

Tuesday  
22 October 2019

Volume 666  
No. 7



**HOUSE OF COMMONS  
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY  
DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**Tuesday 22 October 2019**

---



# House of Commons

*Tuesday 22 October 2019*

*The House met at half-past Eleven o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## Speaker's Statement

**Mr Speaker:** I am sure that colleagues across the House will want to join me in welcoming, formally and with enthusiasm, our newly appointed Serjeant at Arms, Ugbana Oyet, who started in the service of the House in this role yesterday. He has been with us for some time and he has an exceptional track record. He is incredibly popular across the House and he is going to be a fantastic success as our Serjeant.

I have a short statement to make. I would like to draw Members' attention to the fact that the book for entering the private Members' Bill ballot is now open for Members to sign in the No Lobby. It will be open until the House rises today and when the House is sitting on Wednesday 23 October. The ballot itself will be drawn at 9 am on Thursday 24 October in Committee Room 10. An announcement setting out these and other arrangements, and the dates when ten-minute rule motions can be made and presentation Bills introduced, is published in the Order Paper.

## Oral Answers to Questions

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

*The Secretary of State was asked—*

#### Apprenticeship Levy

1. **Sir Desmond Swayne** (New Forest West) (Con): What guidance her Department has issued to businesses to help them make more effective use of the apprenticeship levy. [900035]

3. **Mr Gregory Campbell** (East Londonderry) (DUP): What steps her Department is taking to help businesses realise the potential benefits to their organisation of the apprenticeship levy. [900037]

6. **Anne Milton** (Guildford) (Ind): What guidance her Department has issued to businesses to help them make more effective use of the apprenticeship levy. [900040]

**The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Andrea Leadsom):** I strongly believe that apprenticeships are a superb option for people to earn and learn. In my Department, we have 154 apprentices, 149 of whom are levy funded. I have taken on a new

school leaver apprentice in my office every year since becoming an MP, which has been an excellent experience for them and for my team. Since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, we have made changes to ensure that businesses can spend up to 25% of it in their supply chain, and I am delighted that the number of people starting higher-level apprenticeships has increased by over 40% since the 2016-17 academic year.

**Sir Desmond Swayne:** Is the 80:20 rule an overhead that is unwelcome to employers who have to provide cover for employees who are learning?

**Andrea Leadsom:** My right hon. Friend makes a really important point, but he will appreciate that off-the-job training is vital for apprentices to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to succeed at work. The 20% off-the-job training rule is based on standards used by apprenticeship programmes regarded as world class, such as those in Switzerland and Germany, which we have made it our ambition to at least match.

**Mr Campbell:** Employers complain about the inflexibility of the apprenticeship levy. What steps is the Minister taking to ensure that it becomes more flexible, leading to greater dynamism in our local economy?

**Andrea Leadsom:** The hon. Gentleman will be aware that the apprenticeship levy is collected from Northern Ireland businesses, with Northern Ireland subsequently receiving a Barnett consequential of spending on apprenticeships in England, which is funded by the levy. Ensuring that apprenticeship policy in Northern Ireland is delivering for Northern Ireland businesses is just one of a number for reasons why it is so essential that devolved government in Northern Ireland is restored.

**Anne Milton:** In Guildford, 97% of businesses are small businesses. What progress have the Government made on ensuring that they can use the 25% transfer from levy employers to build the skilled workforce that we desperately need in this country?

**Andrea Leadsom:** I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend for her superb work as Minister of State for Skills over the past few years. Under her watch, the importance of technical education has been raised substantially. She will be aware that sectors in all parts of the economy are now creating apprenticeship programmes, from cybersecurity to offshore wind, and more than 61% of starts are now on high-quality industry design standards.

**Sir Vince Cable** (Twickenham) (LD): How does the Secretary of State explain the fact that the Government's own skill index, which measures the value added from apprenticeships and vocational training, is now 25% below 2012 levels?

**Andrea Leadsom:** The right hon. Gentleman will be aware that in the 2018-19 academic year, despite an overall fall, nearly 60,000 people started higher-level apprenticeships, up nearly 43% on the year before the levy was introduced. It is important that the Government continue to talk to business about how to make use of this, but we are very pleased with progress.

**Mr Iain Duncan Smith** (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con): A recent report by the Centre for Social Justice showed that in the UK, of those who start entry-level work, only 15%—15%—will ever progress beyond it in their whole life. That is an indictment of the UK under different Governments. Beyond apprenticeships, what plans does my right hon. Friend have to find ways to encourage businesses to do on-the-job training, so that those people can move on and increase their salaries?

**Andrea Leadsom:** My right hon. Friend is right to raise the much bigger challenge of how to get young people not only into an apprenticeship but past it, enabling their skills to develop. We are doing that in a number of different ways. The Government continue to speak with businesses and monitor the impact of the apprenticeship levy on the performance of young people. We are doing a lot to promote start-up businesses for young people through the British Business Bank, but we continue to need to seek ways to ensure that no young person is left behind.

**Jim McMahon** (Oldham West and Royton) (Lab/Co-op): People are living longer, which is a good thing, but they need care in old age. In Oldham, health and social care is a growing industry, but at the moment it attracts the lowest band of the apprenticeship levy. I saw this week that the Department of Health and Social Care was advertising jobs at just above the minimum wage. Will the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy work with the Department of Health and Social Care to raise the value of those jobs?

**Andrea Leadsom:** The hon. Gentleman raises a really important point. We want to see young people being attracted to apprenticeships right across the range, and he is right to raise the importance of getting good-quality people into the social care system. I would be delighted to speak with him and others who are interested in that area of future employment.

### Executive Pay

2. **David Hanson** (Delyn) (Lab): What recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of executive pay. [900036]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kelly Tolhurst):** Average FTSE 100 CEO pay more than quadrupled from £1 million in 1998 to £4.5 million in 2012. Since then, the median average has fallen by £1.04 million. We have recently implemented a number of reforms to make further improvements to executive pay transparency and accountability through vehicles such as the UK corporate governance code.

**David Hanson:** The Government's Green Paper on corporate responsibility was published more than two years ago, and since that time we have seen corporate pay issues in Carillion and only last month in Thomas Cook. Last week, the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee questioned the chief executive of Thomas Cook about corporate responsibility issues on pay. What precisely have the Government done to act on corporate pay since that Green Paper two years ago?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his question. As I mentioned, CEO pay has fallen. There were reforms at the beginning of the year, to ensure that shareholders' voices are heard more in the boardroom. There is a binding vote every three years on remuneration policy, and there is now an advisory vote every year. If it is not successful, pay has to be put before the next AGM. As he will know, the Investment Association now keeps a record, at the Government's request, to ensure that we are tracking pay where there is shareholder dissent.

**Mr Steve Baker** (Wycombe) (Con): Does my hon. Friend agree that the right way to control executive pay is to increase democratic control of capital, not by increasing the powers of the state but by dramatically improving the rights of shareholders?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** My hon. Friend is right, and that is what the Government's reforms have done. As I outlined, shareholders have a vote every three years and an advisory vote every year. Through the reforms, we have also enabled employee directors, non-exec directors or employee councils to have representation on the board. Companies now have to explain their wider pay policy and how it affects the whole company.

**Rachel Reeves** (Leeds West) (Lab): The chief executive of Thomas Cook was paid more than £8 million during his time as chief executive of a company that has now collapsed, costing 9,000 jobs in this country, with 150,000 customers having to be brought home at a cost to the taxpayer. When he gave evidence to our Select Committee last week, he said he would reflect on whether he will pay back any of his bonus. What will the Government do to ensure that bonuses can be and have to be clawed back after catastrophic failures of businesses like that?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** I thank the hon. Lady for the work she is doing on the Select Committee. Thomas Cook did have clawback and malus arrangements in place for the recovery of directors' bonus payments in specific circumstances, as required by the UK corporate governance code. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has asked the Insolvency Service to fast-track an investigation, and it will report back. As the hon. Lady outlined, the CEO did advise the Committee on 15 October that he would consider voluntarily surrendering some of his 2017 cash bonus, but it must be pointed out that no bonus was paid to the ex-CEO in 2018.

**Mr David Davis** (Haltemprice and Howden) (Con): The hon. Member for Leeds West (Rachel Reeves) highlighted the point that the biggest concern is not simply how much is paid to executives, but their being paid for failure, not for success. The current arrangements in British company law allow chief executives and other executives to be paid on the basis of share price and allow them to buy back shares, propping up the share price. This is a formula for payment for failure. Is the Department looking at that?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** I thank my right hon. Friend for raising this. Part of the reforms in January was to make organisations report back on the effect of share price growth on executive pay outcomes. We published some evidence before the summer from a review undertaken on share buy-backs, and there was no clear evidence to suggest that they did have a perverse outcome.

## High Speed 2

4. **Lucy Powell** (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op): What recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on the potential benefits of High Speed 2 to businesses in the north. [900038]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Nadhim Zahawi):** The independent Oakervee review will advise the Government on High Speed 2, including potential business benefits and how it should proceed. The hon. Lady will understand that I would not want to prejudice those findings.

**Lucy Powell:** I thank the Minister for that reply, but six regional heads of the CBI say that High Speed 2 should be built in full and the Northern Powerhouse Partnership recently published its excellent independent review saying the same, arguing that only HS2 can really rebalance our economy. Will the Secretary of State, as the business representative at the Cabinet table, advocate for business in the north?

