

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT
GENERAL COMMITTEES

Public Bill Committee

AUTOMATED AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES BILL

Seventh Sitting

Thursday 16 November 2017

(Morning)

CONTENTS

CLAUSE 16 agreed to.
SCHEDULE agreed to.
CLAUSES 17 TO 19 agreed to.
New clauses considered.
Bill to be reported, without amendment.
Written evidence reported to the House.

No proofs can be supplied. Corrections that Members suggest for the final version of the report should be clearly marked in a copy of the report—not telephoned—and must be received in the Editor’s Room, House of Commons,

not later than

Monday 20 November 2017

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The Committee consisted of the following Members:

Chairs: MR ADRIAN BAILEY, † SIR EDWARD LEIGH

- | | |
|---|---|
| † Argar, Edward (<i>Charnwood</i>) (Con) | † Mann, Scott (<i>North Cornwall</i>) (Con) |
| † Brown, Alan (<i>Kilmarnock and Loudoun</i>) (SNP) | † Rodda, Matt (<i>Reading East</i>) (Lab) |
| Duffield, Rosie (<i>Canterbury</i>) (Lab) | † Stephenson, Andrew (<i>Pendle</i>) (Con) |
| † Efford, Clive (<i>Eltham</i>) (Lab) | † Stewart, Iain (<i>Milton Keynes South</i>) (Con) |
| † Foxcroft, Vicky (<i>Lewisham, Deptford</i>) (Lab) | Tracey, Craig (<i>North Warwickshire</i>) (Con) |
| † Hayes, Mr John (<i>Minister for Transport Legislation and Maritime</i>) | † Turner, Karl (<i>Kingston upon Hull East</i>) (Lab) |
| † Jones, Graham P. (<i>Hyndburn</i>) (Lab) | † Western, Matt (<i>Warwick and Leamington</i>) (Lab) |
| † Kerr, Stephen (<i>Stirling</i>) (Con) | |
| † Knight, Sir Greg (<i>East Yorkshire</i>) (Con) | Farrah Bhatti, Mike Everett, <i>Committee Clerks</i> |
| † Letwin, Sir Oliver (<i>West Dorset</i>) (Con) | † attended the Committee |

Public Bill Committee

Thursday 16 November 2017

(Morning)

[SIR EDWARD LEIGH *in the Chair*]

Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill

11.30 am

The Chair: We now resume line-by-line consideration of the Bill. I remind colleagues to turn off any electronic devices, please.

Clause 16 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule agreed to.

Clauses 17 to 19 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

New Clause 10

REVIEW OF PART 1

(1) By September 2019, the Secretary of State must lay a report before Parliament assessing the effectiveness of the system for defining and insuring automated vehicles introduced by Part 1 of this Act.

(2) The report must consider—

- (a) the impact on the insurance industry,
- (b) the impact on the cost of insurance premiums for automated vehicles,
- (c) the impact on the uptake of automated vehicles, and
- (d) the levels of disagreement between manufacturers and insurers on liability.—(*Karl Turner.*)

This new clause would require the Government to lay a report before Parliament assessing the effectiveness and impact of the system introduced in Part 1.

Brought up, and read the First time.

Karl Turner (Kingston upon Hull East) (Lab): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The new clause, which stands in my name and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford, is self-explanatory, so I will not talk at great length about it. We agree that in future automated vehicles have the potential to improve personal transport arrangements, as well as air quality—which is crucial, given the dire state of the environment and its impact on health—and to provide many other benefits mentioned by Committee members and witnesses during our evidence sessions.

The Bill could lead to a transport revolution. I know from debates in Committee and private discussions with the Minister and his officials that the Government are keen to ensure that that is the reality arising from the Bill. Answering the question of how automated vehicles can be insured, however, is essential. I welcome the Government setting out how to do that, but it is important to consider how the measures will work in practice and not just as legislation. It is also important for the Government to ensure that regulations work as intended, monitoring unexpected impacts—which there always are—before attitudes and practices become entrenched and before automated vehicles become common on our roads.

The list in the new clause is not exhaustive, but given the focus on part 1 of the Bill, it makes sense to review, report on and seriously consider not only the impacts listed but any disagreements about liability. I will not press for a vote on the new clause, but this will be a fast-moving area and primary legislation is not necessarily the way forward. We may well have to revisit this overall area as and when advances in the technology take place, and we will have to look at how they affect the way vehicles are insured.

It is important for the Minister to give an assurance today that he will keep Parliament informed about the effectiveness and impact of the legislation to ensure that we keep it as up to date as possible, given the new technologies in this area.

The Minister for Transport Legislation and Maritime (Mr John Hayes): The shadow Minister once again does credit to the Committee by insisting that these matters should be carefully considered not just now but as they develop. He is right that this is a developing technology, and the whole Committee recognises the Government's attempt to do sufficient, but not too much—that is to say, sufficient to create the certainty that will allow the development of the insurance framework, but not so much that we constrain those developments. It is right, of course, that we continue to bring these matters to the attention of the House, which is essentially what the new clause would do. He argues rightly that we need to ensure that the purpose of the legislation is being fulfilled. It is as simple as that.

I risk repeating myself—I know that many rather enjoy the repetition of my arguments; I am not one of them—but I drew the Committee's attention to the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015, which specifically makes provision to review secondary legislation in which the requisite provisions are made. It confers that duty on Ministers. There is some advantage to be gained from that. None the less, I have made it clear during the course of our consideration that I am not in any way ill disposed to other means by which we can continue to consider these matters. It is important that we recognise that, in a rapidly changing field, further consideration may be efficacious. On that basis, I hope the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull East will withdraw his new clause.

Talking of sufficiency, I do not feel that that is quite sufficient an argument. I want to talk a little bit about how we envisage the system working, which might offer further reassurance to the hon. Gentleman and other Committee members. The international standards by which these vehicles will be approved for safe sale and use are still being considered, as I said previously, by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, in which the UK plays a leading role. Those standards will form the basis of the type approval process. That means that nothing will be sold or used on our roads that does not meet those standards, and it is vital that standards are agreed internationally, for obvious reasons: the nature of the automotive industry and of the vehicles' use means that it must be done in that way.

The Government take the view that it is not appropriate at this early stage to set criteria that are too precise or to constrain the identification process until we know what those standards are. We certainly need to maintain

sufficient flexibility to ensure that all vehicles relevant to the clause can quickly be identified and included on the list that the Secretary of State is missioned to draw up in clause 1.

