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HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT

PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Monday 14 October 2019

Chronology of The Parliamentary Debates

The Parliamentary History contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almons Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c. &c.

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Adams, Nigel (Selby and Ainsty)
Afolami, Abimbola (Hitchin and Harpenden)
Afriyie, Adam (Windsor)
Aldous, Peter James Guy (Waveney)
Alexander, Heidi (Lewisham East) [*Resigned, May 2018*]
Ali, Rushanara (Bethnal Green and Bow)
Allan, Lucy (Telford)
Allen, Heidi Suzanne (South Cambridgeshire)
Allin-Khan, Rosena Chantelle (Tooting)
Amesbury, Michael Lee (Weaver Vale)
Amess, Sir David Anthony Andrew (Southend West)
Andrew, Stuart James (Pudsey)
Antoniazzi, Antonia Louise (Gower)
Argar, Edward John Comport (Charnwood)
Ashworth, Jonathan Michael Graham (Leicester South)
Atkins, Victoria Mary (Louth and Horncastle)
Austin, Ian (Dudley North)

B

Bacon, Richard Michael (South Norfolk)
Badenoch, Olukemi (Saffron Walden)
Bailey, Adrian Edward (West Bromwich West)
Baker, Steve John (Wycombe)
Baldwin, Harriett Mary Morison (West Worcestershire)
Barclay, Rt Hon. Stephen Paul (North East Cambridgeshire)
Bardell, Hannah Mary (Livingston)
Baron, John Charles (Basildon and Billericay)
Barron, Rt Hon. Sir Kevin John (Rother Valley)
Bebb, Guto ap Owain (Aberconwy)
Beckett, Rt Hon. Margaret Mary (Derby South)
Begley, Órfhlaith (West Tyrone) [*By-election, May 2018*]
Bellingham, Sir Henry Campbell (North West Norfolk)
Benn, Rt Hon. Hilary James (Leeds Central)
Benyon, Rt Hon. Richard Henry Ronald (Newbury)
Bercow, Rt Hon. John Simon (Buckingham)
Beresford, Sir Alexander Paul (Mole Valley)
Berger, Luciana Clare (Liverpool, Wavertree)
Berry, James Jacob Gilchrist (Rossendale and Darwen)
Betts, Clive James Charles (Sheffield South East)
Black, Mhairi (Paisley and Renfrewshire South)
Blackford, Rt Hon. Ian (Ross, Skye and Lochaber)
Blackman, Robert John (Harrow East)
Blackman, Kirsty (Aberdeen North)
Blackman-Woods, Roberta Carol (City of Durham)
Blomfield, Paul Christopher (Sheffield Central)
Blunt, Crispin Jeremy Rupert (Reigate)
Boles, Nicholas Edward Coleridge (Grantham and Stamford)
Bone, Peter William (Wellingborough)
Bottomley, Sir Peter James (Worthing West)
Bowie, Andrew Campbell (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine)

Brabin, Tracy Lynn (Batley and Spen)
Bradley, Benjamin David (Mansfield)
Bradley, Rt Hon. Karen Anne (Staffordshire Moorlands)
Bradshaw, Rt Hon. Benjamin Peter James (Exeter)
Brady, Sir Graham Stuart (Altrincham and Sale West)
Brady, Michael (Newry and Armagh)
Brake, Rt Hon. Thomas Anthony (Carshalton and Wallington)
Braverman, Sue-Ellen Cassiana (Fareham)
Brennan, Kevin Denis (Cardiff West)
Brereton, Jack Edgar (Stoke-on-Trent South)
Bridgen, Andrew James (North West Leicestershire)
Brine, Stephen Charles (Winchester)
Brock, Deidre Leanne (Edinburgh North and Leith)
Brokenshire, Rt Hon. James Peter (Old Bexley and Sidcup)
Brown, Alan (Kilmarnock and Loudoun)
Brown, Lyn Carol (West Ham)
Brown, Rt Hon. Nicholas Hugh (Newcastle upon Tyne East)
Bruce, Fiona Claire (Congleton)
Bryant, Christopher John (Rhondda)
Buck, Karen Patricia (Westminster North)
Buckland, Rt Hon. Robert James (South Swindon)
Burden, Richard Haines (Birmingham, Northfield)
Burghart, Alex Michael (Brentwood and Ongar)
Burgon, Richard (Leeds East)
Burns, Rt Hon. Conor (Bournemouth West)
Burt, Rt Hon. Alistair James Hendrie (North East Bedfordshire)
Butler, Dawn Petula (Brent Central)
Byrne, Rt Hon. Liam Dominic (Birmingham, Hodge Hill)

C

Cable, Rt Hon. Sir John Vincent (Twickenham)
Cadbury, Ruth Margaret (Brentford and Isleworth)
Cairns, Rt Hon. Alun (Vale of Glamorgan)
Cameron, Lisa (East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow)
Campbell, Rt Hon. Sir Alan Hugh (Tynemouth)
Campbell, Gregory Lloyd (East Londonderry)
Campbell, Ronald (Blyth Valley)
Carden, Daniel Joseph (Liverpool, Walton)
Carmichael, Rt Hon. Alexander Morrison (Orkney and Shetland)
Cartlidge, James Roger (South Suffolk)
Cash, Sir William Nigel Paul (Stone)
Caulfield, Maria Colette (Lewes)
Chalk, Alexander (Cheltenham)
Champion, Sarah Deborah (Rotherham)
Chapman, Douglas (Dunfermline and West Fife)
Chapman, Jennifer (Darlington)
Charalambous, Charalambos (Enfield, Southgate)
Cherry, Joanna Catherine (Edinburgh South West)
Chishti, Atta-Ur-Rehman (Gillingham and Rainham)
Chope, Sir Christopher Robert (Christchurch)
Churchill, Johanna Peta (Bury St Edmunds)
Clark, Colin James (Gordon)
Clark, Rt Hon. Gregory David (Tunbridge Wells)

Clarke, Rt Hon. Kenneth Harry (Rushcliffe)
 Clarke, Simon Richard (Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland)
 Cleverly, Rt Hon. James Spencer (Braintree)
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey Robert (The Cotswolds)
 Clwyd, Rt Hon. Ann (Cynon Valley)
 Coaker, Vernon Rodney (Gedling)
 Coffey, Margaret Ann Wishart (Stockport)
 Coffey, Rt Hon. Thérèse Anne (Suffolk Coastal)
 Collins, Damian Noel Thomas (Folkestone and Hythe)
 Cooper, Julie Elizabeth (Burnley)
 Cooper, Rosemary Elizabeth (West Lancashire)
 Cooper, Rt Hon. Yvette (Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford)
 Corbyn, Rt Hon. Jeremy Bernard (Islington North)
 Costa, Alberto Castrenze (South Leicestershire)
 Courts, Robert Alexander (Witney)
 Cowan, Ronald Jack (Inverclyde)
 Cox, Rt Hon. Charles Geoffrey (Torridge and West Devon)
 Coyle, Neil (Bermondsey and Old Southwark)
 Crabb, Rt Hon. Stephen (Preseli Pembrokeshire)
 Crausby, Sir David Anthony (Bolton North East)
 Crawley, Angela (Lanark and Hamilton East)
 Creagh, Mary Helen (Wakefield)
 Creasy, Stella Judith (Walthamstow)
 Crouch, Tracey Elizabeth Anne (Chatham and Aylesford)
 Cruddas, Jonathan (Dagenham and Rainham)
 Cryer, John Robert (Leyton and Wanstead)
 Cummins, Judith Mary (Bradford South)
 Cunningham, Alexander (Stockton North)
 Cunningham, James Dolan (Coventry South)

D

Daby, Janet Jessica (Lewisham East) [*By-election, June 2018*]
 Dakin, Nicholas (Scunthorpe)
 Davey, Rt Hon. Sir Edward Jonathon (Kingston and Surbiton)
 David, Wayne (Caerphilly)
 Davies, Christopher Paul (Brecon and Radnorshire) [*Recalled, June 2019*]
 Davies, David Thomas Charles (Monmouth)
 Davies, Geraint Richard (Swansea West)
 Davies, Edward Glyn (Montgomeryshire)
 Davies, Miriam Jane Alice (Eastleigh)
 Davies, Philip Andrew (Shipley)
 Davis, Rt Hon. David Michael (Haltemprice and Howden)
 Day, Martyn (Linlithgow and East Falkirk)
 De Cordova, Marsha Chantol (Battersea)
 De Piero, Gloria (Ashfield)
 Debbonaire, Thangam Elizabeth Rachel (Bristol West)
 Dent Coad, Emma (Kensington)
 Dhesi, Tanmanjeet Singh (Slough)
 Dinenage, Caroline Julia (Gosport)
 Djanogly, Jonathan Simon (Huntingdon)
 Docherty, Leo (Aldershot)
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin John (West Dunbartonshire)
 Dodds, Annaliese Jane (Oxford East)
 Dodds, Jane (Brecon and Radnorshire) [*By-election, August 2019*]
 Dodds, Rt Hon. Nigel Alexander (Belfast North)
 Donaldson, Rt Hon. Sir Jeffrey Mark (Lagan Valley)
 Donelan, Michelle Emma May Elizabeth (Chippenham)
 Dorries, Nadine Vanessa (Mid Bedfordshire)
 Double, Stephen Daniel (St Austell and Newquay)
 Doughty, Stephen John (Cardiff South and Penarth)

Dowd, Peter Christopher (Bootle)
 Dowden, Rt Hon. Oliver James (Hertsmere)
 Doyle-Price, Jacqueline (Thurrock)
 Drax, Richard Grosvenor (South Dorset)
 Drew, David Elliott (Stroud)
 Dromey, John Eugene Joseph (Birmingham, Erdington)
 Duddridge, James Philip (Rochford and Southend East)
 Duffield, Rosemary Clare (Canterbury)
 Duguid, David James (Banff and Buchan)
 Duncan, Rt Hon. Sir Alan James Carter (Rutland and Melton)
 Duncan Smith, Rt Hon. George Iain (Chingford and Woodford Green)
 Dunne, Rt Hon. Philip Martin (Ludlow)

E

Eagle, Angela (Wallasey)
 Eagle, Maria (Garston and Halewood)
 Edwards, David Jonathan (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr)
 Efford, Clive Stanley (Eltham)
 Elliott, Julie (Sunderland Central)
 Ellis, Rt Hon. Michael Tyrone (Northampton North)
 Ellman, Dame Louise Joyce (Liverpool, Riverside)
 Ellwood, Rt Hon. Tobias Martin (Bournemouth East)
 Elmore, Christopher Philip (Ogmore)
 Elphicke, Charlie Brett Anthony (Dover)
 Esterson, William Roffen (Sefton Central)
 Eustice, Charles George (Camborne and Redruth)
 Evans, Christopher James (Islwyn)
 Evans, Nigel Martin (Ribble Valley)
 Evennett, Rt Hon. Sir David Anthony (Bexleyheath and Crayford)

F

Fabricant, Michael Louis David (Lichfield)
 Fallon, Rt Hon. Sir Michael (Sevenoaks)
 Farrelly, Christopher Paul (Newcastle-under-Lyme)
 Farron, Timothy James (Westmorland and Lonsdale)
 Fellows, Marion (Motherwell and Wishaw)
 Field, Rt Hon. Frank (Birkenhead)
 Field, Rt Hon. Mark Christopher (Cities of London and Westminster)
 Fitzpatrick, James (Poplar and Limehouse)
 Fletcher, Colleen Margaret (Coventry North East)
 Flint, Rt Hon. Caroline Louise (Don Valley)
 Flynn, Paul Phillip (Newport West) [*Died, February 2019*]
 Forbes, Lisa Jane (Peterborough) [*By-election, June 2019*]
 Ford, Victoria Grace (Chelmsford)
 Foster, Kevin John (Torbay)
 Fovargue, Yvonne Helen (Makerfield)
 Fox, Rt Hon. Liam (North Somerset)
 Foxcroft, Victoria Jane (Lewisham, Deptford)
 Francois, Rt Hon. Mark Gino (Rayleigh and Wickford)
 Frazer, Lucy Clare (South East Cambridgeshire)
 Freeman, George William (Mid Norfolk)
 Freer, Michael Whitney (Finchley and Golders Green)
 Frith, James Richard (Bury North)
 Furniss, Gillian (Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough)
 Fysh, Marcus John Hudson (Yeovil)

G

Gaffney, Hugh Lawrence (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill)
 Gale, Rt Hon. Sir Roger James (North Thanet)
 Gapes, Michael John (Ilford South)
 Gardiner, Barry Strachan (Brent North)
 Garnier, Mark Robert Timothy (Wyre Forest)
 Gauke, Rt Hon. David Michael (South West Hertfordshire)
 George, Ruth Stephanie Nicole (High Peak)
 Gethins, Stephen Patrick (North East Fife)
 Ul-Ghani, Nusrat Munir (Wealden)
 Gibb, Rt Hon. Nicolas John (Bognor Regis and Littlehampton)
 Gibson, Patricia (North Ayrshire and Arran)
 Gildernew, Michelle (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
 Gill, Preet Kaur (Birmingham, Edgbaston)
 Gillan, Rt Hon. Dame Cheryl Elise Kendall (Chesham and Amersham)
 Girvan, William Paul (South Antrim)
 Glen, John Philip (Salisbury)
 Glindon, Mary Theresa (North Tyneside)
 Godsiff, Roger Duncan (Birmingham, Hall Green)
 Goldsmith, Rt Hon. Frank Zacharias Robin (Richmond Park)
 Goodman, Helen Catherine (Bishop Auckland)
 Goodwill, Rt Hon. Robert (Scarborough and Whitby)
 Gove, Rt Hon. Michael Andrew (Surrey Heath)
 Grady, Patrick John (Glasgow North)
 Graham, Luke Patrick (Ochil and South Perthshire)
 Graham, Richard (Gloucester)
 Grant, William (Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock)
 Grant, Helen (Maidstone and The Weald)
 Grant, Peter (Glenrothes)
 Gray, James Whiteside (North Wiltshire)
 Gray, Neil Charles (Airdrie and Shotts)
 Grayling, Rt Hon. Christopher Stephen (Epsom and Ewell)
 Green, Christopher James (Bolton West)
 Green, Rt Hon. Damian Howard (Ashford)
 Green, Katherine Anne (Stretford and Urmston)
 Greening, Rt Hon. Justine (Putney)
 Greenwood, Lilian Rachel (Nottingham South)
 Greenwood, Margaret (Wirral West)
 Grieve, Rt Hon. Dominic Charles Roberts (Beaconsfield)
 Griffith, Nia Rhiannon (Llanelli)
 Griffiths, Andrew James (Burton)
 Grogan, John Timothy (Keighley)
 Gwynne, Andrew John (Denton and Reddish)
 Gyimah, Samuel Phillip (East Surrey)

H

Haigh, Louise Margaret (Sheffield, Heeley)
 Hair, Kirstene Janette (Angus)
 Halfon, Rt Hon. Robert Henry (Harlow)
 Hall, Luke Anthony (Thornbury and Yate)
 Hamilton, Fabian (Leeds North East)
 Hammond, Rt Hon. Philip (Runnymede and Weybridge)
 Hammond, Stephen William (Wimbledon)
 Hancock, Rt Hon. Matthew John David (West Suffolk)
 Hands, Rt Hon. Gregory William (Chelsea and Fulham)
 Hanson, Rt Hon. David George (Delyn)
 Hardy, Emma Ann (Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle)
 Harman, Rt Hon. Harriet Ruth (Camberwell and Peckham)
 Harper, Rt Hon. Mark James (Forest of Dean)

Harrington, Richard Irwin (Watford)
 Harris, Carolyn (Swansea East)
 Harris, Elizabeth Rebecca Scott (Castle Point)
 Harrison, Trudy Lynne (Copeland)
 Hart, Simon Anthony (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire)
 Hayes, Helen Elizabeth (Dulwich and West Norwood)
 Hayes, Rt Hon. Sir John Henry (South Holland and The Deepings)
 Hayman, Susan Mary (Workington)
 Hazzard, Christopher John (South Down)
 Heald, Rt Hon. Sir Oliver (North East Hertfordshire)
 Healey, Rt Hon. John (Wentworth and Dearne)
 Heapey, James Stephen (Wells)
 Heaton-Harris, Christopher (Daventry)
 Heaton-Jones, Peter (North Devon)
 Henderson, Gordon Leonard (Sittingbourne and Sheppey)
 Hendrick, Sir Mark Phillip (Preston)
 Hendry, Andrew Egan Henderson (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey)
 Hepburn, Stephen (Jarrow)
 Herbert, Rt Hon. Nick (Arundel and South Downs)
 Hermon, Sylvia Eileen (North Down)
 Hill, Michael Robert (Hartlepool)
 Hillier, Margaret Olivia (Hackney South and Shoreditch)
 Hinds, Rt Hon. Damian Patrick George (East Hampshire)
 Hoare, Simon James (North Dorset)
 Hobhouse, Wera Benedicta (Bath)
 Hodge, Rt Hon. Dame Margaret Eve (Barking)
 Hodgson, Sharon (Washington and Sunderland West)
 Hoey, Catharine Letitia (Vauxhall)
 Hollern, Catherine Malloy (Blackburn)
 Hollingbery, Sir George Michael Edward (Meon Valley)
 Hollinrake, Kevin Paul (Thirsk and Malton)
 Hollobone, Philip Thomas (Kettering)
 Holloway, Adam James Harold (Gravesham)
 Hopkins, Kelvin Peter (Luton North)
 Hosie, Stewart (Dundee East)
 Howarth, Rt Hon. Sir George Edward (Knowsley)
 Howell, John Michael (Henley)
 Hoyle, Rt Hon. Sir Lindsay Harvey (Chorley)
 Huddleston, Nigel Paul (Mid Worcestershire)
 Hughes, Edmund Francis (Walsall North)
 Hunt, Rt Hon. Jeremy Richard Streynsham (South West Surrey)
 Huq, Rupa Asha (Ealing Central and Acton)
 Hurd, Rt Hon. Nicholas Richard (Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner)
 Hussain, Imran (Bradford East)

J

Jack, Rt Hon. Alister William (Dumfries and Galloway)
 James, Margot Cathleen (Stourbridge)
 Jardine, Christine Anne (Edinburgh West)
 Jarvis, Daniel Owen (Barnsley Central)
 Javid, Rt Hon. Sajid (Bromsgrove)
 Jayawardena, Ranil Malcolm (North East Hampshire)
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard Christison (Harwich and North Essex)
 Jenkyns, Andrea Marie (Morley and Outwood)
 Jenrick, Rt Hon. Robert Edward (Newark)
 Johnson, Rt Hon. Alexander Boris de Pfeffel (Uxbridge and South Ruislip)
 Johnson, Caroline Elizabeth (Sleaford and North Hykeham)
 Johnson, Diana Ruth (Kingston upon Hull North)
 Johnson, Gareth Alan (Dartford)

Johnson, Rt Hon. Joseph Edmund (Orpington)
 Jones, Andrew Hanson (Harrogate and Knaresborough)
 Jones, Darren Paul (Bristol North West)
 Jones, Rt Hon. David Ian (Clwyd West)
 Jones, Gerald (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney)
 Jones, Graham Peter (Hyndburn)
 Jones, Helen Mary (Warrington North)
 Jones, Rt Hon. Kevan David (North Durham)
 Jones, Marcus Charles (Nuneaton)
 Jones, Ruth Lorraine (Newport West) [*By-election, April 2019*]
 Jones, Sarah Ann (Croydon Central)
 Jones, Susan Elan (Clwyd South)

K

Kane, Michael Joseph Patrick (Wythenshawe and Sale East)
 Kawczynski, Daniel Robert (Shrewsbury and Atcham)
 Keegan, Gillian (Chichester)
 Keeley, Barbara Mary (Worsley and Eccles South)
 Kendall, Elizabeth Louise (Leicester West)
 Kennedy, Seema Louise Ghiassi (South Ribble)
 Kerr, Stephen Charles (Stirling)
 Khan, Afzal Mohammed (Manchester, Gorton)
 Killen, Gerard (Rutherglen and Hamilton West)
 Kinnock, Stephen Nathan (Aberavon)
 Knight, Rt Hon. Sir Gregory (East Yorkshire)
 Knight, Julian Carlton (Solihull)
 Kwarteng, Rt Hon. Kwasi Alfred Addo (Spelthorne)
 Kyle, Peter John (Hove)

L

Laing, Rt Hon. Dame Eleanor Fulton (Epping Forest)
 Laird, Lesley Margaret Langan (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath)
 Lake, Ben Morgan (Ceredigion)
 Lamb, Rt Hon. Sir Norman Peter (North Norfolk)
 Lammy, Rt Hon. David Lindon (Tottenham)
 Lamont, John (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk)
 Lancaster, Rt Hon. John Mark (Milton Keynes North)
 Latham, Pauline Elizabeth (Mid Derbyshire)
 Lavery, Ian (Wansbeck)
 Law, Christopher Murray Alexander (Dundee West)
 Leadsom, Rt Hon. Andrea Jacqueline (South Northamptonshire)
 Lee, Karen Elizabeth (Lincoln)
 Lee, Phillip James (Bracknell)
 Lefroy, Jeremy John Elton (Stafford)
 Leigh, Rt Hon. Sir Edward Julian Egerton (Gainsborough)
 Leslie, Christopher Michael (Nottingham East)
 Letwin, Rt Hon. Sir Oliver (West Dorset)
 Lewell-Buck, Emma Louise (South Shields)
 Lewer, Andrew Iain (Northampton South)
 Lewis, Rt Hon. Brandon Kenneth (Great Yarmouth)
 Lewis, Clive Anthony (Norwich South)
 Lewis, Ivan (Bury South)
 Lewis, Rt Hon. Julian Murray (New Forest East)
 Liddell-Grainger, Ian Richard Peregrine (Bridgwater and West Somerset)
 Lidington, Rt Hon. Sir David Roy (Aylesbury)
 Linden, David Melvyn (Glasgow East)
 Little Pengelly, Emma (Belfast South)
 Lloyd, Stephen Anthony Christopher (Eastbourne)
 Lloyd, Anthony Joseph (Rochdale)
 Long Bailey, Rebecca (Salford and Eccles)
 Lopresti, Giacomo (Filton and Bradley Stoke)

Lord, Jonathan George Caladine (Woking)
 Loughton, Timothy Paul (East Worthing and Shoreham)
 Lucas, Caroline Patricia (Brighton, Pavilion)
 Lucas, Ian Colin (Wrexham)
 Lynch, Holly Jamie (Halifax)

M

Mc Nally, John (Falkirk)
 McCabe, Stephen James (Birmingham, Selly Oak)
 McCallion, Elisha (Foyle)
 McCarthy, Kerry Gillian (Bristol East)
 McDonagh, Siobhain Ann (Mitcham and Morden)
 McDonald, Andrew Joseph (Middlesbrough)
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm (Glasgow South)
 McDonald, Stuart Campbell (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East)
 McDonnell, Rt Hon. John Martin (Hayes and Harlington)
 McElduff, Columba Barry (West Tyrone) [*Resigned, January 2018*]
 McFadden, Rt Hon. Patrick Bosco (Wolverhampton South East)
 McGinn, Conor Patrick (St Helens North)
 McGovern, Alison (Wirral South)
 McInnes, Elizabeth Anne (Heywood and Middleton)
 Mackinlay, Craig (South Thanet)
 McKinnell, Catherine (Newcastle upon Tyne North)
 Maclean, Rachel Helen (Redditch)
 McLoughlin, Rt Hon. Sir Patrick Allen (Derbyshire Dales)
 McMahan, James (Oldham West and Royton)
 McMorrin, Anna Rhiannon (Cardiff North)
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar)
 McPartland, Stephen Anthony (Stevenage)
 McVey, Rt Hon. Esther Louise (Tatton)
 Madders, Justin Piers Richard (Ellesmere Port and Neston)
 Mahmood, Khalid (Birmingham, Perry Barr)
 Mahmood, Shabana (Birmingham, Ladywood)
 Main, Anne Margaret (St Albans)
 Mak, Alan (Havant)
 Malhotra-Saluja, Seema (Feltham and Heston)
 Malthouse, Christopher Laurie (North West Hampshire)
 Mann, John (Bassetlaw)
 Mann, Scott Leslie (North Cornwall)
 Marsden, Gordon (Blackpool South)
 Martin, Alexander Gordon (Ipswich)
 Maskell, Rachael Helen (York Central)
 Maskey, Paul John (Belfast West)
 Masterton, Paul (East Renfrewshire)
 Matheson, Christian John Patrick (City of Chester)
 May, Rt Hon. Theresa Mary (Maidenhead)
 Maynard, Paul Christopher (Blackpool North and Cleveleys)
 Mearns, James Ian (Gateshead)
 Menzies, Mark Andrew (Fylde)
 Mercer, John Luther (Plymouth, Moor View)
 Merriman, Huw William (Bexhill and Battle)
 Metcalfe, Stephen James (South Basildon and East Thurrock)
 Miliband, Rt Hon. Edward Samuel (Doncaster North)
 Miller, Rt Hon. Maria Frances Lewis (Basingstoke)
 Milling, Amanda Anne (Cannock Chase)
 Mills, Nigel John (Amber Valley)
 Milton, Rt Hon. Anne Frances (Guildford)
 Mitchell, Rt Hon. Andrew John Bower (Sutton Coldfield)
 Molloy, Francis Joseph (Mid Ulster)
 Monaghan, Carol Frances (Glasgow North West)

Moon, Madeleine (Bridgend)
 Moore, Damien (Southport)
 Moran, Layla Michelle (Oxford West and Abingdon)
 Mordaunt, Rt Hon. Penny Mary (Portsmouth North)
 Morden, Jessica Elizabeth (Newport East)
 Morgan, Rt Hon. Nicola Ann (Loughborough)
 Morgan, Stephen James (Portsmouth South)
 Morris, Anne Marie (Newton Abbot)
 Morris, David Thomas (Morecambe and Lunesdale)
 Morris, Grahame Mark (Easington)
 Morris, James George (Halesowen and Rowley Regis)
 Morton, Wendy (Aldridge-Brownhills)
 Mundell, Rt Hon. David Gordon (Dumfriesshire,
 Clydesdale and Tweeddale)
 Murray, Ian (Edinburgh South)
 Murray, Sheryll (South East Cornwall)
 Murrison, Rt Hon. Andrew William (South West
 Wiltshire)

N

Nandy, Lisa Eva (Wigan)
 Neill, Robert James Macgillivray (Bromley and
 Chislehurst)
 Newlands, Gavin Andrew Stuart (Paisley and
 Renfrewshire North)
 Newton, Sarah Louise (Truro and Falmouth)
 Nokes, Rt Hon. Caroline Fiona Ellen (Romsey and
 Southampton North)
 Norman, Alexander Jesse (Hereford and South
 Herefordshire)
 Norris, Alexander James Jordan (Nottingham North)

O

O'Brien, Neil John (Harborough)
 Offord, Matthew James (Hendon)
 O'Hara, Brendan (Argyll and Bute)
 O'Mara, Jared (Sheffield, Hallam)
 Onasanya, Fiona Oluyinka (Peterborough) [*Recalled,
 May 2019*]
 Onn, Melanie (Great Grimsby)
 Onwurah, Chinyelu Susan (Newcastle upon Tyne
 Central)
 Opperman, Guy Thomas (Hexham)
 Osamor, Kate Ofunne (Edmonton)
 Owen, Albert (Ynys Môn)

P

Paisley, Ian Richard Kyle (North Antrim)
 Parish, Neil Quentin Gordon (Tiverton and Honiton)
 Patel, Rt Hon. Priti Sushil (Witham)
 Paterson, Rt Hon. Owen William (North Shropshire)
 Pawsey, Mark Julian Francis (Rugby)
 Peacock, Stephanie Louise (Barnsley East)
 Pearce, Teresa (Erith and Thamesmead)
 Penning, Rt Hon. Sir Michael Alan (Hemel Hempstead)
 Pennycook, Matthew Thomas (Greenwich and
 Woolwich)
 Penrose, John David (Weston-super-Mare)
 Percy, Andrew Theakstone (Brigg and Goole)
 Perkins, Matthew Toby (Chesterfield)
 Perry, Rt Hon. Claire Louise (Devizes)
 Phillips, Jessica Rose (Birmingham, Yardley)
 Phillipson, Bridget Maeve (Houghton and Sunderland
 South)
 Philp, Chris Ian Brian Mynitt (Croydon South)
 Pidcock, Laura (North West Durham)
 Pincher, Rt Hon. Christopher John (Tamworth)

Platt, Joanne Marie (Leigh)
 Pollard, Luke (Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport)
 Poulter, Daniel Leonard James (Central Suffolk and
 North Ipswich)
 Pound, Stephen Pelham (Ealing North)
 Pow, Rebecca Faye (Taunton Deane)
 Powell, Lucy Maria (Manchester Central)
 Prentis, Victoria Mary Boswell (Banbury)
 Prisk, Mark Michael (Hertford and Stortford)
 Pritchard, Mark Andrew (The Wrekin)
 Pursglove, Thomas Christopher John (Corby)

Q

Quin, Jeremy Mark (Horsham)
 Quince, William James (Colchester)
 Qureshi, Yasmin (Bolton South East)

R

Raab, Rt Hon. Dominic Rennie (Esher and Walton)
 Rashid, Mian Faisal (Warrington South)
 Rayner, Angela (Ashton-under-Lyne)
 Redwood, Rt Hon. Sir John Alan (Wokingham)
 Reed, Steven Mark Ward (Croydon North)
 Rees, Christina Elizabeth (Neath)
 Rees-Mogg, Rt Hon. Jacob William (North East
 Somerset)
 Reeves, Eleanor Claire (Lewisham West and Penge)
 Reeves, Rachel Jane (Leeds West)
 Reynolds, Emma Elizabeth (Wolverhampton North
 East)
 Reynolds, Jonathan Neil (Stalybridge and Hyde)
 Rimmer, Marie Elizabeth (St Helens South and
 Whiston)
 Robertson, Laurence Anthony (Tewkesbury)
 Robinson, Gavin James (Belfast East)
 Robinson, Geoffrey (Coventry North West)
 Robinson, Mary Josephine (Cheadle)
 Rodda, Mathew Richard Allen (Reading East)
 Rosindell, Andrew Richard (Romford)
 Ross, Douglas (Moray)
 Rowley, Danielle (Midlothian)
 Rowley, Lee Benjamin (North East Derbyshire)
 Ruane, Christopher Shaun (Vale of Clwyd)
 Rudd, Rt Hon. Amber (Hastings and Rye)
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd (Brighton, Kemptown)
 Rutley, David Henry (Macclesfield)
 Ryan, Rt Hon. Joan Marie (Enfield North)

S

Sandbach, Antoinette Geraldine (Eddisbury)
 Saville Roberts, Rt Hon. Elizabeth (Dwyfor
 Meirionnydd)
 Scully, Paul Stuart (Sutton and Cheam)
 Seely, Robert William Henry (Isle of Wight)
 Selous, Andrew Edmund Armstrong (South West
 Bedfordshire)
 Shah, Naseem Akhter (Bradford West)
 Shannon, Richard James (Strangford)
 Shapps, Rt Hon. Grant (Welwyn Hatfield)
 Sharma, Rt Hon. Alok Kumar (Reading West)
 Sharma, Virendra Kumar (Ealing, Southall)
 Sheerman, Barry John (Huddersfield)
 Shelbrooke, Rt Hon. Alec (Elmet and Rothwell)
 Sheppard, Thomas (Edinburgh East)
 Sherriff, Paula Michelle (Dewsbury)
 Shuker, Gavin (Luton South)
 Siddiq, Tulip Rizwana (Hampstead and Kilburn)

Simpson, Thomas David (Upper Bann)
 Simpson, Rt Hon. Keith Robert (Broadland)
 Skidmore, Rt Hon. Christopher James (Kingswood)
 Skinner, Dennis Edward (Bolsover)
 Slaughter, Andrew Francis (Hammersmith)
 Smeeth, Ruth Lauren (Stoke-on-Trent North)
 Smith, Angela Christine (Penistone and Stocksbridge)
 Smith, Catherine Jane (Lancaster and Fleetwood)
 Smith, Chloe Rebecca (Norwich North)
 Smith, Eleanor Patricia (Wolverhampton South West)
 Smith, Henry Edward Millar (Crawley)
 Smith, Jeffrey (Manchester, Withington)
 Smith, Rt Hon. Julian Richard (Skipton and Ripon)
 Smith, Laura (Crewe and Nantwich)
 Smith, Nicholas Desmond John (Blaenau Gwent)
 Smith, Owen (Pontypridd)
 Smith, Royston Matthew (Southampton, Itchen)
 Smyth, Karin Marguerite (Bristol South)
 Snell, Gareth Craig (Stoke-on-Trent Central)
 Soames, Rt Hon. Sir Nicholas (Mid Sussex)
 Sobel, Alexander David (Leeds North West)
 Soubry, Rt Hon. Anna Mary (Broxtowe)
 Spellar, Rt Hon. John Francis (Warley)
 Spelman, Rt Hon. Dame Caroline Alice (Meriden)
 Spencer, Rt Hon. Mark Steven (Sherwood)
 Starmer, Rt Hon. Sir Keir (Holborn and St Pancras)
 Stephens, Christopher Charles (Glasgow South West)
 Stephenson, Andrew George (Pendle)
 Stevens, Joanna Meriel (Cardiff Central)
 Stevenson, Andrew John (Carlisle)
 Stewart, Robert Alexander (Beckenham)
 Stewart, Iain Aitken (Milton Keynes South)
 Stewart, Rt Hon. Charles Roderick James Nugent (Penrith and The Border)
 Stone, James (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross)
 Streeter, Sir Gary Nicholas (South West Devon)
 Streeting, Wesley Paul William (Ilford North)
 Stride, Rt Hon. Melvyn John (Central Devon)
 Stringer, Graham Eric (Blackley and Broughton)
 Stuart, Graham Charles (Beverley and Holderness)
 Sturdy, Julian Charles (York Outer)
 Sunak, Rt Hon. Rishi (Richmond (Yorks))
 Swayne, Rt Hon. Sir Desmond Angus (New Forest West)
 Sweeney, Paul John (Glasgow North East)
 Swinson, Joanne Kate (East Dunbartonshire)
 Swire, Rt Hon. Sir Hugo George William (East Devon)
 Syms, Sir Robert Andrew Raymond (Poole)

T

Tami, Rt Hon. Mark Richard (Alyn and Deeside)
 Thewliss, Alison Emily (Glasgow Central)
 Thomas, Derek Gordon (St Ives)
 Thomas, Gareth (Harrow West)
 Thomas-Symonds, Nicklaus (Torfaen)
 Thomson, Ross (Aberdeen South)
 Thornberry, Rt Hon. Emily (Islington South and Finsbury)
 Throup, Margaret Ann (Erewash)
 Timms, Rt Hon. Stephen Creswell (East Ham)
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 Tomlinson, Justin Paul (North Swindon)
 Tomlinson, Michael James (Mid Dorset and North Poole)
 Tracey, Craig Paul (North Warwickshire)
 Tredinnick, David Arthur Stephen (Bosworth)
 Trevelyan, Anne-Marie Belinda (Berwick-upon-Tweed)
 Trickett, Jon Hedley (Hemsworth)

Truss, Rt Hon. Elizabeth Mary (South West Norfolk)
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 Turley, Anna Catherine (Redcar)
 Turner, Karl (Kingston upon Hull East)
 Twigg, John Derek (Halton)
 Twigg, Stephen (Liverpool, West Derby)
 Twist, Mary Elizabeth (Blaydon)

U

Umunna, Chuka Harrison (Streatham)

V

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 Vara, Shailesh Lakhman (North West Cambridgeshire)
 Vaz, Rt Hon. Keith Anthony (Leicester East)
 Vaz, Rt Hon. Valerie Carol Marian (Walsall South)
 Vickers, Martin John (Cleethorpes)
 Villiers, Rt Hon. Theresa Anne (Chipping Barnet)

W

Walker, Sir Charles Ashley Rupert (Broxbourne)
 Walker, Robin Caspar (Worcester)
 Walker, Thelma Doris (Colne Valley)
 Wallace, Rt Hon. Robert Ben Lobban (Wyre and Preston North)
 Warburton, David John (Somerton and Frome)
 Warman, Matthew Robert (Boston and Skegness)
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 West, Catherine Elizabeth (Hornsey and Wood Green)
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 Whitford, Philippa (Central Ayrshire)
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 Williams, Paul Daniel (Stockton South)
 Williamson, Christopher (Derby North)
 Williamson, Rt Hon. Gavin Alexander (South Staffordshire)
 Wilson, Philip (Sedgefield)
 Wilson, Rt Hon. Samuel (East Antrim)
 Winterton, Rt Hon. Dame Rosie (Doncaster Central)
 Wishart, Peter (Perth and North Perthshire)
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 Wood, Michael Jon (Dudley South)
 Woodcock, John Zak (Barrow and Furness)
 Wragg, William Peter (Hazel Grove)
 Wright, Rt Hon. Jeremy Paul (Kenilworth and Southam)

Y

Yasin, Mohammad (Bedford)

Z

Zahawi, Nadhim (Stratford-on-Avon)
 Zeichner, Daniel Stephen (Cambridge)

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

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(FORMED BY THE RT HON. BORIS JOHNSON, MP, JULY 2019)

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Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy—

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MINISTERS OF STATE—

The Rt Hon. Kwasi Kwarteng, MP (Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth)

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

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Lord Duncan of Springbank §

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Kevin Foster, MP (Interim) §

Simon Hart, MP

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

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Michelle Donelan, MP (Interim) §

Lord Agnew

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MINISTERS OF STATE—

The Rt Hon. Zac Goldsmith, MP §

George Eustice, MP

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Rebecca Pow, MP

Exiting the European Union—

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MINISTER OF STATE—Lord Callanan

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The Rt Hon. Dr Andrew Murrison, MP (Minister for the Middle East and North Africa) §

Andrew Stephenson, MP (Minister for Africa) §

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Minister for the Commonwealth, the UN and South Asia)

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Caroline Dinenage, MP (Minister for Care)

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Jo Churchill, MP

Nadine Dorries, MP

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Kit Malthouse, MP (Minister for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service)

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Minister for Countering Extremism)

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Seema Kennedy, MP

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The Rt Hon. Jake Berry, MP (Minister for the Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth) §

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Viscount Younger of Leckie

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SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt Hon. Alok Sharma, MP

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The Rt Hon. Zac Goldsmith, MP §

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MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt Hon. Conor Burns, MP

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Graham Stuart, MP

Justice—

LORD CHANCELLOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt Hon. Robert Buckland, QC, MP

MINISTER OF STATE—Lucy Frazer, QC, MP

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Wendy Morton, MP

Chris Philp, MP

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SOLICITOR GENERAL—The Rt Hon. Michael Ellis, QC, MP

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Leader of the House of Lords—

LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND LORD PRIVY SEAL—The Rt. Hon. Baroness Evans of Bowes Park

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt Hon. Earl Howe

Northern Ireland Office—

SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt Hon. Julian Smith, MP

MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt Hon. Nick Hurd, MP

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—

Robin Walker, MP §

Lord Duncan of Springbank §

Scotland Office—

SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt Hon. Alister Jack, MP

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—

Colin Clark, MP §

Robin Walker, MP §

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SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt Hon. Grant Shapps, MP

MINISTERS OF STATE—

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George Freeman, MP

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—

Nusrat Ghani, MP §

Paul Maynard, MP

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ECONOMIC SECRETARY—John Glen, MP

EXCHEQUER SECRETARY—Simon Clarke, MP

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Rebecca Harris, MP

Michelle Donelan, MP §

Mike Freer, MP

David Rutley, MP

Nusrat Ghani, MP §

Colin Clark, MP §

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 Leo Docherty, MP
 James Morris, MP
 Tom Pursglove, MP
 Nigel Huddleston, MP
 Marcus Jones, MP
 Iain Stewart, MP

UK Export Finance—

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—The Rt Hon. Elizabeth Truss, MP

Wales Office—

SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt Hon. Alun Cairns, MP
 PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Kevin Foster, MP §

Work and Pensions—

SECRETARY OF STATE AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN AND EQUALITIES—The Rt Hon. Dr Thérèse Coffey, MP
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 Mims Davies, MP
 Guy Opperman, MP
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 LORD STEWARD—The Earl of Dalhousie
 MASTER OF THE HORSE—Lord de Mauley
 TREASURER—Amanda Milling, MP
 COMPTROLLER—Jeremy Quin, MP
 VICE-CHAMBERLAIN—Stuart Andrew, MP
 CAPTAIN OF THE HONOURABLE CORPS OF GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS—The Rt Hon. Lord Ashton of Hyde
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 Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist
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REPRESENTING THE SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS AUTHORITY—Sir Charles Walker, MP

REPRESENTING THE HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION—The Rt Hon. Tom Brake, MP

CHAIRMAN OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION—The Rt Hon. Sir Edward Leigh, MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

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SECRETARY—Chris Stanton

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EDUCATION: CLERKS—Richard Ward, Mike Everett, Daniel Schlappa

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EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION: CLERKS—Gordon Clarke, Claire Cozens

FOREIGN AFFAIRS: CLERKS—Chris Shaw, Hannah Bryce, Samir Amar Setti

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 TRANSPORT: CLERKS—Marek Kubala, Ed Faulkner, Robi Quigley
 TREASURY: CLERK—Gosia McBride, Gail Bartlett
 WELSH AFFAIRS: CLERKS—Kevin Maddison, Matthew Congreve
 WOMEN AND EQUALITIES: CLERKS—Jyoti Chandola, Radhika Handa
 WORK AND PENSIONS: CLERKS—Anne-Marie Griffiths, Stuart Ramsay, Zoe Backhouse

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 DEPUTY HEAD OF UNIT (FINANCE)—Larry Honeysett

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 HEAD OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS—Liz Parratt
 HEAD OF WEB AND PUBLICATIONS UNIT—Miranda Olivier-Wright

CHAMBER BUSINESS

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OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
[WHICH OPENED 13 JUNE 2017]

SIXTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES

VOLUME 666

FIRST VOLUME OF SESSION 2019-2020

House of Commons

Monday 14 October 2019

*The House met at twenty-five minutes past
Eleven o'clock*

PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

MESSAGE TO ATTEND HER MAJESTY

*Message to attend Her Majesty delivered by the
Lady Usher of the Black Rod.*

*The Speaker, with the House, went up to attend Her
Majesty; on their return, the Speaker suspended the
sitting.*

Speaker's Statement

2.30 pm

Mr Speaker: The House has directed the Speaker to make a statement at the beginning of each Session about the duties and responsibilities of hon. Members.