**Nadhim Zahawi:** The hon. Lady mentions the CBI. Both the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, and the Mayor of Birmingham, Andy Street, who sits on the panel conducting the review, have said it is important that we kick the tyres on value for money, but it is also important to make such representations to ensure that the committee gets a full view of the business benefits of HS2.

**Philip Davies** (Shipley) (Con): May I urge the Minister to ignore the siren voice opposite? Most people in the north accept that HS2 is a catastrophic waste of money—a huge white elephant that is destroying the environment and the countryside and will chiefly benefit London, hence why it started out in London in the first place. May I therefore urge him to tell the Secretary of State for Transport to scrap HS2 and crack on with the thing that will really benefit the northern economy—Northern Powerhouse Rail or HS3—connecting the north, which is what we need to benefit the north's economy.

**Mr Speaker:** I do wish the hon. Gentleman would overcome his natural shyness.

**Nadhim Zahawi:** I do not think there is any danger of that, Mr Speaker.

My hon. Friend raises an important point, which is why the Prime Minister has pledged to fund the Leeds to Manchester route and has accelerated those plans with a deal in the autumn of 2019, with billions of pounds going into Northern Powerhouse Rail, and has of course set up Transport for the North.

**Mr Barry Sheerman** (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op): The Minister may know that I am a fierce opponent of the £100 billion that is going to be wasted on HS2. Has he looked at research in France, where we see that high-speed trains actually suck more power and wealth into the metropolitan area of Paris, rather than the renewal of provincial towns? Will he have a look at the £100 billion, because that is how much it is going to cost, and will he spend it instead on investing in the workforce of this country?

**Nadhim Zahawi:** The hon. Gentleman makes a powerful point, although his colleague, the hon. Member for Manchester Central (Lucy Powell), was shaking her head, so there is clearly division on the benefits of HS2. That is why we have an independent review to tell us which way we should proceed.

**Martin Vickers** (Cleethorpes) (Con): One of the businesses in northern Lincolnshire that will be a crucial part of the supply chain for HS2 is British Steel in Scunthorpe. I urge the Minister, when he is in discussion with the Department for Transport, to consider the effect on the supply chain and the impact on local economies.

**Nadhim Zahawi:** That is certainly a consideration for the review.

## Hydraulic Fracturing

5. **Lee Rowley** (North East Derbyshire) (Con): What steps her Department is taking to review the regulation of hydraulic fracturing. [900039]

**The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (Kwasi Kwarteng):** I pay tribute to my hon. Friend's campaign on this fracking issue. We are all concerned about the impact of recent seismic events in Lancashire. My hon. Friend knows that the Government have been clear that they will support the exploration of our shale gas resources only in a safe and sustainable way. The Oil and Gas Authority is undertaking an analysis of the data from Cuadrilla's operations and we will set out our future approach as soon as we have considered that report.

**Lee Rowley:** I thank my right hon. Friend for his comments. Will he confirm that he will consider not just the OGA review, but feedback from constituencies such as mine that do not believe that fracking is the way forward?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** My hon. Friend is right: this is one of the top issues that come across my desk. I feel the local concern about it, and we will take that into consideration when we reach a final decision.

**Alan Brown** (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP): The National Audit Office report confirms that the UK Government have not analysed the costs and benefits of fracking and do not know how much money they have actually spent supporting fracking. Governance and regulation risks remain, as well as decommissioning liabilities that need to be resolved. Is it not time that the UK Government followed the lead of the Scottish Government and decided not to support the development of unconventional oil and gas?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** As I said to my hon. Friend the Member for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley), we will consider the Oil and Gas Authority's report and we will look at the evidence before we reach a final decision on the issue.

**Jeremy Lefroy** (Stafford) (Con): Does my right hon. Friend think that it might be a good idea to leave those carbon-based fuels in the ground as a reserve for future generations in case of emergency?



**Kwasi Kwarteng:** My hon. Friend knows that we are committed to a net zero carbon target. We are doing very well on renewables, and our success in that is the best way to reach the target.

**Mr Speaker:** Danielle Rowley—no relation to Lee.

**Danielle Rowley** (Midlothian) (Lab): Definitely not, Mr Speaker. No offence to the hon. Gentleman.

The decisions that we take over the next year will be critical in preventing climate change from becoming irreversible. The Committee on Climate Change has said that fracking on a significant scale is not compatible with UK climate targets. It increases local air pollution, generates huge volumes of chemical waste water, causes earthquakes and is just not necessary for the UK's energy security. Yet the Secretary of State recently reiterated her support for fracking. Given the climate emergency, will the Government reconsider and commit now to banning fracking?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** As I have said on three occasions now, we will consider the OGA report, and we will look at the evidence. We are very mindful of what local communities are saying and we will set out our future direction shortly.

### Workplace Access Rights

7. **Faisal Rashid** (Warrington South) (Lab): What recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of workplace access rights for trades unions. [900041]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kelly Tolhurst):** All workers in the UK have the right to join a union and to participate in union activities. That right is protected under trade union law, and 23% of UK employees are union members. That is higher than some European countries, including France and Germany, and it demonstrates that union rights to recruit and organise through individual members and officials are sufficient.

**Faisal Rashid:** This week shocking reports have emerged about dire workplace conditions at Amazon. Those exploited workers desperately need a union, but workers at Amazon have had their shift patterns interrupted just to prevent them from talking to union officials on the way to work. When will the Government put an end to those draconian anti-union practices, and will the Secretary of State launch an investigation into reports of workers' rights being violated at Amazon?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his question. It is the right of unions and employers to come to an agreement about representation in the workplace. The Central Arbitration Committee is available if that is refused. With regard to workers' rights, the good work plan represents the biggest reform of workers' rights in 20 years. We are determined to continue on that path, because workers' rights are important to this Government.

25. [900059] **Joanna Cherry** (Edinburgh South West) (SNP): I believe that my constituents' workplace rights should keep step with those of citizens across the EU, but on reading the WAB, or European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill, last night I see that my

constituents will have to wait on Tory Ministers deciding to replicate progressive EU change. I believe that back in 2010 the Secretary of State said her vision was for small firms to give

"no minimum wage, no maternity or paternity rights, no unfair dismissal rights, no pension rights".—[*Official Report*, 10 May 2012; Vol. 545, c. 209.]

Is it therefore not the case that so-called progressive MPs who support the withdrawal agreement Bill will never be forgiven for putting the rights of workers into the hands of Thatcherites?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** It will come as no surprise that I completely disagree with the hon. and learned Lady. The Prime Minister has been clear: not only will we maintain workers' rights, but we will enhance them. Even in my role as a Minister over the past 12 years, everything has been focused on ensuring we are ahead of the European Union. We are committed. We have never, ever, not once ever put forward a position where we have shown we will row back on workers' rights.

**Laura Pidcock** (North West Durham) (Lab): Wow! What an answer. This is the situation for workers at Amazon: their bones are being broken; they are being knocked unconscious; and they are being taken away in ambulances. Where is the urgency to step in and stop what is happening to these workers? Are the Government going to demand an urgent inquiry, or do they wash their hands of these workers? At the heart of the issue at Amazon is a hostile environment for trade unions, which are often the only force that can resist exploitative practices. A Labour Government would legislate to enforce access rights for trade unions and a robust enforcement regime. Why are the Government sitting on their hands while the richest man in the world treats his workers so disgustingly on their watch?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** The hon. Lady makes allegations about a particular organisation. She is welcome to write to me further about those allegations, but I remind her that sufficient workplace laws are in place. We have the Health and Safety Executive, for example. If she has evidence of certain employers breaking the law, I would expect it to be passed on to the relevant agencies. As I outlined, our Prime Minister is committed to ensuring that we keep step with the European Union and go further. I believe the actions the Government have taken over recent months prove that.

### Businesses: Dartford

8. **Gareth Johnson** (Dartford) (Con): What recent steps she has taken to support businesses in Dartford constituency. [900042]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Nadhim Zahawi):** I am pleased to say that Dartford has been shortlisted for the future high streets fund to renew its town centre. This will build on £4.3 million support already allocated from the South East local enterprise partnership growth fund.

**Gareth Johnson:** A number of businesses in my constituency face an uncertain future due to a nationally significant infrastructure project earmarked for the

Swanscombe peninsula, where those businesses are located. Will the Minister commit to working with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to do all he can to support the businesses that find themselves in that situation?

**Nadhim Zahawi:** I fully appreciate the concerns of local businesses with regard to the uncertainty over Swanscombe peninsula. My Department works very closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. I will gladly raise this with my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth, when I see him tomorrow.

#### Photovoltaic and Battery Storage Systems: VAT

9. **Karen Lee** (Lincoln) (Lab): What assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of changes to VAT for solar on the uptake of photovoltaic and battery storage systems. [900043]

**The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (Kwasi Kwarteng):** The hon. Lady will understand that the UK was forced to make these changes to comply with EU legislation. Since the new rates only came into effect on 1 October this year, it is too early to see what effect they have had. Once we have left the EU, we will have opportunities to amend the VAT treatment of low-carbon technologies to ensure that we can set the rates that we consider most appropriate.