Sir Oliver Letwin (West Dorset) (Con) *rose*—

Mr Hayes: I see my right hon. Friend indicating that he wants to intervene. I know that whatever he says will add value to our consideration, so I happily give way.

Sir Oliver Letwin: Can my right hon. Friend confirm that, as he says in the first of the three letters he has helpfully written to the Committee, it will be high on the Government's agenda that the type approval process will be used as the means for ensuring the cyber-security of the vehicles, in addition to their safety? Can he also confirm that he is confident that the international negotiations will result in a type approval system that covers security as well as safety?

Mr Hayes: Yes. That was debated at some length when we last met. My right hon. Friend is right that because of the character of the software we use to make these vehicles work, data and cyber-security become ever more significant. My letter addresses this, as he helpfully reminded the Committee, but I can confirm that the discussions we are having have at their heart all the considerations to which he has drawn the Committee's attention.

We will continue to engage with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and other stakeholders to ensure that the system works effectively once in place. In addition, we have produced a detailed impact assessment that looks at potential direct economic impacts on the insurance industry. Hon. Members will remember that we rehearsed the effect that this will have on insurance premiums and the industry as a whole in oral evidence. The industry is already preparing for those effects, because it knows that the shape and character of the insurance industry will alter as a result of all this. Indeed, one of the UK's major insurers has stated that it expects insurance premiums to become cheaper because automated vehicles will be safer. That view was echoed by the Bank of England, which reported in March this year that the safety benefits from automated vehicles could see insurance premiums become more than 20% cheaper by 2040.

As part of this regulatory programme, we will continue to work with the industry to ensure that, as the new insurance framework is implemented, we still meet our intended policy objectives. I therefore hope I have made it clear that we entirely agree with the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull East that these matters need to be considered now and in the future, and I have no doubt that there will be a need for the House to be involved in that process. With those assurances, I hope the hon. Gentleman might see fit to withdraw the new clause.

Karl Turner: I beg to ask leave to withdraw the clause.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New Clause 12

REVIEW OF IMPACT OF PART 2

“(1) The Secretary of State must, within 12 months of this Act receiving Royal Assent, lay a report before Parliament setting out the impact of regulations made under Part 2 on—

- (a) the number and location of charge points in the United Kingdom,
- (b) the resulting uptake of electric vehicles in the United Kingdom, and
- (c) the manufacturing of electric vehicles in the United Kingdom.

(2) Before exercising their duties under subsection (1), the Secretary of State must consult the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive and have regard to their views.”—(*Alan Brown.*)

This new clause would require the Government to produce a report examining the uptake and manufacturing of electric vehicles in the United Kingdom.

Brought up, and read the First time.

Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Sir Edward. I apologise for being late; I am glad I got here in time to make some comments. New clauses 12, 13 and 14, when looked at in the round, encompass a common theme: ensuring a proper UK-wide approach and commitment to reviewing the policy's implementation and effectiveness across all nations of the UK, in terms of the roll-out and uptake of electric vehicles.

I appreciate that the Minister appears to be a listening Minister who reflects, reviews and advises as appropriate. That has been evident throughout the Committee. I also appreciate that he has already made a number of commitments, but the reality is that nothing is absolutely certain unless it is in the Bill. In February 2016, as part of the Enterprise Bill Committee, I was urged not to push an amendment about cash retentions to a vote and was assured by the then Minister that the issue would be resolved by the end of 2016. We are now a full year on from that deadline and the Government are consulting on a previous consultation. That is proof that Ministers and commitments come and go, which is why we are trying to incorporate these measures into the Bill.

New clause 12 would require a binding 12-month review of the impact of the regulations and ensure that the views of the devolved nations are taken on board. For example, the Scottish Government are creating their own strategy for the uptake of ultra low emission vehicles, which they are linking with the Scottish energy strategy, which is obviously a common-sense alignment. It is important that the Scottish Government's 2032 target for phasing out new petrol and diesel cars is not undercut by a UK Government strategy. A further example is that the Scottish Government are offering interest-free loans and free infrastructure installation over and above UK Government grants.

It is quite clear that the UK Government and the Scottish Government can and will work together on future strategies. That could include, for example, the UK Government introducing a vehicle scrappage scheme. New clause 12 would therefore formalise that aspect of working together towards a common goal in the long-term future.

Mr Hayes: It is our concern that these things should be dealt with in the way the hon. Gentleman describes. I have regular dialogue with the Scottish Government, the Welsh Administration and other parts of the kingdom on transport matters and will continue to do so. We get on well, and I think we share a common view that these things should be crafted in a way that works for the whole of the United Kingdom. We make it our habit to involve all relevant bodies in these considerations. The hon. Gentleman can be absolutely certain that that will continue, and I am happy to put it on the record that that dialogue will form an important part of how we see these measures coming into force.

I see the objective of his new clause, and he makes a perfectly understandable case, but I think he will have determined from working with me in Committee in the past that I always try to find means by which we can build bridges across the House—particularly in those areas where, frankly, it is very hard to make party politics. Any Government, of almost any colour, would introduce legislation such as this. It is a necessity. It is vital, relevant and, one might even say, demanded. Those in the industry, such as those engaged in research and development, whom we have all mentioned, know that the Government need to work in collaboration with them to make it all happen in the interests of the common good. I hope that with that firm, strong assurance, the hon. Gentleman will see fit to withdraw the new clause.

11.45 am

Alan Brown: I certainly welcome the Minister's assurances and his comments. I still have the slight feeling of having had my fingers burnt in the past, but I recognise the genuine commitment from him and I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New Clause 13

REPORT ON ELECTRIC CHARGING POINTS

“(1) The Secretary of State must, within 12 months of this Act receiving Royal Assent, lay a report before Parliament setting out a UK-wide electric charging point strategy that must include, but is not limited to, a strategy for establishing charging points for —

- (a) domestic properties,
- (b) urban and rural settlements, and
- (c) the road network.

(2) Before exercising their duties under subsection (1), the Secretary of State must consult the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive and have regard to their views.”—(*Alan Brown.*)

This new clause would require the Government to consult with devolved administrations and produce a report setting out a UK-wide strategy for electric charging points.

Brought up, and read the First time.

Alan Brown: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

New clause 13 would formalise the need for a reporting strategy for establishing charge points covering the varied demographics and geography of the UK, and would include differentiating between rural and urban areas. I appreciate that the Minister has spoken at length about the commitment to consider how we can roll out so as to ensure that rural areas are not left behind.