I begin by reminding hon. Members of their duty to observe the code of conduct agreed by the House, and to behave with civility and fairness in all their dealings.

The behaviour code applies to Members as it applies to others who visit or work in Parliament, and provides clear guidance. Unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with seriously, independently and with effective sanctions.

The House asserts, colleagues, its privilege of freedom of speech. It is there to ensure that our constituents can be represented by us without fear or favour. It is an obligation upon us all to exercise that privilege responsibly. Members must be mindful of the impact of what they say not only on other Members, but on others who follow our proceedings, and Members should be heard courteously whatever their views. That privilege is enjoyed by Members of Parliament only in their work in this House; as private individuals we are equal under the law with those whom we represent.

Parliament should be open to those whom it represents. We should seek to explain its work to those who elect us, and make them welcome here. The security of this building and those who work and visit here depends upon all of us. We have a duty to be vigilant, and to assist those whose job it is to maintain this place as a safe place to work.

Before moving to the first business of the new Session, I would like to express my very best wishes for the new Session to all hon. Members and all those who work here.

OUTLAWRIES BILL

A Bill for the more effectual preventing Clandestine Outlawries was read the First time, and ordered to be read a Second time.

Queen's Speech

Mr Speaker: I have to acquaint the House that this House has this day attended Her Majesty in the House of Peers, and that Her Majesty was pleased to make a most Gracious Speech from the Throne to both Houses of Parliament, of which I have, for greater accuracy, obtained a copy. I shall direct that the terms of the speech be printed in the *Votes and Proceedings*. Copies are already available in the Vote Office.

The Gracious Speech was as follows:

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

My Government's priority has always been to secure the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union on 31 October. My Government intends to work towards a new partnership with the European Union, based on free trade and friendly cooperation.

My Ministers will work to implement new regimes for fisheries, agriculture and trade, seizing the opportunities that arise from leaving the European Union. An immigration bill, ending free movement, will lay the foundation for a fair, modern and global immigration system. My Government remains committed to ensuring that resident European citizens, who have built their lives in, and contributed so much to, the United Kingdom, have the right to remain. The bill will include measures that reinforce this commitment. Steps will be taken to provide certainty, stability and new opportunities for the financial services and legal sectors.

My Government's new economic plan will be underpinned by a responsible fiscal strategy, investing in economic growth while maintaining the sustainability of the public finances.

Measures will be brought forward to support and strengthen the National Health Service, its workforce and resources, enabling it to deliver the highest quality care. New laws will be taken forward to help implement the National Health Service's Long Term Plan in England, and to establish an independent body to investigate serious healthcare incidents.

My Government will bring forward proposals to reform adult social care in England to ensure dignity in old age. My Ministers will continue work to reform the Mental Health Act to improve respect for, and care of, those receiving treatment.

My Government is committed to addressing violent crime, and to strengthening public confidence in the criminal justice system. New sentencing laws will see that the most serious offenders spend longer in custody to reflect better the severity of their crimes. Measures will be introduced to improve the justice system's response to foreign national offenders. My Government will work to improve safety and security in prisons and to strengthen the rehabilitation of offenders. Proposals will be brought forward to ensure that victims receive the support they need and the justice they deserve. Laws will be introduced to ensure that the parole system recognises the pain to victims and their families caused by offenders refusing to disclose information relating to their crimes.

A new duty will be placed on public sector bodies, ensuring they work together to address serious violence. Police officers will be provided with the protections they need to keep the population safe. They will also be awarded the power to arrest individuals who are wanted by trusted international partners.

My Government will bring forward measures to protect individuals, families and their homes. Legislation will transform the approach of the justice system and other agencies to victims of domestic abuse, and minimise the impact of divorce, particularly on children. My Ministers will continue to develop proposals to improve internet safety, and will bring forward laws to implement new building safety standards.

My Ministers will ensure that all young people have access to an excellent education, unlocking their full potential and preparing them for the world of work. My Government will take steps to make work fairer, introducing measures that will support those working hard. To help people plan for the future, measures will be brought forward to provide simpler oversight of pensions savings. To protect people's savings for later life, new laws will provide greater powers to tackle irresponsible management of private pension schemes.

To ensure that the benefits of a prospering economy reach every corner of the United Kingdom, my Ministers will bring forward a National Infrastructure Strategy. This will set out a long-term vision to improve the nation's digital, transport and energy infrastructure. New legislation will help accelerate the delivery of fast, reliable and secure broadband networks to millions of homes. An aviation bill will provide for the effective and efficient management of the United Kingdom's airspace. Proposals on railway reform will be brought forward.

A white paper will be published to set out my Government's ambitions for unleashing regional potential in England, and to enable decisions that affect local people to be made at a local level.

My Government is committed to establishing the United Kingdom as a world-leader in scientific capability and space technology. Increased investment in science will be complemented by the development of a new funding agency, a more open visa system, and an ambitious national space strategy.

My Ministers remain committed to protecting and improving the environment for future generations. For the first time, environmental principles will be enshrined in law. Measures will be introduced to improve air and water quality, tackle plastic pollution and restore habitats so plants and wildlife can thrive. Legislation will also create new legally-binding environmental improvement targets. A new, world-leading independent regulator will be established in statute to scrutinise environmental policy and law, investigate complaints and take enforcement action.

Proposals will also be brought forward to promote and protect the welfare of animals, including banning imports from trophy hunting.

The integrity and prosperity of the union that binds the four nations of the United Kingdom is of the utmost importance to my Government. My Ministers will bring forward measures to support citizens across all the nations of the United Kingdom.

My Government remains committed to working with all parties in Northern Ireland to support the return of devolved government and to address the legacy of the past.

My Government will take steps to protect the integrity of democracy and the electoral system in the United Kingdom.

My Government will continue to invest in our gallant Armed Forces. My Ministers will honour the Armed Forces Covenant and the NATO commitment to spend at least two per cent of national income on defence.

As the United Kingdom leaves the European Union, my Government will ensure that it continues to play a leading role in global affairs, defending its interests and promoting its values.

My Government will be at the forefront of efforts to solve the most complex international security issues. It will champion global free trade and work alongside

international partners to solve the most pressing global challenges. It will prioritise tackling climate change and ensuring that all girls have access to twelve years of quality education.

Members of the House of Commons

Estimates for the public services will be laid before you.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

Other measures will be laid before you.

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

Debate on the Address

[1ST DAY]

Mr Speaker: Before I call the mover and seconder, I want to announce the proposed subjects of debate during the remaining days on the Loyal Address, which are: tomorrow—Britain’s place in the world; Wednesday—public services; Thursday—the climate emergency; Monday—the NHS; Tuesday—the economy.

I shall first call Lee Rowley to move and then Sarah Newton to second the Address.

2.33 pm

Lee Rowley (North East Derbyshire) (Con): I beg to move,

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

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, your Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

It is a great honour to move the Loyal Address, both for me and the constituency of North East Derbyshire, my home, which I am so proud and privileged to represent. First, however, I stand here this afternoon to right an historic and terrible injustice: no Member from my great county of Derbyshire has moved the Loyal Address for over 100 years. The delay has been long. It last happened in 1903, when it was moved by Colonel Gretton, representing the constituency so ably now served by my hon. Friend the Member for South Derbyshire (Mrs Wheeler).

I took to reading that speech to get some inspiration for the rather terrifying job I now have. I am afraid to report that it only increased my nervousness at the task ahead. I discovered that before the good colonel even uttered a single syllable, *Hansard* noted, with that courteous understatement that *Hansard* is famous for, that he was heard “with much difficulty”. What that is an Edwardian euphemism for is lost to time. I will seek to avoid the challenge that faced my county forebear by speaking both loudly and, at least at the start, by avoiding Brexit.

Secondly, another worry arose, if not for me, for the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition. The subject to which Colonel Gretton turned first was not education, health, welfare or taxes, or even his constituency, but a subject that is returned to time and again in this place: Venezuela. [*Laughter.*] The colonel was keen to explain that the recent policy successes in South America had been achieved without the destruction of personal property. I wonder if our Venezuelan friends will have the same pre-eminence in 2019 that they did in 1903.

Finally, I was struck by the response of the Prime Minister, Mr Balfour. His initial remarks were not focused on great matters of state. Instead he was keen not to impede the impending dinner hour of the Members present. I hope not to do so today by applying some Derbyshire common sense and knowing when to sit down.

I am relatively new to this place, having only been here since the 2017 general election. Having just turned 39, I hope that I tend—just—towards the more youthful

end of the parliamentary age range. That is true not least—if he will forgive me—when I compare myself with my parliamentary neighbour, the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr Skinner), who was in customary fine form this morning and who has been providing quips to this House since a decade before I was born. [*Laughter.*]

Having witnessed only one Queen’s speech, I searched for advice about how to do this, and I discovered that the definition was laid out by my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr Mitchell) in a speech in the 1990s. My joy quickly turned to horror when, having read his remarks, I found I had been given a privilege by the Treasury Bench usually accorded to

“some genial old codger on the way out”—[*Official Report*, 6 May 1992; Vol. 207, c. 56.]

I know that Brexit has aged us all in the last three years, but I did not realise that my right hon. Friends in the Government thought it had affected my youth so badly, nor how keen they were to get rid of me.

We meet today in troubled times, at the end of the longest parliamentary Session since the civil war. It is a time that more experienced Members tell us newer recruits is just not normal. Our precious body politic lies bloodied, poisoned by rancour and enmity, and, until the hope of the last few days, paralysed by competing legitimacies. Our politics is fought over, sometimes viciously, by us here in a way that I have never known in my lifetime. I say that as a working-class kid who grew up in the north during the miners’ strike, who is the nephew of someone who worked for the National Union of Mineworkers, and whose grandparents toiled under some of the villages I now have the privilege to represent. So I have some knowledge of challenge and tumult.

We are in a hard place, and all of us, whatever Bench or Chair we sit on, are responsible for where we end up. In the last few days, there has at least been hope that this toxic and crippling fog we have created might just be lifting, as the Prime Minister sketches an outline of a way forward. I speak as someone who has been robust in my review of previous proposals, but the House must surely see, as I do, that we have debated long enough, this is a moment for decision and we were elected to make decisions. If there is light at the end of the tunnel later this week—heaven knows, I hope there will be—we have a fundamental responsibility in this place to try to resolve this most vexed of problems, and allow our despairing and embittered country to move on. For the health of our democracy and to restore faith in this most venerable of institutions, we simply must get Brexit done.

I hope that, deep down, this place realises it is time to get back to the other priorities of our country—if it does not, this shattered Parliament will be given even shorter shrift than the residents of North East Derbyshire have already given it. They speak plainly and honestly in my 41 towns, villages and hamlets. They are good, honest, industrious men and women who are the quiet backbone of our great country. In Dronfield and Killamarsh, they seek only to get up every morning, get a fair crack of the whip and be able to get on. In Eckington and Clay Cross, they seek betterment in life for their families and their children, recognising that communities are built from the ground up, not imposed from the top down, and understanding that Governments should do some things well, not lots of things badly.

They want Governments who prioritise technological advancement and innovation in healthcare, to allow people to get better quickly and to live longer; they want people who stand shoulder to shoulder with our brave officers on the frontline, through a police covenant; and they want Governments who make it their mission to deliver fast broadband to all of our nations. That is why there is so much to be welcomed in this Queen's Speech and why we must move beyond Brexit.

My constituency sits around the towering presence of a church that has been there since the 12th century and can be seen for miles around. It is famous for a spire that twists and bends unconventionally into the sky. I am the son of that crooked spire and am so very proud to represent some of its domain today. The values of those sons and daughters of north Derbyshire are the same as those of other proud working-class northern and midlands towns across the country. They are the values that propelled me here today: hard work; aspiration; a hand up, not a handout; freedom: liberty; society; real opportunity for ourselves and for our communities; and a desire to be set free to allow our talents to let us achieve what we can, and not to be told how to live our lives.

Last Friday, I returned to my old school, St Mary's in Chesterfield, to talk about the importance of democracy. It reminded me of the first time I came here some years ago, on a sixth-form trip, when we were welcomed by our Member of Parliament at the time, the much-respected Tony Benn. I come from a very different political tradition from Mr Benn, but he is still held in high esteem in my constituency. In the same year as he kindly showed me and my fellow students around these Benches, he stood somewhere in here and asked five questions of politicians, as he did regularly. They are as pertinent today as they were then:

"What power have you got? Where did you get it from? In whose interests do you exercise it? To whom are you accountable? And how can we get rid of you?"—[*Official Report*, 22 March 2001; Vol. 365, c. 510.]

I hope we remember that in the days ahead.

As we turn the page on one of the most tumultuous parliamentary Sessions of our lives and dare to hope of new beginnings in a new one, I close by turning back to the Prime Minister, Mr Balfour, who responded to the last Derbyshire MP to propose a Loyal Address. Mr Balfour was a remarkable man, who contributed much to our civic and political life in this country. He was reputed once to have said:

"Nothing matters very much, and few things matter at all."

That may or may not be true, but in this most tempestuous of times, I hope and believe that most of us in this place recognise that the coming days do matter, and that our nation is watching, anxious with hope and belief that we can move on. North East Derbyshire wants to move on and return to the priorities of the people so outlined in this programme of government—I think the country does too.

2.44 pm

Sarah Newton (Truro and Falmouth) (Con): It is an absolute pleasure to follow my hon. Friend the Member for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley), who made an outstanding speech and demonstrated yet again what a champion he is for his constituents.

When I was asked to second the Humble Address, I felt honoured, but I also felt some consternation. Of course, it is always an honour to represent my constituents in this place. Although the House may very much tire of my talking about Cornwall, I will never tire of speaking up for the Duchy and its great people. I imagine there are many people watching this debate at home, and I think they might prefer to be casting their eyes over that dark-haired and handsome Member of Parliament for the 18th century—of course, I am referring to Ross Poldark, my fictional predecessor who represented Truro. I have to confess that even when I was in the Whips Office, I was not any use with a scythe. As my ancestors were Cornish tin miners, I think of myself more as a Demelza than a Ross, but we can all occasionally indulge in a bit of wishful thinking. I felt a degree of consternation—probably along with my hon. Friend the Member for North East Derbyshire—because I was asked to give a speech that I felt was reserved for those people the Whips had found to have reached the high watermark of their career in this place. I do not know about you, Mr Speaker, but I still very much feel like I am 35 and that the best years are ahead of me.

It is nearly 10 years since I first spoke in the Chamber, when I described beautiful Cornwall and highlighted my creative, inventive, enterprising and determined constituents. Those qualities are as evident today as they were then. Thanks to the steps taken by Governments since 2010 and the work done with the many can-do people in my constituency, we are making real progress in improving the quality of people's lives. Along with the recently announced increased investment in our public services, the Bills announced today will mean that we will be able to move further and faster in ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to reach their potential—from improving education opportunities and access to high-quality health and care services, to better paid and high-quality jobs. The increase in the number of detectives who painstakingly research and gather evidence to solve crime in our streets is most welcome. The funding attached is enough for 20,000 officers—or one Coleen Rooney.

Most important of all is that we will be leaving our natural environment in a better condition than we found it in. Our excellent local enterprise partnership has rightly identified Cornwall's abundance of natural resources, which, when harnessed, will make a massive contribution to the Government's clean growth strategy. In my maiden speech, I singled out the potential for deep geothermal energy as a significant renewable energy technology. I am delighted to report to the House that we now have the hottest, deepest hole in the UK, and the trials to generate electricity are well under way. It has been a long journey and the determination of all involved in the project clearly illustrates the UK's global leadership on tackling climate change. We are now working on floating wind in the Celtic sea, which has even greater potential.

The UK has decarbonised faster than any major economy, reducing our emissions by 38% since 1990. We know that we need to go further and faster, which is why I am proud that it was a Conservative Government who supported the world leading net zero target and who have today set out measures that will enable us to do that. The landmark environment Bill is a huge step in ensuring that we leave the natural environment in a better state than we found it in. The Bill will enable a

[Sarah Newton]

comprehensive framework for legally binding targets, including a target for air quality and the establishment of a new office for environmental protection. Together with the threat to our natural environment, climate change is the most serious challenge that we face today. Our response must be comprehensive, with action taken across the whole economy. I am confident that we can do it. Why? Because there is now widespread concern and support for action, and because we have what it takes to rise to the challenge. It is a real opportunity to grow our economy more sustainably, but also an opportunity to grow our economy more successfully.

Like Members across this House, I have meetings every week with a wide range of people who are fully invested in wanting us to succeed in meeting our net zero target. If we are to harness that enthusiasm and expertise, it cannot just be about distant international summits with acronyms that few people understand.

When the UK hosts the international UN climate summit in Glasgow next year, it must ensure that every sector of society is involved in the conversation. With an issue as big as climate change, we need everyone's collective brainpower to find the right solutions, and we must have everyone on board if we are to implement them. Post Brexit, the country needs to unite around a shared national purpose, and I believe that this is it.

By enabling comprehensive action on climate change across the whole of society, with everyone involved and no one left behind, we can start rebuilding a truly United Kingdom—one of which we can all be proud. But that is the thing, Mr Speaker, to have that unity of purpose, we now have to agree on the one thing on which we have not been able to agree—the one thing that is holding the nation back—and that is our future relationship with Europe. It has been tough going, and we have debated the subject thoroughly for years, but it is this week—this week above all others—when we must redouble our efforts, compromise and find a consensus on our way forward.

I have been thinking about what we could do in this place to create the right atmosphere and the right mood—one that will promote trust, generate harmony and result in consensus and that unity of purpose. I was thinking about what we do when we are under pressure, when we are anxious, when success seems so far away. What do we do in our personal lives with our families, in good times and bad, and in our communities when we get together—whether in collective acts of worship or when our beloved football or rugby teams are playing? What we all do on those occasions is sing. We sing because it makes us all feel good. Gareth Malone has inspired the nation's workplaces and has proved that singing together increases feelings of trust and common purpose between people. So I thought about what songs we could sing to help us on our way this week. I thought that, perhaps, we should begin with Queen's "Under Pressure, which would be apt as the ticking of the Brexit deadline approaches at the end of October. "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow" by Fleetwood Mac could focus our minds on our future relationship with Europe—

David Hanson (Delyn) (Lab): "Help"—[*Laughter.*]

Sarah Newton: It could also focus our minds on the need to respond to the threats of climate change. To encourage greater co-operation between all Members in this House, we could be singing, "We're All In This Together" from "High School Musical", or "Meet Me Halfway" by "The Black Eyed Peas". I hope that, as we work our way through this songbook, we would eventually unite in a rousing rendition of Johnny Nash's "I Can See Clearly Now", leading us ultimately, I hope, to Gloria Gaynor's "Let's Make A Deal". Returning to our own shores, the Beatles can point us in the right direction with their song, "We Can Work It Out". After all, that is what the nation expects us to do.

2.54 pm

Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab): This year marks two anniversaries. The first is the 70th anniversary of the Parliament Act 1949, which asserted the primacy of this House over the then hereditary House of Lords. It is worth remembering in our deliberations this week the primacy of the House of Commons over that and over the Executive. The second is the 50th anniversary of the Representation of the People Act 1969, which I remember very well because it extended the vote to everyone over the age of 18. As we meet today, we should commit to strengthening our democracy and the vital role of this democratic House in holding the Executive to account.

By tradition, at the beginning of each parliamentary Session we commemorate the Members of the House we have lost in the past year. Earlier this year we lost our great friend Paul Flynn—a fiercely independent, passionate, very kind and very principled Member of this House. I remember him reading out in this House the names of those who had died in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—two wars to which he was opposed. He briefly served in our shadow Cabinet, and I think the whole House was enlivened by his performance. He joked at the first meeting of the shadow Cabinet and when he spoke from the Floor of the House that he was part of a job creation scheme for octogenarians. He was there not only because he was an excellent orator, campaigner and Member of the House, but because he was also an excellent representative of the people of Newport West, the constituency that he served so well and so passionately for 32 years.

Today's proposer and seconder of the Loyal Address share a route to this place; both were local councillors prior to entering the House. I pay tribute to all those who put themselves forward to represent local communities as councillors, because without them our democracy would be worse off. They work hard and for long hours, and are often not particularly well rewarded or appreciated for the work they do. We should recognise that they are part of our democracy.

I was a little surprised to see that the hon. Member for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley) had been asked by the Prime Minister to propose the motion today, because I understand they have not always enjoyed the best of relationships. As we know, the Prime Minister has earned a reputation for enjoying life to the fullest. I understand that during his time as London Mayor he became incandescent with anger and rage on learning that the hon. Member for North East Derbyshire—at that time, a Westminster councillor—intended to introduce a nightlife tax. Thankfully, the hon. Gentleman

was able to reassure the now Prime Minister that the nightlife tax would apply only to car parking charges and not to other activities—although, on reflection, he may have missed a great opportunity of earning a great deal of revenue for the people of Westminster.

I suspect it is no coincidence that the hon. Member for North East Derbyshire has shown great independence of thought as a politician, as he grew up in Chesterfield during the 1980s—a cradle of political dissent. Today, the hon. Gentleman is again in danger of finding himself upbraided by the Prime Minister, this time as a member of the “nose-ringed...unco-operative crusties”. Indeed, the hon. Gentleman took his arguments against fracking into the lion’s den of the 2018 Tory party conference, and predicted that his party’s support for fracking would see it lose seats—in North East Derbyshire, I assume. My late, great friend Tony Benn, who was the Member for Chesterfield, gave one of his last diaries the title, “Dare to be a Daniel”. I hope that the hon. Member for North East Derbyshire continues to dare, and that he will also emulate the dardom, the experience and the wit of his constituency neighbour and my great friend, my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr Skinner). *[Interruption.]* He is my great friend.

Researching today’s seconder, the hon. Member for Truro and Falmouth (Sarah Newton), I believe I have uncovered yet another secret Conservative project originating in Merton in the 1980s that led directly to Downing Street three decades later. Chief of the Wimbledon set, as they became known, was the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May). By her side stood her loyal lieutenants—the hon. Member for Wimbledon (Stephen Hammond), the right hon. Member for Basingstoke (Mrs Miller), and, of course, the hon. Member for Truro and Falmouth. Today, those who were part of the Wimbledon set are described as “competent and professional”, which really begs the question, how did the right hon. Member for Epsom and Ewell (Chris Grayling) ever sneak into the Wimbledon set? *[Interruption.]* The most expensive Transport Secretary we have ever had—don’t worry about it.

The House may not know this, but in 2013 the hon. Member for Truro and Falmouth and I found ourselves in political agreement. I was happy to support her early-day motion to mark the anniversary of the death of Emily Wilding Davison. It is worth the House hearing some of EDM 164. It said that the House

“commemorates the centenary of the death of Emily Davison...salutes her courage on behalf of the suffragette cause...and pays tribute to her and her fellow campaigners for their brave and ultimately successful efforts to secure votes for women”.

While I may be dubious about the company she keeps, the hon. Lady is deserving of the honour of seconding today’s Loyal Address.

There has never been such a farce as a Government with a majority of minus 45 and a 100% record of defeat in the House of Commons setting out a legislative agenda they know cannot be delivered in this Parliament. *[Interruption.]* Hon. Members heckle about a general election. I said to the Prime Minister last month, “Get an extension, take us away from the dangers of a no deal, and then we are in a position to do that.”

We may be only just weeks away from the first Queen’s Speech of a Labour Government. In that Queen’s Speech, Labour will put forward the most radical and people-focused programme in modern times—a once-in-a-generation chance to rebuild and transform our country.

It will let the people decide on Brexit, build an economy that works for all, rebuild our public services that support everyone, tackle the climate emergency, and reset our global role to one based on peace and human rights.

Sir Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire Dales) (Con): The Prime Minister gave the right hon. Gentleman the opportunity of having a general election tomorrow. Had that general election taken place tomorrow and he had been successful, he would have been going to the Council of Ministers this weekend to negotiate. Why did he reject that opportunity when he has been calling for it all the time?

Jeremy Corbyn: Quite simply because we do not trust the Prime Minister.

This Government have had three and a half years to get Brexit done and they have failed. The only legitimate way to sort Brexit now is to let the people decide with the final say. To pass this House, any deal needs to meet the needs of workers and businesses. That means including a new customs union—a close single market relationship—and guarantees of workers’ rights, consumer standards and environmental protection; and, if I may say so, guarantees that the Good Friday agreement will not be damaged or undermined in any way. A withdrawal agreement was announced, but we do not know yet if the Government have done a deal. What we are sure of is that this House has legislated against crashing out with no deal and that the Prime Minister must comply with the law if a deal does not pass this House.

The Queen’s Speech talked about the opportunities that arise from Brexit, but the Government’s own figures suggest that a free trade agreement approach would cause a near 7% hit to our economy, while a no-deal crash-out would cause a 10% hit. Those seem like opportunities that we could all live without. For many people, the economy of this country is fundamentally weak. Since 2010, there are more workers in poverty, more children in poverty, more pensioners in poverty, more families without a home to call their own and more people—fellow citizens—sleeping rough on our streets. Fewer people can afford their own home, and wages are still lower than they were a decade ago. Productivity is falling, and the economy contracted last month.

At the weekend I was in Hastings on the south coast, where last year food banks staffed by volunteers distributed 87,453 meals, and one in seven people in that town live in fuel poverty. Are those not shocking figures in this country in the 21st century? There was nothing in the Queen’s Speech to address our stagnant economy, nothing to address low pay and insecure work, and nothing to reverse the rising levels of child poverty or pensioner poverty.

Seema Malhotra (Feltham and Heston) (Lab/Co-op): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the challenges of rising child poverty, compounded by the mental health issues that young people face and rising special educational needs not being met due to our education system lacking the resources it needs, are contributing to the next generation growing up in despair, for which the country will pay the price for generations to come?

Jeremy Corbyn: I thank my hon. Friend for her intervention. We have almost a lost generation. Children are going to understaffed schools with very few teaching

[Jeremy Corbyn]

assistants, where headteachers are going to parents with a begging bowl to try to match school budgets, and too many young people are growing up in bad housing, with incredible levels of stress and worry about the future. That contributes to the mental health crisis that this country as a whole must address.

Will the Prime Minister match Labour's commitments to scrap the benefit freeze, end the benefit cap, ditch the bedroom tax, scrap the two-child limit and the disgusting rape clause, and end punitive sanctions in the benefit system? While we welcome the legislation to ensure that employers pass on tips to their workers—something that the Labour and trade union movement has long campaigned for—the Government must go further, and I urge them to listen to the package of measures set out by my hon. Friend the Member for North West Durham (Laura Pidcock) in her brilliant speech at the TUC last month. This Queen's Speech was supposed to herald an end to austerity and a new vision. Instead, it barely begins to unpick the devastating cuts to public services.

Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that the climate and nature emergencies demand so much more than the six words they were accorded in the Queen's Speech and an Environment Bill that will widely weaken the protections we currently enjoy as members of the EU? Will he join me in calling for a comprehensive green new deal to decarbonise the economy by 2030, so that we can show we are genuinely serious about the climate crisis?

Jeremy Corbyn: I thank the hon. Lady for her intervention. I am coming on to that in a moment, but I absolutely agree: what we need is a green new deal. We need a green industrial revolution, and we have to face up to the reality of the climate emergency. If we do not, the damage to the next generation and the one after it will be even worse.

Our national health service has suffered the longest funding squeeze in its history, while life expectancy is falling and infant mortality rising. Schools have had their budgets cut, class sizes have risen, and headteachers are sending begging letters to parents. Any Government Member who is concerned about that should simply take a walk down the road and speak to any primary school headteacher about the stress that they and their pupils are going through. The police have lost more than 20,000 officers, while violent crime soars.

Bim Afolami (Hitchin and Harpenden) (Con): I thank the right hon. Gentleman for giving way. Does he support this Government's policy to rapidly increase school funding?

Jeremy Corbyn: If only they were, it would be a good thing. All the off-the-cuff announcements made by the Prime Minister since July do not add up to addressing the austerity created by the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats during their period in coalition.

NHS England has made clear that core treatment targets cannot be met within the funding settlement offered by the Government. They cannot be trusted with the national health service. Waiting lists are going up, waiting times are going up, and the shortage of GPs continues to create problems at every doctors' surgery.

The Government's refusal to guarantee key standards lets down the 4.4 million patients on the waiting lists, all those waiting longer and longer in accident and emergency departments, and the nearly 34,000 patients who waited more than 62 days for cancer treatment last year.

With 40,000 nurse vacancies, there is an urgent need to restore the nursing bursary for the nurses of tomorrow. If the Prime Minister really wants to defend the NHS, he needs to end privatisation so that our NHS is focused on making people better, not on people on the make—a universal service free at the point of use. We do not want just tinkering around the edges. We want to bin the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and truly end all privatisation in our national health service.

Maria Caulfield (Lewes) (Con): I trained in the bursary system and lived on a pittance each month. It is this Government who have introduced degree nurse apprenticeships whereby student nurses earn while they learn.

Jeremy Corbyn: I have news for the hon. Lady: it is her Government who ended the nurse bursary system—simple.

Will the Prime Minister support Labour's plans to provide free prescriptions to people in England, as has been done in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland? Will he also back Labour's commitment to legislate for safe staffing levels in all our hospitals?

The previous Queen's Speech, in 2017, stated:

"My Government will reform mental health legislation and ensure that mental health is prioritised in the National Health Service in England."

Two years on, all we have are the same warm words. The mental health crisis continues to get worse and worse, as many people in great stress are told that there is no therapy available for several months. As a result, terrible things can happen.

It is a similar story on social care. The 2017 Queen's Speech promised:

"My Ministers will work to improve social care and will bring forward proposals".—[*Official Report, House of Lords, 21 June 2017; Vol. 783, c. 6.*]

Today we have the same promise after two years of inaction and failure, with 87 people dying every day while waiting for social care that is not provided.

This Queen's Speech is shockingly weak on education, with no commitment on early years, on colleges or on universities. The money announced for our schools does not restore the funding loss since 2010. It is all very well promising extra police, but the reason why we do not have enough police is that the Government cut 21,000 police jobs and nearly 7,000 police community support officers. If the Conservative party—the party in government—wants to talk about providing police with protections, perhaps it can tell the police why it subjected them and millions of other public sector workers to cuts in their pay and pensions, damaging their terms and conditions of employment.

I know that this Government do not have a great record of listening to judges, but they are surely aware that judges already have the powers to ensure that the most serious offenders serve more than half their sentences in jail. Our prisons are severely overcrowded. There are 2,500 fewer prison officers in our prisons today than in 2010—hence many of the problems throughout our prison service. The privatisation of the probation service

was a shambolic and costly failure. I hope that lessons have been learned, and we will examine closely any proposals on rehabilitating offenders. I hope that, alongside the tougher sentencing, the Government will also recognise that too many people are in prison on very short sentences for non-violent and non-sexual offences. Our society, I believe, could be better served by their being subject to community sentencing and restorative justice.

What will the Prime Minister do to address the appallingly low conviction rate for rape and other serious sexual offences? The dog-whistle rhetoric around foreign offenders is a rather ugly mask for the fact that, by crashing out of the EU, the Government risk losing some of the most effective measures in tackling cross-border crime: the European arrest warrant, participation in Eurojust and access to numerous databases.

We will, of course, closely study the detail of the Government's proposals on rail reform, but it is no good simply changing the way in which train operating companies carry on extracting profit from our fragmented railway system. Only a Labour Government will cap fares and ensure that the railway is run for the passengers, not for profit. There is nothing in this Queen's Speech to reverse the devastating cuts to bus services all over the country. A Labour Government will restore rail and bus services, and the integration of those services.

Two years ago, the horror of Grenfell happened. We all remember it very well and we remember the response of the public and in this House. But I have to say that nine out of 10 private blocks of flats with Grenfell-style cladding have still not had it replaced. Not a single private block has been made safe under this Prime Minister. Will he confirm today that he will set a hard deadline for all landlords to replace dangerous cladding, that he will toughen sanctions against block owners that will not do that work, and that he will fund the retrofitting of sprinklers in all high-rise social housing blocks? Will he restore the budget cuts to our fire service, who acted so heroically on that dreadful night of the Grenfell fire?

Perhaps the Prime Minister can set out what measures there are to address the Government's abject failure on housing. That has led to more people sleeping on our streets, more families in hostels and temporary accommodation, and fewer people able to buy their own homes. Labour will end no-fault evictions. We will tackle the leasehold scandal and kick-start the largest council house building programme for a generation. It will be Labour that will fix the housing crisis in this country.

The introduction of pension dashboards is welcome, as is the legislation for CDC—collective defined contribution—pension schemes, which I hope will help to resolve the Royal Mail dispute. Sadly, the proposals do nothing to address the injustice done to women born in the 1950s. That injustice must be put right. Additionally, this Queen's Speech does nothing to guarantee the free TV licence for the over-75s.

The Government handed our armed forces a pay cut for seven years. Cuts to council budgets in England have made it far harder to deliver the armed forces covenant, leaving our veterans and our personnel and all of their families worse off.

We will not allow the Government to stifle democracy by making it harder for people to vote. There was only one instance of voter personation at the last election.

Some 11 million people in this country do not have—*[Interruption.]* This is serious. It is about elections and it is about democracy. Some 11 million people in this country do not have a passport or a driving licence. There are huge risks in the legislation being proposed which will disproportionately affect working class, ethnic minority and young voters.

Ms Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab): I thank my right hon. Friend for giving way on that point. Does he agree with me that the decision to require voters to have photo ID at the ballot box is clearly an attempt by the Conservative party to suppress voting, and is designed deliberately to hit the poorest hardest?

Jeremy Corbyn: There is no question. My hon. Friend is absolutely right. This legislation is designed to hit the poorest the hardest: those who do not have passports or access to other forms of identity, and who will thus lose their right to vote and decide who governs in the future. *[Interruption.]*

Mr Speaker: Order. The right hon. Gentleman will give way when he chooses. He does not need to be told what to do by people gesticulating at him. Stop it. It is low grade, downmarket and out of keeping with the code.

Jeremy Corbyn: Freedom of movement has given opportunities to millions of British people to live, work and retire across Europe. It has benefited our economy immensely, with European Union workers playing a key role in sustaining many of our industries and public services. No responsible Member would vote to rip that up, unless there is a proper plan in place. In the shadow of the Windrush scandal, the settled status scheme for European Union citizens risks another round of wrongful denial of rights and shameful deportations. I look forward to the Prime Minister assuring those European Union citizens, who have made such an enormous contribution to our lives and our society, that they will have a secure future in this country.

The Government say that they will be at the forefront of solving the most complex international security issues and global challenges, yet they are playing precisely no role in stopping the horrors unfolding in the Kurdish areas of northern Syria, ending the war and humanitarian crisis in Yemen, or standing up for the rights of the Rohingya, the Uighurs, or the people of Palestine, Ecuador or Hong Kong. They are continuing to cosy up to Donald Trump, and sitting idly by as he wrecks the world's efforts to tackle climate change and nuclear proliferation.

As the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas) said in an intervention, the crisis of our age is the climate emergency as declared by this House in May, but there is no action announced in the Queen's Speech. I pay tribute to the climate school strikers and to Extinction Rebellion. Sadly, the Government have not listened. The Prime Minister derided them as “nose-ringed...crusties”, although I note that their number included a Conservative former Member of the European Parliament, who I believe is related to the Prime Minister. So many people are concerned about bad air quality, the failure to invest in renewable energy, the pollution of our rivers and seas, and the loss of biodiversity.

[Jeremy Corbyn]

Only this Government have the power and resource to tackle the climate emergency if they wanted to, but they are missing with inaction. It is Labour that will bring forward a green new deal to tackle the climate emergency.

The legislative programme is a propaganda exercise that the Government cannot disguise. This Government have failed on Brexit for over three years. They are barely beginning to undo the damage of a decade of cuts to our public services. It does nothing for people struggling to make ends meet. It does nothing to make our world a safer place or tackle the climate emergency. The Prime Minister promised that this Queen's Speech would dazzle us. On closer inspection, it is nothing more than fool's gold.

3.25 pm

The Prime Minister (Boris Johnson): This Government exist to serve the British people and this Queen's Speech delivers on their priorities by strengthening our NHS with the biggest programme of hospital building for a generation, by putting 20,000 more police on the streets and by unlocking the potential of the whole country with new infrastructure, better education and high technology, from gigabit broadband to a new national space strategy. We aim to create a new age of opportunity for the whole country.

As we prepare to get Brexit done by 31 October, we are setting out now our vision of an open, global, free-trading United Kingdom: a high-wage, low-tax economy with the highest environmental standards and new protections for animal welfare, the best place to invest, the best place to start a business, and the best place to start a family and send your kids to school. Without being chauvinistic or disrespectful to anywhere else in the world, in important respects this country is the greatest place to live and to be—the greatest place on earth.

Her Majesty's Gracious Speech was proposed superbly by my hon. Friend the Member for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley)—the first Conservative to represent his seat since 1935, when presumably, the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr Skinner) departed for Bolsover. If hon. Members are wondering whence my hon. Friend derives his passion and his oratorical gifts, it may interest them to know that his aunt was secretary to Arthur Scargill. I doubt that he shares many of the convictions of the former miners' leader, except one: that we should obey the democratic will of the people and get Brexit done by 31 October. My hon. Friend is also a passionate collector of airline memorabilia. His home is allegedly stocked—a museum of airline washbags, airline socks and a vast fleet of model planes, including a model Extinction Rebellion protester glued to the roof. All I can say to him is: "Cabin crew, doors to automatic and cross-check", because his career is "planely" about to take off, and his speech was in the very finest traditions of the House.

The Loyal Address was brilliantly seconded by my hon. Friend the Member for Truro and Falmouth (Sarah Newton), who comes, if I can continue with the aeronautical metaphor, from a very different wing of the party—the modern Tory party is a vast and capacious low-carbon plane, by the way—and who has been highly successful as a campaigner for the rights of disabled people.

Though she is known for her calm manner and her dulcet tones, when it comes to defending the interests of her native Cornwall or protecting the pasty against the fiscal depredations of former Chancellors, she can be as fearsome as any Falmouth seagull going for your chips. On the most divisive issue in modern Britain, which plagues us to this day, it is well known that she has come down on one side and will not be budged: it is jam first, not cream, on scones. She is Cornish to her roots and her speech too was in the best traditions of the House.

Let me join the right hon. Member for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn) in paying tribute to the much loved and greatly missed Paul Flynn, who served his constituency of Newport West for 31 and a half years. He was a proud and witty Welshman who earned this obituary from Goldie Lookin Chain, a south Wales rap ensemble, straight outta Newport. They said:

"As an MP he was well respected, since 1987 when first elected.

Across the parties Paul was revered, and it's just possible he was born with that beard.

Across the floor, far and wide, respected across the political divide,

Regardless of your own stance, left or right, raise a glass to Paul tonight."

I have no idea as to the political preferences of the band members 2Hats or Eggsy—[*Interruption.*] The hon. Lady's sedentary interjection may be right, but I have no doubt that the whole House will agree with that tribute to Paul Flynn.

The speeches from my hon. Friends the Members for North East Derbyshire and for Truro and Falmouth were in the finest traditions of the House, and the speech from the Leader of the Opposition was in the finest tradition of the tergiversating Leader of the Opposition. First he was opposed to no deal; now he seems to be opposed to any deal. First he was in favour of delivering Brexit; now he wants a second referendum. First he wanted an election—actually, he had wanted an election for quite a long time; but now he would much rather not. He resembles a Janus, a pushmi-pullyu facing in both directions at once and unable to decide for either. His policy on cake is neither having it nor eating it. Frankly, I fear for his political health, because we can all see the Soviet-era expulsions that are taking place in his circle, as one by one his lieutenants are purged, as Lenin purged the associates of poor old Trotsky. There is Lenin, the veteran fabricator of GLC budgets. As the shadow Chancellor tightens his icy grip on the Labour party, the contrast becomes ever starker. Contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition just said, we are putting up wages with the biggest expansion of the living wage ever seen. He would put up taxes. We will control immigration with a points-based system—

Alberto Costa (South Leicestershire) (Con) *rose*—

The Prime Minister: Let me anticipate the point that my hon. Friend is going to make. We will also look after the interests of the 3.4 million. Labour wants to abandon immigration controls all together, to judge by what the right hon. Gentleman has just said. We back our armed services; that side were their enemies, historically. He has said he would like to disband them. We want to strengthen, and we will strengthen our United Kingdom; he would break it up.

Toby Perkins (Chesterfield) (Lab): The Prime Minister was just saying how his Government back the armed services. He will be aware that our Army is almost 40,000 fewer than it was when the Conservatives came to power. He will be aware that people serving in the armed forces have seen their wages cut in real terms for seven years in a row. What would he do for armed forces he was not backing?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman should support—and I hope that he will support us in the Divisions—a Government who are putting another £2.2 billion into our armed services, increasing spending on our armed services by 2.6%, investing massively in shipbuilding and taking our armed services forward. As he may know, measures will come forward as a result of the Queen's Speech that will do more to protect our armed services.

Rehman Chishti (Gillingham and Rainham) (Con): Defence is linked to foreign policy. Britain is respected around the world for the values it stands up for. One of them is freedom of religion or belief. It is not mentioned in the Queen's Speech, but yesterday parliamentarians from across the House, led by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, were at the Holy See for the canonisation of Cardinal Newman. Can the Prime Minister confirm that religious freedom will always be a key priority for our Government?

The Prime Minister: I thank my hon. Friend for everything he does to promote religious freedom around the world, and I can certainly give him that assurance. We will stand up for religious freedom in all our doings, and in all our foreign policy.

Bob Stewart (Beckenham) (Con): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

The Prime Minister: I will give way with pleasure to my hon. Friend.

Bob Stewart: I thank my right hon. Friend. I know that he really cares about legacy prosecutions and what is happening to soldiers like Dennis Hutchings, but there was no mention in the Queen's Speech of looking after our veteran soldiers from Northern Ireland. I know that my right hon. Friend intends to do that, so what are we going to do about it? In the case of Dennis Hutchings, it is urgent.

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend has anticipated a point that I am about to come to, but let me deal with it out of order, as it were, and say that we will be bringing forward legislation to protect serving and former serving personnel. As he will know, the consultation on that matter has just come to an end.

I have drawn several important points of distinction between this Government and the party led by the Leader of the Opposition, but, for our present purposes, perhaps the most immediate is that we want to get on and deliver Brexit on 31 October whereas he wants to dither and delay. I cannot in all conscience believe that that is the right way forward for this country.

The right hon. Gentleman recently said that he was "daunted" by the prospect that he might actually become Prime Minister. Well, I have to say that he is not alone in that fear—so are most Opposition Members, judging

by their actions, most of the House of Commons, and, indeed, most of the country. I can give him the reassurance—the consolation—that I intend to do everything I can to prevent that from happening.