**Karen Lee:** By raising the VAT threshold for solar installations, the Government are disincentivising the transition to green energy, and this is just one example of the Government's failure to act with the urgency that the climate crisis demands. Will the Minister undertake today to consider adopting Labour's plans to fit solar panels to 1.75 million low-income homes, which would combat climate change while creating jobs and reducing energy bills for people in Lincoln and across the UK?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** I did suggest that the VAT increase was part of EU legislation, and that is something we can amend, if we wish to do so, after we have left the EU. Solar is a UK success story. I will not take any lessons from the Labour party about the success of solar: 99% of our solar-generating capacity and over 1 million installations have been deployed since 2010, since the Government took office. This is something that we are proud of, and it will obviously be part of our energy mix as we seek to hit the target of zero carbon emissions in 2050.

**Kevin Hollinrake** (Thirsk and Malton) (Con): Even given the VAT situation, solar and wind, together with battery storage on commercial buildings, are pretty much viable without public subsidy. Is not now the right time for a widespread deployment on every public building, including every school, hospital and prison?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** My hon. Friend makes an excellent observation. We are supporting innovation in this area. We have the Modern Energy Partners programme, which cuts energy costs and carbon emissions across the public sector.

**Drew Hendry** (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) (SNP): Any VAT increase would be yet another hammer blow to solar. The Minister's predecessors took solar power to the brink, blocked onshore wind, cut support for offshore wind and failed to capitalise on Scotland's lead in marine and tidal power. Has he compared the detail in the Scottish Government's new green deal with the lack of detail in the Queen's Speech? When will his Government wake up to the climate emergency?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** As I have said a number of times, the VAT increase was a consequence of EU membership, so on that basis I recommend that the hon. Gentleman support the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill this evening.

**Drew Hendry:** Last month's energy auction revealed that offshore wind is a third cheaper than gas and half the price of the energy from Hinkley C nuclear plant, yet Tory dogma is holding climate change mitigation back. Does the Minister agree that VAT on solar is yet another barrier to much needed change, and will he ask the Chancellor to rule that out in the Budget?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** I very much appreciate the hon. Gentleman's prepared remarks, but he does not seem to be living in the real world. We have delivered on offshore wind, which he mentioned. The price has fallen by two thirds—that is a Government success and we are going to pursue that sort of success to meet the net zero carbon target.

#### Business Establishment: Women

10. **Giles Watling** (Clacton) (Con): What steps she is taking to enable more women to establish businesses. [900044]

**The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Andrea Leadsom):** We want to make the UK the best place to work and grow a business. We have set the target of an additional 600,000 female entrepreneurs by 2030, and the British Business Bank has delivered over £198 million to women in start-up loans. With my hon. Friend the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, we are implementing the initiatives of Alison Rose's review, including focusing on female entrepreneurs' access to finance, better enterprise education and launching the investing in women code.

**Giles Watling:** I thank my right hon. Friend for her answer. In my Clacton constituency, I am fortunate to have a group of very powerful businesswomen, with whom I had a very pleasant business lunch recently. In 2018, the BBC reported that women were half as likely to set up a business as men. I am pleased that the Government are doing all that my right hon. Friend said, but that must be in part due to a bias in education, so what more can be done to address this great loss of potential?

**Andrea Leadsom:** My hon. Friend is quite right. We need to go further in addressing education, and that is why one initiative in the Rose review specifically addressed the roll-out of enterprise education in schools and colleges to help in particular with the skills women need for business success at an earlier age. BEIS has also

launched the Longitude Explorer prize, which is aimed specifically at 11 to 16-year-olds, to encourage innovative problem solving in our young entrepreneurs.

**Ruth George** (High Peak) (Lab): Many of the women in business in my constituency are EU nationals, and they were extremely concerned at yesterday's tabling of the draft Freedom of Establishment and Free Movement of Services (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which would allow Ministers to remove their rights to own and manage companies or provide services. While we welcome the fact that the Committee was cancelled yesterday, what are the Government's plans in this regard, because many EU nationals in business are very concerned?

**Andrea Leadsom**: I am sorry that the hon. Lady seeks to lean into the scaremongering. The statutory instrument has a very limited direct policy impact and will not impose additional restrictions on EU nationals or EU-based businesses or on the nationals and businesses of countries with associated agreements after we have left the EU. It is very important that we all take great care not to scaremonger and try to make people think that things are the case that are simply not the case.

**Mrs Anne Main** (St Albans) (Con): Establishing a business is very difficult, particularly when business rates are so high and online businesses often do not pay their way. Is it not time, particularly for those establishing businesses, that we had a root-and-branch review of the business rates model, which affects so many businesses in St Albans?

**Andrea Leadsom**: I am very sympathetic to my hon. Friend's point; I know she is a big champion of businesses in St Albans. In my Department, we are helping the British Business Bank to provide greater support to start-up businesses, providing huge support to the UK's 1.2 million female-led SMEs, and doing everything we can to ensure that there are more incentives and opportunities for women to start businesses than ever before.

**Jim Shannon** (Strangford) (DUP): If we are to encourage more women into business, it is essential that we tackle the gender pay gap at executive level. What has been done to address that issue?

**Andrea Leadsom**: The hon. Gentleman will know that the gender pay gap is now the smallest it has ever been and that the Government have required reporting of the gender pay gap. Such transparency can partially solve the problem, but we are not resting there: we are doing as much as possible to get more women to become entrepreneurs and to help women to acquire the skills they need to lead some of our fantastic UK businesses.

### Offshore Wind Industry

11. **James Cartlidge** (South Suffolk) (Con): What support her Department is providing to the offshore wind industry. [900045]

22. **Greg Hands** (Chelsea and Fulham) (Con): What steps she is taking to support exports from the offshore wind sector. [900056]

**The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (Kwasi Kwarteng)**: As a result of the Government's support, the UK is a world leader in offshore wind and a leader in tackling climate change. The third contracts for difference auction in 2019 delivered 5.5 GW of new offshore wind capacity, and the price was £39 per megawatt-hour, which was two thirds less than just four years ago. Our sector deal also paves the way to increase exports fivefold to £2.6 billion a year by 2030.

**James Cartlidge**: In East Anglia, we want to be champions of clean growth and are very proud that off our coast we are generating 52% of this country's offshore wind output, but we want to go much further. Can my right hon. Friend assure me that the national grid will be able to keep pace and that we will support technology such as battery storage that will enable us to make the most of our natural asset?

**Kwasi Kwarteng**: My hon. Friend can rest assured that the Government continue to upgrade and invest in the electricity system to ensure that it can deliver additional generation. Of course, battery storage technology and other forms of storage are at the centre of any strategy to reach the net zero carbon target.

**Greg Hands**: The offshore wind sector has been one of the Government's biggest success stories, with the delivery of the world's largest capacity. When I was at the Department for International Trade, we also made it a priority to be able to export that capability. Could the Minister tell us a bit about the work that BEIS is doing with the DIT to continue that work so that we also deliver real economic benefits for our country's exporters?

**Kwasi Kwarteng**: I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend, who spent two years in the Department for International Trade and was an excellent Minister. He has driven a great deal of progress in this area. As he will know, increasing competitiveness and the capability of our supply chain are key to increasing our exporting power, and, through the offshore wind sector deal, the sector will invest up to £250 million for that purpose. I continue to work with my right hon. Friend's former Department to identify opportunities, and I regularly meet my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for International Trade, in his capacity as Minister for investment.

**Melanie Onn** (Great Grimsby) (Lab): Ørsted recently opened an east coast hub in my constituency. It is committed to providing local employment opportunities as part of its business, but sadly the extension of the non-EEA visa waiver to the offshore wind workers means that some companies can exploit underpaid and overworked foreign labour rather than developing local opportunities. Will the Government commit themselves to ending the waiver next year?

**Kwasi Kwarteng**: The Government will absolutely commit themselves to supporting new jobs in the sector. Because of allocation round 3, the contracts for difference auction, we are envisaging 400,000 new jobs in the immediate future, in the next few years. This is something at which the Government are actually succeeding and on which we are working.



**Angus Brendan MacNeil** (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): It was welcome that the Hebridean renewable project won 240 MW in the contracts for difference allocation round, but we need 370 MW to 400 MW for an interconnector. I know that the Scottish island group has enough CfDs to build an interconnector for clean green energy. Is it only the UK that could design a system under which we secure CfDs but Ofgem then says that that is not enough to build an interconnector? Will the Minister ensure that, in these days of climate change, the clean green energy of the Saudi Arabia of renewables—the Hebrides, Shetland and Orkney—is taken advantage of?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** I welcome the hon. Gentleman's enthusiasm and passion for this technology, but it is wrong to suggest that the CfD auction was a failure, or that it somehow constituted a defeat. In fact, it was extremely successful. As I have said, the price was £39 per megawatt-hour, two thirds lower than the 2015 price of £115. Obviously we are looking at interconnectors, which will be part of the solution to the issue of net zero carbon.

**Mr Speaker:** Anyone would think that the hon. Member for Na h-Eileanan an Iar (Angus Brendan MacNeil) was conducting a symphony orchestra rather than chairing an august Select Committee of the House, but the eccentricity of the hon. Gentleman merely adds to his lovability.