Again, this is about ensuring a UK-wide approach and picking up on other investment required for rural areas, which I have touched on before, such as mobile coverage upgrades. Additionally, as other hon. Members have highlighted, a strategy for domestic properties needs to be developed covering solutions such as charging points accessible to terraced houses and flats, and possibly roll-out in future developments, so that infrastructure is incorporated as new developments take place. We also need to consider the road networks and allow best practice to be rolled out fully across the UK. That is the idea behind the clause, and I look forward to the Minister's response.

Matt Western (Warwick and Leamington) (Lab): As I did on Second Reading, I want to re-emphasise the point about the provision for other forms of electric vehicle—the Minister and I have had conversations elsewhere about it—particularly in the provisions for EV buses, for example, and cycles.

We are facing a revolution, not just in cars but in all forms of mobility. It is incumbent on us to recognise that at this juncture we should be thinking about how to integrate those needs into the Bill, and specifically about infrastructure. We have talked about where sites might be located, and about commercial properties, but we should be thinking specifically about the infrastructure needed for buses in our town centres. I urge that that be incorporated into the new clause as well.

Alan Brown: I welcome that intervention. It is a valid point; we need to look at the wider considerations. Buses and other vehicles are the biggest polluters in terms of NOx, so it is certainly an important consideration. As I said, I will be happy to hear the Minister's response; I hope that it will encapsulate these issues as well.

Mr Hayes: In 2013, as the whole Committee, including the hon. Gentleman, will know, the Government published “Driving the Future Today”, which set out the path to achieving zero-emissions vehicles. It was Yeats, my favourite poet, who said that

“Happiness is neither virtue nor pleasure nor this thing or that, but simply growth. We are happy when we are growing.”

The growth of new kinds of vehicles has been almost unremitting since that publication. The facts speak for themselves. There are around 10 times more ultra low emission vehicles registered in the UK than in 2013, so although the aims of the strategy published then remain the same, the hon. Gentleman is right that we need a new one. I have thought about it since I read his new clause and since hearing the arguments made from both sides of the Committee. We shall publish a new strategy that will include all vehicles. The hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington is right: we have had private discussions about this and he has made representations to me. We will start work on it now, because I do not want to delay—I am casting an eye only at the politicians in the room, by the way. Shall we say that we will have it completed and published by March? That would be well within the time in which the Bill is being considered. On that basis, I hope the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun will withdraw his new clause.

Alan Brown: As the Minister says, the facts speak for themselves. I certainly welcome that review and that forward direction. I would also be grateful if he wrote to the Committee to confirm the timescale and the terms of reference.

Mr Hayes indicated assent.

Alan Brown: On that basis, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New Clause 14

REPORT ON IMPACT OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS ON ENERGY CONSUMPTION

“(1) The Secretary of State must, within 12 months of this Act receiving Royal Assent, lay a report before Parliament on the impact of charging points on—

- (a) energy consumption,
- (b) grid management, and
- (c) grid storage capacity.

(2) Before exercising their duties under subsection (1), the Secretary of State must consult the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive and have regard to their views.

(3) As well as consulting those in subsection (2) the Secretary of State must consult with—

- (a) the National Grid, and
- (b) any other such persons as the Secretary of State considers appropriate.”—(*Alan Brown.*)

This new clause would require the Government to consult with devolved administrations and produce a report on the impact of energy consumption as a result of increased number of electric vehicles in the UK.

Brought up, and read the First time.

Alan Brown: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The Minister’s comments on new clause 13 almost make mine on new clause 14 superfluous, because some of the matters that I will raise can be incorporated as he outlined. New clause 14 returns to the theme of assessment and understanding of the impact of uptake on the energy network. We know that spikes in electricity usage are predicted while vehicles are being charged, but there is a huge variation among analysts’ predictions of how big peak surges could be. It all depends on when electric vehicles are plugged in and charged. We heard in evidence from the National Grid that it does not think the surge will be as large as predicted by many other analysts, who say that it will completely overwhelm the network.

The facts speak for themselves, as the Minister said. The number of electric vehicles on the road is still at a low point; we will fully understand the impact on the grid only once the uptake of electric vehicles has increased massively. That proof will be really important, and it is important that the Government review how uptake works in practice. What will the increase in peak electricity demand be? What impact will that have on the National Grid? What upgrades will be required? How will that feed into smart grid charging strategies and future energy storage requirements? All those questions need to be taken into account.

New clause 14 sets out a 12-month timescale, but at the predicted rate of uptake of electric vehicles, we will probably still not understand the full impact on the grid of people’s behaviour in that time. The roll-out of electric vehicles may be patchy across the UK, so on reflection I must admit that even 12 months might not

be enough. However, I hope that the strategy assessment that the Minister mentioned in his remarks on new clause 13 could also incorporate consideration of this issue, with a commitment to further reviews in future.

Sir Oliver Letwin: I am delighted that the Minister is talking to the National Grid and others. I entirely sympathise with the hon. Gentleman’s desire to see a transparent product of those discussions: a continuous published analysis of impacts.

There are two kinds of impact. The hon. Gentleman mentioned the adverse impact on the grid from peak moments early in the morning or late in the evening, and in winter there is a lot of fast charging, which will increase the peak effect. However, I am much more interested in the other kind of impact, which I see as much more serious: the benefits, which many of us have seen for some years, that the National Grid anticipates from peak shaving. Night-time, and indeed daytime, vehicle charging can be switched off at moments indicated as economically advantageous to the car owner by the half-hourly settlement price. It is also highly economically advantageous for the grid to have reduced demand at such moments, avoiding the need for additional power. That would transform the economics of intermittent energy supply, including through renewables, for example solar, which are currently not regarded as having any contribution to capacity. I am very much in favour of new clause 14’s general principle; I am sure the Minister is about to assure us that he will fulfil that principle through regular publications.

Matt Western: To emphasise the point and go back to buses, which I mentioned earlier, the scale of the need will be quite significant, say in our town centres, where we may have a bus that will be using these charge points for opportunity charging—an immediate fast charge—drawing 300 kW. If we think about, say, 10 buses in our town centres, we can imagine what sort of requirement would be needed. I add that to the debate.

Sir Oliver Letwin: The hon. Gentleman is clearly right that the bus issue is serious. This is not the place for a prolonged discussion about the patterns of charging and so on, but my own instinct is that battery life will have got to the point at which overnight charging will probably mainly suffice for buses. I am also quite optimistic about the ability to have charging en route on the most thickly used routes. Let us leave that aside for the moment. Clearly, we are joined in the view that the Minister will need, through the grid and others, to publish assessments of all kinds of use and storage, including not just cars but buses, taxis and vans, and indeed bicycles, although that is a minor item.