I hope very much that, in spite of some of our differences, the right hon. Gentleman will support at least some of the measures in the Gracious Speech. At the heart of the speech is an ambitious programme to unite our country with energy and with optimism, but also with the basic common sense of one nation Conservatism. Contrary to some of the gloomier things that we heard just now, we have unemployment at its lowest level since 1974, we have inward investment at record highs, we have 700,000 fewer children in workless households than there were in 2010, and we are leading the world in so many sectors of 21st-century business and technology. It is because of that economic success, that free market success—and I see the shadow Chancellor recoil at the notion of a free market success like a Transylvanian in the sunlight—that we will look after those who look after us and keep us safe. That is how we will spend another £2.2 billion on the armed services, which brings me to the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Bob Stewart)—and yes, as I said, we will bring forward legislation to protect our serving men and women.

I should be very clear about this. The Government understand that no one can escape justice for a crime that they have committed, but we also understand that there should be no unfair prosecution when no new evidence has been produced; and yes, in the same spirit we will protect our brave police—who run towards danger to keep us safe—by putting the police covenant into law and by giving them the political support that they need in order to do their job, even if that means difficult and intrusive procedures like stop and search, because those procedures save lives. As we back our police and insist on serious sentencing for serious crimes—and I think it was the Labour party that instituted automatic early release—this Government, this one nation Government, also insist—

Alberto Costa *rose*—

The Prime Minister: I will give way, with pleasure.

Alberto Costa: I congratulate the leader of the Conservative party, our Prime Minister, on delivering an excellent Queen's Speech—one of many over the years, I trust. He said, rightly, to the Leader of the Opposition that there should be no further dithering and delay, and I agree entirely. As we exit the EU on 31 October, can he confirm once and for all that the immigration Bill that his Government will bring forward will absolutely and unequivocally enshrine in primary legislation the rights of my mother and father and 3 million other EU nationals?

The Prime Minister: Not only can I give my hon. Friend that absolute and unequivocal guarantee, but I am delighted to say that 2 million EU nationals in this country have already registered under the EU registration system.

Sammy Wilson (East Antrim) (DUP): Can the Prime Minister give us an assurance that, in keeping with his one-nation philosophy, the legislation that he intends to introduce to protect members of the armed forces will

[Sammy Wilson]

include those who served in Northern Ireland, and that he will not be distracted from that by the efforts of the Northern Ireland Office which would try to placate Sinn Féin rather than protect soldiers?

The Prime Minister: I am very grateful to the right hon. Gentleman. I know that he campaigns passionately on this issue and I merely repeat what I think he would agree with: no one should escape justice for a crime he or she may have committed, but it cannot be right that people should face unfair prosecutions when no new evidence has been forthcoming, and that applies across the whole of our country.

This is a one-nation Government who insist on dealing not only with crime but the causes of crime—as a former Labour leader once put, it by the way—and on tackling all the causes of mental ill health or alienation in young people. That is why today we announced a new programme to purge online harms from the internet and to invest massively in youth clubs. We vow, as one nation Conservatives, never to abandon anyone—never to write off any young person because they have been in prison, but to help them into work, and, by investing in prisons, as we are, to prevent them from becoming academies of crime.

When we tackle crime as one nation Conservatives, and when we tackle the problems of mental ill health, we are doing something for the social justice of the country, because we all know that it is the poorest and the neediest who are disproportionately the victims of crime, and we know that it is the poorest who are most likely to suffer from mental ill health. It is our job, as a campaigning Government, to level up investment across the nation, and I am proud that we are now seeing the biggest programme of investment in the NHS for a generation. In 10 years' time, as a result of decisions being taken now, there will be 40 new hospitals. We have fantastic NHS staff—the best in the world—and it is time to give them the funding and facilities they deserve.

Opposition Members have shouted about education. I am proud we are levelling up with a £14 billion programme of investment in our primary and secondary schools, and I hope they will support that, because we believe that is the best way to create opportunity and spread it more fairly and uniformly across the country, to give every child a superb education.

Sir David Evennett (Bexleyheath and Crayford) (Con): I welcome the Queen's Speech and its emphasis on the people's priorities. Is my right hon. Friend aware that in my borough of Bexley people want Brexit done, but then they want a one nation Conservative Government going forward with all the other policies that we have in the Queen's Speech for the benefit of all of the people? We do not want to go back to the Labour period of the 1970s, which was a failure.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend is completely right. What we have is a choice between a semi-Marxist, if not Marxist, Opposition that would set this country back decades and a one nation Government who understand the vital importance of wealth creation.

Catherine West (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab): I am very grateful that the Prime Minister has given way to a woman MP. In the Queen's Speech there was very little information about the climate change emergency;

will he give a little more detail on what the Government will do in relation to this pressing issue that is affecting so many young people and their mental health?

The Prime Minister: I thank the hon. Lady for her question. She raises a very good point. At the heart of the Queen's Speech is provision for a new independent environmental regulator that will invigilate this Government and any Government in the future as we achieve our climate change targets. That is how this country can hope to be carbon neutral—to be net zero—by 2050, and that is what we are going to achieve. That is our programme.

Maria Eagle (Garston and Halewood) (Lab): The Prime Minister rightly said a moment ago that those who are poorest are the hardest hit by crime. Can he therefore explain why, having lost 1,120 police officers, the Merseyside force has been told by the Home Office that it is allowed to recruit only 200 more?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Lady raises a reasonable question. The answer is that this is the first wave—[*Interruption.*] Well, there are 7,000 or 8,000 being recruited this year, and the volume of applications is, I am delighted to say, very high. I believe that our approach is right.

Vicky Ford (Chelmsford) (Con): I should like to pick up on the point about the environment. The Leader of the Opposition seemed to suggest there was not much about the environment in the Queen's Speech. Will the Prime Minister confirm that the UK is leading the world on the environment and on helping developing countries to fight back against climate change, and that in this Queen's Speech, which I have in my hand, there are new measures on water quality and air quality, on committing to reduce emissions and on protecting our wildlife, our plants and our planet?

The Prime Minister: I am so grateful to my hon. Friend, because she gives me the opportunity to point out that it is this Government who are doubling spending on climate change to £11.6 billion over the next five years. That is a colossal sum—more than any other country—and we are leading the world in tackling climate change and setting a blistering pace for our friends and partners across the world.

We are able to do that because we support a dynamic free-market economy, and that is how we are able to fund education across the country. We believe that that is the best way to create and spread opportunity, rather than setting out, as the Leader of the Opposition would, to mutilate that system by banning all fee-paying schools, thereby saddling the taxpayer with a £7 billion bill. We want to give every parent the confidence that comes from properly inspecting schools, and I think it is frankly insane to scrap Ofsted with no plan to put anything in its place, when parents rely on Ofsted to keep their kids safe. It is because we one nation Conservatives believe in opportunity that we insist on standards in schools and on investment. It is to allow young people to make the most of their education and their talents, and to boost the productivity of all the UK, that we are embarking on the biggest programme of infrastructure investment for a generation.

Tom Brake (Carshalton and Wallington) (LD): How does the Prime Minister think young people's education opportunities are going to be affected, given that the aerospace, chemicals and food and drink industries' associations have written to him saying that the manufacturing sector is going to be badly damaged by his deal? Those industries employ more than 1 million people and are worth just under £100 billion to the UK economy each year.

The Prime Minister: May I respectfully suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that that might be a good reason—if it were true, which it is not—for his party to support a deal. I must say that I find it most peculiar that the leader of the Liberal Democrats has been off to see Mr Barnier in Brussels to beg him not to give this country a deal. That is a really quite extraordinary state of affairs. We believe in boosting the productivity of every part of this country—

Alex Chalk (Cheltenham) (Con) *rose*—

The Prime Minister: Including, particularly, Cheltenham.

Alex Chalk: Schools in Cheltenham, and teachers in particular, are doing a fantastic job of driving up standards while coping with a dramatic increase in demand for special educational needs provision. Does the Prime Minister agree that this Queen's Speech meets that demand with huge additional investment to allow schools to ensure that their pupils go as far as their talents will take them?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is entirely right. That is why there is a massive increase not just in primary school funding, not just in secondary school funding, but in SEND funding across the country, giving local people the power to set up special educational needs schools where they desire. We will fund them, and we will support them.

Mrs Anne Main (St Albans) (Con): I thank the Prime Minister for giving way. He visited St Albans and found it fabulous, but my St Albans private schools, including one of the oldest in the country, are hugely worried about the asset grab proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. Will the Prime Minister give all private schools the reassurance that they will not be just the first of the charitable organisations whose assets will be under attack from the Leader of the Opposition?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. Of course, that is not the only act of wanton expropriation—theft by the public sector of the private sector—that is envisaged, because Labour wants a massive £196 billion programme of nationalisation. That is the destruction that it would wreak on the UK economy.

By contrast, we want to boost the productivity of the whole UK with massive investment. We will begin Northern Powerhouse Rail, we will banish the rattling old Pacer trains, and we will invest in roads across the country and fleets of clean green buses. We understand that that is the way to create the platform for economic growth. If we have great infrastructure, great transport connectivity, and gigabit broadband, we have the environment in which business can flourish. We need business to flourish, do we not? Labour does not like business, but we need

business to flourish not just for the tax yield, but because so many of the solutions to our problems, not least the environmental problems, are provided by the free market and by capitalism.

If we look at the battery technology, in which this country now leads the world, or the designs for wind turbines or solar panels, in which this country also leads the world, we see that it is not the Government who make that stuff. Yes, of course, the Government must lead and create the right fiscal and regulatory frameworks, but the Conservative vision is of a nation full of innovators, entrepreneurs and start-ups. That is not only how the green economy will take this country forward, but how we will become carbon neutral by 2050. That point is understood by proud free market Conservatives, including, as the Leader of the Opposition was kind enough to point out earlier, some of my relatives—my crustier relatives, I should say—who joined the protests in the past few days but who understand the vital importance of free market economics for delivering the solutions we need.

What would Labour do, by contrast? Labour avowedly wishes to destroy capitalism. The Leader of the Opposition wants to foment the overthrow of capitalism. Not just that, he wants to whack up taxes on virtually everything, from income tax to pension tax to inheritance tax. He envisages having the highest corporation tax in Europe and a £196 billion programme of re-nationalisation.

Christian Matheson (City of Chester) (Lab): I am most grateful to the Prime Minister for giving way. I am listening to his exposition on the merits of free market capitalism. When was the transition to that position from his previous position, which was, "F*** business"?

The Prime Minister: The destruction that Labour would do to business is, I think, the single gravest concern that this country faces—far greater than any fears that business may have had about a no-deal Brexit.

Worst of all for the certainty and confidence of business is what this Opposition would do were they ever to obtain power, because they would simply delay Brexit with yet more paralysis and pointless procrastination. I say let's not wait—we cannot wait. Let's get Brexit done so that we can take back control of our money, our borders and our laws. Let's get Brexit done so that we can regulate differently and better: getting life-saving medicines faster and more cheaply to market for the NHS; galvanising coastal areas with a constellation of new free ports; and organising our immigration system ourselves so that we are open to talent and open to scientists.

Geraint Davies (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op): The Prime Minister talks about getting Brexit done, but he knows it is a painful journey and not an end point. Why has he not included a trade Bill to enable this House to scrutinise the trade bills that will come week after week? We will not be able to see those bills, so we will end up importing hormone-impregnated food, asbestos and the like. Where is the trade Bill?

The Prime Minister: I reassure the hon. Gentleman by saying that the trade Bill is in the Queen's Speech, so I very much hope that we can count on his support in voting for any deal we might secure and in getting Brexit done.

Rachel Maclean (Redditch) (Con): One of the things my constituents care deeply about is social care, so I welcome the proposals set out in the Queen's Speech. Does my right hon. Friend agree we must get Brexit done so that we can focus on the needs of the most vulnerable people in society?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is completely right, and the entire country is yearning for this House to come together and to work together to get Brexit done. If we can get a deal, I think it would be the will of the people of this country for us to move that deal forward, because that is the way to get on with the priorities of the British people—not just controlling immigration, but ensuring that we look after the interests of young people growing up in this country and give them the skills and investment they need to match their talent.

Anna Soubry (Broxtowe) (IGC): The Prime Minister talks about Brexit. We all know that, whichever way we do Brexit, it will reduce jobs and our future prosperity. Is that why there is no mention of HS2b in the Queen's Speech? Has he given up? [*Interruption.*] Yes, I know he is having to ask what HS2b is. It is the line via Toton in my constituency to Leeds that will serve the east midlands and, indeed, Yorkshire. Have the Government now given up on that vital piece of infrastructure?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Lady knows there is an ongoing review of HS2, but this Government will be conducting the biggest infrastructure revolution of our time. I suggest that she contain her impatience until the Chancellor unveils his Budget on 6 November.

Andrew Percy (Brigg and Goole) (Con): When I was re-elected at the 2017 election, I and all the MPs for surrounding constituencies, including the Labour MPs, were elected on a very clear pledge to deliver Brexit. Can my right hon. Friend assure me that he will not tolerate any attempt to get a second referendum? A second referendum is about one thing: it is about giving backward on the solemn pledge we gave in the 2017 election to respect that result.

The Prime Minister: I concur entirely with my hon. Friend. The one thing that would be more divisive, more toxic, than the first referendum is a second referendum. Let's get Brexit done.

Mr Kenneth Clarke (Rushcliffe) (Ind): The right hon. Member for Broxtowe (Anna Soubry) asked a question that is very important to our region of the country. The Prime Minister has announced a review of HS2, which I understand, but I hope he gave no commitments during his leadership campaign on the future of that project. Will he ensure that the review carefully consults on the economic impact on the east midlands—Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire particularly—if the whole HS2 project to Leeds and the developments at Toton were abandoned?

The Prime Minister: I can certainly give the Father of the House exactly that assurance.

The objective of Brexit is not just to give business the certainty of concluding this whole affair; it is, of course, to get on and take back control of our borders, our

money and our laws to enable us to champion our food and farming sector as we would desire and to alleviate, perhaps, the unnecessary burdens of bureaucracy that farming sometimes faces in this country. Let's take back control of our fisheries, so that Scotland can make proper use of her incredible marine wealth.

David Duguid (Banff and Buchan) (Con) *rose*—

The Prime Minister: I am delighted to give way to a great campaigner for Scottish fishing.

David Duguid: I thank my right hon. Friend for giving way on a point that, as he is well aware, is important for my constituency. Does he agree that the new fisheries Bill will not only restore the UK's status as an independent coastal state and bring back a fairer deal for our fishermen, but will, as its No. 1 objective, improve the sustainability of our fisheries policy?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is completely right on that, and I congratulate him on everything he is doing to advance the cause of Scottish fishing, in stark contrast to his opponents on the Scottish National party Benches. As I never tire of pointing out, their whole policy is to hand back control of Scottish fishing to Brussels.

Brexit will bring all sorts of commercial, economic and also humanitarian objectives. It is very relevant to the concerns of this country that we will be able, for the first time, to ban the exports of live animals, which have offended people in this country for so long. I wonder whether the right hon. Member for Islington North has even considered that. Those are among the things we can get done once we get Brexit done, but even before we get Brexit done, let us get on—

Sir John Hayes (South Holland and The Deepings) (Con) *rose*—

The Prime Minister: But I am going to give way, before I come to a juddering conclusion, to my right hon. Friend.

Sir John Hayes: I hesitate to intervene on the Prime Minister and spoil his splendid peroration, except to say this: Brexit gives the opportunity for us to revisit the issue of the common agricultural policy, which has disadvantaged our farmers and growers for years. Does he agree that we need to make more of our food in this country and so we need to back our farmers?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend has spoken with his customary wisdom and he is entirely right: that is one of the opportunities Brexit gives us. But even before we have achieved it and even before we have got Brexit done, let us get on with the measures announced in this Queen's Speech. Let us get on with our vision for a Britain where fairness and balance are at the heart of what we do, a Britain where we fight crime and demand justice for the victims, but where we also insist—I agree with the right hon. Member for Islington North on this point—on rehabilitation of offenders and education in prison.

Antoinette Sandbach (Eddisbury) (Ind): On that point—

The Prime Minister: I am going to give way for positively the last time.

Antoinette Sandbach: I am very grateful, because I welcome the Prime Minister's opportunity to revisit the Marxist-style expulsions from the Conservative party. While doing that, he can perhaps look at moving HS2 out of Eddisbury, where he could save £100 million on the route and invest it in energy-efficiency infrastructure projects.

The Prime Minister: I am very grateful to my hon. Friend for her intervention. I must direct her back to the answer I gave a moment ago: we are looking very carefully at HS2, and she should wait until the review concludes.

We have a vision of a balanced, just and fair society, where we fight crime and demand justice for victims, where we educate in prison and demand rehabilitation, where we fund superb education and healthcare, not in spite of our belief in the free market—again, the right hon. Member for Hayes and Harlington (John McDonnell) flinches at the mention of the free market—but because we understand that a dynamic wealth-creating economy is essential to pay for those public goods. That is the vision for the society I believe in: a generous, tolerant, outward looking and humane society. That is the vision at the core of this Queen's Speech, and I commend it to the House.

Mr Speaker: I call Mr Ian Blackford.

4.4 pm

Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP): Thank you, Mr Speaker. [*Interruption.*]

Mr Speaker: Order. I appeal to right hon. and hon. Members who are leaving the Chamber to do so quickly and quietly so that the rest of us can afford the right hon. Gentleman the courtesy to which he is entitled.

Ian Blackford: Before I begin my response to the Queen's Speech, Mr Speaker, I am sure that you are aware of the news from Spain. A number of Catalan politicians who have been arguing for self-determination, including a former Speaker of that Parliament, have been imprisoned. It is right that politicians here and elsewhere around the world have the right to argue for self-determination. I am proud to say that, at the Scottish National party conference, which has met today in Aberdeen, we have passed a motion in solidarity with our friends in Catalonia. We stand with the Catalans who have been imprisoned for standing up for the right of self-determination.

I rise to respond to the Queen's Speech. In the usual tradition, I pay tribute to the hon. Member for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley), who talked about the longest Session of Parliament since the civil war—although I did wonder whether he was talking about the civil war in the Conservative party.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald (Glasgow South) (SNP): That's still ongoing!

Ian Blackford: It is still ongoing.

Stephen Kerr (Stirling) (Con): And there is no civil war in the SNP?

Ian Blackford: Actually, no, there is no civil war in the SNP. The hon. Gentleman will find that the SNP is absolutely united.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Truro and Falmouth (Sarah Newton), who talked about singing. I am sure that SNP Members could make a number of suggestions—perhaps the “Anthem of Europe” or, indeed, “Freedom Come-All-Ye”.

Let me move on to the serious situation in which we find ourselves. We have entered very dark days. In just 17 days, the UK is set to leave the European Union. I wish to take some time to reflect, with the House, on why this Government's actions are leading to such a tragedy—and, Mr Speaker, I do not use my words lightly. Leaving the European Union is a tragedy. At the inception of the European Community, it was stated:

“The contribution which an organised and living Europe can bring to civilisation is indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations.”

Perhaps the Prime Minister might show some respect to the debate, rather than sitting and laughing about those who established the European Community.

The European Community was born in the aftermath of the second world war, after two devastating world wars that brought death, destruction and misery. The European Union is the greatest example of political co-operation and peace, leaving behind the scars of war and the pain of loss and instead choosing to take the hand of friendship across the continent. The United Kingdom joined with European partners to say that never—not ever again—would we compromise peace and stability, and that the European Union would work as a beacon of hope and the guiding light for continued peace, to avoid conflict and the loss of more lives. That is the European Union that my colleagues on the SNP Benches are so proud of.

For decades, the United Kingdom has played its role as an equal partner with member states across Europe in the pursuit of inclusion, tolerance, solidarity, freedom and peace. Through the European Union, we have prioritised human dignity, worked together to deliver equality, protected human rights, and preserved the importance of the rule of law and democracy.

Mr Robert Goodwill (Scarborough and Whitby) (Con): How would the right hon. Gentleman rate the performance of the common fisheries policy over the past few years?

Ian Blackford: I will come on to fishing and agriculture, but when I am talking about the principles and what the European Union has meant for peace and stability, that is the response that we get from the Conservatives. Frankly, that is telling. I am amazed that the right hon. Gentleman, for whom I have respect, has lowered himself to a situation where he is talking about fishing when we are talking about the peace and stability that the European Union has brought us.

We have not yet left the European Union, yet we already have a preview of the Prime Minister's contempt for democracy and lack of respect for the rule of law. Leaving the European Union risks the protection, rights and values that have made our democracy possible. The rights that we have all shared as EU citizens—to live, to work and to receive an education in each member state—are about to be torn from us if this Government get their way. They are rights that perhaps many of us

[*Ian Blackford*]

have taken for granted. The great right of freedom of movement is to be stopped by a Government whose warped sense somehow sees this as a victory.

Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): I thank the right hon. Gentleman for giving way. We have our political differences, but the fact is that he represents the biggest constituency in the UK and I represent the second biggest. When it comes to fisheries, the EU has, over many years, paid for whole harbours such as Kinlochbervie, paid for roads, paid for airports and paid for bridges. Is it not utterly reprehensible that there is nothing in the Prime Minister's plan to replace this crucial money for my constituents?

Ian Blackford: I thank the hon. Gentleman—I did not think we had that many differences, but there we are. He is absolutely right. As I travel around Ross, Skye and Lochaber, and as he travels around Caithness and Sutherland, it is absolutely the case that the signs of what the European Union has brought to our constituents are everywhere—the signs of the investment that Europe has brought to our constituents and the European Union citizens who have found a home in our constituencies, including those who are prepared to say that the highlands and islands are their home. We, too, are glad to welcome them as part of our community.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: Let me turn back to freedom of movement for one second. It happens so often that Members on the Conservative Benches, historically illiterate as they are, cheer the end of freedom of movement in this country. Is it not the case that freedom of movement remains, and will probably always be, the greatest economic, social, cultural and peaceful diplomatic achievement anywhere—not just in Europe but, frankly, in the world?

Ian Blackford: My hon. Friend is correct and we celebrate all those who have come to live in our countries, given our membership of the European Union. I stand as someone who has worked in the Netherlands. My son lived and worked in the Netherlands. My grandchildren are losing the automatic right to live, to work, to get an education and to benefit culturally from everything that Europe has meant. And why? Because of the narrow ideology of the Brexit fanboys who sit on the Government Benches.

The rights that we have all shared as EU citizens to live, to work and to receive an education are about to be taken from us—rights that perhaps many of us have taken for granted. That great right of free movement is to be stopped. That is a backward, retrograde and isolationist step. Brexit poses a serious, significant and lasting threat to democracy and to the values that we cherish.

I stand here today not only as a Member of Parliament for Ross, Skye and Lochaber and as the SNP Westminster leader, but as a social democrat and a proud European who wholeheartedly believes in peaceful co-operation across these islands and across the continent. I am deeply saddened. In truth, I am, like many people across these countries, frightened—frightened of the future that this Prime Minister and this Government are planning for citizens across Scotland and across the United Kingdom.

The terms “crisis”, “chaos” and “catastrophe” are now everyday terminology in the United Kingdom, and that is alarming. I fear that the past few years have numbed many of us to the looming disaster of a no-deal Brexit and to the real dangers of the Vote Leave occupants of No. 10. Britain is in a difficult position, with a dangerous Prime Minister who has no majority and no mandate for office. He and his toxic party must be stopped.

Today the Prime Minister has vowed to make the UK the “greatest place on earth”. That is a comment straight out of the Trump playbook, and it is celebrated by the hon. Member for Stirling (Stephen Kerr); that just about says it all. Members across this House—from across Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom—know that neither Donald Trump nor the Prime Minister have a hope of making America or the United Kingdom great again, simply because both egotists are obsessed only with making life for Trump and for the Prime Minister great again.

Mr Andrew Mitchell (Sutton Coldfield) (Con): Will the right hon. Gentleman tell the House what is wrong with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom wanting to make this country the greatest place on earth to live?

Ian Blackford: I will tell the right hon. Gentleman what is wrong with what the Prime Minister is bringing forward: it is that he wants to bring forward the catastrophe of a no-deal Brexit. The fact of the matter—[*Interruption.*]

Mr Speaker: Order. I do not know whether it is something to do with the melodic susurrations emitted by the leader of the Scottish National party, but there is an unfailing tendency of those on the Government Back Benches to holler at the right hon. Gentleman in a most over-excitably—bordering on demented—fashion. Calm yourselves. There is a long way to go and nothing on earth will prevent the right hon. Gentleman from continuing his speech until its conclusion, so lie back and think of either England or Scotland, and get used to it.

Ian Blackford: I think the Leader of the House might need a bit more space if he is to lie back as he is prone to do.

This is a serious matter. We know that, if Scotland is taken out of the European Union against its will, it will cost us up to 100,000 jobs. We also know, because the Government have told us through the Yellowhammer document, that there is a threat to the supply of food and medicines. And now the chief medical officer for England is telling us that there is a threat to lives. At the end of the day, it is the Government who are responsible for this situation and it is the Prime Minister who has it within his gift to recognise what a calamity a no-deal Brexit would be.

The Prime Minister could stand up in this House today and say that he will respect the rule of law and the Benn Act, and that under no circumstances will we leave the European Union on a no-deal basis at the end of October. To do so would be an act of dignity and an act that respects the rule of law. I will happily give the Prime Minister the opportunity, if he so chooses, to rise now and tell the House that he will respect the law and that he is never, ever above the law. Well, there we are.

There is the answer that the House needs. *[Interruption.]* The Prime Minister might be tying his laces, but he is tying the Conservative party in knots.

It is worth noting that 10 of the Bills introduced by the UK Government during the 2017-19 Session did not complete their passage through Parliament despite the length of the Session, emphasising the chaos at the heart of this Government. In contrast, just last month, the Scottish Government set out their latest programme for government and continue to pass progressive legislation such as the Climate Change Bill, committing Scotland to becoming a net zero society by 2045.

The Government have announced 22 Bills today, but they are not truly proposing the pathway for governance. It is blatant, egotistical electioneering—another toxic Tory agenda, presenting wish lists for a Prime Minister who carries no majority in Parliament. This Government's top priority is to leave the—*[Interruption.]* You know, it gets a bit rich for someone who is behaving as if he is a barrack-room lawyer to shout out repeatedly. I tell you what—I look forward to the people of Stirling being able to give their judgment on the behaviour of the hon. Gentleman. That the Government's top priority is to leave the European Union shows contempt for the majority view of Scotland that we should remain in the European Union. It is about time that those who are temporarily here from Scottish seats representing the Tories recognised that they should be standing up for the people of Scotland, who want to stay in the European Union, not stabbing them in the back.

These legislative proposals will be devastating for Scotland. Despite the rouse and the fanfare around today, the Prime Minister is not really interested in delivering a new legislative programme; he is only interested in showcasing his party's manifesto—and what a regressive manifesto it is. The Queen's Speech is a missed opportunity to address years of austerity and punishing cuts in social security support. We call it social security, by the way—you lot call it welfare, and that is the difference. The Queen's Speech completely failed to address the social security disaster the Tories have overseen since 2010. The Scottish National party is clear that universal credit should be radically reformed, and that the disgraceful—absolutely disgraceful—two-child cap on child tax credits, along with the appalling rape clause, must be scrapped immediately. It is astonishing that this Government continue to pursue a policy of inflicting hardship and economic harm on people across the United Kingdom.

The sheer hypocrisy of saying that this Queen's Speech is heavy on law and order, coming from a Prime Minister who is prepared to break the law: you really couldn't make it up. The Prime Minister was found by the Supreme Court to have given unlawful advice to the Queen. Then he told the Commons he would not abide by the Benn Act. However, he then gave a sworn promise to the Scottish courts that he would obey the law and issue a letter for extension if no deal is agreed by 19 October. The Prime Minister must deliver that letter but, if not, I give him this promise: he will find himself back in the courts next week and answerable to them.

On Thursday 3 October, the Prime Minister told the Commons that his proposals would not create physical infrastructure on the Irish border, which the Taoiseach then called out, stating simply that United Kingdom proposals would mean infrastructure on the border.

Many across the UK will find it hard to stomach a Prime Minister talking about law and order when he himself shows the rule of law absolutely no respect.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Slough) (Lab): In terms of law and order, does the right hon. Gentleman agree that the Conservative party has lost any shred of reputation with regard to keeping our communities safe? In constituencies like mine, knife crime and violent crime is the highest on record and communities are no longer feeling safe because more than 21,000 police officers, 7,000 police community support officers and 5,000 specials have been cut. That is why we need to get rid of this Conservative Government—does he agree?

Ian Blackford: I absolutely agree. The hon. Gentleman makes a great deal of sense and he is absolutely correct. The harsh reality is that the Conservative Government have cut police numbers alarmingly over the past seven years. That stands in direct contrast to the performance of my Government—the Scottish Government—who have increased police numbers in Scotland, recognised the challenge that violent crime and knife crime presents, and dealt with that in a progressive manner north of the border.

In the context of everything that we are discussing today, we cannot ignore the behaviour that is exhibited in this place, and in particular the language that is used—language such as “the surrender Bill”, and accusing those of us who wish to stay in the European Union, which our constituents voted for, of being collaborators. The Prime Minister and his cronies talk about freedom of speech, yet they blithely ignore the abuse, online threats and death threats that many Members—*[Interruption.]* I find it remarkable, when many Members of this House have spoken eloquently of the death threats they have faced, that what we had from the Government Benches was loud guffawing—we lost a Member of this House a few short years ago, and we have that kind of behaviour.

Too many Members of this House are being threatened, and the behaviour that is exhibited in this place is a clarion call to those who wish to send threats to Members of Parliament. I appeal to everyone to think about where we are and the importance of the next few days. All of us—and I mean all of us—have a responsibility to call out misbehaviour whenever it happens, across the House, whichever party it comes from. We have a duty to ensure that we create respectful debate and dialogue, and I commit myself and my party to that.

Anna Soubry: The right hon. Gentleman makes a powerful point about the way that we conduct ourselves in this place. I am sure he will agree that it behoves us all to be careful with our language, and that includes the language of our supporters. I have had all sorts of abusive texts from all sorts of people, but I have to tell him that that includes supporters of his own party. *[Interruption.]* Conservative Members should not get too excited, because I have had those texts from supporters of that side of the argument as well. Wherever it happens, and whoever it comes from, it has to stop.

Ian Blackford: I thank the right hon. Lady, and I agree with every word she said. We must call out abuse wherever it comes from—wherever it comes from, it is not acceptable. We are all political leaders in this place, and we need to get away from the toxic environment that we live in today.

[*Ian Blackford*]

I make it clear that my colleagues and I believe that our days in this place are numbered, because we want Scotland to become an independent country in Europe. The one promise and the one commitment I give is that—

Mrs Main: Will there be a hard border?

Ian Blackford: You couldn't make it up. We are trying to deal with the issue of abuse in politics, and someone shouts, "Will there be a hard border?" The point I was about to make is that, as far as we can achieve, I want any debate on Scottish independence to be respectful. It has to be about the future of our country. It has to be respectful of all points of view, and everybody has a responsibility to ensure that that takes place.

Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab): One of the most depressing sets of conversations I have had in the last few days is with Members who have decided not to stand at the next general election; a number of them have said that they will not do so because they are frightened for themselves, their families or, more often, their staff. Regardless of the conversation about how we conduct ourselves in here and elsewhere, it seems ludicrous to me that it has taken more than three years for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority and the House authorities to come together to agree protocols for ensuring that there are proper security arrangements in every constituency home and constituency office. Is it not time we got that right?

Ian Blackford: I commend the hon. Gentleman, because he speaks with absolute sense. We have to be cognisant of what is going on. I suspect there are not many Members of this place who have not had threats, many of them death threats. Let us be under no illusion: this is increasing—we all know it is increasing. Of course we need to ensure in particular that our staff members get protection. We have to cool the temperature in this place. We have to accept the position of leadership that we all have. The next few days are going to be absolutely challenging. Let us show some responsibility and leadership in what is a time of crisis.

Douglas Ross (Moray) (Con): The right hon. Gentleman has asked Members of this House to call out misbehaviour. Does misbehaviour include the leader of the SNP saying that the SNP wants to radically reform welfare but does not want the powers transferred from this House to Holyrood? Does it include the leader of the SNP saying that Scotland's crime figures are better, when serious and violent crime is at its highest level in Scotland under the SNP? Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that the SNP Scottish Government, led by Nicola Sturgeon, dodges the big ideas, makes bad policies worse and makes good policies bad? Those are not my words, but those of Robin McAlpine, the "Yes" supporter who said in an interview this weekend that the biggest impediment to independence is the SNP.

Ian Blackford: It is not my job to give advice to the Scottish Conservatives, but I respectfully say that it might be a bit better if they tried to engage positively and proactively with the position that Scotland is in.

Martin Docherty-Hughes (West Dunbartonshire) (SNP): The United Kingdom Government's Queen's Speech, placed before the House by the Prime Minister, states:

"As the United Kingdom leaves the European Union, my Government will ensure that it continues to play a leading role in global affairs, defending its interests and promoting its values."

Does my right hon. Friend agree that leaving the European Union diminishes the position of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the global order, and plays no part in supporting people such as my constituent, Jagtar Singh Johal, or Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe in determining their freedom and ability to return home?

Ian Blackford: I have to say—I take no joy out of this—that my hon. Friend is absolutely correct. We should be discussing Nazanin. We are glad that Nazanin's daughter has come home, but where is the Government intervention? There is no question but that our voice will be diminished internationally by the fact that we will not be around the table with our European partners.

I have taken a number of interventions and I must move on. Nothing in the Government's speech is designed to enhance the rights of Scotland, our Parliament or the voices of the Scottish people. Most notable is the fact that this Government plan to reintroduce the Agriculture Bill and the Fisheries Bill, showing contempt for our devolution settlement and seeking to sideline and silence the voices of Scotland. Under the Prime Minister's predecessor, powers over fisheries and agriculture were removed from Scotland without the consent of the Scottish Parliament—powers that the Scottish people had voted for back in our devolution referendum in 1997. They were taken back to Westminster without the consent of the people of Scotland. I want firmly to put on the record that the Scottish National party, while here in Westminster and in Scotland, will do all that we can to resist the downgrading and dismissal of our devolved rights and powers. When Westminster talks of taking back control of fishing and agriculture, it means taking back control not from the EU but from Scotland.

The day is coming, and coming fast, when the people of Scotland will have their say on Brexit Britain and on whether they wish to be an independent country in Europe. Let me remind the Prime Minister, who is not in his place—he seems to have gone, despite the protocol that he is supposed to be here for two speeches after he finishes—of the words of Parnell:

"No man has a right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation."

Prime Minister, you must heed those words.

Not satisfied with the hostile environment, this Tory Government want to legislate to end freedom of movement once and for all. That is not only morally deplorable, but economically nonsensical. In Scotland, our economy relies on immigration to support key public services—not least our health service. EU citizens from outwith the UK living in Scotland make up 3.9% of our population and 5% of our workforce. They enrich our culture, strengthen our society and boost our economy.

Leaving the EU and ending freedom of movement could cost Scotland up to £2 billion in lost tax revenues. Restricting the rights and freedoms of citizens to come to Scotland will risk the delivery of key public services. But what do we expect from the Tories? Closing up borders is driven not by fact or reason, but by an

ideological, fundamental position from the governing party: that immigration is bad. We have recently seen that fundamentalism in practice, as the Government refused automatically to guarantee permanent residence to all EU nationals in the UK, along with their families. The Government are risking leading us into another Windrush scandal, making life impossible for thousands of EU nationals. The UK Government should be working to keep citizens here and enable a fairer immigration system to deal with sectoral needs across Scotland and the UK, rather than focusing on forcing people to leave their homes here. The Conservatives need to stop playing with people's lives and drop the hostile environment once and for all.

Mhairi Black (Paisley and Renfrewshire South) (SNP): Is my right hon. Friend as confused as I am? I listened to the Queen's Speech and heard the Prime Minister talk about the economic opportunities and how the economy is thriving under this Conservative Government. How, then, can they still somehow not find the money for women born in the 1950s who paid in for their pensions but have not received a penny back? Does my right hon. Friend agree that that is completely unjustified and that the Prime Minister would do well to remember that all those women have votes in the election that he seems so desperate to get?

Ian Blackford: My hon. Friend is correct. Some 3.8 million women are affected by these pensions changes. We have been over this time and again: the lack of notice given—in some cases, only 14 months. Some women have lost years of pension entitlement—in some cases, tens of thousands of pounds. The callousness, the lack of consideration! The fact that many of these women are suffering is absolutely disgraceful, and they have had nothing but contempt from this Government.

Mr Jim Cunningham (Coventry South) (Lab): I totally agree with the right hon. Gentleman about the pensions of women born in the '50s. Has he noticed that something else was missing from the Queen's Speech? There was no commitment to do anything about the issue of pensioners' television licences either. Does he agree that that should have been included?

Ian Blackford: I very often agree with the hon. Gentleman, and I absolutely agree with him on this. There ought to be a commitment in the Queen's Speech that the TV licences of those over 75 will be paid by the Government. My question to the Prime Minister is: where is that? Let us have a signal that those over 75 will have the comfort of being able to watch television and having their TV licences paid for.

Patricia Gibson (North Ayrshire and Arran) (SNP): We have just heard about the attack on women born in the 1950s and the assault on free TV licences, and we know about the changes to universal credit. Does my right hon. Friend share my concern that this Queen's Speech has done nothing to halt that relentless attack on pensioners?

Ian Blackford: Absolutely—and pensioners will be better off in an independent Scotland than they are under this Conservative Government.

What a missed opportunity the Queen's Speech has been! Although the SNP welcomes progress on bringing forward legislation on the pensions dashboard, the Bill falls short in a number of areas. We have discussed the 1950s women: the Government have a responsibility to address the hardship visited on hundreds of thousands of those women. It must be addressed in this legislation. It simply cannot go on any longer.

Moreover, the Scottish National party has consistently called for the establishment of an independent pensions and savings commission to deal with policy gaps in delivering dignity in retirement. If the Prime Minister and his Government are really interested in delivering on preparation for later life, they need to get real. Not everyone has a Tory trust fund to fall back on. We need robust and responsive policy to deal with the crisis in pensions saving that we simply cannot wait for. I therefore plead with the Government: do not mess this up; establish the commission and use the opportunity to deliver a pensions Bill that actually delivers fairness for older people, rather than uncertainty, complexity and hardship.

The Government have said that as part of their efforts they will bring forward a new environment Bill to set legally binding targets to reduce the use of plastics, restore biodiversity, improve water quality and cut air pollution. We on the SNP Benches say about time. The Government might at last have woken up to the reality of the climate crisis, but the devil will be in the detail. Already, the United Kingdom Government are lagging behind the Scottish Government in their commitment to ending the climate crisis. The SNP Scottish Government already have more robust targets in place, so I say to the UK Government that if they are ready to face the reality that our world demands action now, then they should follow the lead of the SNP Scottish Government.

Members across the House know that the single market has been achieved by removing barriers to trade and having a single set of trade rules across all member states.

Geraint Davies: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Ian Blackford: I want to move on, because I am conscious that other right hon. and hon. Members want to speak.

For businesses in Scotland, that means being able to sell their goods and services to 500 million people, without paying any tariffs and without having to adhere to completely different rules in each country. An estimated 300,000 jobs in Scotland rely on our trade with the rest of the EU. A Tory trade Bill will end all the economic progress that has been made.

Furthermore, not unexpectedly, the Government have announced a Bill on the withdrawal agreement, an agreement this Government have yet to reach with the European Union—or indeed with this House. Let us call it a fantasy Bill. Yet media reports suggest that the Prime Minister is looking possibly to legislate for the agreement on 19 October. That is this Saturday. Announcing on Monday a Bill on an agreement that does not exist and expecting it to pass through this House on Saturday—Mr Speaker, what recklessness!

[Ian Blackford]

The Prime Minister has offered a Queen's Speech today not to set out his vision to protect our economy and communities from a disastrous no-deal Brexit, but to platform his election campaign days before he intends to drive the UK off the cliff edge. The Prime Minister is fooling no one. This is not the beginning of a new Parliament; it is the end. We in the SNP are crystal clear that we want it to end on our terms, not on the Prime Minister's. Deal or no deal, the Prime Minister is driving Scotland and the UK into economic catastrophe. His proposals do not keep Scotland in the single market and the customs union, and that will cripple our economy, risking jobs, livelihoods and delivering a race to the bottom on fundamental rights. These are not acceptable to the SNP; nor should they be acceptable to this House.

There is a piece of legislation that should focus the minds of all Members today: the Benn Act. In just five days, the Benn Act legally requires the Prime Minister to ask for an extension. His public utterances suggest that that will not happen. We all know that we cannot trust this Prime Minister to act in accordance with the law. We cannot even trust him to turn up to Parliament. I have to say that I am sceptical about the possibility of compromise. What exactly is the Prime Minister compromising and who is he compromising with? Internally, the Prime Minister is seeking to play a crude numbers game, hoping that a number of Labour Back Benchers come to his rescue for any shoddy deal that he might be able to force through at the final hour.

I want to make the opposition of the Scottish National party clear for the House, and I hope that the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberal Democrats listen carefully: only by taking control of the House this week can we bring down and end the days of this Government. That is the only way that we can ensure that we can secure an extension and make sure that no deal cannot become a reality. We cannot wait and trust the Prime Minister and his cronies in No. 10. Any Member in this House who caves in on bended knee to a deal cooked up by the Prime Minister is trying to escape the inescapable reality that any Brexit will destroy opportunities and the totality of relationships across these islands as we know them. We must stop this Government riding roughshod over the rights and freedoms of all our citizens. We cannot allow a dangerous Prime Minister to remain in office. We cannot allow the Vote Leave campaign to suffocate Parliament into submission. We must resist.

If Opposition parties come together, we can take no deal off the table and resolve the deadlock once and for all by holding a general election to clear the decks. We must put our trust in the people. We must trust that after years of uncertainty, chaos and instability, the public want something better than this Tory Government. That is our job. That is the job of any Opposition—to oppose the Government—and to offer a better way.

The SNP will not play into the Prime Minister's hands and partake in his charade. We will vote down this Queen's Speech. We are not in the business of backing Tory manifesto pledges; nor should others be on these Benches.

4.46 pm

Tracey Crouch (Chatham and Aylesford) (Con): It is a great privilege to speak at the start of this debate celebrating a new parliamentary Session, especially after the paralysis of the domestic agenda since the last Queen's Speech. While I recognise that we still have to deliver Brexit, and, contrary to what the Scottish National party leader, the right hon. Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber (Ian Blackford) was just saying, it is refreshing to have the opportunity to talk about other issues that mean a great deal to people outside this place.