**Sarah Newton** (Truro and Falmouth) (Con): There is huge potential for low-cost, low-carbon electricity generation from floating wind in the Celtic sea. Will my right hon. Friend accept an invitation to pay a visit on 19 November and find out about this exciting opportunity?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** My desire and propensity to visit all these installations know no bounds, and I should be very happy—diary permitting, obviously—to take up my hon. Friend's offer.

**Wera Hobhouse** (Bath) (LD): Does the Minister agree that hydrogen should be made from renewables via electrolysis in the medium and long term?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** The hon. Lady is right to point to the advantages of hydrogen, but, as she will understand, the issue with electrolysis is that it is currently very expensive, so the green hydrogen to which she has referred is something that we are continuing to develop.

### Hydroelectric Power Generation

12. **Mr William Wragg** (Hazel Grove) (Con): What steps her Department is taking to support hydroelectric power generation. [900046]

**The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (Kwasi Kwarteng):** A number of hydro projects are currently in receipt of support through the feed-in tariff and renewables obligation schemes. As my hon. Friend will know, from 2020 small-scale hydroelectric projects will also be eligible for the smart export guarantee, which allows people to resell excess capacity to the grid.

**Mr Wragg:** My right hon. Friend will be aware of the failure of Solarplicity during the summer. Many renewable energy companies, including Stockport Hydro in my constituency, are significantly out of pocket. Will my right hon. Friend meet me to discuss the problem, and will he urge Ofgem to step in and cover the debts that are owed to Solarplicity?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** I should be delighted to meet my hon. Friend to discuss the issue. Obviously, I cannot commit Ofgem to bailing out companies or paying debts—that is not its function, as my hon. Friend should know—but I should be happy to meet him at any time that is convenient.

**Albert Owen** (Ynys Môn) (Lab): I welcome the support given to hydroelectricity generation at this time. Exciting new projects in marine energy need the same support. We would not have a successful offshore wind industry had not support been given to that for decades. Will the Minister follow the work of his predecessor on this and work with the Welsh Government to ensure that this happens around the UK coastline?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** Absolutely. The hon. Gentleman raises an important point: the success with offshore wind did not come out of a clear blue sky. It evolved and depended on huge amounts of investment and development over many decades. So I am very happy to engage with the hon. Gentleman and the Welsh Government on this.

### New Mothers: Workplace

13. **Eddie Hughes** (Walsall North) (Con): What steps she has taken to ensure that new mothers can participate in the workplace. [900047]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kelly Tolhurst):** The Government are wholly committed to women's participation in the workforce, including by supporting new mothers to return to, and thrive in, work. That is why we recently consulted on a broad range of proposals to help families to balance their work and home commitments. We have also announced our intention to extend redundancy protection to new mothers returning to work.

**Eddie Hughes:** I thank the Minister for that answer. What support are the Government giving to new mothers who, sadly, have experienced stillbirth?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** First, I pay tribute to my hon. Friend and Members across the House who participated in Baby Loss Awareness Week and the emotional debate in the House. The Government have committed to introducing parental bereavement leave and pay, which will apply to parents who lose a child under the age of 18, including parents with stillbirth. We plan to lay the regulations to implement the policy in January, ready to come into force on 6 April. That will support new mothers facing these tragic and difficult circumstances.

**Gareth Thomas** (Harrow West) (Lab/Co-op): Discrimination against new mothers and pregnant women is still widespread in our country. When are the Government going to take it seriously?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** I point out that discrimination in the workplace is illegal; it is unlawful. I have just outlined that we have announced our intention to extend redundancy protection for those mothers who return to work.

### Electric Vehicle Technology

14. **Mark Pawsey** (Rugby) (Con): What support her Department is providing for the development of electric vehicle technology. [900048]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Nadhim Zahawi):** We have just announced up to £1 billion of new funding to advance the next generation of cutting-edge automotive technologies. I am sure the House would want to know how that funding is being used. Part of it is being used by the supply chain for large-scale production of electric vehicles so that we scale up the production in the UK, and of course part of it will be used for vehicle research and development.

**Mark Pawsey:** I do not know whether you have had the opportunity to make a journey in one of the new electric London taxis, Mr Speaker, which are manufactured in my Rugby constituency by the London Electric Vehicle Company and which often provide people with their first experience of an electric vehicle. The company has just recorded its best ever sales month, with 352 taxis sold, and the fleet is improving the carbon footprint in our cities by preventing 6,800 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from entering the atmosphere. What further can we do to improve the switch to electric?

**Nadhim Zahawi:** I am very pleased to hear that the London Electric Vehicle Company had record sales in September. I spoke to the CEO recently and was very impressed with their capability. I understand their sales have grown month on month since April. They have capacity to produce 20,000 vehicles a year and his message to this House when I spoke to him was, “Let’s get Brexit done.”

**Conor McGinn** (St Helens North) (Lab): Some London boroughs have hundreds of electric vehicle charging points while whole towns in the north have none, but given the lack of public transport options in places such as St Helens, would it not be economically and environmentally better to invest in places such as mine to get people out of their cars?

**Nadhim Zahawi:** The hon. Gentleman is right to raise this issue. Our grant scheme and the £400 million charging infrastructure investment fund will see thousands more electric vehicle charging points installed across the whole UK.

**Damian Hinds** (East Hampshire) (Con): To accelerate take-up, first, we need to have more people having an electric vehicle in their consideration set, so alongside communications to consumers can the Minister look at the pivotal role played by dealers in getting more people to take a test drive?

**Nadhim Zahawi:** My right hon. Friend raises an important point. Different touch points with consumers are important. For example, when people go for a

replacement tax on their car, they should be immediately alerted to the fact that, instead of paying that tax, they could pay for a new electric vehicle.

**Chi Onwurah** (Newcastle upon Tyne Central) (Lab): Electric vehicles represent a fantastic opportunity to combat climate change and boost manufacturing jobs. That is why Labour is committed to investing £2.3 billion in three new battery gigafactories, £3 billion in support for manufacturing new car models, and £3.6 billion in our electricity grid and charging infrastructure, and we will also provide targeted interest-free loans for new electric cars for up to 500,000 people a year. We will do all that while retaining membership of the world’s largest customs union. Apart from a few ad hoc pots of money, the Government are proposing green licence plates. When it comes to climate change and manufacturing, is it not true that the Government are all hot air and no action?

**Nadhim Zahawi:** The hon. Lady just reeled off a list, so I will reel off my own list of good news, starting with the fact that Government announced £1 billion to increase the capacity for electric car development. On 10 October, Nissan launched the new Juke model after investing £100 million in Sunderland. On 26 September, Jaguar Land Rover announced its latest investment in the Gaydon facility, close to my constituency. On 18 September, INEOS Automotive announced that its headquarters and assembly plant for its SUV will be based in Bridgend. BMW’s new MINI Electric launched in July. JLR has made a massive investment in electric engines at Castle Bromwich. On 20 March, Toyota announced a collaboration with Suzuki to make an electric version of its Corolla model. That is all real investment, not “hot air”. The Labour party would crash the economy, raise taxes and have nothing—nowt—to spend on the green economy.

### Topical Questions

T1. [900060] **Julian Sturdy** (York Outer) (Con): If she will make a statement on her departmental responsibilities.

**The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Andrea Leadsom):** After two years as a sole trader at this Dispatch Box as Leader of the House, it is a huge pleasure to be here today with such a superb ministerial team. In addition to my Department’s vital work to help businesses to prepare for Brexit, we have set out three key priority areas for BEIS. First, we aim to lead the world in tackling climate change. From the Prime Minister chairing a new Cabinet Committee to our hosting of COP26 in Glasgow next year, our pathway to net zero is well under way. Secondly, we will seek to solve the grand challenges facing our society, from new support for our life sciences sector to developing fusion power to setting out how amazing UK innovations can solve the challenges of low productivity. Thirdly, we aim quite simply to make the UK the best place in the world to work and to grow a business.

**Julian Sturdy:** Will the Secretary of State reassure me that her Department is fully assessing the potential of UK peatlands and peatland restoration in regions such as North Yorkshire, where my constituency lies, in

getting us to net zero? Peatlands are a carbon sink that absorb more emissions than the world's oceans each year.

**Andrea Leadsom:** My hon. Friend is right that peatlands have a vital role to play in delivering net zero. In addition to £10 million to help to restore more than 6,000 hectares of peatland over a three-year period, we are working with Natural England on a number of pilot projects, including one in North Yorkshire, to test our approach for moving all peatlands in England on to a path of recovery and restoration.

**Rebecca Long Bailey** (Salford and Eccles) (Lab): I welcome the Secretary of State to her place for our first BEIS orals together. I know that we will have many a productive exchange.

Nine thousand UK jobs lost and 150,000 holidaymakers repatriated at an estimated cost to the taxpayer £100 million, yet the former chairman of Thomas Cook confirmed that Government financial support would have allowed him to save the company. A report from Unite the Union and Syndex also showed that £188 million in bridging loans would have prevented Thomas Cook's collapse. With reports that banks and investors were still willing, even on the day of the collapse, to support a deal provided that the Government stepped in, will the Business Secretary explain why she failed to meet with the company in the final days and clarify her rationale for not offering support?

**Andrea Leadsom:** First, I would like to reciprocate by saying that I am delighted to be working with the hon. Lady. I look forward to many exchanges across the Dispatch Box.