Another issue connected to new clause 14 goes back to the third of the letters that the Minister has helpfully written to the Committee in response to points that I raised earlier about clauses 11 and 12. I am very grateful for the subsequent discussions the Minister has facilitated about that with his officials. I hope he can confirm that he will now look at one specific issue further, which I do not think is wholly handled in the third of his letters. That is the question of ensuring that the vires given by clause 12(1) and (2), for him or the Secretary of State to issue regulations mandating the transfer of data from charge points through to the grid and the distribution

[*Sir Oliver Letwin*]

network operators, are sufficiently well established by a technical drafting amendment to ensure that they are not challenged successfully in court.

That is obviously vital, because if the spirit of new clause 14 is to be observed and the grid is to be able to publish reasonably reliable forecasts of the pattern of charging and storage provided or demanded by electric vehicles, it needs to be able to use and mine the data from the use and charging of electric vehicles as it evolves. The only way to structure an electricity system is to plan some years ahead. Therefore, we need evolving information to be relayed from an early stage, so that before the load or the opportunity for storage become very big, the pattern is well understood.

To say one further word about that, the Committee must be aware that it is not a marginal point. If those patterns are well understood, the history suggests that one can save in the order of one quarter to one third of the investment costs of the entire electricity supply industry, compared with a situation in which there is chaotic unanticipated demand. The whole system relies on ensuring that one has a capacity margin at peak. If we cannot accurately predict the peak, because we do not understand the configurations of demand and supply on the system, we have to over-provide. We thus end up having bought a lot of heavy metal that is sitting there doing nothing, which is very expensive for the economy. We are talking about fives or 10s of billions of pounds. It is material that that data flow starts, starts early, and starts accurately, without missing anything off, so that the grid can start building a transparent picture that then, as in the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun's new clause 14, is regularly published and updated.

12 noon

The last point I want to make is that although I am not suggesting that the regulations necessarily need to cover this, it is very important that in the Minister's discussions with BEIS, the grid and the DNOs he makes it clear that we will not tolerate a private assessment of this. It needs to be transparent. The reason I say that is, unfortunately, bitter experience. There is a terrible tendency inside the electricity supply industry, when things are getting tight, to go into a huddle and pretend all is well. The two worst Christmases I have spent in my life were when I was alternating between walking around in gumboots in flood zones and sitting tearing my hair out because it was clear that we did not know whether the system was going to balance because the grid had not been transparent enough about the real status of the interconnector contracts. There was this tendency to keep things in a cupboard.

The only way that we can ensure security of supply in this country is if there is maximum transparency of all these data, so that all sorts of people, not just the experts, can look it at, understand it and come to their own common-sense conclusions about whether we have sufficient margins of supply. That is very important, because even the sums I was talking about pale into insignificance when compared with the economic disutility of having power cuts.

The hon. Gentleman's intent behind new clause 14 is absolutely right, and I am pretty confident that this Minister and his colleague, the Minister responsible for energy, will fulfil the spirit of it.

Mr Hayes: It is indicative of the generosity that typifies your stewardship of this Committee, Sir Edward, that you have allowed us to speak about the new clause, arguably tangentially but not in a way that is not helpful to our consideration. I will return to the argument of the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun in a second, but the remarks of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset are reminiscent of the conversations that he and I had many years ago when I was the Minister responsible for energy and when we unsuccessfully attempted jointly to address these matters.

My right hon. Friend is right to say that it is important that the Bill creates the necessary means by which powers could be taken, should they become necessary, to deal with the flow of information in the way he described. He will know well, having studied the Bill in detail, that although clause 11 and clause 11(2) in particular suggest that the Secretary of State can indeed take powers that he considers necessary, those powers are defined as being

“likely to be useful to users or potential users”

of a charge point. Moreover, there is nothing in clause 12 that specifically addresses the argument that my right hon. Friend just made.

In the light of that I am minded to consider a minor technical Government amendment, which either adds a further Roman numeral to the list or amends one there already, to be certain that the Secretary of State taking the powers detailed in the Bill could do so for the purpose that my right hon. Friend set out. I hope that will be sufficient to persuade him not to become rebellious and, even if the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun, who I am about to try to satisfy, withdraws his new clause, bring something potentially destructive to bear, thereby changing the whole atmosphere of this extraordinarily convivial Committee.

I think the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun is right again, if I may say so. It is certainly true that the strategy that I described, which we will bring in with vigour and rigour, with diligence and alacrity, should include the manufacture or use of electric vehicles. That is a given. It needs furthermore to relate that to the Government's environmental objectives, which I spoke about earlier—our desire to create a low emission vehicle environment that is helpful to our broader air quality plans. However, he is also right that consideration of the matters brought up by his new clause must be part of that broad sweep or strategic approach. So, again, he does us a service by highlighting that.

I will take that point away and I hope that by the time we get to the next stage of our consideration of the Bill I will be able to say a little more about the characteristics of the strategy. On that basis, I hope that my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset and the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun will feel that I am going not the extra foot or yard but the extra mile to ensure that their wishes are granted.

Alan Brown: It is often asserted that the SNP is never satisfied in this place, but I am certainly satisfied with the Minister's remarks and with that direction of travel, so I beg to ask leave to withdraw the new clause.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New Clause 15

LIABILITY OF INSURERS ETC WHERE ACCIDENT IS CAUSED BY AUTOMATED VEHICLES IN CONVOY

“(1) That the Secretary of State must set out in regulations liability for insurers and other parties where an accident is caused by automated vehicles driving themselves in convoy.

(2) These regulations must make provision for—

- (a) a definition of automated vehicles driving themselves in convoy,
- (b) determining liability of insurers and automated vehicle owners in cases where—
 - (i) the automated vehicles travelling in convoy are insured, including where the vehicles may be insured by different companies;
 - (ii) one or more of the automated vehicles driving in convoy are not insured.
- (c) resolving liability disputes where automated vehicles are driving in convoy,
- (d) ensuring any compensation received by the injured party in such accidents is not delayed by liability disputes.

(3) Where a statutory instrument contains the first regulations made under this section, the instrument may not be made unless a draft of it has been laid before Parliament and approved by resolution of the House.

(4) A statutory instrument containing regulation under this section that is not the first such regulation made under this section, is subject to an annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.”—(*Clive Efford.*)

Brought up, and read the First time.

Clive Efford (Eltham) (Lab): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The Committee will be pleased that this is the last of my amendments and my last contribution to the debate. It has been a pleasure to be on the Committee under your chairmanship, Sir Edward; please pass on my regards to Mr Bailey. I also thank the Clerks for their assistance in loaning me a few of their grey cells, from their humungous brains, to draft my ideas for amendments and make them legible; I am very grateful for their assistance.