There is much to welcome in the Queen's Speech, including further protections for our police officers, a possible ban on the import of hunting trophies, the continued passage of the Domestic Abuse Bill, the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill and the Commonwealth games Bill, making sure that Birmingham can deliver a spectacular event in 2022.

Chris Bryant: The hon. Lady mentioned the police. As she knows, in the last Session of Parliament, we brought forward—on a unanimous, cross-party basis—new legislation to protect the police and emergency workers. I hope that any new measures in the Queen's Speech that might affect the police might also affect all emergency workers, because the number of attacks on emergency workers is still growing, but my anxiety is that the legislation that is already on the statute book is not being fully enforced. Do we not need to do that as well?

Tracey Crouch: I was very pleased to support the hon. Gentleman in that piece of legislation—the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018—and I now have a vested interest, in that my nephew has joined the police. It is very important that we protect not only our police officers but all our emergency workers, who do an absolutely fantastic job as first responders, so I support the hon. Gentleman very much in that initiative.

As someone who is working on a project to green a school in one of the most polluted parts of my constituency, as a signatory to *The Times* clean air pledge and as a member of the Conservative Environment Network, I very much welcome that the environment Bill will set out binding clear air targets as well as cutting plastic use, protecting biodiversity, reducing our carbon footprint and investing in better, cleaner technology. I hope that the Bill will get full cross-party support to make its passage through Parliament swift for the benefit of those—such as some of my constituents—who live in unacceptably highly polluted areas, as well as for the future generations of this country.

Geraint Davies: The hon. Lady will know that 2.6 million children go to polluted schools. Does she accept that if we are to meet the World Health Organisation guidelines by 2030, we will have to ban the sale of new diesel and petrol cars by 2030 and not 2042, as has been agreed in Sweden, Ireland and many other countries? Does she agree that it should be 2030 if we are serious?

Tracey Crouch: I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on the work that he has done on the Clean Air Bill, and I was pleased to attend an event he sponsored in the House to sign up to the pledge in *The Times* on that. I agree with him about how we can protect children, especially around schools, from high pollution. One school

in my constituency is planning a protest to stop parents driving their children to school, and that is something that he has campaigned on as well. I appreciate that a lot more work remains to be done.

I also welcome plans in the Queen's Speech to update the Mental Health Act, but I hope that it will include measures to ensure that no person can be discharged from residential care without a care plan, as unfortunately I have several such cases in my constituency. It leads to heightened pressure on the families of those suffering from severe poor mental health.

Luciana Berger (Liverpool, Wavertree) (LD): Does the hon. Lady agree with Sir Simon Wessely, who carried out the Mental Health Act review on behalf of the last Prime Minister, that the issue is not just about legislation change but needs resources too? If we are seriously to address the mental health challenge in this country, we need £800 million extra to go into our mental health services, according to Sir Simon Wessely.

Tracey Crouch: I congratulate the hon. Lady on all the work that she does on mental health and the changes that have happened in our time in this place: we have seen some real progress. I recognise the issue of resourcing, but we also need to put the right resources in the right places. I work closely with clinical commissioning groups and other partners in my constituency to ensure that we are getting the right mental health support to those who need it most.

Unfortunately, there are some real gaps in mental health provision. For example, children under 11 in my area get some really good support, but there is a gap in the support for those aged between 11 and 18, which can be an acute time. Nor do we necessarily have the right mental health support for men who are suffering from poor mental health. We certainly do not have the right level of trained support for those who have been in the armed forces and have a different type of mental health condition that requires specialist care. It is incumbent on all of us to look at the detail of the mental health proposals in the Queen's Speech and, if required, work cross-party to ensure that we have a significant and good piece of legislation.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): The hon. Lady mentioned veterans and mental health. There are many good charities that do a lot of good work with the Ministry of Defence, but every week in my office—and perhaps in hers—we find that many people slip under the radar. Does she agree that the legislation and the Government's strategy should ensure that we capture those people and make sure that they are helped, rather than their falling between stools and disappearing, meaning that their problems are never sorted?

Tracey Crouch: I agree entirely with the hon. Gentleman. One of the issues that we have is making sure that people do not slip under the radar. Now that we are talking more about mental health than ever before, I hope that we will have other ways of capturing those people and getting them into the support systems. As I have said, one concern I have is that those in the system who have a particularly severe mental health condition and have spent some time in a residential unit are discharged without the right care plan or home visits. That is not fair on the person suffering from poor mental health or on their families and loved ones who are trying to support them.

Another Bill in the Queen's Speech that I very much support—but again I look forward to seeing the detail—is the new offences Bill. It is right that we increase the prison sentences for those found guilty of serious violent and sexual offences, but I hope it will also include reforms relating to the misuse of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, bringing sports coaches in line with the rules relating to teachers, and will finally increase the sentences for those who cause death by dangerous driving. I have been lobbying for an increase, having had a desperately sad case—unfortunately not a unique one—raised with me by local residents who tragically lost their son. We made a commitment in that regard in 2017, but as yet it has not had parliamentary time. I hope that we can now do that. I can only imagine how difficult it must be to deal with the loss of a loved one in such horrendous circumstances. Knowing that justice has been served must be an important part of coming to terms with that loss, and after such a welcome announcement two years ago and the subsequent delay, I very much hope that the Government can finally present the legislation to Parliament as soon as possible. I am sure that it will have broad support across the House.

Those measures could easily have been set alongside others relating to, for example, road safety, and I should have liked to see more work in that area of domestic policy. After a constituent's partner was killed while recovering another vehicle from the M25, I, along with my right hon. Friend the Member for Hemel Hempstead (Sir Mike Penning), have been campaigning for greater protections for people who work to rescue those who have broken down on our road network. They include minor changes in traffic regulations, such as allowing recovery vehicles to go through red lights rather than just amber, but they also include a full-scale review of our smart motorway network.

I have actively campaigned against the roll-out of a smart motorway on the M20, because I am not convinced of its safety. I have seen and heard the statistics from Highways England, but I share the view of the Birmingham Solihull coroner—who was presiding over the inquest into the sad death of an eight-year-old boy killed in an incident on the M6—that there needs to be greater clarity about the safety of the smart motorway network, including a vastly improved system to recognise stranded vehicles. I feel deeply uncomfortable with the concept of smart motorways, as they effectively strip a driver of the option to pull over. Given the higher proportion of heavier vehicles on motorways, even a collision at a slower speed between a large vehicle and a stranded smaller vehicle can have fatal consequences. The announcement of a review in the Queen's Speech would have been greatly welcomed by drivers, recovery workers and, of course, the families of victims, and I hope that it will be considered as part of a future legislative programme.

However, the Bill to replace the rail franchising system is very welcome. Long-suffering commuters in Kent have been left in limbo in respect of the future of the Southeastern franchise, as the competition was delayed and delayed again by the Department for Transport, and was eventually cancelled altogether in August this year. It does not seem all that long ago that the franchise timetable was torn up following the Brown review in 2013, which resulted in a 50-month extension of the current franchise. Ultimately, it is the passenger who loses out

[Tracey Crouch]

from all the uncertainty created by a chaotic franchising system. Kent Members of Parliament have lobbied hard for improvements in the service, and welcome much of what was included in the new franchise proposals—including greater capacity—but given that passengers face ever-increasing rail fares, it is time that those improvements were actually delivered.

Let me raise a specific matter related to my constituency. Since becoming an MP in 2010 I have lobbied, along with colleagues in west Kent, for improved services to the City on the Maidstone East line. They were due to be introduced in December this year, with a new Thameslink service, and we wrote to the Secretary of State in May and again in September asking for assurances that they would be delivered. It was therefore desperately disappointing to be told that the roll-out would not take place in December as planned, and, incredibly, to be given no concrete assurances about when it would happen. While that is bitterly disappointing for passengers, it is, unfortunately, entirely in keeping with the complete shambles of our rail franchising system. Anything that will create more transparency and, critically, accountability, including stricter penalties, is to be welcomed. It is about time we had a rail franchising system that worked for the passenger and not the rail industry.

However, rail is just one part of our creaking infrastructure. One area of domestic policy on which I would have liked to see legislation relates to roads. I shall be lobbying the Chancellor hard for more funding for Kent roads, including major investment in junction 3 on the M2 and junctions 5 and 6 on the M20. With the prospect of the lower Thames crossing coming on stream, it is essential that we invest now to minimise the negative impact of increased traffic going through my constituency and, indeed, the county as a whole.

It is important for us not to forget that there is a world beyond Brexit. I welcome our new domestic agenda, and I hope that it is passed next week so we can get on with delivering on our pledges to improve the lives of our constituents.

4.58 pm

Jo Swinson (East Dunbartonshire) (LD): It is a great pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Chatham and Aylesford (Tracey Crouch). Her remarks about the importance of mental health were particularly worth listening to.

On behalf of my colleagues on the ever-expanding Liberal Democrat Benches, let me associate myself with the words of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition about Paul Flynn. He was a thoughtful man, an independent spirit who spoke truth to power, and he will be remembered with great affection.

I should like to spend a moment remembering another former Member of this House whom we said farewell to in the last year: the former MP for Yeovil and leader of the Liberal Democrats for 11 years, Paddy Ashdown. He led an energetic life of public service in the special forces, in this House and indeed in the other place, and in his role in Bosnia. He was bold, fearless and determined, and he is very much missed.

I pay tribute to the mover and seconder of the Humble Address. The hon. Member for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley) took us on a grand tour from Derbyshire

to Venezuela and surely guaranteed himself good coverage in tomorrow's "Red Box" in *The Times* by quoting the favourite catchphrase of Matt Chorley, "This is not normal." As a fellow child of the 1980s I would just like to put on record my thanks to him for confirming to the House that 39 is clearly still considered "up and coming."

The hon. Member for Truro and Falmouth (Sarah Newton) is a well-respected former Minister liked on both sides of the House for the way in which she genuinely engages. I understand from looking at her Wikipedia entry that she was head girl at school, and that she graduated with a history degree from King's College London and then a Masters as a Rotary scholar. Some might call her "a girly swot"; I would say to her that she should know that, at least from these Benches, that is meant as a compliment. I did start to worry slightly, however, when she mentioned Coleen Rooney, and I was grateful that she did not seek the House's opinion on the recent Instagram controversy, because surely we have had enough division—although perhaps the next time the Prime Minister needs someone to do a leak inquiry there is an obvious candidate.

It is perhaps a sign of our political times that the Humble Address was proposed by a leaver who has three times voted with me against a Brexit deal and seconded by a remainer who has three times voted for a deal to leave the European Union.

On these occasions it is of course traditional to try to lighten the mood with the odd joke, and I see that even the Queen today managed to include something to make us all laugh when she said:

"The Government's new economic plan will be underpinned by a responsible fiscal strategy",

because this Queen's Speech is predicated on the UK leaving the European Union in just over two weeks and analysis after analysis shows that that will leave a massive hole in the public finances.

Much of the last three years has felt a little bit like groundhog day for many of us, but there was something about the last week that has felt particularly familiar to me, and then it dawned on me: we have all been sat in meetings where a woman puts forward an idea and it gets shouted down only a little later for a man to suggest virtually the same thing and pretend it was his great idea all along. But the Liberal Democrats are crystal clear: whether it is a hard or soft Brexit, whether it comes with a red rosette or a blue rosette, whether it is proposed by the former Prime Minister, the current Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition, there is no form of Brexit that will be good for our country. And the Liberal Democrats will continue to fight to stop Brexit: to secure a people's vote with the option to remain in the European Union, to give the public the final say on the Brexit deal, because there is no deal that will ever be as good as the one we currently have as members of the European Union.

There was nothing in this Queen's Speech that will bring comfort to the factory worker set to lose their job or to the many thousands who already have; nothing to bring comfort to families when they are having to pay more and more to put food on the table; nothing to bring comfort to our young people who are being stripped of the right to live, work and study in 27 other countries; nothing to bring comfort to our NHS on the cusp of yet another winter crisis and having lost more

than 5,000 EU nurses in the past two years; and nothing to bring comfort to the cancer patients who fear delays to drugs will mean delays to treatments and risks to their own health.

Nothing in this Queen's Speech will give the 3 million European citizens any comfort. Bina is with us today. She is a Dutch national who moved here in 1999. After the birth of her second daughter she decided to become self-employed, but despite paying her taxes just as she should, the Home Office asked for proof after proof before finally granting her settled status after weeks of anxiety and uncertainty and weeks of being treated like a second-class citizen in the place she calls home.

Jennifer is also with us today. Her daughter, who is 38 years old, was born in Strasbourg and is severely disabled. In 1986, Jennifer moved her family to the UK, where Marie could get better care and education. Marie has settled status now, but only because her mother was there to help and to ensure that her daughter's rights were protected. There are so many other vulnerable EU citizens in our country who cannot rely on a family member or friend to help them through the complicated application process.

Last but not least, my constituent Kristin has travelled down with her mother to be with us today, too. Margot moved to the UK 45 years ago from Norway. Two years later, she married Geoff in Liverpool and then Kristin was born. After raising her family, Margot went back to work, paying her taxes every step of the way. As required, Margot applied for settled status, but she struggled to get her application approved. After 45 years of contributing to our society and our economy, the Government treated her like a bureaucratic problem, causing unnecessary anxiety and fear to an elderly couple trying to enjoy their retirement years. Their family are fearful that they will be torn apart.

Wera Hobhouse (Bath) (LD): My right hon. Friend is movingly describing the huge anxiety that a lot of EU citizens face as a result of an unfair and unsuitable application process. It should have been a registration process, but this Government just do not treat EU citizens fairly. Does she agree that they have never counted the human cost of this anxiety?

Jo Swinson: I wholeheartedly endorse what my hon. Friend says about the human cost; it has not been properly taken into account by this Government.

Dr Sarah Wollaston (Totnes) (LD): Does my right hon. Friend agree that this is also a desperately anxious time for British citizens living elsewhere in the European Union who face not knowing whether they will be able have healthcare or what will happen to their pensions six months from now? This is intolerable, and entirely avoidable.

Jo Swinson: My hon. Friend is quite right. In this place, we often have the debates, the braying and the back-and-forth across the Dispatch Box, and it can feel like the pantomime or theatre, but this is people's lives that we are talking about, and some of them are sitting in the Gallery today. I was going to ask the Prime Minister, but he is no longer here, so I hope that the Ministers will have the courage to look Kristin, Margot, Bina and Jennifer in the eye and apologise for the anxiety that they have caused to them and to the 3 million other

citizens from the EU27. Our country is better than this. We do not turn our back on those who have come over to be our doctors and nurses, teachers and carers. We do not turn our back on our family, friends and loved ones, and we do not turn our back on those who, like the rest of us, only want to make our country a better place. That is not who we are.

There is little more British than getting all dressed up and taking part in pomp and ceremony, but there is a time and place for that and today should not have been it. Today is a distraction from the fact that our country is fast hurtling towards catastrophe, and that the Prime Minister is more interested in hanging on to power at any price than in what is best for our country. This hard-line Brexit Government have no majority, no plan and no clue, and they are putting the future of our great country at risk.

The Conservatives are clamouring for a general election, and we are ready to give them one. All they need to do is sign a simple letter and secure an extension to article 50. I have said this before in the House, and I will say it again: I relish the opportunity to take the Prime Minister on at the general election. I cannot wait to take to the country the positive alternative vision that people deserve—a vision of a country where, if someone works hard and plays by the rules, they are rewarded with a decent home and enough money to get by and live with dignity, where every child and young person is nurtured and supported to become whatever they want to be, no matter who their parents are, how much money they have or the colour of their skin, and where the most vulnerable can always get the help they need with no judgment or sanction.

We know that our country is better than what this Government want it to be. We can be open, generous and collaborative. Our politics can be one of hope and inclusion, firmly set on the better future that we want to create, but this Government want to turn us into an insular, closed, selfish country, trading in fear and division to get their way. That is what this Queen's Speech is all about and that is why the Liberal Democrats will not be voting for it.

5.10 pm

Mr Andrew Mitchell (Sutton Coldfield) (Con): I am most grateful to have the opportunity to contribute relatively early in this Queen's Speech debate, and I draw the House's attention to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests.

It is, of course, a great pleasure to follow the hon. Member for East Dunbartonshire (Jo Swinson), the leader of the Liberal Democrats. She and I worked together during the coalition Government—a rather good government, Mr Speaker, I hope you might agree—and I echo her comments about Paddy Ashdown, whose memorial service a number of us attended in Westminster Abbey just a few weeks ago. I worked closely with him during the coalition. He was a tremendous force for good in the international development world as well as being a great parliamentarian with a hugely distinguished career in politics behind him. I can honestly say that we miss him very much indeed in the international development firmament, so it was good that the hon. Lady chose to say what she did.

I also congratulate the mover and the seconder of the Loyal Address today, a task which I undertook 27 years ago, although it feels like only yesterday. I can still

[Mr Andrew Mitchell]

remember the fear and trepidation that attended me as I sat where my hon. Friend the Member for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley) is sitting and announced that the address was being seconded by

“an oily young man on the make”.—[*Official Report*, 6 May 1992; Vol. 207, c. 56.]

You can tell, Mr Speaker, that not much has changed in that respect.

I am one of those who believes that today’s Queen’s Speech encapsulates the most important principles of a one nation approach in Britain today. I have the privilege of being the secretary of the one nation group of Conservative parliamentarians and, away from the sound and fury of politics in the run-up to the approaching general election, there is much in the speech that can be welcomed. My hon. Friend the Member for Chatham and Aylesford (Tracey Crouch) set out several of the key measures that ought to carry strong support across the whole House.

The wings of the momentous decisions on Europe that we will be making in the next few days span the whole of British politics. The hon. Member for East Dunbartonshire said much about Europe that is of concern to all of us. However, she was, in a way, talking about a world before the referendum. Once the referendum had taken place, these arguments were put to bed. In my view, we are all committed to implementing the referendum result and I speak as someone who voted to remain and whose constituents declined to support that—but only just. I think that the sooner we are able to implement the result of the referendum, the better.

Wera Hobhouse: Why was it that we did not leave on 29 March? Was it not because Conservative Members consistently did not vote together for a particular Brexit proposal?

Mr Mitchell: With the greatest of respect, the hon. Lady has something of a brass neck by intervening with that. Most Conservative Members, most of the time, voted in favour of a deal and it is the party opposite that has not voted in favour of a deal. I respect the result of the referendum and I voted for the deal on the past two occasions it came before the House, believing that at that point there was too little room for manoeuvre and that it was in the best interests of those I represent in the royal town of Sutton Coldfield to vote for it. So I can see no reason not to support the deal I expect my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to put before the House shortly. The message I get, particularly outside the M25 beltway, is that people want this done. They want to move on. When the House meets in extraordinary circumstances next Saturday, they want a deal to be secured and for us to move on to the next phase. It will only be the next phase, of course, but it will be psychologically important to the markets.

Jamie Stone: I reinforce the point I made to the right hon. Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber (Ian Blackford). Any form of Brexit is potentially so damaging to the interests of my constituents. I must put my constituency first, which is why I cannot vote for any form of deal. I want to make that plain and have it on the record. My constituents must come first.

Mr Mitchell: To be fair, across the House, nearly all of us are doing what we think is in the best interests of our constituents. In my judgment, the best interests of my constituents are represented by drawing a line and moving on. There are tremendously important negotiations to come, of course, but once we have left the European Union, as we are bound to do following the referendum, we can start to repair two key things that need so much to be repaired. The first is the deep, deep divisions that run throughout our society, throughout all our constituencies and throughout the four kingdoms of the United Kingdom. A second referendum, which will clearly be very much in contention over the next few days, is a ghastly prospect, particularly as it would put back yet further the important and necessary act of healing the terrible divisions that disfigure our country.

Geraint Davies: Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that people out there are saying they want Brexit to be over? They do not want to get Brexit done; they want to get it over. The simplest way to get it over is to put the deal to the people, and then we could see Brexit as it really is, warts and all. The people could then decide, once and for all, whether this is what they want. Is it more money, more control and more jobs? No. People do not want it. Let us get it over, and let us have that vote. Otherwise we will not be getting it done; we will have years and years of trade negotiation and poverty.

Mr Mitchell: I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman. I think he is arguing for a second referendum—a confirmatory vote. I cannot think of anything more likely to exacerbate and perpetuate these deep, deep divisions that disfigure our country than going on, month after month, for a second referendum. It is now for the House to decide whether we can secure a deal, and I very much hope the House will decide that on Saturday.

The second thing, and it bears upon the Gracious Speech, is that a resolution to Brexit at the weekend will allow Britain to re-engage internationally. As the House will be aware, our reputation has plummeted over the past three years. We have been absent from parade on a number of big issues where Britain had previously shown great leadership, such as migration, climate change, protectionism, terrorism and the desperate threats that the Kurds face today. Britain’s voice needs to be heard trenchantly on these issues and, over the past three years, Brexit has prevented that from happening.

Climate change, for example, was mentioned in the Queen’s Speech. I have talked to some of the Extinction Rebellion people who blockaded the streets around Westminster over the last week or so. It is easy to mock these people, but there is something rather noble about the cause they espouse. Talking to some of them while negotiating my way through Trafalgar Square on my bicycle has been interesting and constructive, but the problem is that, in attacking this Government, they are attacking the wrong target.

Britain has been a leader in tackling climate change at the major international forums of the UN and elsewhere. I pay particular tribute to important work by Lord Turner and his colleagues on the Committee on Climate Change. Britain has put its money where its mouth is in tackling climate change internationally, as well as domestically. Starting with the coalition, when I had

some responsibility for these matters, we allocated some £7 billion for the international climate fund. For 2016–2021 we allocated £5.8 billion, from our hard-pressed taxpayers, for adaptation and mitigation of climate change. As the Prime Minister said, we are projected to spend £11.6 billion between 2021 and 2026. In addition, we are streets ahead of some of our European friends and neighbours in developing the technology, and here I highlight the Ayrton fund, which has allocated £1 billion for innovative technology. Britain has standards and an approach to climate change, both in adaptation and mitigation, that have been enormously effective. It is also worth bearing in mind that, this year, for the first time since the industrial revolution, we will consume more energy from renewables and nuclear power than from coal and gas.

Angela Smith (Penistone and Stocksbridge) (LD): I concur entirely with the right hon. Gentleman's aspiration for Britain to continue to lead internationally on key issues such as climate change, but does he not agree that Britain's role internationally will be diminished if it is no longer a member of the EU? Britain has played a leading role on these issues within the EU and internationally partly because it has been a member of the EU, and it will be difficult for us to retain our status if it departs the EU.

Mr Mitchell: The argument the hon. Lady puts is the one that led me to vote to remain. I did not feel that the architecture of the EU was enormously compelling, but I did think that most of the problems, some of which I listed, were best handled by a more international approach. That is something where we are on the back foot. Nevertheless, it would be wrong not to conclude that, even outside the EU, working closely with our allies and partners in NATO, the United Nations, Europe and the Commonwealth, we can still have an immense footprint in tackling these important issues.

I wish to mention one way in which, under climate change funding, we can do more of this. We have seen Britain leading in the vital, world-changing area of educating girls. That was certainly done in the Blair and Brown years, and it was given a strong boost during the coalition years through the girls education challenge fund, which was designed to get 1 million girls into school in areas where they have been denied any form of education. Of course the Prime Minister, both in his current role and as Foreign Secretary, has made a staunch stand in favour of that.

I want to see, as a result of the Queen's Speech and of policy development, Britain doing much more to clean up the oceans of the planet. That is a good use of the development budget; millions of very poor people earn their living from the seas. Plastic has now reached almost the remotest places on earth. It has been found 11 km deep in the ocean and even on the island of St Helena, which is thousands of miles from the nearest landform and where, incidentally, the airport is proving to be such a success. By 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans of our planet. The Government's policy domestically has been very successful in terms of curtailing the use of plastic bags and microbeads, and from April next year we will ban plastic straws. The Government have also been very successful in using the market to achieve these desirable results wherever they can. This is an area where British leadership could have

a big impact. So I urge the Government to put not only the money from the international development budget—or a proportion of it—but the considerable intellectual weight of British thinking and activity in the international forums behind that initiative.

The next point I wish to make about the Queen's Speech certainly complements a one nation Queen's Speech and, I hope, a one nation Budget in due course. I wish to stand up for capitalism and free markets, which are under great pressure, not least from the Leader of the Opposition, as was said earlier. We need to do more to stand up for capitalism and free markets and to explain why free enterprise has been such a powerful engine of advancement and social elevation, particularly for those who are among the least well off. It has always been the case that Governments have hedged around the free market system with rules, taxes and laws to stem excesses and excessive greed.

We recently watched the sad demise of Thomas Cook—now mercifully in the hands of Hays Travel—with a consequent loss of livelihoods and jobs and the inconvenience caused to hundreds of thousands of people who were coming back from their holiday. Is it right in Britain today that the chief executive officer of that company has been paid £8.3 million since 2014, with a £2.9 million bonus in 2015? The two chief financial officers have been paid £7 million since 2014, and the non-executive directors have been paid £4 million, including £1.6 million for the non-executive chairman. Effectively, these were the directors of the UK's oldest travel agency, and they appear to have presided over the destruction of the business while awarding themselves collectively £47 million in pay and bonuses in the past 10 years. I submit that that brings the free enterprise system and the laws that this House should make into disrepute.

Sixty-one FTSE 100 companies do not pay the living wage to their employees. The living wage was championed effectively by the Prime Minister when he was Mayor of London and by the former Chancellor, George Osborne. For those 61 companies, the average chief executive pay is just under £4 million per year. The arguments for capitalism and free enterprise are under attack, as we shall see in the forthcoming general election. They need to be explained, defended and propagated. One of the ways in which we do that is by demonstrating fairness in the way that the system works.

Let me conclude on another point relating to one nation fairness. It has to do with homelessness. Led by our West Midlands Mayor, Andy Street, we are doing our best to eradicate this problem. Last Friday, our mayor was at Aston Villa with 130 people who slept out voluntarily to raise money to help to tackle the curse of rough sleeping. Throughout the west midlands, good progress has been made in offering rough sleepers accommodation: via Housing First we have got 94 people into accommodation—far more than the other two pilot areas have achieved. Housing First also provides the support that individuals need, including drug and alcohol programmes and mental health support. We all understand and know of the complexities involved. Progress is being made, but it is not just about money. The Government have been pretty generous, with £100 million going towards the rough sleeping strategy. In Sutton Coldfield, we currently have four rough sleepers. We have two extremely well-run food banks that operate and help in a wider area than just the royal town. One man has been sleeping rough in our park for more than 20 years.

[Mr Mitchell]

The reason I mention that is that I do not think any of us can sleep easy knowing about the extent of rough sleeping throughout Britain and in our cities. In November 2018, the count of rough sleepers in Birmingham stood at 91. That was an increase from the previous year and a big increase indeed since 2010. The number of new homeless is showing no signs of slowing. It is a complex and difficult problem and it is not just about finance and funding, but I hope that this good, one nation Queen's Speech, which I strongly support, will not neglect this vulnerable cohort in our communities and will regard reversing this most unfortunate trend as a very high priority indeed.

5.29 pm

David Hanson (Delyn) (Lab): It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr Mitchell). I was in the Chamber 27 years ago when he seconded the Loyal Address—it was my first ever Gracious Speech. It is a tribute to him that, 27 years later, he is still quoted by those who ably proposed and seconded the Loyal Address today. I congratulate him on the longevity of that speech in 1992.

This Queen's Speech is dominated by Brexit, but it also contains policy announcements on justice and policing. It also has some measures that even I, as a Labour Member, will welcome in due course, such as those on trophy hunting and on the restoration, potentially, of the devolved Government in Northern Ireland. It also, in my view, requires some additions, which I shall touch on briefly in a moment. It reminds me that the Prime Minister appears to be running against what his own Government did over the previous 10 years, with his emphasis on increasing policing, increasing investment in education and increasing investment in health. The proof of that pudding will be very much in the eating, because what is on offer is really a counter-balance to the austerity that the Conservative Government have forced through—dare I say it with the help, in their first five years, from members of parties who now sit on the Opposition Benches.

None the less, the Queen's Speech is dominated by Brexit, which is the Government's first priority. The opening line of the Gracious Speech is that the Government's priority has always been to secure the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union on 31 October. You will know, Mr Speaker, that the terms of that departure will potentially be set this week on 17 and 18 October at the European Council. Government Members have said that we on the Opposition Benches should vote for a deal. I confess that, as of today, which is five days before we are expected to vote on a deal in a Saturday sitting, we have no clear idea of what that deal will be. We have no clear idea of what the terms of that deal could be, what the boundaries of that deal could be, and what impact that deal could have on my constituents who make cars, who make planes, who make paper, who export sheep products, who provide tourism and who require safety and security through policing and through support of international agreements on security.

I say to those sitting on the Government Front Bench that, first and foremost, I voted to trigger article 50. I stood on a manifesto that said that we would respect the referendum, but in the 2017 general election, which was

called not by me, but by the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May), who wanted a mandate to force through her form of Brexit, I made commitments to things which I still do not know will be in the agreement that comes before us on Saturday. I stood on a manifesto that was against no deal, and I have voted against that. I stood on a manifesto, which, in my terms as a representative in Wales, was for a customs union and for a single market. I do not yet know what the outcome of those discussions are.

I cannot say whether I will vote for the deal on Saturday, because we do not know what it is. I have to ask whether it is going to be better, because the Ministers in the Gracious Speech today have said that they will implement new regimes for fisheries, for agriculture, for trade and for opportunities arising from the European Union once we have left. Again, I do not know what those opportunities will be, but I have seen some adverts on the television this week that tell me that, on 1 November, if we go ahead with any form of deal—or no deal—that the Government are proposing, I will have to check whether my healthcare is still valid in Europe; check whether and how I can send goods to Europe from businesses in my constituency; check my insurance on travel, because it will not be valid in the great new world that we face; and check whether I can still drive in the European Union after 1 November.

I still do not know about any of those things or whether we will have something positive or negative at the end of this week. None of that was on the bus when it came driving through the United Kingdom on 23 June 2016. We still have no details in the document that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster produced last week on what will happen to the European arrest warrant, what will happen to European policing co-operation, and what will happen to the second generation Schengen Information System, under which we exchange information about paedophiles, criminal gangs, and drug abusers. As a former Policing Minister and a former Justice Minister, I cannot vote for anything when I do not yet know whether we have police co-operation and international co-operation on preventing drug trafficking, child pornography and child abuse. I do not know whether we have that yet, and I hope that during the course of this debate we can get some clarity on that so that we know what we might be asked to vote for on Saturday.

It also strikes me that the farmers in my constituency who currently export sheep to Europe do not yet know whether they will face a 40% tariff. Vehicle manufacturers at Toyota and Vauxhall at Ellesmere Port—employing thousands of people in my constituency—do not yet know what the tariff regime will be or what form it will take, and neither do the aircraft manufacturers at Airbus. There should therefore be a real sense of urgency on the Government's part to pull together what we might be voting on. I have already voted for some forms of the deal that the Government have brought forward; I have also voted against some forms of the deal. But right now we have no clarity on what the deal presented to us on Saturday might be.

It strikes me that the only way in which we are ultimately going to be able to bring this together is to settle on a deal—whatever it might be—and then to put that deal back to the people so that they can decide through a confirmatory vote whether to support whatever deal comes before Parliament. As I have done in the past,

I will support a confirmatory vote in due course. I hope we can find a way to bring a deal back so that people can see what Brexit means, because even now—four days from a vote—we do not yet know what it means in practice.

The Queen's Speech is not all about Brexit. There are some measures regarding violent offenders. The question for me is: what has happened to the excellent work that was being done by the former Justice Secretary, the right hon. Member for South West Hertfordshire (Mr Gauke), who was talking about trying to abolish sentences of six months or less because they can cause people to struggle? Many people need clarity about how the Government are approaching the question of sentencing, because the Queen's Speech seems to include sentence inflation for serious offences, which we can debate and discuss in due course, but we have no statement about what is going to happen to people who are being imprisoned for less than six months on a regular basis. In such situations, there is no opportunity to intervene in offenders' behaviour or to turn their lives around, and we do not have the potential to make an impact on them through the prison system.

I would like to look in more detail at—but will probably welcome—the police covenant proposal that is included in the Gracious Speech. I met representatives of the Police Federation at the Labour party conference in Brighton this year, and they were very keen on the police covenant. We want that to happen and I can give Ministers cross-party support on that measure. We can also give Ministers cross-party support on replacing lost police officer numbers. The key test of that pledge is whether and how those police officers are going to be recruited, and over what period. There are questions to be answered such as how many police officers we are losing and how many we need to recruit to replace the 21,000 officers removed by this Government since I was the Policing Minister exactly 10 years ago, when there were lower levels of crime, including violent crime, more police officers, more security and more resolution of community issues than now. Over this 10-year period, violent crime has risen and crime has been more damaging. The sudden realisation that those police officers are needed is welcome, but we need to see how the plan will be delivered.

I welcome Helen's law, which will mean that murderers who have been concealing the location of their victim's body will not be allowed to leave prison until they reveal that location. That is fair and proper, and I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for St Helens North (Conor McGinn) for driving that measure forward.

I welcome the measures on trophy hunting. Again, we want to look at the details, but it is appalling that people can go on holiday to shoot tigers, leopards, lions, giraffes and a whole range of other animals, with no impunity. Stopping the import of materials resulting from trophy hunting is a very welcome proposal. I want to look at the details to see how UK citizens who are taking part in trophy hunting will be restricted in bringing back trophy-hunted animal parts to the United Kingdom.

I welcome the potential restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland, which is also key to the whole settlement of the Brexit issue. The helpful explanatory notes to the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill, which we need to return to in due course, state that we are going to:

“Clarify the immigration status of Irish citizens once the free movement migration framework is repealed. This means Irish citizens will generally not require leave to enter or remain in the UK.”

I question what the word “generally” means, because the Good Friday agreement, and the work I did as a Northern Ireland Minister, meant that people can identify as British or Irish, feel comfortable in that, and move around the United Kingdom and Ireland based on their identification. I worry about what “generally” actually means in practice.

I welcome the potential of some of the issues in the national infrastructure plan. We have a north Wales growth deal, as the Minister will know from when he briefly but successfully navigated his role in the Wales Office until he moved to his new position. I am sure he misses the Wales Office tremendously. I hope that he will be able to secure the north Wales growth deal as part of the national infrastructure plan as a matter of some urgency.

I want to finish on two issues that I had wanted to be included in the Gracious Speech. With regard to the forthcoming violent crime reduction Bill, the Minister and the House will know that there is severe concern about attacks on shop workers in their place of work. About 115 shop workers per day are attacked in the course of preventing shoplifting and upholding legislation on alcohol, tobacco and solvent sales—and now on knife and acid sales. Those shop workers are upholding the laws that we have passed in this House, and yet they have limited protection from this House accordingly. I am pleased that my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow West (Gareth Thomas) is here because, as a member of the Co-operative party, I know that it has pushed very hard for action on support for shop staff, as has my own trade union, USDAW. We secured from the Government a consultation that has been ongoing and is now closed. When the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, the hon. Member for Louth and Horncastle (Victoria Atkins), had responsibility for the issue of attacks on shop staff, she undertook to report back on the consultation by the end of November. I hope that the current Policing Minister will do so and that there will be outcomes from it that give protection to shop staff in their daily lives.

I hope that when the violent crime Bill is brought before the House, there will be an opportunity for action to be taken on protecting shop staff by giving greater support to measures that will discourage violence against them and ensuring that they live free from fear about their daily workplace. It is very important that we do that. There is certainly cross-party support in this House, but also from the British Retail Consortium, the National Federation of Retail Newsagents, USDAW, the Co-operative Group, and small supermarkets and stores right across the board. Nobody apart from the current Government has resisted the potential for action on this. I hope that the consultation that the Government have undertaken will prove fruitful, but I want to see it come back before Christmas, as promised.

My final point is about air weapons safety, on which I know there is a range of views in the House. In December 2017, the Government launched a review on the use and control of air weapons. I have an interest in that, because constituents of mine have been killed accidentally by the use of an air weapon when a lockable cabinet or a safety lock would have made a real difference to the safety of that weapon. That is one of the facets of the consultation. The consultation commenced on

[David Hanson]

12 December 2017. It closed on 6 February 2018. It is now 14 October 2019, and the Home Office has still not responded to the consultation on air weapons safety. My plea to Ministers is to conclude that consultation. I do not mind what Ministers say on that, but there is an opportunity to conclude the consultation. Constituents of mine have invested time and energy in putting points to the consultation, which is about the loss of their loved ones, to find that no response has been given to date. I want the Government to produce the consultation response. If they want to introduce measures on producing better airgun safety, such as requiring that airguns are kept in lockable cabinets, that could be done in the serious violence Bill. It could be done as part of the Home Office Christmas tree Bill, which we know will be in any Session, subject to any general election that occurs. My plea is for clarity on the outcome of the consultation, so that it can form part of legislation.

In conclusion, can the Minister give us some idea of what is happening on Saturday, and can he give us some idea of what is happening with the consultations on shop staff attacks and on airguns? Let us work together on areas where we have co-operation, including trophy hunting and infrastructure plans. Let us fight at some point the battle about the wider political discussion that the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield touched on, about capitalism versus Government intervention in an active, positive society. I believe that Government intervention and government is a force for good. It has given me the health service and health in life. It has given me education in life. It has given my family security of housing in life. It has given opportunities to millions of people across this country. An active Government who take a role in the future is what I seek in a future Labour Government, whenever the election comes.

5.46 pm

Sir Peter Bottomley (Worthing West) (Con): The hon. Member for East Dunbartonshire (Jo Swinson), the leader of the Liberal Democrat party, talked about Paddy Ashdown, our former colleague. He was one of the people who, in part, worked for my father in Geneva in the 1970s, and he is an example of why it is wrong to say that people who come into Parliament cannot do anything else.

There are many people who did many things before they came into Parliament, whether with domestic responsibilities or in professional or voluntary work, and there are many who do the same thing again when they leave. We ought to look on our debates in this place as a way of recruiting many others to stand for election and make contributions here.

Our contributions in this place are often about justice as much as law, and those two come together in the Queen's Speech in leasehold reform. The Government have said that they want to enshrine it in law that ground rents should be zero and that houses should not be sold unnecessarily as leasehold. That is a start, but a great deal more needs to be done.

Leasehold reform was accepted as a key element in the findings of the Government White Paper "Fixing our broken housing market". That White Paper produced a number of consultations, all of which accept the urgent

need for reform. We have been seeing leaseholders abused over the last 10 to 20 years, partly by mistake, partly by crooks and—too often, in the last 10 years—by ordinary commercial organisations that realise they can stuff their own pockets and those of their shareholders by exploiting the weakness of individuals, whether under Help to Buy or in other ways. I am grateful for the commitments made by Government on that.

The Government have accepted Lord Best's report recommending statutory regulation of managing agents. They have asked and funded the Law Commission to undertake a major review of leasehold and commonhold law. The Government have tasked officials in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government with supervising that work and asked them to carry out their own work on leasehold reform. Earlier this year, the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, led by the hon. Member for Sheffield South East (Mr Betts), produced an amazing report—as I have said before, it is one of the best Select Committee reports I have read in my time here—urging the Government to do even more.

The Competition and Markets Authority is, with a bit of encouragement, currently considering a potential investigation of major mis-selling activities by developers. I ask the Government to assure us that the reforms that have been considered over a number of years will now come forward. We have the chance to make big progress. It is in a bipartisan area, and it will make a difference to many of the people who live in the 5 million to 6 million leasehold homes—that might be 10 million people, which is a very high proportion of our electorate, to whom we are responsible.

I declare, as a matter of form, that I am a leaseholder in my constituency. We and five others bought the freehold. We had a good freeholder and a good managing agent. Separately, in about three years' time, I expect to buy a leasehold flat somewhere near here. I say that to avoid people thinking that I am serving my own interest.

I want to turn to two other issues, both relating to justice. The first is the case of Krishna Maharaj, who is in his 80s and who was convicted more than 20 years ago of two murders in Florida that he did not commit. I will then turn to the case of Gurpal Viridi, a Sikh former Metropolitan police sergeant who is still seeking justice for the way in which he was treated and prosecuted—unsuccessfully, obviously—for indecent assault.

Before that, I do not think one should totally ignore the contribution of the leader of the Scottish National party, the right hon. Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber (Ian Blackford), who keeps saying interesting things, often very loudly, and then drops his voice and says we should all be very calm in this place. I say calmly to the SNP that, if we are talking about elections, let us remember what happened in the 2017 election compared with that in 2015. The Scottish National party's share of the vote went down from 50% to about 37%, while the Conservatives' national share went up from about 37% to about 42%. The SNP always floats the idea that it has a majority, but that did not happen last time and I hope it does not happen next time.

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP) *rose*—

Sir Peter Bottomley: Have I provoked the hon. Gentleman? Of course I give way.

Patrick Grady: We still won a majority of seats in the 2017 election. We still have a very strong mandate to speak on behalf of the people of Scotland. It was the second best result in our party's history here.

Sir Peter Bottomley: I could have said that as well, and as gently too, but it is also worth remembering that having a greater number of seats does not mean that those Members speak for all the people in Scotland. I think they will accept that getting 37% means that other parties got 63%, and they deserve to talk, if not shout, as much as the hon. Gentleman's party.

I first met Krishna Maharaj in a Florida jail 22 years ago. It was two days after the funeral of Princess Diana, which is why I remember the date. He was said to have killed two people. There was no evidence that he had done so. The investigation was clearly wrong, and the work of Benedict Kuehne and Clive Stafford Smith of Reprieve has now proved that beyond reasonable doubt.

In fact, a magistrate in Florida has concluded that there is an at least 87% chance that the conviction was totally wrong; 87% is seven out of eight, meaning that there is only a one in eight chance that the prosecution was justified. Clive Stafford Smith has done really well. For those who want to look it up, I refer them—I am afraid that this is a bit detailed—to case No. 17-21965-CIV-Martinez/Otazo-Reyes of the United States district court of the southern district of Florida. The petitioner was Krishna Maharaj and the responder was Mark S. Inch, secretary of the Florida Department of Corrections. It was submitted by Benedict Kuehne and Clive Stafford Smith, and delivered on 7 October 2019.

On behalf of someone who is in 80s and has been in jail unnecessarily and wrongly for more than 20 years, I ask the Florida state to stop going for delay after delay. For someone of that age who has suffered an obvious injustice, the case should be reheard as soon as possible, and Krishna Maharaj should be released. He is British. He is from Trinidad. The whole saga is in Clive Stafford Smith's book. Following the magistrate's decision, I ask our American friends to ensure that the Florida authorities re-examine the case in court and then this injustice can be ended.