The hon. Lady will appreciate that my Department and I were very closely involved in the run-up to Thomas Cook's insolvency. It is a Department for Transport lead and, as all hon. Members will appreciate, too many cooks can spoil the broth, so I liaised closely with the Secretary of State for Transport who took the lead on this, but BEIS officials were very closely involved.

At the weekend I wrote to the insolvency practitioner about clawback and malus, to ATOL about looking after the insurance for those who booked holidays, and to the banking associations about ensuring that proper restraint is shown to those who sadly lost their jobs in that run-up.

Why did we not bail out Thomas Cook? Simply because it was clear that the £200 million it was asking for was just a drop in the ocean. There was no way the company could realistically be restored, despite the Government seriously considering the prospects for doing so and for making it an ongoing concern.

**Rebecca Long Bailey:** It is interesting that the German Government saw fit to intervene. Not only did our Government refuse, they also failed to take the basic action needed to ensure good corporate behaviour. Today, reports demonstrate a clear conflict of interest for auditing firms that, while signing off on Thomas Cook's finances, separately advised directors on securing bumper bonuses.

BHS, Carillion and the banks all had similar auditing conflicts. Sir John Kingman officially advised the Government nearly a year ago to create a more robust statutory regulator, but to no avail. Will the Secretary of

State confirm if and when she will bring forward reforms to the Financial Reporting Council and the wider auditing sector, as proposed by the Kingman review, Professor Prem Sikka and the Competition and Markets Authority?

**Andrea Leadsom:** First, may I gently say to the hon. Lady that the situation in Germany was extremely different? It was a separate business in Germany. If there had been an opportunity to save Thomas Cook, we would have done so. We looked very carefully at the prospects—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Lady is just demonstrating a lack of understanding of how UK business works, and I am very sorry to hear that. She really needs to look at the facts here, and not just at trying to make a point. This was a very serious issue, and it was something the Government took very seriously.

We have done everything possible to protect those who sadly lost their jobs. I am delighted, but the hon. Lady did not even mention, that Hays Travel has taken over many Thomas Cook shops, which is fantastic news for many of those employees. She has also not paid any regard to the fact that the Government were able to establish a repatriation on the biggest scale ever in peacetime to bring more than 140,000 people back to the United Kingdom.

T9. [900068] **Vicky Ford** (Chelmsford) (Con): Workers' rights matter. Given that eight out of 10 mums consider work-family balance before thinking about any new job opportunity, can the Government confirm they remain committed to considering the proposal that employers should make all jobs flexible unless there is a good reason not to do so?

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kelly Tolhurst):** Good-quality flexible working is important to all employees and is central to good work. Workers' rights matter. Over 97% of employers offer some form of flexible working, and our recent consultation looked at how further to increase the prevalence of flexible working by advertising jobs as flexible and by requiring large employers to publish their policy.

T2. [900061] **Kerry McCarthy** (Bristol East) (Lab): British companies have been shown to be complicit in the fires and deforestation in the Amazon through their investments and supply chains. Will the Minister look at introducing mandatory due diligence to address this?

**The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (Kwasi Kwarteng):** This subject has come up, and we need to look at how companies and exporters tackle serious carbon emissions. What they are doing in the Amazon is not acceptable. We need to engage with that and have a dialogue.

T10. [900069] **Douglas Ross** (Moray) (Con): I recently visited Orbex in Forres, which is heavily involved in the new spaceport at Sutherland and is seen as a sector leader with its new innovative launch vehicle. Will the Minister outline what support the UK Government can give to companies such as Orbex, which plans to bring 250 high-quality jobs to the region?

**The Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation (Chris Skidmore):** The Government support growing our national space capabilities, especially by



establishing the new national space council, which will be chaired by the Prime Minister. We are supporting Orbex to develop an exciting new launch vehicle technology with a grant of £5.5 million as part of our industrial strategy. We are keen to work with it as part of the wider national space framework we are establishing.<sup>1</sup>

T3. [900062] **Liz Twist** (Blaydon) (Lab): The town of Blaydon has been without a post office in its shopping centre for about five years, as no local retailer has been prepared to take this on. Leaving the availability of local post offices to the willingness of local retailers is just not working in Blaydon, so what steps will the Minister take to ensure that post office provision is retained where no local retailer can be found, as in Blaydon?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** I thank the hon. Lady for her question and I am more than happy to meet her to discuss her constituency in further detail if she would require. There is no programme of closures and the Post Office is working extremely hard, where post offices do shut for any, sometimes unpredictable, reason, to find replacements. We do have outreach services that are available when there is a lack of service, but I am happy to speak with her further about that.

**Greg Clark** (Tunbridge Wells) (Ind): I welcome the Secretary of State to the Dispatch Box and hope that she will have distinguished tenure at this important time. She will know that the recommendations of the independent review of the Financial Reporting Council, conducted by Sir John Kingman, were widely endorsed and are urgently required. I was concerned that the statutory implementation of those recommendations was not included in the Queen's Speech. Can she assure me that she is not going to miss a golden opportunity to make these reforms and give a big boost to our standing in the world?

**Andrea Leadsom:** First, let me pay tribute to my right hon. Friend, my predecessor, who did a fantastic job in this Department. I am delighted to stand by the position that he took as Secretary of State: it is the Government's plan to legislate for a new regulator with stronger powers, replacing the FRC, as soon as parliamentary time allows. We are planning to progress this work in the first quarter of next year, once we have received Sir Donald Brydon's review of the quality and effectiveness of audit.

T4. [900063] **Karen Lee** (Lincoln) (Lab): Next month will mark five years since the Government first announced they would undertake an independent review of the UK's product recall system, and a failure to implement recalls has led to fire services responding to preventable fires due to product failures. Will the Minister today update the House on the review's progress and whether the single recall register will be up and running this year?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** I am not sure whether the hon. Lady is aware that we undertook one of the biggest recalls that has happened this year: the recall of Whirlpool tumble dryers. She will know that I have updated the House on the progress we have made on that. Since 12 June, when I announced the recall, we have had more than 90,000 contacts, with people getting in touch about recall. So we are continuing to improve and work on recall.

**Michael Tomlinson** (Mid Dorset and North Poole) (Con): Heatric is a business in my constituency that is leading in clean energy, for example, carbon capture and storage, but it can do more. What more can the Department do to support businesses such as Heatric?

**Chris Skidmore:** Carbon capture, usage and storage is essential to meet our mission for net zero by 2050. We have committed £25 million so far to supporting new companies to progress CCUS, with an additional £100 million as part of the £505 million energy innovation programme. I know that my hon. Friend has taken Heatric to the Department, and officials are keen to ensure that they can continue to work with the company.

T5. [900064] **Christian Matheson** (City of Chester) (Lab): When we leave the European Union, we will also leave the auspices of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency, so what plans do Ministers have to provide regulatory certainty to the aerospace sector and for the thousands of jobs that it relates to in my constituency?

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Nadhim Zahawi):** I think the hon. Gentleman would know that we already have agreements in place so that planes can continue flying. If he votes for the deal today, we will be in a much better place to leave in an orderly way.

**Paul Masterton** (East Renfrewshire) (Con): More than half a dozen post offices in East Renfrewshire have closed over the past couple of years and not one has been able to be replaced, because it was not a viable business proposition for retailers. Does the Minister think that increased fees under the banking framework agreement will be enough to build the sustainability of the post office network?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** I thank my hon. Friend for that question. I am happy to discuss particular issues in his constituency. I believe that the new banking framework and the increase in remuneration that postmasters will be receiving as part of that framework will make a significant impact for postmasters. But he is right to say that we must not stop there. I am working hard, with the Post Office and the National Federation of SubPostmasters, to make sure that we have a post office network that is fit, relevant and viable.

T6. [900065] **Tommy Sheppard** (Edinburgh East) (SNP): Scotland has 35% of the total European carbon capture and storage capacity; it has much of the infrastructure already in place; and it has in my constituency the world-leading research group Scottish Carbon Capture & Storage. Will the Secretary of State press the Chancellor to seriously increase the amount of investment in the next Budget that goes into the industry, so that it can upscale and go into commercial production?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** The hon. Gentleman is right: carbon capture, usage and storage is going to be crucial to our meeting our net zero carbon target. We are committed to supporting its deployment in the 2020s. The Government are already funding programmes in this policy area worth more than £500 million, and we will have a useful dialogue with colleagues in the Treasury to encourage the development of the technology.

1. [Official Report, 31 October 2019, Vol. 667, c. 3MC.]



**Stephen Metcalfe** (South Basildon and East Thurrock) (Con): Many businesses in my constituency depend on a constant flow of engineers entering the workforce. Will my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State tell the House how her Department is ensuring that enough young people take up engineering? What is she doing with other Departments to embed it in the curriculum?

**Chris Skidmore:** May I start by thanking my hon. Friend for his work as the Government's engineering envoy and for the work he has taken forward as part of our Engineering: Take a Closer Look legacy campaign? We have so far invested £406 million in maths, digital and technical education to help to focus on the shortage of science, technology, engineering and maths skills, but we must ensure that the "E" in STEM is equally vital, so we will be taking forward work to put engineering at the centre of our STEM strategy.