The Bill attempts to make it easy for an injured party to claim in the event of an accident. That is necessary because we are opening up the insurance industry and disputes in the event of an accident to considerations that have not been part of our road system in the past. That is, we are bringing manufacturers further into the possible area of liability than they have been before, because vehicles will be controlled not by people but by machinery and computer software. Software designers may even be dragged in to these disputes.

As we heard in our evidence sessions, in some circumstances these automated vehicles will be connected and moving in convoy. It is an interesting concept that vehicles moving in convoy will communicate with one another, as is how they will share information and how that information will be used. When we look out of our vehicles, we see the immediate environment around us, but if vehicles are travelling in convoy and communicating with one another, they can see the road ahead exactly as it is seen by the vehicle at the head of the convoy. So, if something is amiss in the first vehicle with the data or the design of the software, or if there is a glitch, that will affect the vehicles further down the line.

When we discussed this issue at our last sitting, the potential hacking of the software was mentioned. If there is hacking, the driver of the vehicle cannot therefore be held responsible—he or she did everything they could to make sure the vehicle was roadworthy—and the manufacturer of the vehicle and the designer of the software may say, “Well, we did everything that was reasonable”. Helpfully, the Minister has written to us to say that in those circumstances the insured person—the person who took the vehicle on the road—is the responsible party.

However, in those circumstances the situation will become more confused and, again, this is an area that the Government need to consider, because who is responsible when we know that the vehicles are not necessarily driving themselves as they are communicating with one another? The assumption in this Bill is that the insurance companies will pay out and it will all be sorted out afterwards, but we know that that is not true.

My daughter had a collision. No one was injured, but her vehicle was damaged. Only when the two insurance companies had sorted out the blame—that is, who had caused the dent in the vehicles—was the claim settled. That took several months, during which time she was driving around in a brand-new damaged vehicle. The insurance company did not pay out straight away, so under circumstances in which consideration of who is responsible could be quite complicated—particularly instances where several vehicles were travelling in convoy—it could take some time for insurance companies to settle who should pay in the first instance. The Bill needs to protect the consumer—both the insured, and the third party, who may be the injured party. We could be creating a situation where no party is paid for some time while those complications are sorted out.

With these automated vehicles, which will be communicating with one another on the road, we are introducing an area that needs further consideration. I am not suggesting for a minute that the Minister should have the answer now—not even on the bit of paper that he may be passed in a few seconds—but I do think that this matter is worth further consideration by the Government, particularly as the Bill progresses through both Houses. We may well come back and look at this complication in more detail at a later date, so that we ensure that we are protecting the consumer—both the insured, and the third party.

Sir Oliver Letwin: I want to add one or two words to what the hon. Gentleman says. I do not know whether it is sensible to try to address this in regulations under the Bill, whether it is better to leave it to the courts to settle, or whether some other legislation is necessary, but the hon. Gentleman’s point, although it has its analogue in existing practice, is very serious. Of course there are effectively already convoys on motorways when they are very busy, with somebody at the head of it and, some miles behind, me chugging along in my car. All sorts of complicated things happen, and I am sure that the Minister will be advised to assure the Committee that the courts and insurers already have mechanisms for resolving between them how everything works, and that in principle it makes no difference whether an automated vehicle driving itself or a human-driven vehicle is at the head of the queue.

[*Sir Oliver Letwin*]

I see that point entirely, but the difference is that that only happens from time to time on our motorways at the moment. Although it is not at all certain, it is quite likely that motorways will turn into automated, semi-autonomous trains, and that people will basically go onto the motorway and lock into a system which they are then part of, perhaps then travelling hundreds of miles in convoy. The convoys themselves may be hundreds of miles long.

Sir Greg Knight (East Yorkshire) (Con): How boring.

Sir Oliver Letwin: My right hon. Friend says how boring; I see life entirely differently. He is of course a driving enthusiast, and has the most magnificent machines to drive. I drive one of the smallest and cheapest cars in the United Kingdom, and hate driving. I cannot think of anything more delicious than being able to lock in and leave the machine to it while I am reading, listening to music, or talking to my wife. I think all of those things are much nicer than driving, but there we are—tastes differ, chacun à son goût.

My point is, whether we like it or not, we are likely to be in that condition in the future. Once that starts being the case on motorways, Governments and Parliaments—regardless of the political colour of the Administration—will be ineluctably driven to mandate those circumstances, because the efficiency with which motorways can be used will multiply by some considerable factor. Therefore, the amount of motorway building that needs to go on, a significant component of total capital expenditure in the UK budget, will reduce by some appreciable factor. We will clearly be driven in that direction if the technology permits, and it may very well do so.

12.15 pm

Given all that, there is a chance that there will at some point be some mega problem, potentially involving thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of cars, if the technology is not perfect. We all hope it will be, but it probably will not. It may happen on only very few occasions—perhaps far less frequently than crashes today—and perhaps the problems will have far less significance. I am not prophesying doom and gloom. Nevertheless, these events could be very complicated and very large in scale. They could be much more like what happens when there is a natural disaster, when there is flooding all over the place and thousands of people are seeking insurance claims, than what happens with the normal traffic accidents that we are used to, in which one, two, five or 10 vehicles are involved.

It would be worth hearing from the Minister that somebody has at least gone through this and ensured that if there were such a massive concertina affair everybody would be clear about the problems that the hon. Member for Eltham raises. Which insurers will, in the first instance, pay out? I am not concerned about everybody settling it between themselves. We all want to ensure that the injured parties get their money quickly and that no insured party is unjustly treated, has to pay up a large amount of money and has to go to court to recapture it. It is worth thinking this through for clarity, even in the event of a massive concertina crash. I hope the Minister will tell us that he has done that, that he is going to do it or that some independent group is going to do it so we do not lose sight of this issue.

Mr Hayes: Given that it is not our intention for platooning to be self-driving at this stage—the trials I am about to describe do not include autonomous vehicles—it seems that in allowing us to have this brief debate, Sir Edward, your generosity knows very few bounds indeed. None the less, it is a helpful debate.

As the hon. Member for Eltham knows, we started platooning trials in August. We are adopting a highly consultative approach, and the trials are ongoing. The hon. Gentleman is right that we will need to consider a range of issues not necessarily directly related to the Bill but not unconnected from it, one of which might be the gradual addition of autonomous vehicles into the platooning mode, as it were—that way of driving.