Krishna Maharaj's case reminds me of the days when I used to talk more often on such subjects. About seven times a year we would discover that people had been convicted in this country of murders that they either could not have committed or where the conviction was not safe. Some of those cases involved IRA attacks. Sometimes the authorities go too far.

I strongly support criminal justice reform and the need to ensure that the police can do their job more easily, more effectively and more openly. I pay tribute to the Metropolitan police and to members of the police services of other parts of the country who have come together in the past week or so to deal with the street campers and protestors in London.

I was surprised to discover that the so-called Extinction Rebellion had so much money that it could provide up to £400 a week in expenses to people who are ruining the lives of others trying to get to work in the capital city and earning less than £400 a week.

Given the selfishness and, if I may say so, foolishness of those who think it is a good game to take a holiday or receive expenses to come down to London and spread

around lots of nylon and plastic tents, most of which seem to get abandoned as though it is the Glastonbury festival, I think they ought to look themselves in the mirror and ask, "Are we doing the right thing in the right way?" I would argue that they are not. When I asked a number of them one evening, "Which G20 country has done more than this country?" none of them volunteered the name of another major country.

I will give the police all the support I can as they work with councils and schools to eradicate the rash of adolescent violence in some of our seaside towns. Young people should be involved in worthwhile activities. They should not be going around in gangs. When they start going astray, they ought to be caught and redirected to ways in which they can actually make something of their lives. Just because someone's family has a bad past is not an excuse for them to have a bad future. We need to turn people's lives around, and that is what I think justice should be.

Gurpal Virdi has been a friend of mine for about 30 years. I will not go through his previous experiences, but he is one of the very few minority ethnic officers who has actually got through to full retirement with the Metropolitan police. He was once fired for allegedly sending himself a National Front leaflet saying that black and Asian people were not wanted in the police. That got resolved in his favour. I was there when Bernard Hogan-Howe presented him with an award for exemplary conduct.

Following an attack similar to that on my constituent Stephen Lawrence, Gurpal Virdi left his police station in Ealing, found two of the attackers and the attack weapon, and went to see the family to give them information and comfort. After he retired, he did various things voluntarily and for money. Importantly, he stood as a Labour candidate and was mentored by the present Mayor of London, whom I suggest should get in touch with him to give him the support he should have given him all the way through.

Gurpal Virdi was told that he was being charged with indecent assault, with an extendable truncheon, on someone under the age of 16. The police investigation was not done by the historical sexual offences group; it was passed to the directorate of professional standards, which had been at fault in some of his other disputes with the police.

The one thing it knew all the way along was that extendable truncheons, which the complainant was certain had been shoved up his bottom, were not made available until 10 years later. The police statements from others then serving in Battersea said that they had not seen one until 1997, and the alleged offence took place in 1986.

Every single statement of so-called fact by the complainant was contradicted by the only serious witness put forward by the police. The fact that the event did not happen, that the witness was not there and that Gurpal Virdi was not involved can be viewed as side issues, because the statements made by the so-called witness contradicted what the so-called complainant said in his so-called claim.

It was also known that Gurpal Virdi had arrested this complainant five months later in the company of another named officer. The only known records were the identity of the officer in charge who had arrested the complainant in November 1986; that Gurpal Virdi and another officer

[*Sir Peter Bottomley*]

had arrested him in March the following year when there was a warrant out for him; and that the police knew that Gurpal Viridi had taken the complainant's fingerprints in March 1987. That was not disclosed on time to the defence. The officer who was with Gurpal Viridi in March '87 was not interviewed. The police officer who was in charge in November '86 did not put a statement to court; we heard later that he had said that he could not remember anything about the incident, which had probably been only a simple arrest, as used to happen. When Gurpal Viridi asked the then Independent Police Complaints Commission to look into the matter, it was passed on to the Metropolitan police, who passed it to the department of professional standards—the investigator into whose conduct the Met was supposed to be looking. The department said that it had done everything right. I say that it did everything wrong, and I ask the new Independent Office for Police Conduct, if it has the powers, to form its own investigation. I ask the inspectorate of police to do that, too.

I conclude by saying this. Operation Midland, into what “Nick”—Carl Beech—said, is going to be reviewing a number of things. I ask for two things. One is that Ministers and the Metropolitan police consider getting someone such as Sir Richard Henriques to give a week to looking at the Viridi case—it would not take more than that.

I then ask the review of Operation Midland to look into Operation Gianna and ask especially how the gold group, the supervising group in the Metropolitan police—I think it went from the deputy commissioner all the way down—managed to overlook every single bit of evidence showing that Gurpal Viridi was innocent. He should not have been charged. There should have been a proper investigation, and he should have been exonerated.

6.1 pm

Gareth Thomas (Harrow West) (Lab/Co-op): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Worthing West (Sir Peter Bottomley). Let me be the latest Member to congratulate him on his long-running leadership of the campaign for leasehold reform; I am thinking of my constituents who have had to suffer from the mismanagement of their leasehold arrangements by Redrow and Persimmon. The hon. Gentleman's case for more substantive leasehold reform is well made, and I hope that there will be urgent action on that. As a Member of the Co-operative party as well as the Labour party, I have always supported the principle of commonhold. However, I recognise that we have much to do to establish commonhold as the norm in England and Wales. I hope that reforms will allow that to happen.

I want to concentrate my remarks on the state of our public services and on Brexit. As a proud Co-op MP, I am disappointed, but not entirely surprised, to see once again nothing in a Queen's Speech about how the Government might want to help the co-operative movement expand. There is nothing to help energy co-operatives expand to grow the usage of renewable energy still further, which is essential if we are to get our emissions down quicker. There is nothing to help housing co-operatives expand to tackle the housing crisis, particularly, but not exclusively, in London. There is nothing to help co-operative schools either.

I share the disappointment of the co-op movement that there is no commitment in the Queen's Speech to bring forward as a matter of urgency legislation to reform the rules on credit unions. The Government know that there is a growing consensus within the credit union movement on what needs to happen to release credit unions from some of the red tape that holds back their expansion, yet there is no commitment to legislate on that. Some of the legislation that governs other forms of co-operatives dates from the Victorian era and needs to be modernised. Work by the Law Commission and a commitment to legislate for reform would have been timely.

It is the biggest co-op businesses that struggle on occasion to get access to the level of capital that they need to expand, and that is where there is the most urgent need for Government legislation. Withdrawable shares could help the biggest co-ops, such as the Co-op Group, to expand and go to the capital markets without their co-operative status being threatened. Such legislation has been successfully introduced in Australia, and I hope that the Treasury will move forward on this issue in the next 12 months.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Delyn (David Hanson) set out, the Co-operative party has long supported action to reduce violence against shop workers; his leadership of the effort to get the Government to legislate has been notable. I add my voice to his in hoping that we will see significant Government movement on that very soon.

It feels as if there is nothing in this programme suggesting that the Prime Minister, the Health Secretary, the Education Secretary or the Home Secretary truly have a plan to tackle the crisis in our public services. The crisis in the national health service and social care facing my constituents is the most urgent issue that I want to address. The three major hospitals serving my constituency are all either directly in crisis or clearly exhibiting signs of the huge pressures that they are under. Alternatives to acute care in my constituency and the neighbouring ones are being closed. Three walk-in centres have either closed or are being closed. Primary care in my constituency is under growing strain. GP surgeries report increasing difficulties in recruiting staff, and the users of those surgeries report increasing difficulty in getting appointments. The clinical commissioning group and the trust are millions of pounds in the red and have often been in the red in the past. Nothing suggests that the deficits that they have at the moment are likely to get significantly better in the coming years.

I turn to something that many on these—and, I suspect, the Government—Benches will recognise. Years ago our local council had to give up providing social care to all but the most chronically in need. It is fair to say that they are struggling even to do that successfully, given the shortage of funding in local government. In May, an independent inquiry by clinical experts ruled that Mount Vernon Hospital, one of the three that serves my constituency, can no longer operate safely—that it is unviable and cannot maintain the safety of its patients. It is a 117-year-old cancer hospital. It is so dilapidated and short of doctors and nurses that it cannot provide modern cancer care or even basic elements of treatment, such as consultants undertaking daily ward rounds, new inpatients being reviewed within 14 hours of arrival, or rapid access to diagnostic testing and results.

It is the first time in the history of the national health service that a major facility, specialising in this country's biggest disease—cancer—now poses a direct risk to patients and has been declared unfit for purpose. It was therefore astonishing that when the Health Secretary recently announced funding for building six hospitals and for work on a bunch of other hospitals, Mount Vernon Hospital was not included in the mix. I hope that we will shortly hear some sense of a plan for investment in Mount Vernon Hospital to keep the hugely valued cancer facilities there, which until now have been hugely successful. There is a huge affinity with the hospital and its staff, and it urgently needs the Government to show it a little care and attention.

Central Middlesex Hospital serves my constituents in part and it also needs a little love and attention from the Government. Only 10 years ago, after considerable investment, it was being marked out as the future for the NHS—a hospital able to get people in and out very quickly. Ten years on, its accident and emergency department has closed—permanently, some five years ago—and now its urgent treatment centre has closed at nights. Many in its vicinity worry about what is coming next.

The major acute hospital serving my constituency is Northwick Park Hospital, which is under huge pressure. Northwick Park hospital last met the four-hour accident and emergency target—95% of attendance lasting no longer than four hours—over five years ago, in August 2014. For the first half of this year, from April to September, demand for A&E services was up again, by 4%, which is vastly higher than the average of 0.2% across the rest of London. Occupancy rates for bed usage across the trust are above the national average. Staff vacancy rates appear to be significantly above the national average too, at almost 20% for medical staff and over 13% for nursing staff. Porters, cleaners and caterers, who do such essential jobs, are being paid less than the London living wage, while the chief executive of company they work for, Medirest, has a salary of over £1 million. It is hardly surprising that the staff should be contemplating industrial action.

It is, however, the scale of backlog maintenance at Northwick Park that particularly bears highlighting. According to its risk register, over £38 million is needed to tackle the high and significant risks that have been identified around the Northwick Park estate.

Some seven years ago, Ministers and Conservative Members of Parliament decided to use north-west London as a health experiment and brought forward a document, "Shaping a Healthier Future". Over six years, it set out to close a number of A&E departments and spent over £75 million on consultants. This was going to be the way in which other services, including those that serve my constituency such as Northwick Park, were going to see additional investment. No additional investment has been forthcoming. After huge campaigns, two of the four A&E departments that Ministers wanted to shut, Ealing and Charing Cross, have been saved. However, Hammersmith and, as I alluded to earlier, Central Middlesex, have closed. It is difficult to see what has been achieved to make things better for my constituents directly, other than increasing demand on our acute hospital.

To be fair, some of the original analysis in the "Shaping a Healthier Future" programme was prescient, even if the resulting strategy was deeply flawed. We have a

significantly growing population. There are huge health inequalities in our area. We have an ageing population and modern lifestyles are exacerbating some of the care needs that my constituents face. "Shaping a Healthier Future" did set out a need for significant new investment and a bid for over £500 million was submitted to the Department of Health and Social Care and the Treasury last year. Included in that were efforts to tackle the maintenance backlog across all the hospitals in north-west London, including Northwick Park, which serves my constituency. That bid was rejected last summer and, so far, nothing has been brought forward in terms of significant new moneys to tackle the issues that "Shaping a Healthier Future" originally identified.

Seven years ago, the authors of that document were a little prescient in that they wrote:

"Unless things change, we predict that most hospitals in NW London will end up in financial difficulties."

That has certainly been proved right for Brent and Harrow. London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust, which runs Central Middlesex and Northwick Park hospitals, is over £30 million in the red. Harrow clinical commissioning group, which serves my constituents, is over £40 million in deficit. It has been in deficit since it was first set up and no one expects that to change anytime soon unless there were to be, as there should be, a significant increase in funding for the NHS. What is even more worrying is that London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust, to try to reduce the scale of its deficit, had to sell off land owned by the NHS.

The particular issue that my constituents have noticed in the crisis in NHS care is the closure of walk-in centres. In November last year, Alexandra Avenue walk-in centre closed. It had been open from 8 am to 8 pm, 365 days a year, allowing people in my constituency to walk in off the streets and see a nurse or a doctor usually within 15 or 20 minutes. Belmont walk-in centre, which serves the constituency of Harrow East primarily as well as some of my constituents in Wealdstone, is set to close at the beginning of next month. The Pinn medical centre, which serves the northern part of my constituency but is located in Pinner, Ruislip and Northwood, is being earmarked for closure, too. There is a funding crisis in the NHS and it needs to be sorted as a matter of urgency, in particular in my constituency.

It is now seven years since we had a police force in Harrow that was recognisably up to the task of tackling violent crime and antisocial behaviour. Then, we had a sergeant, two constables and three police community support officers in every ward of my constituency. The Mayor of London has done what he can do to make sure there are dedicated police constables and a PCSO in each ward, but £1 million extra a year needs to go into the Metropolitan police budget if we are to be able to return to having dedicated neighbourhood, ward-based teams with sufficient officers to tackle crime.

I echo the concerns of other Opposition Members about our future relationship with the European Union, which is the big issue dominating the Queen's Speech. I am a pragmatic pro-European. As a Minister who went to Brussels on what sometimes felt like more than a regular basis, it was not always easy to feel passionate about the European Union. One saw it up close, warts and all. However, when one stands back from those occasional frustrations, the case for staying in the European

[Gareth Thomas]

Union remains compelling: our economy is stronger, our security is enhanced and our influence on the world stage is much greater.

Following the referendum result, I voted to respect that result by triggering article 50 to allow formal negotiations to begin. However, every Brexit scenario advanced by the Conservative party suggests that our economy would be significantly poorer and our influence on the global stage much more limited. My right hon. Friend the Member for Delyn rightly alluded to the fact that until our future relationship with the European Union is resolved crucial elements of the security of our country remain very substantially at risk. To his list, I would add the issue of people smuggling. We have to co-operate across the European Union to tackle the gangs who try to transport people illegally into our country.

A no-deal Brexit is without question the worst of all the Brexit scenarios that have been advocated. One heard last week the statement by the president of Nissan that there may well not be a future for Nissan in the UK under a no-deal Brexit scenario. Manufacturers giving evidence to the International Trade Committee, on which I have the privilege to sit, set out the huge damage to the steel sector a no-deal Brexit would deliver. There is, perhaps, a compromise to be had. It requires the current occupant of No. 10 to be a little bolder in taking on the European Research Group on his own Back Benches and to agree that any deal he negotiates must be put back to the British people. Then and only then should we have the election that I suspect we all want, on both sides of the House.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition that this is an odd time to be having a Queen's Speech. It does not answer any of the significant challenges facing our country and I look forward to opposing it next week.

6.19 pm

Sir David Amess (Southend West) (Con): I support today's Gracious Speech. I have spoken on the first day of every Gracious Speech debate since I was first elected to Parliament, but never under these circumstances. The atmosphere is a little strange. We are all a little subdued, perhaps because colleagues are stressed out for various reasons, although that is not to say that the quality of the speeches from my hon. Friend the Member for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley), who is no longer in his place, and my hon. Friend the Member for Truro and Falmouth (Sarah Newton) was not absolutely splendid.

This really is a broken Parliament, but I have some good news. I, a Scottish National party Member, the hon. Member for Glasgow North (Patrick Grady), who happens to be in the Chamber, and some Labour and Conservative colleagues were all in Rome yesterday for the beatification—

Patrick Grady: The canonisation.

Sir David Amess: The canonisation of Cardinal Newman—it was the first of an Englishman for 50 years. The House should know that we asked the Holy Father if he would pray for a miracle so that we can deliver Brexit—*[Interruption.]* When we asked him if the next canonisation

would be of a British Member of Parliament, his eyes lifted up to heaven. A number of us are feeling slightly spiritual at this rather sombre occasion, as today has been thus far.

Patrick Grady: I put on record that there was a great degree of cross-party consensus, but praying for a miracle to deliver Brexit was absolutely not part of the SNP's contribution.

Sir David Amess: That was a faux pas on my part, but I think we got on pretty well. We share similar levels of stress and we just want the thing to be over.

I voted initially for us not to join the European Union. I voted for us to leave the European Union when we had the referendum, never thinking for a moment that we would have another referendum, and I was absolutely shocked at the result. No Liberal Democrat Members are in the Chamber at the moment, but I pay tribute to them because their view has been consistent. However, I do not see anything liberal or democratic about their policy.

I had the privilege of helping to chair the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill Committee. There was a first-class debate in the Chamber from Members on both sides of the House. Reflecting on that debate now, I simply do not understand why, when it came to the vote to trigger article 50, such a huge number of Members voted for that process. If we had not triggered the process, we would not be where we are now. Anyway, I hope that a miracle happens, Brexit is fixed and we leave the European Union on 31 October.

The reason I like to speak on this particular day is that we can speak about anything, as a number of colleagues have demonstrated, but bizarrely, I will keep my remarks close to the Gracious Speech. The Leader of the Opposition made an interesting speech, but I did not feel an atmosphere of good will. He seemed reluctant to say that he would support any of the measures. Surely in a broken Parliament, there are at least half a dozen measures that, cross-party, we could support. He said one particular thing that I agree with and I will come to that later.

The last Session was, of course, the longest parliamentary Session since the civil war. I attend business questions every Thursday. Opposition Members said, "When are we going to get the Queen's Speech?" Well, we have it, so it should be celebrated that we have a new Session. The point I am particularly interested in is the wonderful line about measures to be announced. Besides the 22 measures, there will be many more. As far as Brexit is concerned, I have given my view already. Even if I had a different view, I would follow what my constituents voted for in the referendum: 58% voted to leave and 42% voted to remain.

In terms of cross-party support, I would have thought that the Opposition could support the animal welfare measures. We recently had a debate about the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill. It fell at Prorogation, but it can be carried over, and everyone should be pleased that "dumb animals" will have protection if the legislation is carried. We will ban the imports of trophy-hunted animals and all the other barbaric practices whereby going on safari is advertised and when people get there, the animals are all caged up. How people can celebrate

standing on such a beautiful thing as an elephant or a rhinoceros, I do not understand, so the House should support those measures.

Over the years, we have spoken about laws to recognise the sentience of animals. The UK has been a global leader in this area for as long as I can remember, and I pay tribute to the Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation, of which I am a patron. I am very glad that the Queen's Speech suggests that we will do something about that issue.

I know that no Minister sums up this debate on the first day but, if we ever get to day six, I would like an answer to the question about pet passports. In terms of when we negotiate the withdrawal Bill, a number of my constituents have asked whether we are going to continue with the reciprocal arrangements, so that those remain in place for them when they take their dogs or cats abroad.

There is another point that the House should surely agree on. Only last week, we had a wonderful debate about the Domestic Abuse Bill, when the House was at its very best and we heard a number of splendid speeches. I am absolutely delighted that that Bill has been carried over. If we really are going to vote down the Queen's Speech, it would be a great shame if that Bill is lost.

I was on the Health Committee for 10 years. You reach a point where you just go round and round in circles in the inquiries that are held, but I was really pleased that we announced in the Queen's Speech that we would have an integrated care Bill. Our NHS is a huge organisation. The treatment that we get from general practitioners, hospitals, pharmacists and other services is absolutely essential, but it is important that we have joined-up healthcare. I hope that that is what the Bill will mean, and it is certainly something that the Conservative party has been promising ever since we formed the coalition Government in 2010.

The morale of our staff who work in the NHS is very important. I am very glad that they have been given a reasonable pay rise. I visited my local hospital recently. Every single ward does a splendid job. I suppose that this will go down like a lead balloon, but I am going to pick out the Elizabeth Loury ward, which deals with particularly ill patients. I thought that the staff were absolutely amazing and when I went to congratulate them, a patient who was hooked up to all sorts of machines heard what I was saying and forced their way out to say, "I want to agree with you: they are doing an absolutely wonderful job." I would have thought that all Members of Parliament would agree that we should praise the work that they do. All this talk about the privatisation of the health service is absolute rubbish, as far as I am concerned.

The Royal College of Nursing's staffing for safe and effective care campaign was brought to my attention at the recent Conservative party conference, and I am glad that the Queen's Speech included matters relating to support for the NHS workforce, which the RCN believes should be at the heart of Government policy.

Earlier this month we had another really good debate on women's mental health, led by the hon. Member for Bath (Wera Hobhouse), who is no longer in her place, with first-class contributions from colleagues. I think it was the hon. Member for Liverpool, Wavertree (Luciana Berger)—she has recently joined the Liberal

Democrats—who said that we need more money for mental health services. We would all say amen to that, but it is a question of balance. In that debate, I spoke about two inspiring local women, Kelly Swain and Carla Cressy. Both those ladies run charities in my local area, and I know that access to Government funding would represent a significant boost to their organisations. I hope that we will look at how clinical commissioning groups and the Department of Health and Social Care can work together to ensure that money goes to small charities.

I said I agreed with the Leader of the Opposition on one point, and that was Grenfell. We all remember waking up after the election and seeing the terrible scenes. The hon. Member for Kensington (Emma Dent Coad), who was newly elected, made a fantastic speech, and we have had some very good debates. I am the chairman of the all-party parliamentary fire safety and rescue group, and I absolutely agree with the Leader of the Opposition that we should fit sprinklers retrospectively in high-rise buildings. No new school should be built without sprinklers being fitted, and I agreed with his point about new building safety standards. Following Dame Judith Hackitt's review, it is important that the House gets behind the legislation, about which I hope to hear more detail.

At the recent Conservative party conference, I met the British Heart Foundation, and the statistics it gave us on UK air pollution were truly shocking. From the reports that I have read, the environment Bill about which we have heard today will address not only poor air quality but the protection of landscapes and habitats. I am glad that my right hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Theresa Villiers) is the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We all know that to deliver a clean environment we must promote electric cars. I am surrounded on these Benches by experts in the technology of electric cars. I am no expert, but I now understand much more about hybrid cars than I did. At the conference, I met representatives of the industry who mentioned serious concerns about the lack of charging points available across the country, with just one charging point in my constituency, and a total of five in the whole of Southend. It is essential that the infrastructure legislation that will be introduced improves that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Worthing West (Sir Peter Bottomley) mentioned Extinction Rebellion. I do not want to be a hypocrite about this. I collected my tree, as did a huge number of colleagues. I got a beech tree, which will be used for hedging. Umpteen people locally would like more trees. I promised the chap who gave me the tree that I would mention his opinion that, while what the Government are doing at the moment with tree-planting programmes is good, we need to plant billions of trees. Quite where billions of trees could be put, I do not know. All I would say is that in Southend West we have an active tree-planting campaign, and I am sure there is plenty of space in Scotland to plant even more trees.

Vicky Ford: I thank my great Essex neighbour and hon. Friend for giving way. In Chelmsford, on one of our new developments, we have recently planted 70,000 tree whips and shrubs. Perhaps he would like to come and check out how we did it.

Sir David Amess: I eat my words. If my hon. Friend has room for 70,000 trees in Chelmsford, perhaps we have a bit more room in Southend, although we are a bit restricted by the Thames estuary. I will look at that with the local authority. Even though the protests were controversial, I thought the tree planting thing was worth while.

I recently had a meeting with the excellent new Exchequer Secretary about the cost of vehicle excise duty, and I was joined by the National Caravan Council and the Caravan and Motorhome Club. All Members have caravan and motorhome owners in their constituencies. Recent changes have meant a 705% increase in vehicle excise duty on those vehicles, which I think is totally unfair. It is meant as an incentive for owners to buy alternative products, but they are not available at the moment. Many of the owners are of modest means. They have saved diligently to enjoy their retirement and they cannot afford an extra £2,000. I am delighted that we will have a Budget on 6 November and I hope that we can do the trick there.

I am glad about the announcements on law and order in the Gracious Address. I have always thought that the number of people in prison should not be a badge of honour. The fewer people in prison the better, and the present situation just shows that prison does not work. Prison should be for the most violent offenders, and I hope that we can get the balance right.

On the subject of law and order, Harvey Proctor was my predecessor in Basildon and a near neighbour. Ted Heath and Leon Brittan were also colleagues, and Lord Bramall was a Member in the Lords. I know Harvey Proctor very well, and his life has been destroyed and broken. He has lost everything. When he had to leave Parliament, he only survived because half a dozen colleagues had a whip-round and set him up in a shirt shop. What has been done to his life is a disgrace. I hope that he gets compensation as quickly as possible and that the conduct of that case is carefully considered.

I am pleased about education: with our excellent Minister for School Standards, the minimum level of funding per pupil for secondary schools is up to £5,000 and £4,000 for primary schools. I was lobbied by the musicians' passport campaign, and I ask the Government to agree to introduce touring visas for musicians and other creatives. A constituent raised with me the issue of blue badges, and whether they will be reciprocal when we leave the European Union.

If I was disappointed by any element of the Queen's Speech, it was the lack of a sentence about Southend becoming a city. There was a big moment for me on 25 July, because the Prime Minister said at the Dispatch Box that Southend could become a city. I will hold him to that. I have already had a letter from a Minister saying that we need some sort of royal event to hold a city contest. Well, the Duke of Edinburgh is coming up to 100, so we could make that the reason, and the Queen will soon be the longest reigning monarch anywhere in the world. It was a splendid Queen's Speech, and I am just so glad that Southend will become a city next year on the centenary of our mayoralty.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): Order. This is obviously a magnificent debate, and I do not want to place any undue stress on colleagues, but

there are still 14 Members wishing to speak. If colleagues speak for more than 15 minutes, it may put a bit of pressure on others later.

6.40 pm

Angela Crawley (Lanark and Hamilton East) (SNP): I will endeavour to be a tad briefer than some of my colleagues on both sides of the House.

This Queen's Speech was delivered against a backdrop of chaos and a political crisis that we have never seen before. It was nothing more than an expensive distraction from the shambles that is Boris Johnson's premiership. While I am more than happy to pay tribute to the hon. Members for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley) and for Truro and Falmouth (Sarah Newton), who opened the debate, I think it is clear that, as was said, the Government are desperate to hold on to the Union of this Kingdom. Perhaps a more apt choice of Fleetwood Mac lyric than "Don't stop thinking about tomorrow" would have been "Chain, keep us together", because that is what they are hoping for. The fact is that, despite the pomp and ceremony, none of the announced Bills will be implemented before a general election, and I think that the Government know that.

The right hon. Member for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn) outlined his ambitions to scrap the benefit freeze, the rape clause, the two-child tax and the bedroom tax. I was pleased to note that he had a copy of the 2017 Scottish National party manifesto. We have been espousing those policies for the best part of five years, and it is good that he has finally caught up with our programme. It was good of the SNP to help him out by writing his manifesto; I know that he needs a bit of inspiration.

Sadly, the Queen's Speech cannot be delivered by this Government. In their current form, they would be lucky to do so. The hon. Member for Southend West (Sir David Amess) said that he was praying for miracles. Let me say with the greatest respect: the Government need a miracle to get this Queen's Speech passed.

Not only did the Prime Minister lie to the Queen about Prorogation, but he has now brought her to this place to launch his election campaign. If we hear the words "Get Brexit done" one more time—perhaps someone will tell me, and the rest of the UK, exactly what that means. In fact, it is meaningless, and it detracts from the real problems that we face across the UK, and with which the Government have to deal. We have heard vague promises of hospitals, police on the streets and better education. We in Scotland know exactly how to deliver an education system, a police system and a justice system, because we in Scotland have been doing that successfully. In the crisis that is Westminster, it is the SNP Government who are delivering for Scotland.

Ironically, the Government appear to be putting law and order front and centre of their ambition to return to power. That would surprise most people, given that the Prime Minister was recently found to have broken the law by the highest court in the land, and consistently says that he will do the same again at the end of the month. We have a Parliament in turmoil, a Government without a mandate and a Prime Minister with no power, yet we find ourselves in the House delivering the election manifesto of the Conservative party through the vehicle of the Queen's Speech.

The Government are cutting taxes for the rich while cutting services for the rest of us. Rather than using the Queen's Speech to address the glaring inequalities across the country, the Prime Minister used it to announce a crackdown on our European neighbours entering the country, a move that would be devastating for my constituency and for Scotland. In Scotland we have a problem with emigration, not immigration, and this proposal proves how out of touch the Government are with the wishes of the people of Scotland. It does not need to be said again, but I will say it again none the less: Scotland voted to remain in the EU, and the Government have shown a flagrant disregard for the will of the Scottish people. *[Interruption.]* I am happy to take an intervention, if the hon. Member for Corby (Tom Pursglove) would like to make one. No? Then I will carry on.

Mhairi Black: As you were.

Angela Crawley: As I was saying, EU citizens from outwith the UK who are living in Scotland make up just over 3% of our population. They enrich our culture, strengthen our society and boost our economy. Leaving the EU and ending freedom of movement could cost Scotland up to £2 billion in tax revenues. I would like to understand how MPs who also represent Scotland on this side of the House intend to answer to their constituents when the general election comes. For Scotland that is not a price worth paying, and Scotland is not willing to pay it.

In my constituency, thousands of EU nationals are anxious about their future. I recently held a surgery specifically for those who are concerned about their future in the UK post Brexit, and the response was heartbreaking. Women in their 80s are planning to leave the place they have called home, families fear that they will have to return to a place that their kids will not recognise because they have never lived there, and young people are angry about the fact that their opportunities are being removed by this Government. Their anxiety was not relieved when the Minister for Security threatened EU nationals with deportation from the UK if they did not apply for settled status. We all know that the Government's response has been woeful.

Europeans who work in our health service, support local businesses and help to grow our economy now face the full force of the Tories' hostile environment. As if it were not bad enough to be happy to target anyone who does not look like a British citizen, they now want to target EU nationals who contribute to healthcare, contribute to the economy and contribute to Scotland. They are happy to tell us that those people must apply for settled status in a home in which they have lived for most, if not the entirety, of their adult lives.

I cannot support a Queen's Speech that is inward-looking and ignores the problems that my constituents face. Rather than focusing on blocking EU nationals entering the UK, the Government could have used today's events to announce a halt to universal credit, a failed policy that has been wreaking havoc in my constituency, causing people to turn to foodbanks and crisis grants just to feed themselves. That is this Government's record. That is the record that we are not hearing about from the Prime Minister, but that is the record that the Government will face at the ballot box: a policy that is leaving local

authorities out of pocket by millions of pounds, and picking up the pieces for a private sector that is increasingly reluctant to accept universal credit claimants.

The Prime Minister could also have announced compensation for the 1950s women whose pensions were removed from them with no consultation, or he could have called an end to the benefits freeze—another policy that has been in our manifesto for quite some time. Instead, in a room full of lords and ladies, the Queen, sitting on a golden throne, read a party political broadcast written by an unelected Prime Minister with no working majority, announcing the continuation of punitive policies that have harmed the most vulnerable in society.

Today has proved again how out of touch this place is. Scotland deserves the choice of a better future than the one that is being imposed upon it. It is clearer than ever that the only way to protect Scotland's interests properly is for it to become an independent country.

6.48 pm

David Tredinnick (Bosworth) (Con): I am most grateful to be called to speak on this first day of the Queen's Speech debate. I echo colleagues' remarks about the excellence of the speeches that we heard at the beginning from my hon. Friends the Members for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley) and for Truro and Falmouth (Sarah Newton).

I do not know whether you recall, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the House of Commons gift shop used to sell a fridge magnet featuring the words of a certain British comedian, Spike Milligan. My hon. Friend the Member for Southend West (Sir David Amess) remembers it. Those words were "One day the don't knows will get in, and then where will we be?" I fear that there is a danger that we shall be known as the "don't know Parliament".

This is the second Long Parliament. My hon. Friend the Member for Southend West referred to the first Long Parliament and he may recall what Oliver Cromwell said on 20 April 1653:

"Ye are grown intolerably odious to the whole nation; you were deputed here by the people to get grievances redress'd...In the name of God, go!"

My hon. Friend is nodding.

I pray, in the earnest sense of the word, that on Saturday this House determines this matter of Brexit. I speak as a just-remainer who represents a midlands constituency that voted 60/40 out. I believe I have a moral duty to get my constituents out of Europe, and that the authority of the electorate—we delegated power to the electorate—supersedes anything passed by this House. It may be a legal nicety that the referendum was not legally binding, but woe betide this House if it ignores the will of the people.

We need a bit of luck in politics, and I cannot believe my luck seeing the Minister of State for Health my hon.—or probably right hon.—Friend the Member for Gosport (Caroline Dinenage) sitting on the Front Bench, because I am intending to talk about health. Of course, one of the problems with the Queen's Speech is that if we try to talk about the subject we wish to talk about someone like you, Madam Deputy Speaker, gets up and says "We have to restrict the debate to four"—or three or two—"minutes," so we end up with no debate at all.

[David Tredinnick]

As my perspicacious hon. Friend the Member for Southend West knows and pointed out, one of the joys of being lucky enough to be called on the first day, however, is that we might get a chance to make a longer speech, so I am particularly grateful to be called, and I want to talk about the health measures in the Queen's Speech and, if I have time, say a word about the environment.

I absolutely welcome the 40 new hospitals that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has committed to, and I am particularly excited because Leicester, with the Royal Infirmary, the General and Glenfield, is going to be part of that massive hospital upgrade programme. I would like to think that when my right hon. Friend the Health Secretary came to Hinckley and saw what we were doing there—he visited an integrated healthcare clinic, where he saw chiropractors and massage therapists working together, apart from the main hospital—that might have influenced his decision.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it will be no secret to you and possibly the Minister of State that I have argued pretty much all my parliamentary career for integrated healthcare. I note that an integrated healthcare Bill was referred to in the Queen's Speech, but I do not think it is quite the integration that I have been looking for, which is a wider range of treatments available on the NHS. I will go further today, in what might be my last speech—it will certainly be my last contribution to a Queen's Speech debate—in what has so far been a 32-year career as I am standing down and say that, despite my support for these 40 hospitals, I think we need a new health paradigm. If we look around at what is happening outside—the Attenborough effect, worries about plastics and the Antarctic, not to mention activities recently—we can see that what we really need now is a sustainable healthcare policy. [Interruption.] My hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Bob Stewart) is getting a phone message.

Bob Stewart: It is totally in support of you.

David Tredinnick: I am glad, and I wasn't expecting that; Madam Deputy Speaker, I hope you will waive the rule that says electronic devices are not allowed to be used in support of a cause.

We really need a new paradigm. We need a new health paradigm and that paradigm must look at the carbon footprint of drugs among other things, and it must look at how we are deploying resources in the health service. I have to say to my hon. Friend the Minister that there is a reluctance on the part of the medical establishment to share any space or any resources with anything it does not control itself. I cite in evidence the Osteopaths Act 1993 and the Chiropractors Act 1994. I sat on both those Bills; they were private Members' Bills and they became Acts of Parliament. We were told beforehand, "The osteopaths and chiropractors do not have proper regulations so how can we bring them into the health service?" Well, they have now got proper regulation; they are regulated by Acts of Parliament, but where in the country do we find them working with orthopaedic surgeons? The osteopaths and the chiropractors have a carbon zero footprint—and the western acupuncturists for that matter have a carbon zero footprint—and they can help these practitioners in our hospitals. I would

like to see a small percentage of the money going to these new hospitals put towards a broader base of treatment.

The Professional Standards Authority was set up by the Government to regulate, with oversight, a whole range of professions from sports therapists to all sorts of other therapists. I have argued so many times that the Government should respect the PSA's own request that it be taken seriously and can refer cases that it sees to doctors. It is almost as if it does not exist. The Government speak with forked tongue on this, and I am really concerned about it, so I ask my hon. Friend—who perhaps will be winding up the debate—if she will look at that.

One third of the world's population already has sustainable healthcare so this is hardly a novel approach. China, which has a population of 1.4 billion, has its traditional 4,000-year-old herbal medicine system and acupuncture, and India has a sustainable health ministry and a 4,000-year-old medical system plus the world's greatest usage of homeopathy.

I have just been to India for a week at the request of its Government; I was invited by the Government to see what was going on. I went because on 17 January I had a chance to ask a question of a man I respect, Sir Andrew Dillon, who is the chairman of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. I said to him, "I can't understand why you and your committee are dithering over whether acupuncture works for lower back pain—it has been on and off. Have any of your team been to China or India where the critical mass is, to see what is going on?" and he said, "No, we haven't; we haven't got the money." In fairness to NICE, its budget has been cut by 30%.

I do not pretend to be an academic—I am a politician—but I did do research at Oxford under Professor Sammy Finer of All Souls and Gillian Peele at Lady Margaret Hall for a research degree in the '80s, and they always said to me, "If you're doing research, go to the biggest base of information you can find." Yet NICE has been making decisions on tiny numbers of people—a few homeopaths in Liverpool, a couple of different groups of herbalists and acupuncturists. Why on earth are we not looking at the two biggest countries in the world that use these systems?

As I have said, I have been to India for a week as the guest of the Government. The Secretary of State knows all about this as I have talked to him about it; I was their guest and I shall declare it in the Register of Members' Financial Interests, but I paid for the flights. The AYUSH Ministry—Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa and Homoeopathy—covers a range of disciplines, but I want to dispose first of one component, and that is homeopathy. I want to dispose of this to give some idea of the scale of the operation. Here in the UK, the tiny group of homeopaths has been under constant pressure in recent years from so-called sceptics saying that there is no evidence. When I was in Delhi, I met Dr Raj Manchanda who runs the Government services in Delhi. Delhi has 6,000 homeopathic clinics, with 15,000 registered homeopathic practitioners, of whom 80% are doctors who have had five years' training. They practise in almost every street. I also went to the homeopathic institute and teaching hospital in Calcutta. On a 14-acre site, I found three different lines of patients waiting in areas the size of the New Palace Yard.

The hospital was treating some 2,000 patients a day, off season, and 3,400 in the hot season, with 100 doctors and postgrads on duty at any one time.

This is the evidence we could look at. How can we possibly accept that there is no evidence when in the whole of India homeopathy—which was exported from London to India during the British time and caught on—has 300,000 practitioners, 250,000 of whom are doctors, treating an average 20,000 patients a day? I will leave that now. I know that not everybody wants to hear me going on about homeopathy—[*Interruption.*] Well, doesn't it make it look ridiculous? There are a quarter of a million homeopathic doctors there, yet somebody here who is not very well qualified is saying that there is no evidence. I really think we should look at this. A lot of Indian homeopaths come back to the Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine to do research degrees, and they regard it as the ultimate to come back here and do that work.

I was honoured to have a meeting with Shripad Naik, who is the Minister in charge at AYUSH. He is actually the equivalent of a Secretary of State. Here, the Secretary of State here has responsibility for 66 million people; Shripad has responsibility for 1,300 million, which is 1.3 billion. I think I have got that right; I never was a mathematician. I spoke to our Secretary of State about this, and he would be happy to receive an invitation from Minister Naik to visit India and look at these medical systems—I went round 12 hospitals—and also to establish a working group on traditional medicine such as the one India has with Germany. I would say to the Minister of State, before she gets distracted, that Minister Naik is in the process of opening 5,000 integrated health clinics with allopathic medicine, complementary medicine, the Ayurveda medical system of India and homeopathy. AYUSH, with its medical system including naturopathy, yoga and homeopathy, has 700,000 practitioners, 700 teaching institutions and 200 postgraduate institutions, with an annual intake of 46,000 for its degree courses and 6,000 for its postgrad course. It runs 3,000 Government hospitals that are integrated healthcare hospitals, and it has 28,000 dispensaries. It has 9,000 Government manufacturing units and there are six AYUSH practitioners per 10,000 population.

That is a massive operation, and I suggest that my hon. Friend the Minister really needs to look at this, because it offers us a chance to have a much better regulatory regime in this country. I do not think that our complementary and integrated healthcare regime is thorough enough, in the sense that it is scrappy and fragmented; I know that from working in this field. The AYUSH Ministry was set up by Prime Minister Modi in 2014 as an independent ministry—I remind colleagues that he has just been re-elected for another five-year term—and he has doubled the AYUSH budget twice. It has gone up four times in five years because AYUSH is so effective at treating people. It is extraordinary. It controls research, through central regulatory bodies and research councils. It controls 11 national educational institutes and it controls drug quality care regulation with two central pharmacopeia laboratories and a national medicinal plant board.

Looking around at the landscape outside the House now and at the general attitude that has got very intense—including people's anger about plastics—I believe that it is only a matter of time before a tsunami of anger comes

round the corner because people here are not allowed these services across the health service. I really encourage my hon. Friend to look at this, because they provide solutions where antibiotics are failing, and they provide solutions to opiate addiction. The three main services that AYUSH offers are: Ayurveda; yoga and naturopathy; and homeopathy.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you are smiling at me and I really appreciate that. I do not think you are standing to be the next Speaker—[*Interruption.*] You might be; perhaps you are, so you could be smiling for two reasons. Certainly, one of your reasons is to try to get me to sit down, so I will finish on this.

In 2013, I was acting Chairman of the Health Committee for a short period of time in the interregnum between our other hon. Friends who were Chairs, and I put out the report—HC401—entitled “Managing the care of people with long-term conditions”. It contains evidence from the late great Peter Fisher, the Queen's homeopath, and George Lewith, who ran a department at the University of Southampton. What I found, going round 12 institutions and research laboratories in India, was that homeopathy was used frequently for long-term conditions with multiple problems because it can find the root of the problem, and I just ask my hon. Friend to look carefully at that and perhaps visit the Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine, which is world famous.

I hope that I may get called to speak again one day, Madam Deputy Speaker, but with that, I will sit down.

7.6 pm

Paul Blomfield (Sheffield Central) (Lab): It is great to have this opportunity to contribute to this afternoon's debate, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I assure you that I will not outstay my welcome.

I want to make a few remarks arising from the community consultation that I have just finished with people from across my constituency. I do this every September during the recess, and this year almost 1,000 people were involved in one of 37 events over three weeks. More than 1,000 shared their views by completing a survey that I circulated. They set out their concerns and the issues they wanted me to raise, and today's debate provides a first opportunity to put some of those on the record.

Inevitably, Brexit dominated, and in the survey that formed part of the consultation, 71% of people said they wanted a further public vote; only 18% were against the idea; 77% said that they would vote to remain; 15% said they would support leaving with a close relationship; and only 8% wanted to leave without any agreement. That was reflected in the meetings, too, and it was reflected even more strongly among young people. The Government need to recognise that if they lead this country to a damaging Brexit on a false prospectus, there is a rising generation who will never forgive them.