T7. [900066] **Jessica Morden** (Newport East) (Lab): Last week, Tata Jaguar Land Rover announced that it had created an electric drive unit, which the Government are helping to fund. In view of that, will the steel Minister work with Tata to ensure that the Orb steelworks in Newport stays open and is part of the supply chain? It would be a travesty to lose the capacity to make electrical steel in this country.

**Nadhim Zahawi:** The hon. Lady and I are set to meet on 29 October, and I am meeting the all-party group on steel the day before. I will do everything I can to work with Tata to see whether we can find a future for the steelworks.

**David Morris** (Morecambe and Lunesdale) (Con): I draw the House's attention to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests. In my constituency, we have two EDF nuclear power stations. Part of the EDF group is RTE, which is currently working with the British company Aquind to deliver cross-EU-border energy infrastructure. The EU Commission has just removed UK companies from its list of projects of common interests, which affects their regulation. Will my right hon. Friend urge Ofgem to step up and protect British companies by granting regulation as soon as possible in accordance with British law?

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** Absolutely. We had an official present in the room at that PCI meeting on 4 October. This issue has been raised with me and is a matter of concern.

T8. [900067] **Emma Dent Coad** (Kensington) (Lab): As 90,000 postal delivery workers threaten to go on strike at Christmas over job security and employment rights that were promised but remain undelivered, I note that the chief executive of privatised Royal Mail earns nearly 35 times what our beloved posties earn. Given the creeping privatisation of our post offices that is devastating community assets, will the Minister consider renationalising all our postal services, as demanded by the good citizens of South Kensington, who have lost their post office, so that they will deliver to the nation, not to the pockets of the few?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** I thank the hon. Lady for her question, but I have to disappoint her because my answer to it is no.

**Kirstene Hair** (Angus) (Con): I was delighted to hear that Seagreen wind farm off the coast of Angus was successful in its bid in the UK Government contract for difference auction. It will be the most powerful wind farm throughout the United Kingdom and will have the ability to power up to 40% of Scottish homes. Would the Minister like to come to Angus and see the impact it is already having on our local economy? The local port has already secured the contract for the operations and maintenance base.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:** I would be happy to visit Angus at any opportune time.

**Phil Wilson** (Sedgefield) (Lab): Sedgefield is home to the largest business park in the north-east of England, with 500 companies and 10,000 to 12,000 jobs. More than 50% of the jobs and businesses there rely in some way on trade with the EU. If the Secretary of State has her way and there is no more frictionless trade with the EU, no more customs union and no access to the single market as there is now, does she not have a responsibility to publish an economic assessment on the effects that will have on my constituents' jobs?

**Andrea Leadsom:** I am delighted that Hitachi in the hon. Gentleman's constituency is doing so well and that the high value manufacturing catapult that has an operation in his constituency is also doing well—both supported by the Government. We are seeking to get the withdrawal agreement Bill through this House, so that we can move forward with a good free trade deal that works for the United Kingdom, the EU and the many people in his constituency who are employed in manufacturing, which is something in which the UK excels.

## British Children: Syria

12.40 pm

**Mr David Davis** (Haltemprice and Howden) (Con) (*Urgent Question*): To ask the Secretary of State if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on 60 British children trapped in north-east Syria.

**The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (Dr Andrew Murrison)**: I thank my right hon. Friend for his question. This is, of course, a dreadful situation. Innocent minors trapped in north-east Syria are, without doubt, vulnerable. All these cases must be approached with care and compassion. We are aware that British nationals, including children, are living in displaced persons' camps in Syria, but, owing to the circumstances on the ground, we are not in a position to make an accurate estimate of the number.

The safety and security of British nationals abroad is a priority for the Foreign Office, although UK travel advice has consistently advised against all travel to Syria since 2011. Although the UK has no consular presence in Syria from which to provide assistance, we will do all we can for unaccompanied minors and orphans.

The Foreign Secretary made it clear to the House last week that the Government will try to help any British unaccompanied minors and orphans in Syria. We work with all concerned in Syria and at home to facilitate the return of unaccompanied or orphan children where feasible. Each case is considered on an individual basis.

The situation in north-east Syria is fragile, but we will continue to work with international partners to secure stability in the region, to ensure that the considerable gains made against Daesh are not undermined, and to bring humanity and compassion to a deeply troubled and traumatised region.

**Mr Davis**: I thank the Minister for his compassionate tone and for what he had to say. Last Tuesday, the Foreign Secretary made the commitment to look at whether orphans and unaccompanied minors in north-east Syria could be repatriated to Britain. I welcome that commitment, but I am afraid that it does not go far enough. Save the Children has now confirmed that, of the 60 children in the region, only three are orphans. The children who have not been orphaned still deserve the United Kingdom's protection. These children are at the heart of an unfolding geopolitical disaster in Syria. Many of them under the age of five have been born of parents who made a grotesquely misguided and irresponsible decision to go to Syria. The children are there through absolutely no fault of their own. They should not be punished for their parents' mistakes. They have lived through some of the most brutal and inhumane fighting in modern times. Some have witnessed beheadings and other appalling acts of brutality, and others are suffering from terrible physical and psychological damage.

Some of our international allies have already used the five-day ceasefire to fulfil their duties and repatriate their own children. If we do not do the same, British children would be left at the whim of a brutal dictator, of a terrorist organisation or of roving bands of militia. If we do nothing, we will be abandoning our moral obligations and risking those vulnerable children growing up in a war-torn area and perhaps turning into terrorists themselves. The time to act, Minister, is now.

**Mr Speaker**: I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on securing the urgent question and on making his case within time. He is in danger of being an exception.

**Dr Murrison**: I thank my right hon. Friend for his points. He is right to say that the UK Government's approach to this is, I hope, informed by compassion and care for individual cases. Our priority clearly has to be unaccompanied children and orphans, and that is where our attention currently is.

My right hon. Friend has given me a figure—I have to say that I do not recognise that figure—although, of course, we are talking to all the agencies and to those with an influence on the ground, to better understand the situation, and, of course, we will do all we can. The situation is fast-moving, and getting access to camps and people is extremely difficult. The ceasefire that he has spoken of is due to expire tonight, but we hope that it will be sustained. Under those circumstances, of course, all things become possible.

**Emily Thornberry** (Islington South and Finsbury) (Lab): I thank you, Mr Speaker, for granting this urgent question, and the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) for securing it. His contribution was powerful and it was right. I entirely share his concerns about the dozens of innocent children—many just infants—who are legally British citizens and who find themselves, through no fault of their own, caught up in the latest upsurge in violence around the Daesh detention camps in northern Syria, triggered by the unilateral withdrawal of US troops and the subsequent invasion of the region by Turkey and its mercenary militias. The reckless and treacherous actions of the Trump Administration were always going to have human consequences, including the increased endangerment of the innocent British children living in the detention camps, nearly all of whom have already experienced—as the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden says—huge physical and psychological traumas in their lives because of what they have seen and the conditions in which they have grown up.

It is all very well for some to say that the sins of the father, and in many cases the mother, should be visited on the children, but that is not who we are as a country or a people. Instead, we have a moral and a civic duty to ensure that these British children are brought back to the UK to receive the shelter, care and counselling they need, even if that necessitates bringing back their mothers to face justice in our courts for the crimes they may have committed. If the Minister of State agrees with that, as I hope that he does, I must ask another difficult question, and one with which we need to wrestle.

If we were having this discussion two months ago, we would have been talking about negotiating the repatriation of these children with our Kurdish and American allies. Now, as a result of Donald Trump's actions, that negotiation will need to involve Assad's regime, Russia and what are now their Kurdish allies. So I ask the Minister of State, unpalatable as it may be, does the Foreign Office believe that to achieve the repatriation of these children, it will be necessary to restore formal diplomatic relations with the Assad regime, and will that be on a permanent or a temporary basis?

**Dr Murrison**: I completely distance myself from the phrase "sins of the father". There is no question about this. These are innocent minors; they are vulnerable

people and we must do what we can for them. It is entirely wrong to associate them with what their parents may have done. Indeed, we need to ensure—as my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) made very clear in his question—that the cycle does not continue. That is fully understood.

The shadow Secretary of State touched on the legal position of minors who are living in camps with their parents. That brings us to a very difficult area indeed. I am sure that she would not want to trespass too far in that regard, nor would she want to remove children from their parents.

We have been clear about our attitude towards the Assad regime. As the right hon. Lady will be very well aware, the reality is that the Assad regime appears to have permeated most corners of the country now, and we have to think about what that means if we are to pursue our humanitarian goals. I think that most western countries—the telephone conversation I had with the global coalition against Daesh yesterday would certainly indicate this—are trying to work out what we now do when it comes to operating in the new reality, which sadly has been made a great deal worse by the events of the past few days.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell** (Sutton Coldfield) (Con): May I just pin the Minister down on two key points? First, do the Government accept in principle that these children should be repatriated and are a British responsibility? Secondly, do they accept that, subject to not putting British officials in harm's way, such repatriation could and should take place, possibly with the help of UNICEF?

**Dr Murrison:** I thank my right hon. Friend. Certainly we would want to work with agencies. If he will forgive me, I am not going to specify which agencies. He will know, as he has been Secretary of State in the relevant Department, why we do not want to specify which particular partners we are working with in this instance. On the protection of our own people, we are not going to put civil servants at risk in this. That would be unreasonable. We have a duty of care towards them.