There are potential benefits to platooning, particularly for the movement of goods nationally, which is why we are trialling it. I accept that the insurance issues will need to be considered very carefully for reasons set out by the hon. Gentleman and my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset. As a result of this very useful though short debate, I will be happy to ensure that we include in the consultation discussions with the insurance industry in anticipation of the addition of autonomous vehicles into the platooning field. It will, of course, already be considering the insurance issues relating to non-autonomous vehicles that are platooning. That is implicitly part of what that consultation is about. I am happy to commit to including autonomous vehicles in that.

I obviously cannot comment on individual cases; it would be quite wrong to do so. It is right to say that as an insurance framework develops from the Bill it must be sufficient to take into account the arguments made in the new clause. I will certainly ensure that that message is transmitted not only from this Committee but from the Government. On that basis, I hope the hon. Member for Eltham will withdraw the new clause.

Clive Efford: The Minister is in an extremely generous mood this morning. I am reassured by his comments that he will take these matters on board and consult on them in the future. There are some important issues here, but I am satisfied by what he has said, so I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New Clause 16

SHARING OF DATA TO RESOLVE LIABILITY DISPUTES

“(1) Where an accident occurs under sections 2, 3 or 4, the insurer and other interested parties have the right to acquire data from the automated vehicle for the purpose of determining the extent of liability.

(2) The Secretary of State must set out in regulations a system for handling and sharing data generated in respect of accidents involving automated vehicles.

(3) These regulations must make provision for—

- (a) the format and content of the data recorded by automated vehicles,
- (b) identifying who is responsible for data collection,
- (c) identifying which interested parties have the right to acquire data from the automated vehicle,
- (d) how such data may be acquired by the insurer and other interested parties, and
- (e) any limitation that should be placed on how that data can be shared or used.

(4) Prior to making regulations under this section, the Secretary of State must consult with such persons as the Secretary of State considers appropriate.

(5) Where a statutory instrument contains the first regulations made under this section, the instrument may not be made unless a draft of it has been laid before Parliament and approved by a resolution of each House.

(6) A statutory instrument containing regulations under this section, that is not the first such instrument made under this section, is subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.”—(*Karl Turner.*)

This new clause would ensure that insurers and other interested parties have access to automated vehicle data for the purpose of resolving disputes on the extent of liability where an accident has occurred. This clause would give the Secretary of State power to make regulations on how such data should be handled and shared.

Brought up, and read the First time.

Karl Turner: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The new clause will ensure that insurers and other interested parties have access to automated vehicle data for the purpose of resolving disputes on the extent of liability when an accident event has occurred. The clause will give the Secretary of State the power to make regulations on how such data should be handled and shared.

An automated vehicle is likely to produce huge amounts of data on such things as car location, traffic information, weather information, its route, passenger information and even the parcels that it carries, if used commercially by a courier. Clearly, there are huge advantages to vehicles producing that data when resolving disputes on the extent of liability—for example, increasing the speed and quality of decisions. The data will be a valuable source of information for the insurer and other interested parties.

There are risks. The information gathered by the vehicles might be sensitive; information that needs to be kept private could be damaging if placed in the wrong hands. It is important that the Government ensure that the gathered data is secure, private and accessed only by relevant authorised parties.

Sir Greg Knight: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that without this new clause, the data would probably still be made available, but only after one of the parties sought a court order to obtain it by arguing that it was necessary to settle the issue of liability? Does he also agree that there would be a cost in obtaining that information and that, generally speaking, the person requesting the information should pay that cost, even if he or she is later reimbursed in the settlement of the case?

Karl Turner: Yes. The right hon. Gentleman makes a valid point. As a lawyer, I am always reluctant to make lawyers redundant, but that is clearly a potential outcome.

New clause 16 will give insurers and other interested parties access to that information. It will require the Secretary of State to consult with the appropriate persons and then to put in place regulations for the handling and sharing of such data. [*Interruption.*] The Minister is nodding along nicely to my remarks and I look forward to his response.

Mr Hayes: With you in the Chair, Sir Edward, I feel I am surrounded by lawyers.

The hon. Gentleman is right that data collection will be vital as the technology develops. Furthermore, he is right that this is a potentially challenging area because of the sensitivity of some of that data. I would go still further and say that there is a balance to be struck

between the desirable collection of data to establish what might have occurred in the event of an accident and the privacy of drivers. That balance will need to be struck with great care and must be struck internationally, because people drive across borders. I have spoken repeatedly about the development of international standards, mainly in relation to the type approval process. Those international discussions should and will include the parallel issues of data storage and data collection. As I have made clear, we are engaged in those discussions, and we will certainly want to highlight the issues raised in the new clause as those standards develop.

The debate about what data, beyond who or what was in control of the vehicle, needs to be collected has begun but still needs to conclude. That debate will include engagement about who needs to access that data, and on what basis and for what purpose they will be allowed to access it. That will need to be clearly established to avoid the eventuality—which the hon. Gentleman, given his previous professional circumstances, teasingly offered us—of countless legal cases, no doubt with countless legal fees.

Matt Rodda (Reading East) (Lab): I share the Minister’s concerns about this point. As a non-lawyer, I must admit that my knowledge of the legal aspects is somewhat limited. However, I represent a constituency with large IT businesses, and I urge him to consider the IT industry’s views about the management of big data. There is an ongoing debate in the industry about the various international conventions and rules that govern data. Will he and his officials consult the industry and take on board its concerns about the impact of Brexit and, indeed, our ongoing relationship with the United States on the management of that data? A number of those businesses operate in the European Union, the US and the UK, and I hope that they continue to do so.

Mr Hayes: I regard Brexit as the prospect of a dream coming true. It is a subject of great joy and delight to me. However, I do not want to open up—

The Chair: This was going to be the only Committee where we did not mention Brexit. Let us get back to the point.

Mr Hayes: I should not have done so; I allowed the debate to run away with me. Notwithstanding that, there are challenges associated with Brexit, and the hon. Member for Reading East makes the perfectly fair point that we need to take that into account.

Sir Greg Knight *rose*—

Mr Hayes: I was about to reach my enthralling conclusion, but I happily give way briefly to my right hon. Friend.

Sir Greg Knight: Does the Minister agree that, without international agreement about how it is stored, the data will be in as many forms as there are car manufacturers? That would mean that only the manufacturers themselves were able to decipher it. There is a strong argument for seeking international agreement on this matter.

Mr Hayes: My right hon. Friend is right; he makes a sound point. That is precisely why I said in response to the shadow Minister that we need cross-border international agreement.