For that young generation—and, indeed, more widely across all age groups—there was a real concern to see stronger action to address the climate emergency, on which they felt they had been failed over the past nine years and about which they will see little comfort in today's Gracious Speech. I was interested to hear the Prime Minister's comment that we lead the world on addressing carbon emissions, and that comment has been echoed by a number of Members during the debate.

[Paul Blomfield]

I have taken the opportunity—on the odd occasion when I was not paying attention—to google every survey I could find, and none of them indicates that Britain is leading the world on this. Other countries—Sweden, Morocco and many others—are playing a leading role, and there is much more that we can do. We also have a responsibility to do much more, given our historical contribution.

A wide range of different issues were raised across the meetings and events that I organised, but there was a common theme. I heard how difficult it is for carers to access the necessary respite, without which their lives are challenging. There was frustration that the Government have failed to meet their post-2017 promise to bring forward proposals to tackle the crisis in adult social care and, indeed, to meet the needs of young carers. Domiciliary care workers told me about how their capacity to care had been eroded by 15-minute appointments, poor support, poor training and inadequate supervision. During the consultation I was conducting, one local residential home announced its closure due to inadequate funding, and we all know that many more across the country will follow that path. There was a real sense that we need a complete paradigm shift on how we meet the challenges of an ageing population and how we provide the resources to support that change.

Dr David Drew (Stroud) (Lab/Co-op): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for bringing up that group of young people and for talking about carers. I made a point at a meeting that the continual contracting out of services causes so many problems for voluntary groups. Does he agree that the Government ought to pay attention to that?

Paul Blomfield: I very much agree with my hon. Friend, and I shall return to that point later in my comments.

On health, I was told about the difficulties in securing timely appointments with GPs, sometimes acute difficulties with waiting times in A&E, and difficulties in accessing other services. Young people told me about the pressures that are contributing to the rise in mental health problems, on which the system is failing them badly. Schools told me that they were dipping into teaching budgets to provide support for students in mental health crises. Teaching budgets are there for teaching, but that money has been diverted to cover the crisis in young people's mental health. We need even more support and substantial investment in child and adolescent mental health services. Young people told me that waiting times of 25 weeks between first diagnosis and a referral to the first opportunity for help are the norm, not the exception, but early intervention is critical to tackling mental health crises.

Parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities told me heartbreaking stories of their struggle to get education, health and care plans that met their children's needs. Parents also talked about the challenges that schools face in delivering the plans once they are in place because of the lack of resources. We know that our schools have been hit by an 8% real-terms budget cut, but the particular failure to address special educational needs and disability funding is causing an enormous crisis.

Young people were increasingly worried about crime, talking about knife crime in particular. They made the case for the out-of-school activities that used to be common before the cuts, which have had a disproportionate impact on our local authorities and have led to a collapse in youth services. In other meetings, people highlighted how we miss Sure Start and the difference that the centres made in supporting families during the crucial early years. They talked about how school exclusions, driven by the lack of resources to support the most difficult children, are feeding gangs with recruits and sucking young people into knife crime.

A big worry across all ages and among all parts of the community was the rise in homelessness, rough sleeping and street begging. At a meeting on housing, we talked about the rising number of people in temporary accommodation without a permanent home of their own, the rise in sofa surfing, and the increasing dependency on friends and relatives for accommodation. People were clear that the only solution is a concerted programme of building affordable social housing. The problem of rough sleeping and street begging is clearly more complex, and we talked about mental health and alcohol and drug dependency problems that need intensive interventions to support people into getting off the streets and rebuilding their lives. There was a huge willingness from people in statutory services and the voluntary sector to resolve such problems, but there was also a real sense that the problems had risen over the past nine years as a consequence of the cuts that had affected statutory services' ability to support and work with the voluntary sector in a way that has a real impact.

Those are all different issues, but there is a common theme. Nine years of cuts have sapped the capacity of our public services and much of the voluntary sector to meet the needs of those who need them most. Austerity has corroded the quality of too many lives, but it did not have to be like that. Such decisions were not forced by necessity, but by political choice, and those choices need to change. The Gracious Speech offers a few convenient headlines, but there is no real recognition of the scale of the change that we need: the fundamental new direction for our country that my constituents spoke about and which this Government clearly cannot provide.

7.16 pm

Mr Tobias Ellwood (Bournemouth East) (Con): It is a real pleasure to contribute to this Queen's Speech debate on day one, which is certainly a first for me, and I am grateful to follow the hon. Member for Sheffield Central (Paul Blomfield). As one can probably imagine, I did not agree with a lot of what he said, but he started by speaking about climate change, and I echo his comments on that. We may have different views on Extinction Rebellion and its methods and manner, but I hope we can all agree that climate change is the largest geostrategic challenge we face and that we must work together. We may claim that we are the best in the G20, but we can do better, and I have already called on this Government to bring forward their ambition of being carbon neutral by 2050.

I certainly welcome some aspects of the domestic agenda, not least on law and order—more police officers on the frontline will go down well in Bournemouth—and on environment, health and immigration, and on national

infrastructure, which is divided into two. First, on greater investment in our trains, Boscombe railway station needs more funding and infrastructure support. Secondly, on digital capacity, Bournemouth University will appreciate that, because it is at the forefront of our understanding of how the digital world is changing.

Dame Cheryl Gillan (Chesham and Amersham) (Con): My right hon. Friend mentions the railways, which is my favourite subject and on which I hope to address the House a little later. Does he agree that we really need the holistic policy right across transport and communications that is proposed in this Queen's Speech? Does he also agree that we need to cancel HS2—certainly phase 1 of it—because there would then be the money to invest in Boscombe?

Mr Ellwood: My right hon. Friend gives us a teaser of what we can expect her to speak about, which I am very much looking forward to, and I am pleased that she would like to see investment at Boscombe station—*[Laughter.]* I will now move on from that sensitive but important subject.

On a more serious note, I make no apology for focusing on international security given our ever greater reliance on the economy, access to global markets, trading alliances and, of course, international peace and security, including the links with our own security environment. The first line of the security and defence review talks about the symbiotic relationship between national security and economic security—we cannot have one without the other—so I welcomed the Prime Minister's illustrating a desire to continue to play a role in global affairs and to champion global free trade. I certainly welcome the renewed commitment to spending 2% of GDP on defence, but I want to make it clear that I do not believe that is enough.

The challenges we face are growing and the threats are accumulating. While we can manage and contain the threats today, we face an increasingly dangerous and complex world. We often speak about the erosion of the rules-based order; just look at what happened last week when we saw Turkey breach international law with its military incursion into northern Syria. Let us be honest: a busy, distracted and disunited world is essentially looking the other way. Given the increasingly volatile and changing times, it is a sad testament to the failing international cohesion that once saw the west stand with resolve to defend international norms and values.

The US is our closest and most critical ally, but we must be strong enough to call it out when errors are made. President Trump's decision to withdraw troops has triggered a humanitarian crisis and has undone much of the good work to bring stability to the region. The defeat of Daesh has been set back. We have unleashed a chain reaction of events that is seeing instability and humanitarian crisis unfold.

What message does this send to our competitors and adversaries around the world? Again, I cite the example of China. Twenty years ago, China's military spending was on a par with ours; today, its defence budget is \$250 billion. In our lifetimes, China will spend more on military than the United States does, and it will become bigger economically than the United States. China is watching what is happening. We must see what is happening

in the South China sea—China is able to dominate in that arena—and stand together to support the international rules-based order.

David Tredinnick: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr Ellwood: Very briefly, as I am conscious of time.

David Tredinnick: Is my right hon. Friend worried about Chinese intervention in the telephone network—5G and Huawei?

Mr Ellwood: That is for another day and another debate, but my hon. Friend is absolutely right. China dominates on a scale that we simply cannot comprehend over here. Its technological capabilities and its investment in quantum computing, and so on, mean it already owns 40% of the world's data, and it is moving further afield. Once a country moves into the Chinese way of thinking—Huawei, and so on—it is very difficult to get out.

It is only a matter of time before countries that are already financially compelled or obliged to support Chinese methods and systems will have to move over to China's global positioning system, and so on. Then they will have to move over to the Chinese reserve currency, instead of the dollar. We will potentially see the world split into two huge domains unless we check it, but that is for another debate.

Back to Turkey and Syria, I make it clear that the Syrian Democratic Forces were our allies. They were our boots on the ground, and now we see them pivoting towards the Assad regime—a regime against which we rightly launched weapons strikes because it was using chemical weapons and barrel bombs against its own people.

This has been a disastrous week for international foreign policy. We are losing any leverage in pursuing a peaceful outcome in Syria, so I cannot stress enough the implications of Turkey's incursion. I simply ask the Government to lead calls for Turkey to withdraw, and I call on them to impose an arms embargo until that happens. Let us lead Europe. Let us stand up and bring America with us, if it will not lead on this front.

We cannot complain about the erosion of the international rules-based order if we are not willing to defend it. Ironically, as the west becomes more risk averse, the world is becoming more unstable, giving space for our competitors to avoid effective scrutiny and to advance their own interests illicitly beneath the threshold of any international response. Simply put, the old Bretton Woods organisations that stood us well after the second world war are now out of date, and they are being rejected by newer nations, too. We need to step up to the plate, recognise what is actually happening and lead on updating the standards and norms by which we expect nations to abide.

I make it clear that the threat picture has also changed, as illustrated by the rise of non-state actors such as Islamic State. Their ability to recruit and finance themselves through the internet, and so on, will not go away. We need to recognise that we had no viable plan for the aftermath of the combat phase in Iraq and Syria. Thousands of hard-line jihadi fighters, who for months sat behind barbed wire guarded by the SDF, are now able to escape and our counter-Daesh partners are being attacked by a NATO ally.

[Mr Ellwood]

It is not enough for Britain to deny dual-national fighters any right to return to the UK, while expecting the SDF to process them and their families. We are now seeing orphans caught up in this with nowhere to go. If the United States, to give it its due, can take back youngsters and orphans who are caught up in the mess over there, so can we. Let us get on the front foot and lead by example. Let us show other nations around the world what we can do.

I encourage the Government to show much needed international leadership and help to update international protocols so that all countries can take responsibility for their own nationals and dual nationals, rather than abandoning them to fate, with the very real prospect of allowing them to regroup to fight another day. This is about national security. Please do not say I am making Britain less safe. This is at the forefront of my mind, not just from a personal perspective but because of my interest in Britain's national security. We need to sort out this problem. It is not an unconditional surrender, as we saw in the past; it is a new phenomenon that we need to get our heads around.

Changing technologies are another critical aspect of the Bill that is affecting the threat picture. Over the next decade, technology will advance to dominate our lives, with machines talking directly to machines, smart city infrastructure, artificial intelligence and automation. Our reliance on the infrastructure supporting this new technological world is critical, so I am pleased that we are investing in this area and that we have leading businesses capable of doing so.

Our ever greater reliance on technology comes with a risk. Cyber and space capabilities are so integral to civilian, commercial and military applications that a total or even partial loss of their use would have an instant and dramatic impact on our lives. Our ability to communicate, share information, conduct transactions, use the internet, fly planes or predict the weather would all be severely affected.

I welcome the 2% commitment, but it will soon be inadequate to meet the wide spectrum of threats that we face, especially our technological vulnerability. Data is now taking over terrain as the arena of choice to disrupt an enemy. Why resort to conventional attacks when greater devastation can be caused to an economy or an electoral outcome simply with a laptop?

We are now also seeing the weaponisation of space. In military terms, space has become the ultimate high ground. We require a space command, so we need to follow the United States and France. We saw the evolution of the Air Force 100 years ago and we now need to do the same for space, because both Russia and China have reorganised their military structures to include space as a fighting domain. We need to recognise the changing parameters of conflict and adapt in that area, too.

We also need to invest in our conventional forces. On a day when we have seen the F-35 land on the aircraft carrier, we can be very proud. In the Gulf War we had 36 fast-jet squadrons, but today we have just six. Our main battle tank is now over 25 years old and is in dire need of an upgrade. Our Navy is getting smaller and smaller, and China is increasing its navy by the size of

our Navy every single year. If we want to protect our trading routes after Brexit, we need a surface fleet that is able to do that.

Listening to this debate, I feel that colleagues, in some cases, are not even aware of what is actually happening this week. There is a small possibility that we will strike a deal—not a no deal, as SNP Members spent their entire time talking about—but I stress this is part I. This is getting us to the transition. Part II is the relationship beyond that.

I am pleased that last week we saw some consensus, a sense of compromise, with people being willing to step forward from their original anchored positions to say, "This has gone on long enough. Let's move forward." I wish more colleagues were able to think that way, rather than going back to their original position and saying, "I am not willing to discuss this."

Geraint Davies: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr Ellwood: I will not give way, because I am running out of time. I do apologise.

The nation has now watched this debate continue for three years, and there is now talk of dragging it beyond 31 October. I have made my views on a no deal absolutely clear. I do not want a no deal, but the SNP Members spent their entire time saying that it is our objective. It is not my objective. I want to get this across the line, and it can happen. The planets are aligning, and we are hearing voices from the EU saying that it is possible. Technical talks are taking place, so let us wish them the best at the EU summit. Let us come back on Saturday and get this deal done.

We have to conclude that Brexit has damaged the reputation of this Parliament and has not been good for the country, the Government or the Conservative party. I am pleased to hear the Prime Minister speak about the importance of one nation, because the complexion of my party has been challenged a bit during this difficult period. I am a Conservative. I believe in fiscal responsibility. I believe that a right-of-centre Government are good for Britain in their approach, being progressive, modernist and willing to speak for and represent the entire country. We cannot do that if my party moves to the right, and becomes smaller and more condensed. We can do it if we remain that broad church, and I am pleased to see the Prime Minister articulate that very message.

We should also remind ourselves that we are good at things in this country and we have much to be proud of. We lead in oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, creative industries, life sciences, aerospace and financial services. Those are things we do well. Not only that, but this is a great place to invest: we are a champion of free trade; we have a legal and justice system that people can rely on; we have low corporation tax; and we have stable governance. We should be proud of who we are, but perhaps in all this debate we have lost sight of that.

If global Britain is to mean anything, let us step forward with international reach and resolve, to confirm and update the respected standards for the rule of law. We must start with a sober view of those Bretton Woods organisations, recognising that the world is changing from a technological perspective and that this is a crucial week. This is the biggest week for me as a parliamentarian and it is arguably our biggest week for a generation. It is

up to us in this House to take a binary decision: do we want Brexit to continue and pursue our own pure form, or do we call an end to this, support this deal and allow the nation to move forward?

7.31 pm

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP): I have a huge amount of respect for the right hon. Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood), who was diligent and well-respected as a Minister and is proving to be the same on the Back Benches. Clearly, we have a bit of a disagreement about Brexit. If we have spoken on these Benches about the risk of a no deal, it is because that risk remains very real. Many people might say it remains an extreme possibility. It is one that the Government seem willing to contemplate, despite the fact that, if there is a majority for anything in this House, it is for avoiding no deal. That will be the situation we end up in come the end of this week, one way or the other.

Several Members have commented that this is a slightly unusual Queen's Speech, with a slightly unusual atmosphere and slightly unusual timing. For the hon. Member for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley), who opened the debate, the hon. Member for East Dunbartonshire (Jo Swinson) and myself, it is taking place during our 40th year. We have all celebrated our 39th birthdays; indeed she and I share a birthday, so we will look forward to celebrating that next year. Who knows what situation we will be in. The hon. Member for Worthing West (Sir Peter Bottomley) noted that the temperature goes up and down, but we have a role to fulfil, which SNP Members take seriously, as the third party in this House and as the largest party in Scotland. We have never claimed to speak for all of Scotland, although I would draw the House's attention to the remarks made by our former leader, Angus Robertson, in his first speech after the 2015 election, when he recognised that we won considerably more seats than was proportionate to our vote and that we did have a responsibility to be aware of the broad range of political opinion that exists in Scotland. But there is consensus in Scotland, and every constituency in Scotland voted to remain in the EU. We will not shy away from speaking up for that point of view.

This Queen's Speech is also slightly unusual because this debate is taking place while the SNP annual conference is going on in Aberdeen. No matter how many representations my predecessor and I make through the usual channels about according our party the same respect as all the other parties get in terms of a conference recess; or about how the parties should work to obviate the need for a conference recess, here we are nevertheless. But it is political party conferences that are the place to lay out manifestos and make broad political declarations and plays to attract voters, not the ceremonial opening and the state occasion of the Queen's Speech. However, that is what today's Queen's Speech has had: all the hallmarks of a political manifesto targeted at the perceived priorities of a narrow range of voters in particular parts of England and Wales.

As far as I can see, at least a third of the Bills will be subject to the English votes for English laws process, in whole or in part. Those are all in areas where the SNP Government have already shown themselves to be much more progressive and have a considerably more enlightened vision. We are not cracking down just to be seen to be

tough on crime; we are working towards the rehabilitation of offenders, recognising the difficulties that can be caused by short sentences and finding different ways to bring people who have fallen foul of the law and fallen into criminality back into the fold of society. We are sent here to speak for Scotland and then the rules of this House continue to exclude us, through that EVEL process.

The Bills that will apply in Scotland already seem to be a source of concern; even since the Queen's Speech was delivered my inbox has filled up with dozens of emails with concerns about the proposals for voter identification. The SNP wants to expand the franchise and make it easier for more people to vote, starting with 16 and 17-year-olds, and extending the franchise for elections to this place to include our friends and neighbours who are European nationals, but it seems as though this Government's proposals want to narrow the opportunity for people to take part in our democratic processes. That is equally true of the immigration Bill and the end to freedom of movement, which, as all SNP colleagues who have spoken have said, will be a social, economic and cultural disaster for this country.

This theme of narrowing, isolation and an insular approach comes with Brexit, and the notion of global Britain that the right hon. Member for Bournemouth East spoke of is just increasingly a joke. I was recently in Malawi, where I went to visit the high commission, which had a pop-up banner saying, "Apply, come to Britain. Britain is great. Come and take part in our Chevening scholarship." The night before, I had met stakeholders who could not get a visa for love nor money for their Chevening scholarships. So the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing, and Brexit is the exact opposite of the vision of a global Britain. Much of the legislation that has been outlined today is going to have to help to try to clean up the mess that Brexit could leave behind.

Andrew Bowie (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (Con): I am listening to the hon. Gentleman, who is making a very good speech, with lots of pertinent points. Surely, however, he would agree that the most narrow, isolationist and separatist agenda being displayed in this House today is coming from SNP Members, who want to break up our United Kingdom. Surely that is narrow, nationalist and isolationist. Surely breaking up our United Kingdom, the most successful political union the world has ever seen, is the most isolationist policy being put before the House at the recent time.

Patrick Grady: As my right hon. Friend the Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber (Ian Blackford) pointed out, the EU has secured peace on the continent of Europe throughout the history of its existence. Of course what we want to do as an independent country is join the family of nations. The way to know that a country is independent in the modern world is if it is part of organisations such as the EU, the UN and the World Trade Organisation, all of which are partnerships of equals, where the different member states, through the mechanisms that exist, can have their voices heard. I have just said that Scottish Members, including the hon. Gentleman, will be actively excluded from at least a third of the Bills outlined today because of the EVEL process. So I do not think the point he is trying to make stands up well.

[Patrick Grady]

It is becoming abundantly clear that there is no good outcome to Brexit—there is no good way of leaving the EU. If there was a better deal than membership of the EU, all the other members would want that deal and the EU would not exist. It stands to reason that the best possible deal we can have is the one we already have, which is membership.

The global challenges, which have been outlined in the Queen's Speech and the speeches we have heard today, of poverty, the climate emergency, people trafficking, animal welfare and online harm all require a global response, with countries working in co-operation with each other. This Government are determined to pull the UK out of one of the most important mechanisms for delivering that. The Queen's Speech, in effect, recognises that, because it has to put in lots of different frameworks and structures to deliver on those issues, when we already have one that is working exceptionally well. That shows, as I said to the hon. Gentleman, the importance of Scotland's alternative: our opportunity to genuinely share sovereignty in a partnership of equals. In the EU, legislation comes forward through the Parliament, the Council and the Commission, where the different member states are represented on a fair and proportionate basis, and their voices are heard appropriately. That is the point of independence. The SNP's vision is internationalist: it is about Scotland rejoining and taking its place on the global stage. That is the vision that is being articulated at our conference this week.

Sadly, this SNP conference is the first I have missed in around 15 years, and I think only the second one I have missed since I left university. That is partly because of my duties in the House and partly because, as the hon. Member for Southend West (Sir David Amess) said, I had the immense privilege of being the only parliamentarian from Scotland to be part of the delegation for the canonisation of John Henry Newman in Rome yesterday. There are undoubtedly lessons from that. I think we were praying for many different things—the hon. Gentleman's recollection is perhaps not quite the same as mine—but that was an opportunity for ecumenism, in respect of both theological and political experience, which was quite useful given the week that we are going into.

I hope and expect that by the time of the SNP conference next year—perhaps not by the time of the next Queen's Speech, because that could be sooner than we would have expected—several Members, including myself, will have celebrated our 40th birthdays. I expect we will have had another Queen's Speech, and I hope that the SNP will have been returned in even greater numbers, solidifying the mandate that we have to give the people of Scotland a fair say and a choice in their future. I hope we will be taking our country closer than ever before to the independence that we so badly need, so that we can continue to work as if we live in the early days of a better nation.

7.41 pm

Dame Cheryl Gillan (Chesham and Amersham) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Glasgow North (Patrick Grady). I am not sure that I found much in his speech that I could agree with, but I think he welcomed the provisions on animal welfare that were

mentioned in the Queen's Speech, so I will leave it there and say that I was on his side on that, because I welcome that provision.

I echo other colleagues' praise of my hon. Friends the Members for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley) and for Truro and Falmouth (Sarah Newton), who proposed and seconded the motion on the Gracious Speech delightfully. I welcome the Queen's Speech, even though it was delivered against the extraordinary background of the Supreme Court ordering MPs to return to Westminster and to go back to work, and of what everybody acknowledges is a potentially impending general election. In this time of division and dispute, it was so heartening to see Her Majesty the Queen preside over the proceedings in the other place and once again set us a fine example with her selfless service to our country.

I wish to welcome some of the provisions in the Queen's Speech individually. The provisions on the NHS are excellent, particularly the plans to establish an independent body to investigate serious healthcare incidents. That has long been advocated by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee—it just rolls off the tongue, doesn't it?—on which I have the privilege to serve. I hope that that body will enable people to gain justice if there have been failures in our medical system, and also that we will learn from those mistakes—that is so important.

I hope we can strengthen the NHS in respect of how we make services available to people with autism. I would particularly like to see mandatory training introduced for all health and care staff, as recommended in the 10-year review of the Autism Act 2009 produced on a cross-party basis by the all-party group on autism. That would be a welcome measure for any NHS Bill.

As far as I am concerned, the environmental measures on air and water quality cannot be implemented too soon. We need to protect and restore habitats so that biodiversity is maintained.

I am now going to turn into my grandmother, because I have to tell the House, "I told you so." In drawing up this speech, I looked at my maiden speech from back in 1992, in which I said:

"The Government must encourage United Kingdom industry to seize the chance of a more efficient use of energy, better emission controls, and a whole raft of subjects connected with using more environmentally friendly technologies. Not only is that an essential component of a modern environmental protection plan, but commercial gain could be made from it for small and large companies."—[*Official Report*, 25 June 1992; Vol. 210, c. 438.]

Indeed, a large part of my maiden speech was about the environment and the Rio conference, which of course followed on from Helsinki and really kick-started the concentration of efforts on climate change.

In that context, I hope that the excellent Glover landscape review, which has recommended that the Chilterns area of outstanding natural beauty become a national park, will be progressed without delay. In fact, I was the first person to suggest that option, to add a layer of protection to the threatened and fragile landscape in the Chilterns. I wrote around to all colleagues whose constituencies impinge upon the AONB, and to local authorities, and received a mainly positive response. The development that is proposed in Buckinghamshire and London will overwhelm this precious part of our environment and, I fear, will destroy forever the rare

chalk streams that runs through our hills, unless we can provide an oasis of protected landscape. I again turn into my grandmother, because back at the time of my maiden speech I was in talks with the National Rivers Authority about protecting the chalk streams and the fact that they had dried up. That resulted in bed-lining trials. I am very worried that all these years later we are still talking about their protection and their potential total annihilation.

Of course, HS2 is also currently destroying our environment. I think everybody in the Chamber knew I would get around to this sooner or later—there is no surprise among those on the Front Bench. I really do welcome the Oakervee review, but I despair of the rationale, the exorbitant and profligate cost, the poor governance and the disastrous management of the project.

First, and immediately, I ask the Secretary of State for Transport to stop the roadworks due to begin tomorrow in Missenden. They are going to cause untold upset to my local community and its residents and businesses. I was talking to people in the village on Saturday, and the feeling is so strong that I wish the Secretary of State could go there himself and at least stop the works until the review reports. What is the point in causing disruption for a matter of a few weeks? A few weeks would make all the difference to that community. If phase 1 is cancelled, we would not have to face the disruption that is going to start from tomorrow and continue until the end of the review. Even now, after 10 years of poor communication and the disdain shown by HS2 Ltd towards my local community, I really do have to ask whose bright idea it was to cause this huge disruption in my locality in what is effectively starting to be the run-up to Christmas, which should be good for all the shops and businesses in Missenden. If access becomes difficult, it will affect their profitability. I encourage everybody in the House to come to Great Missenden—it is easily reached on the train—and to spend their pounds in the shops there. They will need the House's help if HS2 goes ahead.

This weekend, there were reports about the treatment of whistleblowers, who were allegedly exhorted to destroy material that may compromise HS2. The statement from HS2 Ltd that it would not release documents requested by a Dr Thornton—I believe—because if they came into the public domain they could be used by critics successfully to lobby for the cancellation of the project, is an appalling turn of events.

Victoria Prentis (Banbury) (Con): My right hon. Friend has for many years been a great leader to those of us on the Government Benches who oppose HS2. Did she hear over the weekend the press reports that the Serious Fraud Office has been called in to investigate allegations of corruption in HS2?

Dame Cheryl Gillan: I cannot stand that story up, other than to say that I have read the reports in the newspapers that say the SFO is investigating aspects of HS2. It would be interesting if those on the Front Bench could confirm that. I do not believe everything I read in the press, but it really would not surprise me, because this is a project that managed to give away £1.7 million of unauthorised redundancy money. Nobody was held to account for that and the money has not been paid back, so nothing would surprise me, although I stress that it was a press report.

Luke Graham (Ochil and South Perthshire) (Con): I thank my right hon. Friend for giving way so generously. On the subject of HS2, she mentioned the issue of whistleblowers, one of whom lives in my constituency and has not had the redress, or the opportunity to put his case forward in the way that is justifiable and that should be awarded to a constituent. Does she agree that whistleblowers and their evidence, and also the chance to address the issue of compensation, should be included as part of that review? Furthermore, does she agree that any future HS2 project should be truly national—in other words linking Scotland, England and Wales together?

Dame Cheryl Gillan: I could not agree more. I have to say that I am very sorry for my hon. Friend's constituent. Quite simply, the lessons have not been learned from the early days of HS2, when my constituents, as I said earlier in my speech, were treated with disdain. All sorts of things took place, which in a democracy—in our modern democracy—should not have happened. I hope that my hon. Friend's constituent gets redress, and I advise him never to give up. I am not giving up after 10 years, and I am still hopeful that there could be a cancellation in the offing.

cancelling HS2 will not harm the country. The money could be spent on the nation's digital, transport and energy infrastructure, as set out in the Queen's Speech today. I really welcome the intention to produce a comprehensive national infrastructure strategy; it is something that I have consistently called for. We need to revolutionise the infrastructure of this country by providing better transport links, particularly in the north of England. We want better bus services, an electric charging network, high-speed broadband, 5G and more reliable commuter services. We can spend taxpayers' money so much better than on HS2, particularly phase 1. Now we hear that HS2 might stop at Old Oak Common. If that happens, the business case goes right out the window. I think that that is enough on HS2 now.

Let me move briefly on to the proposed election Bill. When the Government consider election reform, I ask them to think very carefully. I am already getting a lot of emails from constituents who are worried that the legislation will contain photographic identification for voting. I have the pleasure of sitting on the Council of Europe. I recently led the monitoring team for the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where I bumped into my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Bob Stewart), and where they produce photo ID as a matter of course. People cannot vote until they produce their ID, but these are countries where national ID cards are a matter of course. We do not have a national ID card here. I am very worried about the most vulnerable in our society, so I encourage the Government to think hard about that provision and perhaps turn their mind to looking at the rules around referendums and the changes that were recommended by the Constitution Unit's commission, on which I had the privilege to sit with the right hon. and learned Member for Beaconsfield (Mr Grieve), who has just come into the Chamber. Updating our rules in the light of developments, particularly with social media and artificial intelligence, is of critical importance if we wish to retain confidence in our systems and keep them ahead of the technology challenges that threaten to derail them.

Bob Stewart: I agree with my right hon. Friend—absolutely—but I am confused. Most of us who drive cars carry an identity card: it has our name, our address, our date of birth, and a photograph on it. Effectively, therefore, we already have an ID card.

Dame Cheryl Gillan: For my hon. Friend and me, that is true, but I am thinking about the people who do not drive. I am thinking about disabled people and people who cannot afford a car and who need a better bus infrastructure. These people will feel threatened and will feel that they are being excluded or even prevented from voting. I ask the Government to think very carefully about how they go about this provision, because there are dangers inherent in it for the very people that he and I would seek to protect.

Jim Shannon: Will the right hon. Lady give way?

Dame Cheryl Gillan: I have been very generous. I will give way one more time, but I would like to finish my speech.

Jim Shannon: I thank the right hon. Lady for giving way. In Northern Ireland, we brought in photographic identification for voting. The purpose was simple: to stop fraud. We had many examples of fraud across Northern Ireland. In every part of life today, people really need ID—if they want to open a bank account and so on. We need ID for everything. We have an ID system in Northern Ireland. People just need to apply for it, get their photograph done and they get a card. It is really simple and people want to do it. Perhaps she could follow that example.

Dame Cheryl Gillan: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his intervention. I understand exactly what he is saying, but I am trying to give voice to opinions that are being expressed to me right now in my emails. The Government need to think very carefully about these provisions, so that if they do bring them in, they introduce them in such a way that does not damage those least able to speak for themselves in our community.

Mr Dominic Grieve (Beaconsfield) (Ind): I am most grateful to my right hon. Friend, particularly as I came in halfway through her speech, but I heard what she was saying and I wanted to come in. I personally believe that identity is absolutely essential, because there are problems of personation, but I agree that simply imagining that people can produce photographic identity is wrong. Special provisions will have to be introduced in order to enable that not to happen.

Dame Cheryl Gillan: It is good to know—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Lindsay Hoyle): Order. I do believe that the previous incumbent of the Chair suggested 15 minutes.

Dame Cheryl Gillan: Thank you so much, Mr Deputy Speaker. I have taken rather a lot of interventions.

Mr Deputy Speaker: That does not matter.

Dame Cheryl Gillan: In a similar vein, I would like to see regulation and transparency enhanced around companies such as 38 Degrees, which insert themselves

between MPs and their constituents, gather data and raise funds for lobbying outwith the rules that govern political parties and yet, in effect, they are acting as an adjunct to political movements with no oversight or accountability.

There are many things to welcome in this Queen's Speech, particularly on the law and order front. We need to halt this tide of knife crime and the scourge of county lines, both of which have affected my constituency, and we must give our police forces the resources to provide the safety and security that our citizens need to lead peaceful and successful lives.

I should like to finish by mentioning one provision that has delighted me—I am delighted that it has come to prominence—and that is the ambitious national space plan. My husband, Jack Leeming, during his lifelong career as a civil servant, was finally appointed director general of the British National Space Centre, then attached to the Department for Trade and Industry. He had a vision for the role of space in telecommunications, earth observation and remote sensing and was a huge supporter of our space industries and scientific endeavours. He was passionate about the possibilities of space, and my only sadness is that he died earlier this year and did not live to see a Conservative Prime Minister appreciating the opportunities that this sector affords.

This Prime Minister now has many, many challenges. There is no doubt that there is an overwhelming desire to get Brexit done and to reduce the bandwidth that is occupying Government, which, in turn, is impeding the progress that we can make on things that matter to people and have now been covered in the Gracious Speech—health, education, local government and new opportunities for our service and manufacturing industries. I hope that by the end of the week we will have not just a pathway to delivering our exit from the EU, but a firm grip on the destination.

7.57 pm

Geraint Davies (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op): It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Dame Cheryl Gillan). I very much sympathise with her points about identity cards, given that, we are told, about 11 million people may not have passports or driving licences. It is important that these people can participate in democracy.

I sympathise with many of the points the right hon. Lady makes about HS2. From a Swansea perspective, it takes three hours by train to get from London, two hours to get to Manchester—it will be one hour after HS2—and four hours to Edinburgh. Why do people have to travel more frequently and further when we have the internet? Why do we not spend some money on building regional economies?

At one point, I was leader of Croydon Council and pioneered a 26 km long tramlink, linking Beckenham, Croydon and Wimbledon. It cost £200 million, half of which was paid by the private sector. For HS2's £80 billion, we could do 800 of those schemes, clustering regional economies. I have to ask whether, strategically, it is a good idea to enable people to live further and further from London, so that they can go back and forth to work. In our infrastructure review, we should look at the matter across the piece.

I will briefly mention, as other Members have, Paul Flynn, who was a good friend and a great man. He was a man of great warmth, integrity, humour and distinction, and he is a sad loss for the House and particularly for colleagues across Wales.

The Queen started her speech today as all good speeches really start—with a joke: “My Government’s priority is to leave the EU by 31 October 2019”, but it does not look at all likely that that is going to happen. It is an interesting contrast to her opening words in the 2017 Queen’s Speech, when she said that the priority was

“to secure the best possible deal as the country leaves the European Union...working with...the devolved Administrations, business and others to build...consensus”.—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 21 June 2017; Vol. 783, c. 5.]

That idea has been swept away and we are now rushing towards this deadline—to get Brexit done, do or die. But in our hearts we all know that we cannot just get Brexit done. It will be a series of painful negotiations with deals down the way.

The next part of the Queen’s Speech was on the commitment to financial stability, so it is a strange irony that many of the hedge funds that supported the Prime Minister’s leadership have been betting on no deal.

The next part of the speech was on fiscal responsibility. Government debt is now 90% of the size of the economy. When Labour left government, it was half that figure. After years of austerity crushing the poorest, we are now being told that there is loads of money in the magic money tree for the Prime Minister to spend on all sorts of things. The fact is that the current Government have failed to grow the economy. To be fair, that is largely due to Brexit and the waiting period. However, it is not just the uncertainty of Brexit that is contributing to this economic situation; it is also the reality of Brexit, which will shrink our economy by a further 10%.

The expression “get Brexit done” is very appealing to people because they are sick and tired of talking about Brexit. They want to “get Brexit over with”—so do I, but my contention is that people have now seen what Brexit is likely to be like and they want to have a final say. People who voted leave in my constituency said that they voted for more money, more control and more jobs, but they are now seeing that they will have less money, whether that is through the divorce bill or the shrinking economy. There will also be fewer jobs, whether that is through car companies pulling out of Bridgend, Tata Steel making cuts because of Brexit or Airbus pulling out of the area. There will be less control; people cannot control the laws in Europe that will ultimately affect us, and they want to have a final say.

Conservatives who have traditionally been in favour of the Union and business are basically turning their back on these things. It is all very well the Prime Minister talking about how he values the Union, but if Brexit happens and Scotland pulls out of the UK and becomes part of the EU, much of the industry in England will move to Scotland. We are talking about a divided kingdom, not the United Kingdom, and people should wake up to that. The Government pretend that democracy consists of listening to the result of a referendum some three years ago—since when we have had a general election—with a result that was based on false promises and which is seen to be false. People should have another vote—a vote on the deal in front of them. There is this

crazy notion that some deal that no one has seen should be rushed through the House on Saturday just because the Prime Minister said that we would leave the European Union on 31 October “do or die”. That is frankly absurd.

Let me turn to what was good in the Queen’s Speech. I welcome the focus on mental health because I have my own Counsellors and Psychotherapists (Regulation) Bill. You may know, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the current situation is that you or I could set up as psychotherapists tomorrow, without any training and without practising any evidence-based treatment. The problem is that many people have been abused as a result of this situation. Many individuals with mental health problems go to people who call themselves psychotherapists because it sounds like a professional qualification is needed to be a psychotherapist, but these individuals are basically abused—for example, in conversion therapy or when war veterans are asked to relive their trauma, making their problems worse. This needs to be embraced in the mental health Bill.

Primarily, I want to focus—albeit briefly—on the Environment Bill and on clean air. I have the privilege of chairing the all-party parliamentary group on air pollution. Hon. Members may know that 64,000 people die prematurely every year as a result of air pollution, and that 2.6 million children go to schools polluted with toxic air. That is simply not acceptable. Air pollution affects people’s mental health, contributing to depression, anxiety and psychosis, and giving rise to dementia. It also affects physical health, giving rise to heart attacks, lung problems, strokes and so on. This has to be sorted out. It is good that it has been mentioned in the Queen’s Speech, but of course the devil is in the detail.

What we need in the Environment Bill are specific targets and timetables that include enforcement action. I am particularly talking about PM 2.5 particulates, which are small enough to penetrate women’s wombs and to affect the babies they are carrying. PM 2.5 levels should be at World Health Organisation standard by 2030. The only way to do that is to outline a trajectory to get to the required level of 10 micrograms per cubic metre; we could bring our current levels down to 20 micrograms by 2020, to 15 micrograms by 2025 and to 10 micrograms by 2030. That would require a ban on new fossil-fuelled cars—diesel or petrol—by 2030, instead of by 2042. This is not a new idea. Other places are doing it: Paris is doing it; Rome is doing it; Denmark is doing it; Sweden is doing it; Ireland is doing it. We can do it if we are serious. We can also create the conditions that help to spark new, modern cars, and provide the incentives and direction to have a modern public transport system.

I published my own Clean Air Bill a week ago, which also requires a fiscal strategy to support incentives and move people towards a sustainable transport future. It requires local parents and local people generally to be given information on the pollution levels at their child’s school, so that they can demand action. The Bill would also require the Environment Bill to include indoor air, which the previous iteration did not. Everybody here spends about 90% of our time indoors. How is it that we can have an Environment Bill that is only for outdoor air and is intended to focus on air pollution, given that these days people unfortunately encounter all sorts of toxins in their own homes—from chemicals in furniture, cleaning products, sprays, candles, you name it? These things

[Geraint Davies]

actually have a cocktail impact with outdoor air pollution, causing respiratory and inflammatory problems. Indoor air provisions need to be properly integrated in the Bill so that we can all be protected.

I also have a Plastics Bill—I am Buffalo Bill, me!—which provides that we should have clear aggregate targets for the amount of plastics we are allowed to have, as we do for the Climate Change Act for carbon. It also suggests a fiscal strategy, including the taxation of virgin plastic. Quite simply, plastic is too inexpensive. If it cost more to buy a plastic bottle than to get a reusable one, people would obviously not buy plastic ones.

On climate change itself, it is imperative that we move against fracking. The reality is that any extraction that emits more than 2% methane is worse than coal. Methane is about 85 times worse than carbon dioxide for global warming, and satellite imagery tells us that fracking generates 5% of fugitive emissions and leakages, making it nearly twice as bad as coal. It is just not a sustainable way forward. Some 80% of available fossil fuels cannot be exploited if we are to avoid irreversible climate change.

We now know that we are going to hit the 1.5° C change not by 2040, but by 2030. That means that the zero carbon by 2050 target is already out of date. It is no good saying, “Oh well, we have done a really great job in Britain”, because the reason we have got our carbon emissions down so quickly in recent times is that we have closed the coalmines and exported our industry. We need to stop fracking. We need to come forward with a sustainable transport system. We need to have onshore wind. We need Swansea Bay lagoon, in terms of wave power, and other lagoons, and we need to harness the sun’s energy as well.

The right hon. Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood), who sadly is not now in his place, talked about the importance, in a global environment, of holding our own in terms of cyber-attacks, the critical mass of our military, space and so on. All those arguments lent themselves to the need to act collectively within Europe to sustain our common values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It is critically important for our influence, self-interest, security and prosperity, and for being unified, that we remain in the EU. It is incumbent on us to give the final say to the people of Britain: do they want this deal or do they want to stay with the deal they already have? We already know that they prefer to stay where they are, and the growing numbers of young people coming through feel that as well. We should be duty bound to give the deal back to the people for the final say.

8.10 pm

Andrew Bowie (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (Con): It is a pleasure to be called on the first day of this debate on the Loyal Address. In fact, never in the modern history of this Parliament has an intake of MPs had to wait so long between their first and second Gracious Speeches as those of us who were elected in 2017. It is fully 846 days since Her Majesty last addressed Parliament in the other place, and 841 days since I spoke in that debate, delivering what was my maiden speech. That in itself is hard to believe, for in the interim, while so much has changed, so much, sadly, has remained the same.

On that stupefyingly hot June evening, after I had bored those unfortunate enough to be in the Chamber with my tour around Deeside, Donside, the Geerie, the Mearns and North Kincardine, I raised concerns that businesses and people in West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine, and indeed around Scotland, needed certainty and stability in our country and in our economy. I concluded that evening by making this plea:

“What...this country”

does

“not need is further uncertainty in the shape of another referendum on Europe or another general election, and they certainly do not need another referendum on Scottish independence.”— [Official Report, 26 June 2017; Vol. 626, c. 403.]

As I said, so much has changed, and yet, sadly, so much remains the same. For what have we heard from the Opposition so far today? Sadly, it was almost exactly the same as we heard two and half years ago. The SNP is obsessed as ever with referendums—so obsessed, in fact, that it is currently taking a referendums Bill through the Scottish Parliament to

“provide a legal framework for the holding of referendums on any matters within Scotland’s control.”

That is all well and good, except that the trouble is that the SNP has not yet worked out that the essential element for any referendum to have meaning is that the interested parties accept the result—it is not very hard. So here is a novel idea: how about, before inflicting further division and uncertainty on the people and businesses of Scotland, the SNP accepts the result of the two referendums held within the past five years and works with us to make membership of the United Kingdom, outside the EU, work for Scotland? Until that day, the SNP can never claim to be working in Scotland’s national interest, only for its own narrow political interests, and it can never claim to offer the certainty and stability being cried out for by businesses and people all across this country.