In terms of repatriation in principle, I think my right hon. Friend is tempting me to make commitments in a piece that is fast-moving. I would refer to the point I made in response to the right hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury (Emily Thornberry) about the legality of this and the separation of family members. It would be wrong in principle to separate family members, but, as I said in my opening remarks, we consider each case on its merits. These are all individual cases, and it would be very wrong to give a blanket assessment of the position that the Government would take.

**Stephen Gethins** (North East Fife) (SNP): I thank the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) for securing this incredibly important urgent question. I also pay tribute to the aid agencies working in some extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

One of the most chilling briefings I have ever received came in at the weekend, when I read that children—small children—have died on their way to and in the camps from hypothermia, pneumonia, dehydration or complications from malnutrition and illness. Winter and war are closing in on these children at the moment. The right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr Mitchell) raised a

very good point. Does the UK take responsibility for British children? Can the Minister answer that in terms of the principle?

What discussions has the Minister had with the states that have been able to evacuate children already, and why has the UK not done so? What lessons has he learned? When I raised this with the Foreign Secretary previously, he talked about security considerations. Will the Minister disregard security considerations around children who are about five or six years old, and will he set out the plans to bring these children home?

**Dr Murrison:** I thank the hon. Gentleman, who puts his points in his usual effective and forceful way. It is right to point out that the UK has been right at the forefront of applying international development funding to the dire situation in north-east Syria. We are right at the top of the league table, and it is important to say that. Particularly as winter approaches, it is of vital importance that the British public know that their money is being spent to alleviate as far as they possibly can this dire humanitarian situation.

I am not going to be drawn on other countries, because it is invidious to make comparisons. It is very easy just to pluck out a couple of countries from the air and say that we are not doing as well as X or Y. Let me be clear: we are doing what we can, given the difficult circumstances on the ground, and of course within the rule of law, for vulnerable children in north-east Syria. This is a piece that is rapidly developing and rapidly changing, and of course we keep all things under review. I hope that is helpful to the hon. Gentleman.

**Crispin Blunt** (Reigate) (Con): I declare my interest both as an expert witness in the defence of John Letts and Sally Lane in respect of the non-provision of consular services in the region—evidence that was unchallenged by the prosecution—and in respect of a visit to the region with three parliamentary colleagues with the all-party parliamentary group on Rojava five weeks ago. In al-Hawl camp, we were told that there were 16 British families there. I have to say to my right hon. Friend that every single day we delay in bringing these children home is an extra day of trauma that we are going to have to address at great expense in the United Kingdom. We must take up our responsibilities both to the children and to ourselves in order to protect our future security.

**Dr Murrison:** Yes, I pay tribute to my hon. Friend's first-hand experience in Syria and the efforts he has made to better understand what is going on. The situation in north-east Syria is difficult and unpredictable. We have a ceasefire at the moment, and I hope it endures. If that ceasefire does hold tonight into tomorrow and into the future, the situation becomes much more permissive in terms of trying to deliver assistance where it is necessary and also in dealing with the cases that he has referred to, particularly the orphaned children—the unaccompanied minors—who are deeply vulnerable. I entirely agree with him that with every day that goes past means these children potentially getting even more deeply disadvantaged. I want this resolved. At the moment, we are working with agencies to do what we can. In the event that the ceasefire holds, I think that things will hopefully move a lot more rapidly and we will be able to do more.



**Ann Clwyd** (Cynon Valley) (Lab): But surely now, with a ceasefire and a lull in the fighting, is the perfect time to facilitate repatriation—to get them out. Will the Minister tell us what numbers he is talking about? We do not want the wool pulled over our eyes yet again. I understand that only three of the children are orphans out of the 60 who are from British families. What numbers are we talking about precisely? We do not want just three children taken out; we want all 60 taken out, and their mothers.

**Dr Murrison:** I thank the right hon. Lady, who has taken a very long-term interest in this. I would diverge from the pretext of her question, which is that we have not been doing anything; I can tell her, though I am not going to be drawn on the detail, that actually we have, over the past four days. The ceasefire finishes tonight. I hope that it endures, in which case things become a lot more permissive—a lot easier. We hope that that will be the case. I am sorry to disappoint her, but I am not going to be drawn on precise numbers. I do not recognise the figure that was given earlier on. I do respect the authority that has produced it, but I cannot confirm a number anywhere in that region. I also, I am afraid, do not want to be drawn in this forum on the three precise cases that she referred to. She will understand that we are actively trying to do what we can for them, and I do not want to say something at the Dispatch Box that might prejudice what we do in-country. However, I am perfectly happy to have a conversation with her in private.

**Alistair Burt** (North East Bedfordshire) (Ind): I thank my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) for this urgent question. I very much sympathise with my right hon. Friend the Minister in dealing with it, because he, with the Foreign Secretary, has a responsibility in this House to work out the practicalities of the respective duties of care of those he would send to rescue those who are trapped in this situation abroad with their needs and everything else. However, sometimes the sheer practicality of difficulties can mask a failure in government to make the decisions they need to make. This is particularly about the mothers of the children. It has seemed to me over a period of time that we have to recognise an international responsibility to take back even those who have been indoctrinated and radicalised in order to protect the children, and that we should have the resources to be able to deal with them, as well as to protect the children, who are the only innocents, by and large, in this situation. Can he reassure me that there is in government now a clear decision being made with the Home Office to bring people back, as they should be cared for here?

**Dr Murrison:** I am grateful to my right hon. Friend. He will know that we are currently trying to better understand the situation in al-Hawl, in particular, to try to identify those who have British nationality, their position and their wishes, and, in particular, trying to enumerate those who might be considered to be vulnerable in this piece. As I said earlier, we are approaching this on a case-by-case basis. That is genuinely the case. It is not easy, because our access is obviously imperfect. I hope very much that the ceasefire holds, and then we will be able to do more than we had perhaps been able to do up to this point.

**Mr Gregory Campbell** (East Londonderry) (DUP): The Minister has alluded several times to the five-day window expiring tonight. Can he outline, even in general terms, what steps he expects to take this afternoon and this evening before that expiry?

**Dr Murrison:** As I said, we have been working over the past several days, and indeed for some considerable time, to better understand the situation in al-Hawl camp, in particular, to satisfy ourselves that we know who is there and who we might have responsibility for in some way or another, moral or legal, to work up a plan on how to deal with that. That is irrespective of the ceasefire, but the ceasefire is important because it makes things a lot easier when we are trying to get in place a plan to assist those we think we have a duty towards.

**Penny Mordaunt** (Portsmouth North) (Con): I understand very well the ethical, legal and practical difficulties of repatriating children, especially those who are not orphans. Many of the partners we work with would not want to take a child from their parents, even in these circumstances. Surely our hand would be strengthened in being able to do the right thing if taking a child to a war zone and all the horrors that accompany it were seen as a form of child abuse. Will the Minister please ask Government lawyers to look at this to see whether we can strengthen our hand in taking children back who are not orphans, and also that we have more in our arsenal to enable us to prosecute those who have taken children overseas?

**Dr Murrison:** My right hon. Friend is fully familiar with all this territory. Of course, some of the children will have been born in Syria, which I think illustrates the complexity that I referred to earlier and the reason that we need to take an individual approach to each and every case. In general, of course it is absolutely right that a child should not be separated from its mother in particular. That is a strong principle that we should adhere to, but as I say, this situation is rapidly evolving and we have to consider each case individually.

**Richard Burden** (Birmingham, Northfield) (Lab): The Minister has acknowledged that there is absolutely no time to lose. The current ceasefire presents a window of opportunity to move on these repatriations, but does the Minister accept that access to the two camps where the majority of UK national children are living was possible, as was repatriation, before the ceasefire and is likely to be possible for a little while afterwards? I acknowledge that he is not prepared to be drawn on the performance of other countries, but all the indications are that a number of other countries are able to get their nationals out quicker than we are managing to do. Why is that?

**Dr Murrison:** I am not sure I would agree entirely with what I read in *The Guardian* newspaper, and I would certainly disagree with the characterisation that the hon. Gentleman has portrayed. I have no evidence to suggest that the UK is in any way being dilatory in trying to return vulnerable children to the United Kingdom. That is absolutely not the case. We will continue to do what we can, and we have been very active up to this point in trying to work out the next steps. All I can do is to reassure him on that point.



**Sir Michael Fallon** (Sevenoaks) (Con): While we should certainly care about the children, we should also continue to worry about some of the parents who still constitute an extreme threat to us here in the United Kingdom and from whom our armed forces have spent five years trying to protect us. Can my right hon. Friend say what work is being done in the coalition to ensure that some of those parents are not inadvertently released?

**Dr Murrison:** I regret that the Turkish incursion has really not helped this position, in that it is likely that some of the places in which the foreign fighters have been held will become a little more porous as a result. The early suggestion that this would mean that the doors were opened and that they would simply be released has probably been overdone—that is not our sense at the moment—but it certainly does pose a very real risk. My right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have been absolutely right in saying that public safety must be ensured, and we would want to see those who may have committed offences brought to justice. Our view is that such cases should be tried close to the alleged crimes, and that remains our position.