[Mr John Hayes]

By the way, the hon. Member for Reading East is right, too, about the need to ensure that industry—not just the automotive industry, but the IT industry—is engaged. As he knows, my background is in the IT industry, and it is important that we take advantage of all available expertise in judging why, but also how, we manage data. The “why” is about the balance I described earlier, and the “how” is about the mechanisms for achieving that balance.

I end with this statement, which I hope is sufficiently reassuring. I assure hon. Members that the UK Government and others around the world are investing heavily in automated and connected technologies that will assist in providing evidence of what minimum event data recording and sharing requirements might be needed and wanted. We will work on an international basis to decide what can be done, what should be done and how it will be done. Given that assurance, I hope that the shadow Minister withdraws the new clause.

Karl Turner: I am happy to do so. I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New Clause 17

ACCIDENT RESULTING FROM UNAUTHORISED INSPECTION, REPAIR OR MAINTENANCE OF AUTOMATED VEHICLE

“(1) An insurance policy in respect of an automated vehicle may exclude or limit the insurer’s liability under section 2(1) for damage suffered by an insured person arising from an accident occurring as a direct result of unauthorised inspection, repair or maintenance of the automated vehicle, made by the insured person, or with the insured person’s knowledge, that are prohibited under the policy.

(2) But as regards liability for damage suffered by an insured person who is not the holder of the policy, subsection (1) applies only in relation to unauthorised inspection, repair or maintenance of the automated vehicle which, at the time of the accident, the person knows are prohibited under the policy.

(3) Subsection (4) applies where an amount is paid by an insurer under section 2(1) in respect of damage suffered, as a result of an accident, by someone who is not insured under the policy in question.

(4) If the accident occurred as a direct result of unauthorised inspection, repair or maintenance of the automated vehicle, made by the insured person, or with the insured person’s knowledge, that are prohibited under the policy, the amount paid by the insurer is recoverable from that person to the extent provided for by the policy.

(5) But as regards recovery from an insured person who is not the holder of the policy, subsection (4) applies only in relation to unauthorised inspection, repair or maintenance of the automated vehicle which, at the time of the accident, the person knew were prohibited under the policy.

(6) For the purposes of this section the Secretary of State must by regulations establish a scheme for authorised inspection, repair and maintenance of automated vehicles by licensed and accredited technicians.

(7) The scheme must include details of—

- (a) which professional body will operate the licensing and accreditation of technicians,
- (b) how the licensing and accreditation scheme will operate,

(c) a minimum level of training for technicians working on listed automated vehicles, and

(d) how a list of accredited individuals will be prepared and kept up-to-date.

(8) Prior to making regulations under this section, the Secretary of State must consult with such persons as the Secretary of State considers appropriate.

(9) Where a statutory instrument contains the first regulations made under this section, the instrument may not be made unless a draft of it has been laid before Parliament and approved by a resolution of each House.

(10) A statutory instrument containing regulations under this section, that is not the first such instrument made under this section, is subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.”—(*Karl Turner.*)

This new clause would ensure that insurers should not have to bear liability to the insured person for accidents caused by the vehicle being inspected, repaired or maintained by unauthorised technicians in breach of the insurance policy. This would apply subject to various conditions regarding the level of knowledge of the insured person or policyholder about the insurance policy requirements. This clause would give the Secretary of State power to make regulations on a scheme for authorised inspection, repair and maintenance of automated vehicles by licensed and accredited technicians.

Brought up, and read the First time.

12.30 pm

Karl Turner: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The new clause, which stands in my name and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford, would protect the insurer against accidents caused by vehicles having been repaired by unauthorised technicians. It would also require the Government to establish a scheme for authorised inspection. The automotive industry already relies on hundreds of thousands of individuals in roles to support, work on and maintain vehicles. As the technology develops, so too must the skills of those working on them.

We are aware of existing skills gaps in the industry. The Minister and I have had discussions about this very issue. I think the Government have got a really good intention to skill up people in this area, but as the technology develops, skills gaps seem to be worsening. The Bill does not address the worsening skill gap. If we do not start planning now, we will be left with a huge hole in the support structures for the new vehicles. That is why the Opposition believe, as do a number of stakeholders, that the Government should introduce an accreditation scheme for technicians to work on future vehicles. I think the Minister previously said publicly that he may do just that.

If the Government are not proactive, the UK will not be able to support growth in the new technologies. Will the Minister therefore consider introducing an accreditation scheme for technicians, not only to address the skills shortage but to provide a wider set of protections for insurers against unauthorised repairers and unauthorised maintenance of these vehicles, as set out in the new clause?

Mr Hayes: It is a paradox that, as we become more ambitious in respect of future transport, we simultaneously create a greater and greater problem in respect of the skills necessary to deliver those ambitions. With the road investment strategy, which I began, and with our rail investment strategy, High Speed 2, Crossrail and all

the other developments, the need for transport skills is growing at a pace that is hard to satisfy. We have analysed that thoroughly. Indeed, I think we can fairly say that the Department for Transport is a leader in terms of mapping those future needs and identifying the space between where we are now and where we need to be. Encouraging more and more people to gain those skills will be critical and could be the “make or break” of the technology. Investing in infrastructure means investing in people as well as in things.

If that is a paradox, it is a pseudodox that the only means of gaining fulfilment comes through academic accomplishment. Curious, is it not, that we should have convinced ourselves of that for so long. Frankly, I was never convinced, but many were. Of course, it is through the application of technical and vocational skills that many people find not only their ultimate fulfilment but the means by which our economy works. Encouraging more people to take the practical journey towards the achievement of such competencies is vital. That is why I am so passionate about apprenticeships and why, when I was apprenticeships Minister, I championed those practical skills.

It is perhaps through practical accomplishment—the combination of the work of one’s hands and one’s mind—that people are most likely to achieve the sublime. Most academic learning, at least up until master’s degree level, is derivative. Technical learning is creative at a much earlier stage. Perhaps a journey to the sublime is made more likely through what we do practically, technically and vocationally.

I agree with the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull East. Furthermore, I agree that we need to codify and accredit such skills. The argument becomes, therefore, not about intent, but about method. It is probable that we are at too early a stage to be certain about what that kind of accreditation might look like. Nevertheless, I am happy to agree to have further discussions with the Institute of the Motor Industry and others to help the Government to understand the challenge of ensuring that vehicle maintenance and repair is carried out in a professional and safe manner for technicians and drivers.

May I add a relevant further point, Sir Edward, that does not directly relate to the proposed new clause? I hope your earlier generosity will not have ended.

The Chair: Well, lunch is approaching, so it is getting a bit frayed.