Then there is Labour, which, in the time it has taken the Conservatives to negotiate two deals between this country and the European Union, has not even concluded negotiations within its own party, or even among its own Front Benchers. What is it this week? Is it a referendum and then an election or an election and then a referendum? Is it remain, is it leave, or is it a deal? Labour—a party with more plot twists than an episode of “The Real Housewives of Cheshire”, except that it does not take a Wagatha Christie to work out who is stabbing who in the back in this augmented reality. As for the Liberal Democrats, they have nothing to offer other than ripping up the result of a referendum that they were one of the first parties to call for.

As the late Iain MacLeod so memorably put it, the socialists can scheme their schemes and the liberals can dream their dreams, but we at least have work to do. So while the other parties in this place have spent two years obsessed with plots, schemes and ways of trying to bring this Government down and deny the will of the British people, we did get to work. First under the leadership of my right hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) and now under the current Prime Minister, this party and this Government have been delivering for all the peoples of our United Kingdom, including—and, I would say, especially—for Scotland. This Conservative Government have delivered over £900 million extra funding for the Scottish Government, meaning that the

Scottish Government's budget will have increased in real terms to £32 billion by 2020. We have delivered city and regional growth deals across the country. We have frozen spirits duty, supporting our vital Scotch whisky industry. We have had VAT lifted from Police Scotland and the Scottish fire and rescue service.

We have continued to support our oil and gas sector, to the tune of £2.3 billion, maintaining our globally competitive position and making the North sea basin the most attractive basin in the world in which to invest, while introducing the transferable tax history mechanism. We have recently righted the wrong—and I admit that it was wrong—of convergence uplift money not getting to Scotland's farmers by delivering not just £160 million to them but an additional £51 million to ensure a fair funding settlement for the agriculture industry across our United Kingdom. Unemployment is at its lowest level in half a century and youth unemployment is at its lowest level ever. We have taken millions of the lowest paid out of tax altogether, cut tax for millions of others, and ensured that military personnel will not be punished financially solely for being based in Scotland, combating at least in part the regressive and failing policy of taxing middle-income earners more for doing the same job north of the border than they would be in any other part of our United Kingdom. In doing this, we are also the first major economy to commit to net zero carbon emissions by 2050, cementing our place as a global leader in the fight against climate change.

Jim Shannon: I thank the hon. Gentleman for giving all the reasons why it is better for Scotland to be within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Does he, and does everyone in this House, recognise that when it comes down to the nitty-gritty, it is better to be together within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and very good to have our Scottish comrades on board as well, because they are part of the great United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland?

Andrew Bowie: I could not have put it better myself. I agree with every single word that the hon. Gentleman has spoken.

Patrick Grady: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman can explain why that argument then does not pertain to membership of the European Union. As I have explained, if Scotland were an independent member of the European Union it would have its own voice at the top table where decisions are being made. What is happening in this House is that those of us who are Scottish MPs are actively excluded from decision making processes. If the UK partnership is so strong, why is the European Union not such a good thing for the UK to be in?

Andrew Bowie: The hon. Gentleman will be fully aware that I campaigned and voted to remain in the European Union. As a democrat, however, I recognise that I lost that referendum and we have to follow through with the will of the British people as expressed in the referendum. I will always contest those who say that Scotland would be better off outside the United Kingdom. That argument falls flat on its face. It would be bad for business, bad for the economy and bad for the people of Scotland if we were to rip apart the most successful union of nations that the world has ever seen.

Luke Graham: My hon. Friend is making a fantastic speech. Does he agree that some of the rhetoric from SNP Members is completely hypocritical? Does he also agree that they fail to see the irony of advocating for one union and yet coming into this House and trying to break apart the very Parliament that we sit in? We are one country. We are not a club of international states. We are one country, one state; four nations, one state. It is something very different that they fail to appreciate.

Andrew Bowie: My hon. Friend will be amazed to hear that I agree 100% with what he says.

Today, in this bold, ambitious and positive one nation Queen's Speech, we, this Government, outlined how we will be investing in our NHS, investing in culture, investing in schools and investing in our police—all of which, of course, means extra funding for the Scottish Government to spend on priorities north of the border, benefiting constituents in my part of the world. These are the actions of a bold Conservative Government governing for all and delivering for the peoples of our whole nation—our one nation. The term, "one nation", is bandied about quite liberally these days. You will know, Mr Deputy Speaker, that it comes first from Benjamin Disraeli in his novel, "Sybil", which I remember struggling through at university. Through the young Chartist, Morley, he first spoke about how in this country there existed:

"Two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets".

He was talking about the gap between the rich and poor of mid-Victorian Britain, but it is a sad fact that Britain today seems at times like a country as divided as anything that Disraeli may have imagined—between remainer and Brexiteer, dealer and no-dealer. Although they are all of our one United Kingdom, it seems at times we have before us two nations between which, again, there is no intercourse or sympathy. I know that the majority of Members across the House are as concerned about this situation as I am—a situation where Members who simply hold differing opinions can be called traitors, and where simply because a person seeks a different outcome, they can be classed as an enemy.

There is only one way to bring this country back together and to end this interminable and angry debate which is doing such damage to the body politic and to public debate in this country, and that is to deliver on the will of the British people, as expressed in the referendum in 2016—not at any cost, but to support a deal and support this Government, to leave the European Union on good terms. That surely must be the resolution of this House. There is simply no other credible option. Only then can we reunite this country, move on and get on with delivering this bold, ambitious and truly one nation agenda, which I for one look forward to arguing for and implementing.

8.20 pm

Jessica Morden (Newport East) (Lab): I want to begin by echoing the tributes paid to my constituency neighbour, the late Paul Flynn, who sadly passed away this year. He was an outstanding parliamentarian, a fantastic champion of Newport and a great neighbour to me. Although we have an equally wonderful successor

[*Jessica Morden*]

in my hon. Friend the Member for Newport West (Ruth Jones), I know that Paul is in our thoughts, and it was lovely to hear those tributes.

The Prime Minister quoted Newport's Goldie Lookin Chain earlier, which was one of the stranger moments in my time here—and I say that having been an Opposition Whip for the last couple of years. I will leave it to GLC to say how they vote, but if the Prime Minister has a free evening on 21 December, he may still be able to get a ticket for their 15th anniversary world tour of Wales concert at Newport Centre, courtesy of Newport Live; more dates are available.

It is clear that the Queen's Speech today is a programme that the Government have no way of implementing before a general election, in the shadow of Brexit. My right hon. Friend the Member for Delyn (David Hanson), who made an excellent contribution, was right to say that we just do not know what on Saturday we will be voting on, and I say that on behalf of the steelworkers, the Airbus workers, the food producers and more in my constituency. But I cannot let today go by without mentioning a number of issues that are important to my constituents. There is much to say, but I will include the lack of a credible green deal to tackle the climate emergency; an economy that does not work for many in our country, with more children, families and pensioners living in poverty; and the lack of action for the 1950s-born women hit by pension changes, many of whom are in real poverty in my constituency.

I also want to focus on the Government's lack of measures to support the manufacturing sector and the fact that there was nothing of note to say on steel. The Prime Minister spoke today of a "new age of opportunity", and he has spoken previously about his vision for the UK to become the home of electric vehicles. As laudable as those warm words are, it is crucial that the Government act on that if we are to truly make the UK the home of electric vehicles. That should include a proper commitment to build a UK supply chain for electric cars.

That action needs to be fast, because on 2 September Tata Steel said that it would close Cogent Power's Orb works in my constituency on 20 December. The works is part of the fabric of Newport and its history, having been there since 1898, and it employs 380 people on site. But this is not about the past; it is about the future. This is the only plant in the UK producing electrical steel. With investment, it could make electrical steel for electric vehicles, allowing the UK to have an end-to-end supply chain. If we lose this plant, we will lose that chance and have to import the steel for electric motors.

Matt Western (Warwick and Leamington) (Lab): My hon. Friend is making such an important point about how crucial the Orb is in producing high-value steel. The UK has to have a future in the production of high-value materials, particularly steel. If we are to have a viable automotive sector with hydrogen-powered units and electric vehicles in particular, with Jaguar Land Rover, Aston Martin and others producing cars in this country, these sorts of steel are crucial.

Jessica Morden: I thank my hon. Friend for that intervention. He is right, and it is a point I will come on to make. These are speciality steels, and we cannot afford to lose the capacity to make them.

There is a plan to save the plant. Community union and its consultants, Syndex, are calling for Tata to reinvest money from the sale of Cogent Power Inc in Canada into the Orb and for the UK Government to help by investing £30 million. That would be just a small proportion of the total the Government have awarded Jaguar Land Rover, which is owned by Tata, which has secured a £500 million loan guarantee to help the company sell electric vehicles.

We need concerted investment in the electric vehicle supply chain. Orb can be a vital cog in the wheel. It can be part of the infrastructure strategy that the Government alluded to in the Queen's Speech. If we did that, we could save the only electrical steel plant in the UK, which could and should have a bright future as demand for electric vehicles is only set to grow. Labour has said that we will accelerate the electric vehicle revolution with 2.5 million interest-free loans for the purchase of electric vehicles, a new requirement for the Government car fleet to be 100% electric by 2025 and action on the private fleet.

Jim Shannon: I congratulate the hon. Lady on the important speech she is making. Does she recognise that, to encourage the general public to buy and invest in electric cars, we need charging points across the whole of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland? If we do not have the charging points, there is no incentive for anybody to buy an electric car.

Jessica Morden: I thank the hon. Gentleman for that intervention. Electrical steel can also be part of electric charging points, so it all goes together.

The Labour party is determined to ensure that the right conditions are in place for this revolution, and the Government should be too. If the Orb works is not kept open, the potential to build a supply chain will be squandered, and it is not an overstatement to say that the UK could lose its capacity to be a global leader in electric car manufacturing.

Developing a supply chain will be hugely important for the national balance of trade too. Across the UK, there are 10,000 workers making internal combustion engines, and the Community union has emphasised that a failure to develop the supply chain will result in a loss in the export value of those engines, which will be replaced by the import cost of electric motors. Where is the vision from this Government? If they are serious about making the UK the home of electric vehicles, they will work with Tata to step in and save this plant.

What is there in this Queen's Speech to help the wider steel industry? There is no action. Where is the sector deal? Where is the support on energy prices? Where is the concrete action on procurement? The Steel Council has not even met since June 2018, and we need it to now. I would like to thank the hundreds of people who marched this weekend to save Orb steel, including many of my hon. Friends, and I hope that the show of support was noted by Ministers. Can the Minister here today relay to the Steel Minister that he needs to be proactive and promise to engage with Community, Syndex and Tata to secure this plant's future?

While there are promises in the Queen's Speech to increase police funding and some powers, it is the Conservative party that has been soft on crime by relentlessly cutting funding for police and the criminal

justice system. Since the start of the UK Government's austerity programme in 2010-11, the Gwent police budget has been reduced by 40% in real terms. As the shadow Home Secretary, my right hon. Friend the Member for Hackney North and Stoke Newington (Ms Abbott), said,

"cuts have consequences, and now the Tories are trying to pretend the consequences have nothing to do with them."

The police and crime commissioner for Gwent has confirmed that they are still waiting for clarity on funding. He said that while it appears that the first year will be funded by central Government, there are still concerns about the Government expecting them to raise more through the precept, which would fall on local taxpayers.

We need the Government to address how increased pension costs associated with the programme will be funded and, equally importantly, we need a long-term commitment. Our police and communities have been let down badly since 2010, and we need a Government who will show by their actions how much they really value the contributions of our police officers and staff and ensure that they are always properly resourced and protected. As my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant) said, we need to ensure that his Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 is used to help our emergency service workers.

The Queen's Speech had very little to say for Wales and nothing to say about addressing the perennial underfunding of Welsh rail infrastructure. Welsh routes make up 11% of the UK network but receive only about 6% of UK rail funding. Cross-border services between Newport, Severn Tunnel junction and Bristol are of strategic importance to the economies of Wales and the south-west, and they need to be improved for the sake of passengers who are paying more and more just to get to work in the morning. I regularly receive complaints from constituents who have to make do with severely overcrowded short-formed services. I call again on the UK Government to allow the Welsh Government to develop new cross-border services. The current restrictions on their doing so are ill thought out and it is rail passengers who are paying the price.

Although I note the Government's belated intention for new franchises to concentrate on performance and reliability, I ask them please not to forget the issue of rail fares. Passengers face a deeply unfair 2.8% increase in rail fares next January, and average fares are 40% higher than they were in 2010. If the Government are serious about climate change measures, forcing people off the railways due to cost and discomfort is not the right way to go about it. It is completely wrong that commuters are paying for services that are all too often overcrowded and unreliable. I support Labour's sensible call to bring our railways back into public ownership, run for passengers not profit.

This Queen's Speech is nothing more than a party political broadcast and is just a wish list that the Government have no means to deliver.

8.30 pm

Ben Bradley (Mansfield) (Con): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on the first day of the Queen's Speech debate. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley)—he is also my actual friend, regardless of

the labels we have to give each other in this place—on moving the Loyal Address. His speech was an excellent example of his advocacy for his constituency. I always take great interest in his speeches because he happens to be my nan's MP and she likes to hear about everything he says in the Chamber about Dronfield. I listened intently to him and I will feed back to her that he has done a fantastic job for his constituents today. She is probably watching Parliament TV; she is that kind of nan.

The key thing laid out at the start of the Gracious Speech is that we need to get Brexit done on 31 October. Despite the challenges put in the way of that by Opposition Members, nobody in my constituency, as far as I can tell, is desperate for more delay and uncertainty. Mansfield and Warsop voted 71% to leave. People tell me all the time that they are desperate to get the thing done and to get out, come what may. A handful of people tell me that they do not want to leave but would like a decision to be made. However, I have yet to meet on the doorstep in my constituency anyone who is desperate for a further six, nine or 12 months of delay and non-decision from this place over something that they decided three years ago.

The Queen's Speech lays out the opportunities to make the most and take advantage of being outside the European Union. It seeks to legislate on agriculture, trade, financial services, immigration and lots of other issues that we can tackle, with our own interests at heart, outside the European Union. That is the right thing to do—to leave at the end of this month and to embark on a brave new era of global Britain, as it is often called, outside the European Union.

I want to focus on the domestic policies in the Queen's Speech. As the co-chair, along with my right hon. Friend the Member for Tatton (Ms McVey), of the Blue Collar Conservatism group in Parliament, I want to celebrate in particular the focus on crime and policing, which is the issue that most regularly crosses my desk as the Member of Parliament for Mansfield and Warsop. We have pushed for more officers on the streets and for the police covenant, which seeks to protect and support the mental health of officers in the back room and behind the scenes. They are both now Government policy, which is fantastic. For those priorities to have come from my constituents is amazing. That is how our Blue Collar Conservatism movement works. We went out and asked people across the midlands and the north of the country what they wanted to see, and those issues were at the top of the agenda. Now they are Government policy and we are genuinely driving forward to improve people's safety in our communities to make sure that we feel safer on the streets and in our homes than we do now. That is fantastic.

The focus on ensuring that sentencing truly fits the crime, particularly in the most serious violent and sexual offences, is hugely important to my constituents. Equally, I advocate the additional rights of and security for victims of crime, as outlined in the Gracious Speech. I think that its priorities are absolutely right. That is my own personal perspective, but they are also important for the country.

I am also pleased that education in schools continues to be at the top of our agenda. Before I came to this place, I wanted to be a teacher. I failed miserably, so I became a politician. Since I have been here, I have talked

[Ben Bradley]

consistently about the need for more resources for our schools. I think that is the right thing to do. I personally thank the Prime Minister and the Education Secretary for announcing this week that every single school in my constituency will receive a significant increase in funding from September. In some cases, it will be as much as an 11% increase in per pupil funding, which will be fantastic. Those receiving the highest increases tend to be from the most deprived parts of my constituency, where the funding will be most effective and most needed.

Not only that, but there is £700 million in additional funding for special educational needs; in Mansfield and Warsop, we have a particularly high concentration of those additional challenges on our educational resources, which have impacted on school budgets in recent years. The extra breathing space will allow local schools to give those kids from deprived communities the experiences that they need from our education system—sport, art and school trips: the things that most of us in this place will probably have taken for granted, but that so many at schools across the country do not get to experience. That is hugely important.

Among the other Bills of note in the Queen's Speech is the one relating to fairness in employment practices. That will also hit home with many of my constituents. A huge proportion of the workforce in my constituency are in retail, where wages are not high compared with the national average. That security and fairness in both work and pensions arrangements in today's Queen's Speech will be important.

I turn to the environment, which is important to us all. We have all recently been reminded of the challenge by the goings on outside this place. I, for one, believe that we can improve our environment in a positive way, through channelling and investing in modern, clean technologies, changing consumer habits and looking at the long-term routes to delivering on the zero carbon emissions target. We can do that without glueing ourselves to vehicles and telling all our children that we are doomed. There is a positive way forward to deliver on that agenda. As has been pointed out by many in this debate, we are doing that—we are among the leading countries in the world in seeking to improve and safeguard our environment for future generations.

I sat here listening to the Leader of the Opposition's speech. It is difficult to say what a Labour Government would be for; I hear more about what they would be against. I surmise from his speech today that he is for shorter sentences for vicious criminals; for uncontrolled immigration; for more schoolkids going on strike; for a free ride on electoral fraud; for seizing private property, from private schools initially—the thin end of the wedge, which should put fear into the hearts of anybody who owns anything in this country; and for more Brexit delay and uncertainty. I hate to point out to the right hon. Gentleman that none of those things is going to go down particularly well in my constituency and many others like it across the country.

I am not entirely sure what the Leader of the Opposition is for, but I do know that this Parliament is fundamentally broken, as we have said many times over recent months. It has not been able to make a decision and, given a majority of minus 43, it is unlikely now to be able to

make a decision on anything. At times, the atmosphere in this place has been absolutely toxic, particularly on Brexit. The reality is that a lot of things coming forward in the Queen's Speech and the long-term issues that affect our country cannot be decided in this environment—they need long-term collaboration and cross-party working, which has been impossible in recent months.

Social care, for example, needs a long-term solution—we need to get together across the House and agree a plan. In recent years, such issues have been weaponised and turned into election issues. A number of Members have said that the Government have not come forward with any plans on social care. That is not true: we did during the 2017 election. A policy that said we would keep more of our money through a new form of funding was dubbed “the dementia tax”, shot down and made politically impossible, rather than there having been a sensible conversation about the pros and cons of the policy and how we might move it forward. Until we get Brexit done and we can change the atmosphere and have a new election and a new Parliament, which might be more conducive to those discussions, these things will be incredibly difficult. I hope that that will happen over the next few months.

I welcome the positive domestic agenda, which includes key priorities such as crime, schools and regional investment that are so important to my constituents in Mansfield and Warsop. I live for the day, post Brexit, when we can get on with delivering it.

8.38 pm

Anna Soubry (Broxtowe) (IGC): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Mansfield (Ben Bradley), another Nottinghamshire MP; if nothing else, we are united in our determination to fight hard for the county that we are both proud to represent. I am afraid that I must disabuse him of some of his final comments about “getting Brexit done”. We hear many things said about Brexit, and most of it is inaccurate when it comes from those who still seek to make the case for the hardest form of Brexit—a no-deal Brexit. Even if the Prime Minister, notwithstanding tonight's news that a deal is not possible in any event by Saturday, got a deal, and even if it passed through this Parliament—rather than there being the confirmatory referendum that I and many others would like—the idea that Brexit would miraculously be done, and that that would be the end of it, is for the birds.

If the hon. Gentleman and many other Conservative MPs had only applied themselves to all the great debates that have taken place in this Chamber, they would know why so many of us did not vote for the Prime Minister's deal. I think that he did not vote for the deal until the final occasion; on the two previous occasions he chose to vote against it. But never mind that. If he had actually listened to the voices of those who, like me, voted against the former Prime Minister's deal, he would know that one of the primary reasons we were so against it was because it did not actually tell us what our final relationship with the European Union would be. That deal was nothing more than a leap in the dark: a blindfold Brexit, as many of us called it. In particular, it did not settle that final trading relationship.

The Gracious Address, or the Queen's Speech to use that parlance, is nothing more than a small box of sweeties put together and assembled to try to persuade

the British people, particularly people in the midlands and the north, in the event of a general election, to vote Conservative on the back of apparently having delivered Brexit. In many respects, it is nothing more than a dog whistle to some of the most base of our prejudices and fears. In my experience, it will not deliver. In a moment, I will explain that, particularly in relation to crime, of which, as a former criminal barrister, I have some understanding. It was a very sorry speech which, to sum up its failings, offered no vision whatever. It did not even begin to embrace the many problems we have, Brexit aside, to look to the future and to offer hope, in particular to young people.

As we all know, if we do not have a good strong economy, we cannot do all the other things that we seek to do, whether that is to invest in our services or to invest back into our economy to make sure that our people prosper and that we can, in turn, pay for those services. Where was the reboot that our economy so desperately needs? Where were the reforms for business, which it has been crying out for now for a number of years? It was nothing more than spend, spend, spend. It is incredible that Conservative Members supporting the Queen's Speech have the audacity to criticise the Opposition—rightly when they look to magic money trees that do not exist—when the Government are embarking on exactly the same folly: making promises to spend money that is not there. As we know, the Government's own assessment shows that, whichever way you do Brexit, it will reduce our future prosperity and reduce jobs. That is the Government's own assessment.

Matt Western: The right hon. Lady is making a powerful speech. She talks about prosperity. Does she agree that one of the great challenges and threats to us presently is the uncertainty being faced by small businesses? I am not talking purely about the uncertainty of Brexit, although that is a huge factor. We see declining consumer confidence and growing threats from the likes of the China-US trade war, which is having a wider impact on our economy. We should be doing more for small and medium-sized businesses, but there was nothing, was there?

Anna Soubry: No. I completely agree. There was nothing for businesses of any size, or indeed in any sectors. I have listened to the debate over the past two hours. I remember the comments of the right hon. Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood), who sadly is no longer in his place. He celebrated the successes of the manufacturing sector—he talked about pharmaceuticals, for example—yet nowhere in the Queen's Speech is there any measure, not one, to mitigate what will happen if we leave the single market and the customs union. The just-in-time supply chains absolutely rely on, depend on and have been created from that single market.

Ironically, the single market found its greatest supporter in the former Prime Minister and former leader of the Conservative party, Margaret Thatcher. We all know that, without the single market and the customs union, our manufacturing sector—the 450,000 jobs, by way of example, in the automotive sector—will be particularly badly hit. There is no plan and no vision of how to mitigate the harm that Brexit will do to our society. It is about not just the manufacturing jobs, but what will happen to the 80% of our economy that relies on the service sector, as well as, of course, what I celebrate: the free movement of people throughout the European

Union and the huge benefits that that has given to our economy. We have had no real plans there and no real solution.

Looking at the lack of investment, notably, in our infrastructure, as I said to the Prime Minister, I am concerned that there is no mention of HS2 phase 2b: the line that goes through my constituency, with the east midlands hub at Toton, and then goes up to Leeds. I am sorry that the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Dame Cheryl Gillan) is not in her place. I did not intervene on her because this is not really a debate about HS2, but HS2 is not just about taking people to London. In my constituency, it is about taking people up to Sheffield, to Birmingham and to Leeds, about providing the essential connectivity that is at the heart of a modern public transport system and about the ability to bring all these pieces together. HS2 plays a critical part in that. It provides the extra capacity and is an engine for growth. We know that, wherever those hubs exist—we have seen this from other examples in France and HS1—we find the new skilled jobs, the new exciting world of work, that can be built around that connectivity with all that it gives.

I pay tribute to the comments of the hon. Member for Newport East (Jessica Morden), who rightly talks about the value of investing in electric cars. She speaks with passion about her constituency and what that would mean for her. We certainly want people to use public transport, if we are going to achieve these hard targets that we have set ourselves for climate change, but we also need to make sure that our cars are electric. One per cent. is certainly not enough. When I was a Minister in the old Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, I sat on the inter-ministerial group for the electrification of vehicles. We had so many plans and ideas, looking at the development of battery, research and the implementation of the chargers that must be put in over the full length of the United Kingdom, as my hon. Friend the Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) said. None of this work has been done. Everything has been glued up with the process of Brexit. My fear is that, if we leave the EU, it will still not get any better because we will see the harm and damage that will be done to our economy.

Services rely on a successful and growing economy, but I do not think there is anything to encourage businesses to grow in this Queen's Speech. Without those services being properly funded, we simply will not be making the investment that we have to make as a nation. One of the great joys of the time that we are in recess, especially in the September break—and about the only benefit of the unlawful Prorogation—is that it gives us all an opportunity to visit our schools and really put that effort in. That is one of the things that I did, and it is simply not acceptable in this day and age that, for example, Chilwell School in my constituency, which was built in the late '60s—flat-roofed, under the old Consortium of Local Authorities Special Programme system—is not fit for purpose. That is not good enough. It does not inspire young people and does not help a school that is desperately seeking to improve its standards and to offer all children the greatest opportunity to reach their full potential.

I also went to Foxwood Academy, for children with special needs, which, again, was built in the early '70s under the CLASP system. It has corridors that are not even

[Anna Soubry]

wide enough properly to accommodate wheelchairs. This is a special school, with flat roofs. Again, it absolutely not fit for purpose. The deep irony is that only last week we heard from the Government that they were spending £8 billion on no-deal Brexit preparations, which would provide 400 brand spanking new schools throughout the United Kingdom—schools that are needed.

The hon. Member for Mansfield talked about social care. He wrongly said that we do not work cross-party in this place: we absolutely do. Maybe the problem is that he has not taken part in that enough. For years now people have talked about the need to work cross-party to achieve real changes in social care for our elderly population and that still has not taken place. I suggest that there are still no plans in the Queen's Speech. We are not meeting the needs of our elderly, or of those children and young people with special needs.

We need big, bold, imaginative government to deal with the challenges of climate change and we need rigour. The party that I have the pleasure of leading—a small band but nevertheless important—takes the view that the target for complete carbon neutrality should be 2040. That is the rigour that is now needed.

I know the clock is against me, but I am nearly done—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Lindsay Hoyle): I suggested up to 15 minutes, so the right hon. Lady has time to carry on.

Anna Soubry: I am grateful, Mr Deputy Speaker.

We talk a great deal in this place about Brexit, but the one thing that we have not talked about—or actually addressed—is the causes of Brexit. I want a democratic revolution. What happened to the commitment in the 2010 manifesto that I was proud to stand on as a Conservative under the leadership of David Cameron? It included a promise that we would reduce the number of Members of Parliament and look at the boundaries to make sure that all constituencies were properly represented and we had a fairer system. That has completely gone.

I would go further and have a radical reform of local government. One size does not necessarily fit all, and I pay tribute to the courage of Conservative borough councillors in my constituency who did the right thing by making the case—bizarre though it may sound—for the abolition of the very borough council that they sit on. Like the hon. Member for Mansfield, they recognise that we need a new unitary system in the county of Nottinghamshire. We also need a much stronger role for our parish and town councils, if we take out the district and borough council levels in our county authorities. We need to put power back into the hands of local councillors who will represent people at a parish or town level. Give them more power and the ability to raise money, because they will spend it wisely on their communities whom they directly represent.

While I am on the subject of a democratic revolution, we have to have honesty in politics now. The trust between us and the electorate has been broken. Long before Brexit, people were disillusioned and fed up. One of the reasons was that too many politicians, especially in this place, were not honest with people about the

tough choices they faced. They promised everything—often admirable things which could never be delivered in reality. That pragmatic and honest approach is needed.

To be honest—it might get me into trouble with the *Nottingham Post*—the city of Nottingham should expand. If we were being honest about how to do things better in the city, that is what we would say. But if we do, we run the risk of headlines and criticism. That lack of honesty is one of the reasons why the immigration debate is in the pitiful state it is and—at its heart—is why we have Brexit. Too many politicians could not be trusted to have an open, honest debate based on evidence. On that basis, we look at the Conservative party and see the drift to the right—

Andrew Bowie indicated dissent.

Anna Soubry: The hon. Gentleman shakes his head, but the fact is that 21 members of his party were effectively expelled from the party for having the temerity to put their country before their party. They were, in effect, expelled. Joseph Stalin would have been proud. As for the Labour party, that too is in the grip of neo-Marxists who would take us into a command economy, making promises that they could not deliver.

I think there is a great deal that we should be talking about. Whether it is the fact that we should be bringing British citizens back from northern Syria, or the fact that there was no mention of housing in the Queen's Speech, a huge problem—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Lindsay Hoyle): Order. I can honestly say that I have been very generous, but the right hon. Lady is now abusing the Chair, and I do not think that that is fair.

8.55 pm

Vicky Ford (Chelmsford) (Con): The Queen of our great country is a beacon of stability, of good sense and of serenity. It was a true honour to be in Parliament today when she delivered her Gracious Speech, and it is an honour to be in this Chamber to speak tonight.

I have been a Member of Parliament for two years, four months and six days—two, four, six—and I genuinely believe that the vast majority of people who go into politics do so because they want to make a difference. Where we see good things happen in our constituencies, we want to replicate them. Where we see bad things happen, we want to eradicate them. We want to move forward, and yet, for the past two years, four months and six days, I have often felt that we are going round and round in circles. Every Wednesday, when we meet for Prime Minister's Question Time, it feels like yet another groundhog day. This week gives us a chance: a chance for hope, a chance to end that merry-go-round, a chance to get that first phase of Brexit done and move on—and people across the country are crying out for us to move on.

I voted remain, but I know it is vital for our democracy that we respect the fact that we gave people the vote, and we should deliver on that vote. However, I also know that the EU is our largest trading partner, and that many EU countries are our closest allies. No deal is not a good deal. It is not good for the UK, it is not good for the EU, and it is certainly not good for Ireland. I urge everyone who is involved in the negotiations today—I see that the Under-Secretary of State for Exiting

the European Union, my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford and Southend East (James Duddridge), is here—to roll up their sleeves, to work night and day, to be creative and to find compromises, and I urge everyone in the House to take the same approach. I say to certain Members—particularly the Leader of the Opposition, who just loves the chaos, and who wants more confusion because he is feeding on it for his own political gain—“History will not forgive you. I urge you to back a deal and end the chaos.”

This has been our longest Session. The Queen’s Speech contains much positive news—news of investment in the NHS, in infrastructure, in schools, in the police and, of course, in caring for our environment—but sometimes, in order to appreciate where we are and where we need to go, it is necessary to look at where we have come from. I remember when, 10 years ago, the Conservative Government took over from Labour. Our country was suffering a massive economic failure. Our country had some of the highest levels of debt in the world. Our country was teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. Our country had run out of money. Reducing public spending was not an ideological mission; it was done because Labour had blown all the cash.

Rebuilding our economy meant supporting entrepreneurs, backing innovators, and making sure that we were at the forefront of some of the fastest-growing sectors—the tech revolution, financial services, science and research, and the space sector—because those were the sectors that were driving investment and creating opportunity. The harsh reality is that 10 years ago, 1 million young people were not in employment, education or training. They had been left by Labour on the edge of society, with no opportunity. Yet this year, in my constituency, 650 people started apprenticeships.

Ten years ago, one in five young people had no job; today we have record employment and record youth employment. Government do not create jobs, businesses do, but it is up to us to create the environment that allows our economy to flourish, and it is because of those policies that we are in the position today to give the opportunities offered in this Queen’s Speech.

First, there is the record investment in our NHS. We know that the NHS needs a long-term vision. In Chelmsford we need more GPs, but that is why we have built a new medical school that is already training them. And we know that a long-term plan needs to come from the bottom up, which is why I am so pleased that the NHS long-term plan is written not by politicians but by physicians and frontline health professionals, and our Queen’s Speech gives us the opportunity to turn that plan into reality.

Before coming here I helped to finance infrastructures all over our country, all over Europe and all over the middle east and Africa, and infrastructure in this country is creaking. As I said in my maiden speech, people in Chelmsford spend too much time in traffic jams and on delayed trains; it is a waste of their time and it is a waste of our country’s productivity. I am honoured to chair the all-party group on infrastructure in this place, and I am pleased to see the national infrastructure strategy right at the heart of the Queen’s Speech.

In my constituency of Chelmsford we have many excellent schools, and I am constantly impressed by the standards of their students and the dedication of their teachers. Our schools have been under pressure in Essex:

costs have increased and the number of pupils with special educational needs in my county has gone up by nearly 22%. Budgets are strained, and I am pleased that the Queen’s Speech gives that vital boost to our education, levels up the funding and gives the extra funding for special educational needs.

On crime and policing, it is no secret that over the past decade Essex police were under-resourced, but in the past two years moves have been made to rectify that, thanks to the Government’s changing the funding stream and to our excellent police, fire and crime commissioner, Roger Hirst, who has made it possible for us to already be recruiting 368 more police, with another extra 135 promised by the Essex Home Secretary just last week. We have city centre policing and more power for police, and in this Queen’s Speech we are also going to be making that extra effort to protect the most vulnerable in our society, the victims of domestic violence.

Finally, I want to talk about climate change. Our country has reduced emissions faster than any other large economy in the world. We are the first major economy to set net zero in our law; we are leading the world on renewables, especially offshore; we are leading the global fight against coal; and we are leading the global work to protect the poorest countries on our planet. We are also now leading the efforts to protect the world’s oceans: this tiny island is going to be protecting a third of the world’s oceans within the next decade.

Of course there is more to do.

Matt Western: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Vicky Ford: No, we are short of time so I will not take any more interventions.

Of course there is more to do but this Queen’s Speech allows us to improve air quality and water quality and restore habitats for wildlife and plants, as well as fight back on plastic pollution. I am standing here having listened to the leader of the Scots Nats say he wanted to fight single-use plastic while staring across the Chamber at the single-use plastic cups that they have chucked under their seats. We need to take action for our planet. There is only one planet, we cannot replace it and we in this country are leading the world’s efforts to protect it.

This Queen’s Speech gives us a unique opportunity; let’s not squander it.

9.4 pm

Judith Cummins (Bradford South) (Lab): I would like to focus on the significant and growing problem of regional inequality in this country. It is often referred to as the north-south divide, but it goes way beyond simplistic narratives about particular regions of our country. It is fundamentally about fairness. I simply do not believe that the policies announced in the Queen’s Speech will address the fundamental unfairness that means that if you live in certain parts of the country, you get a much rougher deal than those living elsewhere.

First, however, I would like to mention another issue. The Queen’s Speech included a new sentencing Bill, but it is extremely disappointing that the Government have still not honoured their previous commitment to bring in tougher sentences for causing death by dangerous driving. In fact, that is more than disappointing; it is a disgrace.

[*Judith Cummins*]

The families of those killed by dangerous drivers have waited for over two years for changes to be made. They believed that their tragic circumstances could at least lead to a change in the law so that other families would not suffer as they had. The Government have yet to see those families find justice; they have let those families down. The Government must now come good on their promise and implement the tougher sentences without delay.

The Queen's Speech does not do anywhere near enough on investment in the regions and communities of our country that have seen decades of underinvestment. Updated data on transport from IPPR North shows that, in both historical and future funding, the north of England is not getting its fair share. Over the past 10 years, annual per capita spending on transport in London has been £739, compared with £305 in the north, and that unfairness is set to continue. IPPR North estimates that current planned spending is nearly three times higher in London than in the north, and over seven times higher than in Yorkshire and the Humber. This Government have let the north down. Passengers on cramped Pacer trains between Bradford and Leeds know this, as do people waiting far too long for a bus that often does not turn up. So, whatever the Government say, however they present their figures, and whatever their narrative, we in the north know that we are still not getting our fair share.

Two major infrastructure projects are of vital importance to the north. On HS2, it is disappointing—to say the least—that one of the possible outcomes of the Government's review would be to scrap the eastern branch to Leeds and Sheffield. Phase 2b will bring enormous economic benefits to West Yorkshire. It will also provide much of the infrastructure needed for Northern Powerhouse Rail. HS2 and NPR must not be an either/or choice. We urgently need both to be delivered.

Dr Rupa Huq (Ealing Central and Acton) (Lab): As a London MP, I feel slightly embarrassed that we are getting all the riches, as my hon. Friend puts it—she makes a powerful point. HS2 goes through my seat in East Acton. Is she not as alarmed as I am that it seems to be going over budget and to haemorrhage CEOs as often as a lot of people change their knickers? Does she not agree that these big projects should be better managed advice?

Judith Cummins: I thank my hon. Friend for that intervention—I think! I will continue with my speech.

I urge the Government to go ahead with HS2 east at the same time as HS2 west. On Northern Powerhouse Rail, I must stress once again the vital importance of a city centre stop in Bradford. It would be an historic mistake to build an out-of-town station, which would risk denying the full benefits of NPR to the people of Bradford. I also say to the Government: make the funding available to bring this transformational project about, sooner rather than later. The people of the north have waited for too long for proper east-west rail connections, and they should not be made to wait for another generation.

Turning to the outstanding work taking place locally in Bradford to improve access to skilled jobs and training, I pay tribute once again to the Bradford manufacturing

week, whose launch I had the pleasure of attending last week in my constituency. This year's event is twice the size of last year's, with more than 40 secondary schools taking part and more than 6,000 manufacturing experiences delivered to local young people right across Bradford. Bradford and the north more generally have a great opportunity to lead a Bradford manufacturing renaissance, but we need the Government to listen to areas such as ours and to give us a skills system that is fully funded and that responds to local priorities. That is the way to provide prosperity to places such as my constituency of Bradford South.

It has become something of a cliché to talk about a divided nation, and it is certainly true that Brexit reveals some of the deep fault lines in our society. I firmly believe that we need national effort to reduce inequalities and to give everyone, whatever their background and wherever they live, the tools and opportunities they need to succeed. The Government must ensure that every part of our country gets its fair share of funding. For too long, the north of England has been held back by a failure of Government policy. Northerners will not stand by and let that happen any more. Invest in our infrastructure, properly fund our public services, and give us the tools to create a successful economy. That is what the north demands.

9.10 pm

Alan Mak (Havant) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Bradford South (Judith Cummins).

I rise to welcome today's Queen's Speech because it lays the foundations for delivering Brexit and ending some of the uncertainty that has affected our country over the past three years. As a Member who voted to trigger article 50 and against delays, that is what the country needs. The Queen's Speech also outlines investment in the public services that my residents in Havant rely on—our police, our schools and our health service—which is why I am pleased to support it today.

I congratulate my hon. Friends the Members for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley) and for Truro and Falmouth (Sarah Newton) on moving and seconding the Loyal Address eloquently and powerfully.

As this new Session begins with a new Government and a relatively new Prime Minister, it is important to re-emphasise that investment in technology and science is how this country will secure its prosperity and security after we deliver Brexit. Contrary to the right hon. Member for Broxtowe (Anna Soubry), I think that the Queen's Speech looks to the future and offers something for communities across the whole country.

Looking at Brexit specifically, the seven pieces of legislation in the Queen's Speech will create a new regulatory framework for agriculture, fisheries and financial services, and it is right that this Queen's Speech gets our statute book ready for Brexit.

I welcome the new environment Bill, which, as my hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford (Vicky Ford) rightly said, will enshrine in law important measures to cut air pollution, to reduce plastic usage, and to improve the quality of our water.

I am pleased that the Domestic Abuse Bill was carried over from the previous Session. Charities such as Stop Domestic Abuse in Havant do important work in this field, and the new Bill will help them.

The police covenant is also being put into law, rightly recognising the bravery and commitment of our police. When I went out with a local response unit in Havant, it was humbling to see the commitment and hard work that they put in day in and day out to keep our communities safe.

On an extremely positive note, I was pleased to see the medicines and medical devices Bill, which will give the NHS access to the most innovative medicines. The Bill follows a trend of innovation and the adoption of innovation started by my right hon. Friend the Member for South West Surrey (Mr Hunt) and continued by the current Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, because ensuring that our health services are on a proper, strong footing when it comes to technology is incredibly important.

All the measures that I have mentioned help to tackle some of the challenges we face today in our public services, in our economy and in delivering Brexit. However, I also support the Queen's Speech because it is forward looking, helping the UK to stay prosperous and competitive after Brexit, particularly by seizing the opportunities offered by science and technology, artificial intelligence, big data, precision medicine, robotics and machine learning. Those technologies are already transforming our society and our economy, and the Queen's Speech takes that agenda forward.

As the founder and chairman of the all-party parliamentary group on the fourth industrial revolution, it is important for the House to know that there is an exciting agenda beyond Brexit, supported by the Government, to ensure that prosperity and the advantages technology are spread to communities across the country. I therefore welcome the commitment to make the UK a global science and technology powerhouse after Brexit, making us a magnet for talented innovators, inventors, investors, entrepreneurs and businesses from around the world, encouraging them to come to this country to invent, manufacture, design and export.

The Queen's Speech sets out plans significantly to increase public R&D funding, providing a framework that gives long-term certainty to our science community. The Government have already increased public spending on R&D by £7 billion over five years—the biggest ever increase in public R&D funding—which is welcome, because R&D is vital to creating a productive economy. The productivity of firms that invest in R&D is around 13% higher than those that do not, so R&D investment is key to our future. The plans in this Queen's Speech will help to accelerate the UK's position in the world and to reach the target of spending 2.4% of GDP on R&D by 2027. This big boost in funding will allow us to invest strategically in cutting-edge science, while encouraging the world's most innovative entrepreneurs and businesses to invest in the UK, but this country also needs to go further. The Queen's Speech sets out a path to 2.4% of GDP, but the world leaders, such as South Korea and Israel, reach 3% of GDP and we must match them in time.

The Government also announced today that the UK will accelerate efforts to realise fusion energy through investment in a new UK fusion reactor design programme, which aims to deliver the world's first commercially viable fusion power plant by 2040. I have visited First Light Fusion, a company in Oxfordshire that is doing incredibly exciting and important work in this field. Fusion energy has the potential to power most of the country, so it is right that the Government invest in it.

Bob Stewart: My hon. Friend says we aim to spend 2.4% of GDP on R&D. If that is correct, it is an enormous amount of money. To put it in context, it is way more than our defence budget.

Alan Mak: My hon. and gallant Friend is right that 2.4% is a huge investment, but it is welcome that the Government are investing so much in this area. I hope the defence budget will increase to the same level.

Bob Stewart: And to 3%.

Alan Mak: And to 3%, which is where we need to be on R&D.

Vicky Ford: Of course, the 2.4% will come from both public and private investment, so it is not all Government spending. The key element is to make sure we encourage investment from outside sources, as well as from domestic and public sources.

Alan Mak: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. In fact, every £1 of public expenditure on R&D typically leverages around £1.40 of additional private sector investment, so it is a powerful tool. If the Government can turbocharge and accelerate investment in R&D, the private sector will follow.

To answer my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Beckenham (Bob Stewart), I very much hope the defence budget will also increase in time. There have been significant advances in defence technology, and the Ministry of Defence has led the way in helping small and medium-sized enterprises and incubators to develop products for the defence sector. I hope that increases in the future, as it has been a good model in America and other NATO allies for ensuring their armed forces have access to the latest technology. I hope our armed forces do that, too.