Mr Hayes: Your generosity declines the closer we get to food; I can understand that, Sir Edward.

There is a risk that smaller providers of services—the small garages and small businesses—will be disadvantaged if those skills are found only in the proprietary repair centres of major manufacturers. I am keen that that should not be the case, not only because it will make those small businesses less viable, but because it will mean that people will travel further to get their car serviced and repaired—the major centres will not be so evenly distributed—and that those acquiring the skills will have to travel much further to do so.

I hope we might be able to emulate the industries that the hon. Member for Reading East mentioned earlier and represents. In the IT sector, while there are a relatively small number of very large manufacturers,

they work through a whole series of other smaller businesses that are accredited to work with them or for them. Perhaps that is the model we should look at to avoid the unfortunate eventuality that I have taken the liberty, with your indulgence, Sir Edward, of drawing to the Committee’s attention.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull East and most of the House are well aware of my absolute commitment to and passion for skills. On that basis, I hope he will withdraw the amendment.

Karl Turner: I will happily do so. It is fair to say that the Minister has gone beyond what I had anticipated, so I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New Clause 20

CONSULTATION ON THE COLLECTION AND USE OF DATA FROM ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS AND SMART CHARGE POINTS

‘The Secretary of State must consult with such persons as the Secretary of State considers appropriate on the collection and use of data from electric vehicle charging points and smart charge points. The consultation must address—

- (a) who is responsible for collecting the data from electric vehicles and from any associated charging or network infrastructure used by such vehicles,
- (b) how the data is shared between different parties, and
- (c) any limitations on the use of such data.’—

(Karl Turner.)

This new clause would require the Secretary of State to consult on the collection and use of data from electric vehicle charging points and smart charge points.

Brought up, and read the First time.

Karl Turner: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

I do not intend to speak for long to this new clause, which stands in my name and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford. It focuses on the collection and use of data from electric charging points, which will bring about many of the same issues that we discussed in the debate on new clause 16.

As with automated vehicles and the data they collect, charging points for electric vehicles will also hold important and useful information, which, were it to fall into the wrong hands, could be damaging. It is important that we get that side of the legislation right. As the technology advances, it is likely that more and more information will be held. Some of that information will be personal, sensitive information. That is why it is important that the Government ensure that the gathered data is secure and private. It is also important that the legislation deals with who is responsible for collecting the data, how the data is then shared between the different parties, and any limitations on such data.

With new clause 20, we are asking the Minister to properly consult the relevant stakeholders in this area to ensure that the correct safeguards are put in place. I hope that the Minister supports my intention and will be able to give some assurances in this area.

Mr Hayes: I can deal with this very quickly: I do agree and I will take those steps.

Karl Turner: On that basis, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

The Chair: A very good note to end on.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr Hayes: On a point of order, Sir Edward. As we conclude our work on the Bill, I want to offer my thanks, of course, to you, Sir Edward, and Mr Bailey for chairing the Committee, and to all members of the Committee. I think it is now a matter of fact that our considerations have been dutiful and considered and continued in the spirit of conviviality and good will in which they began.

Bernard Shaw said:

“We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future.”

But he was wrong about that. In truth, all we have known, been and done informs, inspires and enlivens all we can know, be and do. What we do in respect of the Bill must be informed by all that has passed and that we have learned from the past. This is a new technology, although many of the principles that we have discussed are time-honoured ones. We have spoken just today about skills. We have spoken about the balance between privacy and the useful exchange of information; where responsibility lies and who should take it; and the balance between Government and private individuals and private businesses. Those are not new or modern things, although the technology may be. They are things that should always drive and inspire the proper scrutiny of legislation and the proper business of Government, and this Committee has once again shown that.

I am delighted that the contributions from my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset have shown that even intellectuals add value. I am delighted, too, that my right hon. Friend the Member for East Yorkshire, with his *recherché* approach, has again made the case for all that is glorious about that which is vintage. His own vintage performances have delighted me and, I am sure, many others.

May I particularly thank the Opposition Members, as well as the Government Members, including members of the Select Committee on Transport, who know far more about these subjects than I do? I also thank my Parliamentary Private Secretary, my hon. Friend the Member for North Cornwall, and of course my former PPS, my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle, who is now my Whip. I particularly thank Opposition Members. For it is very easy in opposition to criticise and carp. It is very easy in opposition to critique a Bill in a way that

is designed to be unhelpful rather than helpful. That has not been the case in this Committee. Opposition Members have sought to contribute in a positive, constructive and thoughtful way. I know it is much easier to be a Government Minister than a shadow Minister, because I have done that job, too, so I am extremely grateful to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull East for the approach that he has adopted.

With those brief words—some will say all too brief—I thank everyone once again for making the Committee such a success.

12.45 pm

Karl Turner: Further to that point of order, Sir Edward. I thank you and Mr Bailey for chairing the Committee. I also thank the Clerks. Without their assistance, I would have struggled a great deal, having come to the brief relatively recently. I also thank the officials, who have been extremely supportive with my colleagues in my office and have helped a great deal, even by just having telephone conversations about certain amendments that we planned to table. I also thank the Minister for the discussions that we have had both privately and publicly on the issues that we have been debating.

Alan Brown: Further to that point of order, Sir Edward. I, too, want to put on the record my thanks to you and Mr Bailey for chairing the Committee. I thank the Clerks for their assistance and helping with amendments. I realise that they had to be robust in terms of keeping to the guidelines of the Bill, and I appreciate the guidance that was given. I thank the Minister, who certainly seems to have listened and engaged. He has a good way of getting us to withdraw amendments with a mix of humour, appearing to listen, and a wee bit of flattery thrown in at the start just to keep us off guard. It has been an enjoyable process and I thank everyone involved.

The Chair: On behalf of Mr Bailey, myself and the Clerks, I thank all Committee members for attending. I am thankful for the remarkably good nature of the debate, for the mellifluous tones of the Minister, and for the good nature of the Opposition spokesmen. Whether we will end up with Hayes hooks, Turner turnkeys or something that alliterates with Leigh, we do not know, but there have been some good moments. I look forward to one of Sir Greg’s old cars colliding with Sir Oliver’s 100-mile convoy. I thank you all. We have not deviated too far into the realms of Ruskin.

Bill to be reported, without amendment.

12.47 pm

Committee rose.

Written evidence reported to the House

AEVB 30 Institute and Faculty of Actuaries

AEVB 31 David Gregory

AEVB 32 Riversimple Movement Ltd

AEVB 33 The Institute of the Motor Industry