Returning to the Queen's Speech, not only is there an increase in public investment in R&D but there is a commitment to fusion energy, which holds the possibility of driving forward our energy market and our energy capabilities in the years ahead. As I mentioned, First Light Fusion in Oxfordshire is doing exciting and interesting work, and I hope it succeeds.

The Queen's Speech also establishes a new space council and launches a comprehensive space strategy. Our space capabilities are increasingly central to our day-to-day lives, whether civilian or military. These important capabilities underpin a range of technologies, from smartphones to navigational devices, so this new national space council and space strategy will help us to lead the way in creating high-value, high-skilled, high-wage jobs across the country. My Havant constituency is already leading the way in this area, with firms such as Lockheed Martin doing excellent work.

This Queen's Speech will help our world-leading science and technology base to grow even further. Science and technology will be the foundation of our prosperity after Brexit, and it will help us to tackle some of the big challenges facing society, such as ending the UK's contribution to climate change, managing the adoption and adaptation of "fourth industrial revolution" technologies, transforming our transport systems and tackling the challenges associated with an ageing population.

[Alan Mak]

The grand challenges and the Government's industrial strategy, to which I had the privilege of contributing in a small way when I was at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, are already helping the country to secure our position in the world, but this Queen's Speech takes us even further and faster, which is why I will be pleased to support it in the Lobby next week.

9.19 pm

Dr David Drew (Stroud) (Lab/Co-op): I am delighted to take part on the first day of our consideration of the Queen's Speech, which was more about a political programme for the forthcoming general election than about how this country is going to be governed. Sadly, the Brexit morass that will envelop us all will carry on, regardless of what happens on Saturday and whatever happens by the end of this month. I wish, however, to start on a conciliatory note and something I am pleased to add my comments on. I refer to the commendation of our late friend Paul Flynn. Paul helped me enormously. He always said I would become an MP and he proved to be right, and he came over to Stroud to help me on numerous occasions. I owe him so much and he is clearly someone we all miss on this side of the House, and I hope the whole House will feel the same.

The Queen's Speech is significant not so much for what was in it—as I said, there was a lot of politicisation—but, sadly, for what was not in it. It contained no mention of the Women Against State Pension Inequality Campaign, whose tragedy this whole House has to face up to at some point. It contained no mention of housing, which is the key issue for many of us in terms of how public service has to deliver much better. It did contain a mention of animal welfare, but it was minuscule compared with where we need to be going on animal welfare. A genuine animal welfare Bill is required, yet we are now talking about trophy hunting just as we talked previously about ivory bans, both of which are important in their own right but not what we should be doing, which is looking for a much more comprehensive approach. Many of our constituents vote on the issue of animal welfare and they feel we should be taking things forward much more quickly and radically.

Matt Western: My hon. Friend is making some powerful points. I believe he is alluding to the fact that this Queen's Speech seemed almost tokenistic, in that it was almost like a shopping list of ambitions and touchpoints of things that the Government and Prime Minister felt to be important. How can there have been no mention of something as crucial to what is needed out there as housing, given that we have homelessness and rough sleeping at record levels, with people desperate and dying on the streets?

Dr Drew: That is what we should have been prioritising in this Queen's Speech, along with the abolition of universal credit, which has proved to be a monumental mistake. There was nothing wrong with the concept, but the delivery of UC has caused such hardship, in all our constituencies, and it is beyond reform. We have to get rid of it and start with something different.

The Prime Minister, in defence of the Queen's Speech, talked a lot about one nation. I know the Conservatives like to talk about themselves as the one nation party.

Sadly, the way things could turn out means we could be facing one nation, because the other three parts of the United Kingdom, for various reasons, no longer seems to want to be part of this one nation. I really worry about the level of English nationalism, which is now driving the Conservative party. We have a fundamental problem and I agree with the right hon. Member for Broxtowe (Anna Soubry) that we need radical constitutional reform, and that includes devolution in this country of England, where we have failed to do anything to deal with the centralisation of power. That is a fundamental reason why people voted for Brexit; they did so because they feel disconnected from the way in which decisions are made. That comes into the need for a fundamental rethink, with votes at 16, electoral reform and unitary authorities, to which she alluded. As someone who spent 28 years on a parish and town council, I am pleased to say that that means taking power to the first level of government—it is not the lowest level. That is important, because people can then see what is happening in the communities.

Brexit has caused huge divisions, but it has also led to this Government wasting the past year. I regret and resent the fact that we will not be having the Agriculture Bill and the Fisheries Bill back—we did not even get as far as the environment Bill. All those are fundamental pieces of legislation that should have been enacted over the past year. We may disagree about what was going into those Bills. We had a critique in Committee, but, sadly for those who served on it—I led on behalf of the Opposition—the Agriculture Bill disappeared last November, never to be seen again. That does nothing other than cause disillusion. Farmers are asking, notwithstanding the uncertainty over Brexit, what policy is going to be in place if we crash out. More particularly, even if we do not crash out, we will need an agricultural policy that is understood and that takes account of the idea of public money for public goods. We need to see that in practice and see how it will work. At the moment, we just have a huge void.

I welcome the fact that the issue of mental health is in the Queen's Speech, and hopefully a Bill will subsequently come forward, but there is a problem. Like many other Members, I go around my local schools—I have been to 40 schools in the past year—and besides funding and staff stability, the third issue that all schools raise with me is their children's mental health. It is now at a stage where it is a crisis. We cannot underestimate how bad things are. Of course, it is about not only the children but their families. We have a significant problem, even in Gloucestershire, with off-rolling. A lot of it has to do with parents who do not believe that their children can get special needs provision in the normal system, but it is also about the way parents can take their children out of school into so-called home education. There is nothing wrong with home education in theory, but they are not then educating their children, who are being taken out of school more as companions than in the context of a parent-child relationship. That should be addressed by proper investigation and, in due course, the putting in place of a proper legislative context.

My hon. Friend the Member for Swansea West (Geraint Davies), who is sadly not currently in the Chamber, talked about air quality as a key issue. I hope that will be addressed, either through the environment Bill or in its own right. I shall just add to what he had to say the

significant issue of incineration, which leads to small particulates that have an enormous impact on the health of children in particular. We have never investigated it, and it should be paramount in the way we try to drive up air quality. Yes, of course traffic is seen as the major cause of the huge issue of our deteriorating health standards, but there are other parts to it. The disposal of waste through appropriate means by getting rid of it in a non-polluting manner is crucial, as is not creating it in the first place.

That brings me to the biggest loss in the Queen's Speech: the failure to address climate change properly. The target of 2050 is far too late. Earlier this evening, I had the opportunity to go along to a meeting of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, at which three experts, including the former chief scientist Sir David King, basically argued that we are not anywhere near meeting the obligations in this country, let alone in the wider world. Warming of 2° will cause climate change catastrophe. We need to understand that, which is why I am proud to stand by my constituents. As many Members know, Extinction Rebellion came from Stroud. Many of my constituents are out there at every moment in time, and I am happy to help them wherever I can. I also pay due regard to Polly Higgins, the creator of the campaign on ecocide who latterly became a Stroud constituent. We need to look at ecocide and the implications—there is an opportunity for Members to come to a briefing this week—of how we can pass a law that means we will not leave a worse situation to our children and particularly our grandchildren. We should feel desperately keen to avoid doing that at any cost. Let us listen to the scientists and the campaigners, and let us do something in this place, rather than talk about it.

In conclusion, I am pleased that the Domestic Abuse Bill has been carried over and will hopefully see the light of day. Let us make sure that the legislation is not watered down and includes action such as banning sham marriages. We must make sure that it is not just linked to immigration and human rights but stands in its own right. The Opposition will debate the Bills as they come forward and seek radically to improve the legislation. We will make sure that there is an alternative. We heard earlier that it was all about the previous Government's failings in power; I argue that austerity was a political programme. We are now coming to the end of austerity. It was such an unnecessary and punitive way for any Government to try to deal with the poorest and most vulnerable in our society. If we have come out of austerity, now is the time to see the real changes that are desperately needed, so that we have a more humane society that addresses issues such as housing, education and health, as well as trying to deal with the morass of Brexit. More particularly, we need to deal with climate change.

9.29 pm

Bill Wiggin (North Herefordshire) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Stroud (Dr Drew), who, as always, made many excellent points. I support the Queen's Speech, which I thought was absolutely tremendous, and congratulate my hon. Friends the Members for Truro and Falmouth (Sarah Newton) and for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley) on their excellent speeches. I draw the attention of the House to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests, because that is a traditional thing that one has to do.

The most important point facing my constituents at the moment is, as always, tuberculosis in cattle. I keep coming back to this matter because—the hon. Member for Stroud mentioned the animal welfare element in the agriculture Bill—of the need to tackle this disease, and the issues that are hitting farmers time and again in the countryside. They all come down to the failure of the skin test to correctly identify infection in cattle. There is good news: a new test, the Enferplex TB test, has been approved by the World Organisation for Animal Health—or the OIE. It is an antibody test, and it is more reliable and more accurate. It will genuinely give us, as a nation, the opportunity to find the disease both in cattle and in badgers and to correctly identify it. Until we can do that, the progress we make will never be as good as it should or could be.

There is also work under way on enhanced skin tests and DNA in blood tests, but neither of those are approved by the OIE. The OIE does not approve any old test. It is a respected, proper international body and we need to know what the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is doing to make sure that these tests are adopted and that the fight against tuberculosis is successful.

I have farmers complain to me time and again of the heartbreak of watching their beloved animals being put down. To make matters even worse, they then get a message saying that, during the test later, there was no sign of infection in the animal. Those tests can take up to six months to culture but, by then, of course, my constituents are unutterably miserable and have been treated appallingly, so we need to move on. We need to use science to help to fight this horrible disease in cattle and to ensure that the badger population, which is healthy, is protected. The culling has been proven to work. The peer group review and the science add up. If you do it properly, you can reduce the incidence of outbreaks in cattle and, of course, that is good not only for the farmers and the cattle, but for protecting the healthy population of badgers.

Matt Western: The hon. Gentleman is making a very important point about some of the challenges that are faced in our rural communities, particularly by our farmers. When I speak to farmers in Warwickshire—there are very few in my constituency—they are very vocal about the concerns about TB. I have learned that one of the challenges that they face, or that we face, is that so many of these tests are undertaken by specialist vets, who are often from the EU—from eastern Europe. If we do not have that skilled migration coming from eastern Europe, the delivery of vets and their supply to rural communities will be under threat.

Bill Wiggin: That is a very good reason to have a better test and to win the battle against the disease, and then we will not need to do so many tests because the cattle will be clean.

Dr Drew: The hon. Gentleman is being very generous in giving way. There is even better news: there is now—within five years—the prospect of a cattle vaccine. Under the old enzyme linked immunosorbent assay test, we could not separate those that had been vaccinated and those that had not. I gather that that is now happening. Is that not much better than some of the things that are going on?

Bill Wiggin: The problem with vaccinating against bacteria is that it is much harder for the creature—whether it be human or animal—to fight a disease unless it is under pressure. That means that, if the disease is prevalent, a vaccine is much more successful than if the disease is not. Although I would welcome an effective vaccination, BCG in human beings is only 60% effective. But because we all do the same things, and because we can use antibiotics, that is enough to create the herd immunity that, as a society, we need. Unfortunately, we are not winning this battle particularly successfully in the human population, and it is becoming increasingly prevalent. Although I want to welcome every step of science that protects my constituents and their animals, vaccines alone will unfortunately not do it. But if we do everything, we can triumph.

One of the things that has been bothering me is the situation for our sheep farmers—our shepherds. What will they do if we leave the European Union, which takes such a large proportion of our lamb? We produce 3% of the world's sheep, but 25% of the EU's sheep. We produce a third of the EU's sheepmeat and are the sixth largest producer in the world. The average person in the UK eats 1.9 kg of lamb a year—including you, Mr Speaker, as I am delighted to see from your signalling. That is about the size of a family joint per year. We can do better than that. If our sheepmeat market is threatened, we could double consumption. That would actually make us a net importer of lamb. Some 64% of our product is actually consumed domestically, so the idea that the New Zealanders—who have a 90,000-tonne opportunity to sell into the UK already, but who have never fulfilled that quota—will flood our market is for the birds. We can eat our way to success even if everything goes wrong, and I am a great advocate for that, as the House can see from my aerodynamic dimensions. We produce 298,000 tonnes of sheepmeat per annum, worth £2.216 billion.

The other thing that is really upsetting me at the moment is dog meat in China. I have seen the way that these poor people in Hong Kong are being treated, and I think our reaction has been rather quiet. One of the things we ought to be doing is using our status in the world to set an example. The example that my hon. Friend the Member for Clacton (Giles Watling) and I seek to set is to make it illegal to eat dogs—not least because nobody eats dogs in the UK, so resistance to this law should be pretty minimal. It would set an example to the world. The horrendous torture that goes on for more than 10 million dogs in China is so unbelievably revolting and cruel that, if we can do even the smallest thing here, we should do it.

We care about animal welfare, and today the Prime Minister talked about banning live exports. This is a difficult subject for me. Exporting animals for slaughter abroad is obviously not ideal. It would be much better if they were slaughtered nearer to where they live. We are constantly told that the EU sets these high standards for animal welfare, yet they clearly are not high enough for live exports. That is why our Government want to stop such exports. That is perfectly understandable, but surely when we leave the EU we can have much higher standards for transporting animals. Actually, I think the UK does it very well already, and the NFU has some excellent suggestions as to how this could be done. This is one of the EU failures that people do not talk about but jolly well should.

There are other things in the Queen's Speech that matter to my constituents. I am particularly pleased that railways and buses have come up. Railways really do need to take the passenger to the end of the line, particularly if that is in Hereford. It is no good stopping off in Worcester, Malvern or anywhere else that is jolly nice but where the people do not live; trains really do need to reach the end of the line. There is a wonderful man called Dave Morris, who runs the bus companies in my constituency. I have been appalled by the way in which bus companies treat each other and seek to compete in order to put their competitors out of business. We need reliability in our buses, and preferably slightly thinner buses that can fit down country lanes.

Mr Paul Sweeney (Glasgow North East) (Lab/Co-op): As we look at the increasing dysfunctionality of our public transport system—outside of London especially—we can see that is actually a case of a natural monopoly. There should be further control from a central planning point of view; having further co-ordination, franchising and other co-operative models of municipal control would be far better. Does the hon. Gentleman agree?

Bill Wiggin: I would love to agree with the hon. Gentleman. I am not sure that the buses will ever be completely satisfactory in my constituency. We have a fairly sparsely populated group of people and more roads per capita than any other county. That means that getting a bus when one wants it to where one wants to go is extremely difficult. However, it has got a lot better since I was first elected. In order to get to Tenbury Wells, one took a bus on a Monday morning but could not get back until Thursday afternoon. Things have, believe it or not, got better.

Another gripe I have is this vegetarian nonsense. I have absolutely had it up to here. Someone who really cares about the planet should eat grass-fed meat. There is no way that human beings can consume grass. It makes sense to turn the grass that grows across 60% of our country into protein, and the way to do that is to allow a sheep or cow to eat it and then consume the animal.

Of course I understand that these animals can produce methane from enteric digestion, but that methane is part of the cycle. The manure goes back into the soil and it is a natural cycle. Once someone starts to add fossil fuels through their tractor or their fertiliser, they totally alter the carbon footprint of the crops they are producing.

Therefore, having a plant-based diet is not going to save the planet. All those people nibbling away on soya beans grown on the burnt-out former forests of the Amazon are doing immense harm, not least in lurking outside here and making people stick in a traffic jam emitting carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, NOx's and all sorts of other vile fumes—[Interruption]—especially the ones from Stroud, who are causing no end of trouble. Most of all, they are upsetting people like me who really care about climate change. I wrote a book about it. I have to tell the House that I slightly spoil it by putting a picture of myself on the front, but that did not matter: it was a really important subject. Turning people away from doing the right thing, which is what these people and their vegetarianism are doing, is absolutely disastrous. We are leading the world, and to go out of

one's way to beat up the world leader for something they are doing right strikes me as very poor politics indeed.

I welcome various other parts of the Queen's Speech. The rule of law matters so much to my constituents. We have the lowest crime, I am happy to tell the House, but that does not mean that people do not feel frightened or nervous, or care about seeing police officers. Seeing more of those is a wonderful and important thing, so I welcome that. I agree that the punishment needs to fit the crime and that it is no good giving a long sentence and then the criminal who has been found guilty serving only half of it. Who are we trying to fool—the families of the victims? It is very important that we have honesty in our sentencing.

I welcome the hospital building, particularly in Hereford. I think I still have a photograph of me chasing Alan Milburn and trying to get more beds for Hereford County Hospital in 2001. Now, finally, those beds are about to arrive, as the wards built by the Canadian army in the second world war are finally dismantled and replaced with a 21st-century building. The same is true for the funding of our schools. I am sure that all colleagues have, like me, visited their local schools and heard the plea for more money. The bit that has always been incredibly difficult is to explain why, if someone lives in Westminster, their children receive twice as much money as the children of someone who lives in Ledbury. That cannot be right. Raising the funding from the bottom up will be welcome because it does not take from those who have higher needs, but it does lift the base. That is surely the best way to ensure that our children get the best possible start in life.

I shall close with the thought that these people who care about the climate, care about the future of our planet and want to do the right thing should be encouraged and not put off. They should start eating pasture-fed meat with the Pasture for Life logo on it so that they know they are not only saving the planet but bringing about the highest levels of animal welfare, which I know all our farmers, particularly those in Herefordshire, strive for, care about and deliver.

Ordered, That the debate be now adjourned.—(David Rutley.)

Debate to be resumed tomorrow.

Battle of Arnhem: 75th Anniversary

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(David Rutley.)

9.44 pm

Dan Jarvis (Barnsley Central) (Lab): I am grateful for the opportunity to pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of those who fought at Arnhem 75 years ago as part of Operation Market Garden, which began on 17 September 1944. Before I go any further, I should say that this debate was due to take place last month, prior to the commemorations, but the proroguing of Parliament meant that it did not go ahead. I would like to thank you, Mr Speaker, for agreeing to grant this debate and for the chance to commemorate this historic milestone.

From 17 to 26 September each year, we remember the anniversary of the battle of Arnhem—nine days of some of the fiercest fighting witnessed in the second world war, and the largest airborne operation ever conducted. Arnhem would indeed prove to be a bridge too far, but the story of those who fought there is one of immeasurable bravery and unspeakable tragedy. It would come to define our airborne forces, forging an enduring legacy.

Buoyed by victories in northern France and Belgium after the D-day landings, Operation Market Garden was a bold plan devised by Field Marshal Montgomery to end the war in 1944. Following its conclusion, he predicted that

“in years to come it will be a great thing for a man to be able to say: ‘I fought at Arnhem’.”

Montgomery was indeed correct, but, of course, not for the reasons he originally envisaged.

As part of the operation, the US 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions were ordered to secure key bridges and towns in Son, Veghel, Grave and Nijmegen. To the north, the British 1st Airborne Division, supported by the Polish 1st Parachute Brigade and the Glider Pilot Regiment, were tasked with capturing the bridges at Arnhem and Oosterbeek.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): I thank the hon. Gentleman for giving way; I sought his permission to intervene beforehand. While there are some fantastic examples of heroism, does he agree that the role played by the Irish Guards in the battle of Arnhem should be a source of considerable pride, especially for the people of Northern Ireland? Not only did they lead 30 Corps into the battle, but by the time the war had ended in May 1945, they had been awarded 252 gallantry medals, including two Victoria Crosses—heroism above and beyond the call of duty.

Dan Jarvis: I absolutely agree with the hon. Gentleman and thank him for his intervention. I have proud and happy memories of serving alongside the Irish Guards. They are a regiment with a long and proud tradition. I seem to remember that they were fond of describing themselves as being at the more relaxed end of the Household Division, but he is right to reference their outstanding service in this and many other campaigns.

Had Operation Market Garden been successful, the allied forces would then have prepared an assault across the Rhine, but a combination of poor planning, lack of intelligence and bad weather contributed to a catastrophe at Arnhem. The human cost of the operation was colossal:

[*Dan Jarvis*]

more than 1,500 allied troops were killed, while nearly 6,500 were captured. The damage was lasting, and the division would not fight as a collective unit in the war again. Despite German success, casualties on their side were put at 3,300, although some estimates are as high as 8,000. The ambition of ending the war by Christmas was met with failure, and the people of Arnhem would have to wait another seven long and desperate months for liberation.

Arnhem would, however, come to define what it meant to be airborne, and still today it is a story recounted to every fledgling paratrooper in training. The bravery and mettle shown by those who fought against all the odds is the standard to which everyone who served in an airborne unit would subsequently be held. That is because, facing unrelenting assault from German armour and infantry, the allies held firm. The British and Polish paratroopers at Arnhem were outnumbered, increasingly running low on ammunition, food and supplies and cut off from support. Despite the overwhelming adversity, they did not falter. It was a lesson in true solidarity and one from which we can all learn.

The past year has been a poignant one for remembrance in our country. As we have shown on numerous occasions, most notably during the centenary of the Armistice and the 75th anniversary of the Normandy landings, it is our collective responsibility to honour the dedication and professionalism of those who have served in our armed forces.

This year, the Parachute Regimental Association co-ordinated a series of commemorative events, at which thousands paid their respects. Our nation was privileged that a number of veterans of world war two were in attendance. For many, the 75th anniversary will be the final time that they will gather together. As such, it is important that we cherish these men while we still have the opportunity to do so.

Many of us will have had the privilege of meeting veterans from Operation Market Garden. I am proud to know Tom Hicks, one of my constituents in Barnsley. As a sapper in 1st Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers, Tom was a veteran of operations in north Africa and Sicily. He was dropped in to Arnhem and after nine days' fighting he was injured, taken prisoner by German forces and spent the rest of the war in a forced labour camp. It was with great pride that our community congratulated Tom on another milestone earlier this year: his 100th birthday. He typifies the very best of our country and our airborne forces. Whatever else is going on—and let us be honest, there is a lot going on—we should never lose sight of the fact that the freedoms we enjoy today are a direct result of the determination that Tom and so many others showed throughout the second world war.

The act of commemorating this battle now, and over the years, is particularly important to me, not least because I had the great honour of serving in the Parachute Regiment. I also hope that in 75 years' time, we will not only continue to commemorate the sacrifice of those who fell in the second world war, but commemorate the sacrifice made by my friends and comrades in more recent conflicts. As well as reminding us of our past, the act of remembrance is an opportunity to be mindful of the present and to think of those who have fallen in more recent conflicts around the world.

Stephen Pound (Ealing North) (Lab): I am reluctant to interrupt my hon. and gallant Friend, who is making an extraordinarily powerful speech. However, I am extremely grateful to him for mentioning the contribution of the Polish forces, which is very often overlooked. Will he join me in placing on the record our appreciation for the absolute gallantry of the Polish forces? Their nation had been invaded and they were not to experience freedom for many years, yet they fought with exemplary courage, shoulder to shoulder with our paratroopers. May I also say that it is an honour to sit on the same Benches as my hon. and gallant Friend, who is a distinguished former member of the regiment?

Dan Jarvis: I am incredibly grateful to my hon. Friend, who speaks with great eloquence on these matters. I did not expect his intervention. He is absolutely right and I completely agree with him. I do not want to say anything further because I may struggle to get through it, such was the eloquence with which he expressed himself. I am grateful to him for his intervention.

I was reflecting on the fact that commemoration is, of course, about what has gone before, but it is incredibly important that we also think about what is happening today. It is in that spirit that we reflect not just on the heroes of the past and those who have served previously, but on those who serve today. The environment in which our armed forces operate has changed significantly over the years, but it is just as important to champion those who serve today.

While serving with the regiment, I made the pilgrimage—I use that word deliberately—to Arnhem on a number of occasions. I remember standing in front of the graves of those who fell. I felt humbled and inspired by their courage and their service. As was rightly said, they are, in fact, men apart—every man an emperor.

Bob Stewart (Beckenham) (Con): I thank the hon. and gallant Gentleman for giving way. He is fully aware, as I am, that five Victoria Crosses were awarded at Arnhem: two to members of the Parachute Regiment, one to a Royal Air Force officer, and two to members of my regiment, the South Staffords. A sixth VC got away. Mike Dauncey's VC was downgraded by Montgomery because he thought that five was enough for a debacle, which the battle had turned out to be strategically—nothing to do with the courage of those involved, but strategically.

Dan Jarvis: I am grateful to the hon. and gallant Gentleman for making that point. He is absolutely right to make reference to the outstanding courage and valour of those who served; I will do so in a bit more detail myself in just a moment.

I was reflecting on the fact that each year a commemorative service takes place at Oosterbeek cemetery, during which local schoolchildren emerge from the woods to lay flowers on the graves of those fallen allied soldiers. It is, without doubt, one of the most moving scenes that I have ever witnessed; the hairs on the back of my neck are standing up right now as I recall the reverence with which those schoolchildren and the whole Dutch community pay respect to those who lost their lives, to whom they feel a debt of gratitude for their service. That remembrance service has taken place every year since 1945, and of course it took place again this year. Marking the anniversary of Arnhem is an important

tradition to our friends in Holland; the reverence that the Dutch have for those who served is truly inspiring and hugely appreciated.

For those not familiar with the story of Arnhem, it may seem incongruous that it is held in such esteem, given that German forces saw the battle as such a major success. But there is a reason why it is the most important date in the calendar for our airborne forces. Arnhem is the moment when they wrote themselves into the pages of history.

As the hon. and gallant Member for Beckenham (Bob Stewart) mentioned, among many acts of valour five Victoria Crosses were awarded during those nine days of fighting. They were awarded to: Lieutenant John Grayburn, of the 2nd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment; Captain Lionel Queripel, of the 10th Battalion, the Parachute Regiment; Lance-Sergeant John Baskeyfield, of the 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment; Major Robert Cain, of the 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment; and Flight Lieutenant David Lord, of 271 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

One of the most powerful testimonials given following the battle was delivered by General Eisenhower, who, in writing to Major-General Urquhart, the British commander at Arnhem, said:

“In this war there has been no single performance by any unit that has more greatly inspired me or more highly excited my admiration, than the nine days action of your division between 17 and 26 September.”

On the anniversary this year, I thought of Tom Hicks, all his comrades and all those who served on Operation Market Garden and at Arnhem—not celebrating, but commemorating. In doing so, I tried to understand the heroism and tragedy and how they shaped the lives of so many, including myself. We will forever be in their debt.

9.59 pm

The Minister for the Armed Forces (Mark Lancaster): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing us to have this debate this evening.

I start, of course, by congratulating the hon. and gallant Member for Barnsley Central (Dan Jarvis) on securing this debate on the famous Battle of Arnhem as we mark its 75th anniversary this year. As a former paratrooper, his passion for this subject is unsurprising. I know he worked tirelessly to champion those heroes in his own constituency who took part in that brutal conflict. None of us can truly know what it must have been like to have been a British airborne soldier dropping into the danger zone amid a hail of anti-aircraft fire, but the hon. and gallant Gentleman is one of the few Members of this House with the experience to offer us a window into that world. For my own part, having once dropped out of an aircraft—

10 pm

Motion lapsed (Standing Order No. 9(3)).

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(Leo Docherty.)

Mark Lancaster: I can only say that I found the whole experience utterly terrifying and vowed never to repeat it. And that was without a single shot being fired at me.

I doubt that even the most starry-eyed historian would recall the Battle of Arnhem as an unmitigated success. Indeed, it is a curious quirk of British history that we tend to memorialise our defeats as much as our victories, from the charge of the Light Brigade to Dunkirk. But as we have heard, there are strong reasons why Operation Market Garden merits such an important place in our modern history.

First and foremost, Arnhem has become a byword for bravery. An extraordinary 59 decorations were handed out to the men who escaped from the carnage, while, as we have heard, five incredible individuals received the Victoria Cross. My hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Bob Stewart) made the point earlier that maybe it should have been six. Among them was Major Robert Henry Cain, from the Isle of Man, who, on more than one occasion, single-handedly faced down enemy tanks, immobilising one vehicle and forcing others into retreat despite sustaining multiple wounds. But, in a battle where conditions were horrendous, where the food first ran out followed swiftly by the ammunition, all were heroes. We can only imagine what it must have been like for men such as Major Tony Hibbert watching in horror as German tanks roamed

“up and down the street, firing high explosive into the side of the building, to create the gap, and then firing smoke shells...as the phosphorus from the smoke shells”

burnt his comrades out of their positions. Yet still allied fighters persevered. In the words of veteran Tom Hicks—a constituent of the hon. and gallant Member for Barnsley Central and, I am very proud to say, a fellow sapper—they

“fought until they had nothing left”.

We are privileged that some of these hardy souls are still with us today. We should cherish them while we can, just as we should continue paying our respects to all the troops on both sides who fell.

Next, Arnhem is remembered because of the boldness of the enterprise. This was the largest airborne operation in history, with some 35,000 troops dropped behind enemy lines. Indeed, it was the biggest military operation on Dutch soil in world war two. Yet its ambition was greater still: to use paratroopers and glider-borne infantry to seize a series of nine river and canal crossings between the Dutch-Belgian border at Eindhoven, Nijmegen and Arnhem, then to employ allied tanks and troops to secure the great road bridge over the lower Rhine at Arnhem, and from there to drive straight into Germany. That was Field Marshall Montgomery’s plan. Had it worked, Arnhem would have shortened the war.

Jeremy Lefroy (Stafford) (Con): I am most grateful to my right hon. and gallant Friend. Does he agree that what is even more remarkable is that for many of the units—I include 2nd battalion South Staffordshire—this came after they had been involved in the invasion of Sicily and Italy? Now they were involved in this tremendous operation. Many of these people had seen action almost continuously for several years.

Mark Lancaster: My hon. Friend makes the very powerful point that for many this was not a one-off operation, but the culmination of what had been an incredibly long and tough war. By the standards of today we can only begin to think about the mental impact on so many of those who had served for such a

[Mark Lancaster]

long period of time. We deal with exactly the same mental health issues today, but I hope we are in a much better position to be able to support our veterans today.

Even though Operation Market Garden proved a “bridge too far”, there is a third reason why it has passed into legend: it earned the UK the admiration of its allies. It set the stage for an unparalleled example of international partnerships as British forces worked hand in glove with their Polish and US counterparts. I absolutely agree with the hon. Member for Ealing North (Stephen Pound) about highlighting the role that the Polish armed forces played in this operation. Even today, as we continue to have a UK battle group as part of the enhanced forward presence in Poland, that relationship continues.

Eisenhower wrote:

“In this war there has been no single performance by any unit that has more greatly inspired me or more highly excited my admiration, than the nine days action of your division between 17 and 26 September”.

The hon. and gallant Member for Barnsley Central also highlighted the most poignant legacy of the friendships forged during those times. That can be found in the Netherlands, where local “flower children” gather each year, laying bouquets of flowers at more than 1,500 graves at Oosterbeek cemetery. He did not say, however, that in 1969, 25 years after Arnhem, some suggested that the ceremony should be cancelled. So vociferously was the proposal rejected that it continues unabated today.

Bob Stewart: The hon. and gallant Member for Barnsley Central (Dan Jarvis) will agree with me on this point. Outside the Airborne Museum Hartenstein is probably the most poignant memorial of them all: a stone that thanks the people of Arnhem for their heroism and gallantry in looking after the people who were badly wounded, at great risk to themselves. That memorial was the one that really hit me hard.

Mark Lancaster: My hon. and gallant Friend makes an incredibly important point. Indeed, this is about the contribution of so many who were involved in that operation on that day, both military and civilian, and because of that partnership we see that relationship continue today, as we have highlighted.

Despite the appalling deprivations suffered during that battle and after, the Dutch continue to see those British personnel as their liberators. They still talk in the Netherlands of the “Arnhem spirit”. It is no wonder that in the midst of last month’s commemorations, citizens from across the Netherlands made a pilgrimage to Arnhem and swelled the city centre.

Given the significance of Operation Market Garden, it was only right that the British Army played a prominent part in working with Dutch municipalities to mark the offensive, whether that was at Oosterbeek war cemetery, Ginkel Heath, one of the drop zones used during Operation Market Garden, or at the Airborneplein monument, where the 2nd Parachute Battalion held firm for three days and four nights, isolated and alone, under incessant enemy attack. Among the many highlights was a parachute drop performed in the presence of the Prince of Wales, featuring 1,500 British, Dutch, French, Belgian, German, Italian, Polish and US paratroopers. Among those

descending into the drop zone, in tandem with a Red Devil, was Aberdeen’s Sandy Cortmann, just 75 years after his original descent, at a mere 97 years young—a testament to the boundless drive and energy of that remarkable wartime generation.

Yet this was not just an exercise in nostalgia. The descent was also the culmination of Exercise Falcon Leap, hosted by the Royal Netherlands Army, to train NATO airborne forces in planning and executing an airborne operation together. Many of the paratroopers used another country’s equipment and aircraft to earn that nation’s parachute wings. Significantly, the Royal Netherlands Army is part of our Joint Expeditionary Force of like-minded nations. Our historical closeness is strengthened by modern ties, proving in a more dangerous world that Britain will have the skills and the allies that give us the edge over our adversaries.

Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con): At Arnhem 70, five years ago, when I had the privilege of doing the job that my right hon. Friend now does better than I ever did, I attended the celebrations on behalf of Her Majesty’s Government. I well remember the Oosterbeek remembrance services when, as he says, young children came forward and laid flowers. As he also knows, families bequeath the responsibility for the graves to those who follow them to remember British soldiers. I confess, I welled up. Like the Minister, I have been to many remembrance services, but that was the most unique one I have ever attended. Does he agree that one of the fundamental points about Arnhem is that to this day the Dutch people go out of their way to honour the British and, indeed, the Polish troops who came to liberate them?

Mark Lancaster: My right hon. Friend makes the point more powerfully than I could. He is right that it is those relationships that have been among the enduring benefits of what happened 75 years ago. There is no shame in welling up at these events. Indeed, it is important that we do, as it shows just how much we care and how big an impact those events continue to have on us.

Historians still debate the merits of Market Garden. Monty believed the operation was 90% successful. But even if his is an optimistic take, there is little doubt that the Battle of Arnhem signalled a turning point. It was the Nazis’ last roll of the dice. It drove a wedge into their positions, tied up their supply chains and stopped them counter-attacking. Thereafter they lost every battle they fought against the British, American and Canadian Armies.

Arnhem has rightly become a symbol of British bravery, boldness and partnership. The famous bridge is now named after John Frost, the legendary commander of the 2nd Parachute Battalion. The title of the famous film that told the tale of those events, “A Bridge Too Far”, has passed into the lexicon. Above all, the deeds of the previous generation continue to inspire our present brave forces to even greater heights as they defend our interests across the world. Monty famously said:

“In years to come it will be a great thing for a man to be able to say, ‘I fought at Arnhem’.”

History has proved his spinetingling words correct. But, as those nine days in September retreat further into the annals of history, the responsibility on all of us here

today grows—a responsibility to keep telling their stories and to keep the “Arnhem spirit” alive far into the future.

Question put and agreed to.

10.11 pm

House adjourned.

Petitions

Monday 14 October 2019

OBSERVATIONS

CABINET OFFICE

Proroguing Parliament

The petition of Residents of York,

Declares their deep concern over the proroguing of Parliament, not least during the crucial time of determining the United Kingdom's future relationship with the European Union; further that we believe that our democratically elected Parliament must have the right to set and thereby scrutinise the Government over the determinations that it is making over our future, in order to resolve democratically how it should proceed since we believe that the UK Parliament was elected by the people to serve the people.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government not to prorogue Parliament and that Parliament sits, debates and scrutinises the Government until a final agreement is made on how to proceed with our relationship with the EU, and that this is concluded democratically.

And the petitioners remain, etc.—[Presented by Rachael Maskell, Official Report, 9 September 2019; Vol. 664, c. 5P.]

[P002517]

Observations from the Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office (Kevin Foster):

Prorogation is a prerogative Act of the Crown, exercised on the advice of Ministers, to bring about the end of the parliamentary Session. The royal prerogative is the term used to describe the powers held by Government Ministers, either in their own right, or through the advice they provide to the Queen. The Government determine the length of a parliamentary Session and advises the Queen on the date for the beginning of the next parliamentary Session.

The beginning of the next Session is marked by the State Opening of Parliament during which the Queen delivers the Queen's Speech. The Queen's Speech sets out the programme of legislation the Government intend to pursue in the forthcoming parliamentary session.

In regards to the Prorogation, at all times the Government acted in good faith and in the belief it's approach was both lawful and constitutional. These are complex matters on which senior and distinguished lawyers have disagreed. The Divisional Court led by the Lord Chief Justice agreed unanimously, as did the Outer House in Scotland.

We were disappointed that in the end the Supreme Court took a different view, but we respect the judgment of the Court.

As the Government have made clear on many occasions, this has been the longest parliamentary Session for almost 400 years, but in recent months it has been one of the least productive. This Government want to put before MPs a proper legislative programme, focusing on helping the NHS, fighting violent crime, investing in infrastructure and science, and cutting the cost of living. This is why the Prime Minister has requested of Her Majesty the Queen that the current parliamentary Session

be brought to an end on Tuesday 8 October. The second Session of this Parliament is due to commence with a Queen's Speech on Monday 14 October.

TRANSPORT

Proposed Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges south of Northampton

The petition of Residents of the constituencies of South Northamptonshire and Daventry,

Declares that the sites for the two proposed Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges between the villages of Blisworth, Milton Malsor, Collingtree and Roade in Northamptonshire, either side of the Northampton Loop Line as it branches from the West Coast Main Line to the south of Northampton, to be unsuitable; notes that the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy has previously excluded these sites from industrial development; further that the local road network, including the M1, A43, A45, A5, and A508, is operating at or above capacity, and that development at the proposed sites would exacerbate existing problems of traffic, air pollution, and noise, and impose additional visual blight; further it has not been demonstrated by the developers or Network Rail that there is the existing capacity on the West Coast Main Line to provide requisite freight paths for either and/or both of the sites; further that the existing Strategic Rail Freight Interchange, Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal, which is coterminous in catchment with the two proposed sites, has recently expanded and has extensive unused capacity; and further that two local petitions on behalf of Stop Rail Central and Stop Roxhill Northampton Gateway against the two proposed Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges have received over 17,500 signatures and the overwhelming view of the local community is that neither proposal is acceptable.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to press upon the Secretary of State for Transport the great many concerns that residents of the constituencies of South Northamptonshire and Daventry have about the two proposed Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges, and to not grant Development Consent Orders for either proposal.

And the petitioners remain, etc.—[Official Report, 3 September 2019; Vol. 664, c. 1P.]

[P002511]

Observations from the Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Paul Maynard):

In relation to the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the Northampton Gateway Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI), the Planning Inspectorate provided the Department with the Examining Authority's Report of Findings and Conclusions and Recommendation on 9 July 2019. The Secretary of State notes the issues raised in this petition and will make a decision on the application by the 9 October 2019, taking account of all relevant representations.

The application for a DCO by Rail Central is currently being considered by the Planning Inspectorate.

Under the Planning Act 2008, the final decision to approve DCOs for any new proposed development rests with the Secretary of State, who would therefore be unable to comment on individual applications.

The National Policy Statement for National Networks (NN-NPS) sets out government policy on the development of Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges.

Ministerial Corrections

Monday 14 October 2019

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Draft Human Medicines and Medical Devices (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit)

The following are extracts from the debate on the draft Human Medicines and Medical Devices (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

Ms Dorries: Under just-in-time arrangements, drug companies would have a stockpile of a week's supply, but now all drug companies have stockpiled six weeks' worth of medications to be used in the UK, and I do not envisage a shortage of any drug that is required.

[Official Report, Sixteenth Delegated Legislation Committee, 7 October 2019, c. 8.]

Letter of correction from the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the hon. Member for Mid Bedfordshire (Ms Dorries):

An error has been identified in my closing speech.

The correct information should have been:

Ms Dorries: Under just-in-time arrangements, drug companies would have a stockpile of a week's supply, but now **the vast majority of suppliers of prescription-only and pharmacy medicines from the EU** have stockpiled six weeks' worth of medications to be used in the UK, and I do not envisage a shortage of any drug that is required.

Ms Dorries: Companies will be required to operate a pharmacovigilance system from exit day. The master file is in the description of the pharmacovigilance system and the amending SI, which includes statutory contributions associated with a temporary exemption, to ensure supervisory capability of the companies, the QPPV and the MHRA.

[Official Report, Sixteenth Delegated Legislation Committee, 7 October 2019, c. 10.]

Letter of correction from the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the hon. Member for Mid Bedfordshire (Ms Dorries):

An error has been identified in my closing speech.

The correct information should have been:

Ms Dorries: Companies **are** required to operate a pharmacovigilance system from exit day. The master file is the description of the pharmacovigilance system and the statutory **conditions included in the amending SI should** ensure supervisory capability of the companies, QPPV and the MHRA.

CABINET OFFICE

Census (Return Particulars and Removal of Penalties) Bill [Lords]

The following is an extract from the Committee stage of the Census (Return Particulars and Removal of Penalties) Bill [Lords].

Mike Gapes: From what the Minister says, I am unclear on whether it will be possible for Sikhs to tick a specific box on the 2021 census. Can the Minister please clarify?

Kevin Foster: I am happy to clarify that there will be a tick box for Sikhs under the religion section but not under ethnicity. There have been 55 requests for particular tick boxes on the census that the ONS is not recommending, and having a Sikh tick box under ethnicity is one of those that the ONS is not recommending.

[Official Report, 7 October 2019, Vol. 664, c. 1593.]

Letter of correction from the Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office, the hon. Member for Torbay (Kevin Foster):

An error has been identified in my contribution to the debate.

The correction information should have been:

Kevin Foster: I am happy to clarify that there will be a tick box for Sikhs under the religion section but not under ethnicity. There have been 55 requests **for new ethnic group tick boxes on the census. Of these the ONS is recommending only one new ethnic group tick box, for Roma.** Having a Sikh tick box under ethnicity is one of those that the ONS is not recommending.

PETITIONS

Monday 14 October 2019

	<i>Col. No.</i>
CABINET OFFICE	1P
Proroguing Parliament	1P
TRANSPORT	2P
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MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

Monday 14 October 2019

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CABINET OFFICE	2MC	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	1MC
Census (Return Particulars and Removal of Penalties) Bill [<i>Lords</i>]	2MC	Draft Human Medicines and Medical Devices (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit).....	1MC

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**not later than
Monday 21 October 2019**

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