**Chuka Umunna** (Streatham) (LD): I congratulate the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) on asking this urgent question and agree with every single word he has said. Can I ask the Minister what would happen in the event that we are able to repatriate these children? As has already been said, they have witnessed, seen and experienced things that no adult, never mind any child, should have to experience, and they are likely to be suffering from quite severe psychological and physical conditions. What package of support will be put in place for them in the event that we actually bring them home? They are going to need all the help they can get.

**Dr Murrison:** I am really pleased that the hon. Gentleman has raised that point. He is absolutely right to say that safeguarding will be vital when these children return to the UK. He is a constituency MP, as I am, and he will understand that local social services are principally responsible for the care of vulnerable children. That will remain the case in this case. We would be working with the statutory agencies to ensure that children who are repatriated to this country and who may be traumatised in ways that most of us can barely imagine are given every care that they require. I suspect that the process will be ongoing and very lengthy.

**Sir Hugo Swire** (East Devon) (Con): Can the Minister clarify whether there is a legal distinction between children born in the so-called caliphate and those who have been taken there? For the avoidance of doubt, will he also clarify that the Government are talking solely about unaccompanied and orphaned children? If we are introducing an element where a parent is involved, that will open up a whole range of other possibilities and challenges.

**Dr Murrison:** My right hon. Friend is right to touch on the legality, which is complicated. We are clear that there are British nationals in camps in Syria who have the rights that he would expect any British national to have. If they are born to British parents, they would

naturally be expected to have British nationality, just like any other child born in any other country. To deal with the distinction between unaccompanied children and others, which other Members have mentioned, our principal concern and priority must be unaccompanied and orphaned children. They are the most vulnerable, and that is where our attention chiefly is at this moment. However, I would say to my right hon. Friend, who has some experience in these matters, that this is a bigger piece of work that I hope will be made considerably easier in the event that we have a sustained ceasefire when the current ceasefire ends this evening.

**Andy Slaughter** (Hammersmith) (Lab): Rather than dealing with children on a case-by-case basis and risking some of the parents being released and causing further mayhem, is not the solution to repatriate all UK citizens and, if any are guilty or suspected of committing offences, to put them on trial?

**Dr Murrison:** From my conversations with my international interlocutors yesterday, that does not appear to be the approach being taken by most countries. The Government clearly have a duty to protect the public—the hon. Gentleman's constituents and mine—and that is at the forefront of our mind. In dealing with foreign terrorist fighters, our firm view is that any alleged crimes should be tried close to the scene of those alleged crimes. Justice is best served in that way, and that is what we are attempting to achieve. The hon. Gentleman has to accept that repatriating foreign terrorist fighters makes it more difficult to mount successful prosecutions and thus protect the public.

**Mrs Maria Miller** (Basingstoke) (Con): My right hon. Friend is absolutely right to say that these British children are vulnerable and innocent minors, but that is the case whether they are orphaned or not, so can he explain clearly what Department for International Development-funded partners are doing to ensure that we have identified all British children who are caught up in this appalling situation and confirm that it is the Government's objective to ensure that they have identified them? We have an obligation to them all, and our duty to them really should be clear.

**Dr Murrison:** We want to assist all vulnerable children; I hope I have made that very clear. The reason I said that I did not recognise a figure of 50 or 60 was not that I was trying to obfuscate from the Dispatch Box; it was because we genuinely do not know. It is difficult to determine who they are and how many there are. This piece of work is ongoing, and I hope that a more benign situation in north-east Syria will assist in that process so that we will indeed be able to provide something like an individual service to those who are in the camps, particularly those who are most vulnerable and their family members. That is what we will seek to achieve, but my right hon. Friend's point is well made.

**Angela Smith** (Penistone and Stocksbridge) (LD): The Minister has made a great deal of his hope that the ceasefire will hold, but of course it may not. How does the Foreign Office plan to respond to the end of the ceasefire in its processes for repatriating British children?

**Dr Murrison:** That process is not dependent on the end of the ceasefire. My point was that it is made a great deal easier in the event that the security situation on the ground is more benign and more permissive, but our work on repatriating the priority cases in particular, who have to be orphans and unaccompanied minors, will continue nevertheless.

**Stephen Crabb** (Preseli Pembrokeshire) (Con): The Minister has set out a number of the practical challenges involved in acting in this area. Can he confirm the reports that many of us have heard that a number of other countries, including some of our allies, are already in the process of repatriating children from this area of Syria? Can he also confirm whether those countries are adopting an approach similar to the one that he seems to be adopting today, of drawing a distinction between unaccompanied children and orphans and the wider body of children who may be there?

**Dr Murrison:** I believe that that is the case. I do not discern a dramatic difference from the approach taken by countries with which we could reasonably be compared—that is to say, the countries that we have habitually speak to in this matter. I think there is a commonality of understanding that we need to ensure that those who are most vulnerable are prioritised. That is what we are doing. My right hon. Friend refers to a process being under way. I can assure him that the UK process is under way, and it seems to be in parallel with most countries.

**Mrs Madeleine Moon** (Bridgend) (Lab): I trust the Minister's integrity and honesty, and while he has been vague about the actions that are being taken, I accept his assurance that action is being taken. But the House still requires an assurance not only that the orphans who have been identified will be repatriated, but that we will look at the children who are with their mothers, because they cannot fail to have been traumatised. I suggest that the Minister look at the work of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, which has been asked by the UN and Washington to put together a system for bringing foreign fighters to justice.

**Dr Murrison:** I am grateful for the hon. Lady's comments. Her tone, as ever, is spot on. I agree with her; we need to apply compassion to all in this situation. We also, of course, need to bring justice to those who must be brought before the courts. I am interested in the work that she cited and will certainly take a close look at it.

**Tim Loughton** (East Worthing and Shoreham) (Con): I completely concur with my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) and the Minister that these children are the innocent victims of their parents' actions, and we owe them a duty of care. Since the law was changed in 2013, more than 150 children have been taken into the care system in the UK for fear of the risk of radicalisation by their parents. If the parents of these children were in the UK, those children would hopefully now be safely in the care of extended family members, expert foster carers or even adopted parents. Does the Minister agree that, if we can rescue these children safely, we should work to find them safe homes in the UK, whatever the status of their parents?

**Dr Murrison:** That is a reasonable analogy to draw, because we are dealing with UK law, and these children ultimately will be returned to the UK. In my view, we need to use the same standards, norms and principles with these children as we would apply in the UK. I note my hon. Friend's point. He will understand that the piece of work under way is trying to identify precisely where these families are, who they are and what can be done. I do not think the numbers are vast. [*Interruption.*] He is right to say from a sedentary position that that does not matter. These are individual cases, but the press reporting 70,000 in al-Hol camp, for example, gives the impression that there are thousands and thousands of people in the frame for this. I can say without betraying any confidences that that would be a grave exaggeration. We are talking about a relatively small number of people. This should be a containable piece of work, and it is, I assure him, under way.

**Chris Stephens** (Glasgow South West) (SNP): The Minister will be aware that there are different interpretations, particularly from those on the ground, of the Ankara-Washington ceasefire. Is that hampering the Government's and agencies' attempts to repatriate children? Does he agree that the UK Government need to increase the number of children being resettled here in the UK?

**Dr Murrison:** I think the hon. Gentleman raised a similar point before on the vulnerable persons resettlement scheme, which I am very proud of—20,000 people by 2020 is a big commitment, particularly when it is taken along with our financial commitment to tackling the dreadful humanitarian crisis in Syria. He mentions the ceasefire. I assure him that we have used every opportunity to do what we can in relation to vulnerable people in north-east Syria during this period and will continue to do so, assisted, I hope, by the continuation of the ceasefire, and we have to hope for the best this evening.

**Dr Phillip Lee** (Bracknell) (LD): When we look at the bigger picture, we see that the position of these British children and our national security have been adversely impacted by the invasion of north-east Syria by a NATO country following the exit of north-east Syria by a NATO country. Does the Minister agree that it behoves all political generations to review how supranational organisations work, so that they continue to work in Britain's national interest?

**Dr Murrison:** I think the hon. Gentleman alludes to Turkey's behaviour as a member of NATO. All I can say is that I am very disappointed by Turkey's behaviour, as a trusted NATO friend and ally. I very much hope that it will desist from further incursion into Syria and de-escalate. Otherwise, I think the consequences will be very serious indeed.

**Mr Jim Cunningham** (Coventry South) (Lab): Children's services in this country are overstretched at the moment. Will the Minister ensure that adequate resources are made available to deal with this situation? Is he waiting for a ruling from the courts in relation to British nationality? He has talked about unaccompanied children, but that ruling could mean that there are accompanied children. Does he have contingency plans for that?

**Dr Murrison:** Referring to the point I made earlier, I think that the scale of this is containable. It is the responsibility of local social services to deal with it, notwithstanding the specialist nature of some of the services that will have to be provided to the vulnerable people concerned. I think I can give the hon. Gentleman the assurances that he seeks in relation to vulnerable children returning to this country having the specialist services they need to ensure their welfare and rehabilitation.

**Alison Thewliss** (Glasgow Central) (SNP): My constituent Kate has written to me to share her concerns about the intensifying and dangerous situation facing these children stuck in camps. Can the Minister confirm beyond any doubt that the UK Government accept their duty of care for these children and will take responsibility for these British citizens?

**Dr Murrison:** We look at each case individually; I can give the hon. Lady that assurance. I do not want to get wrapped up in a strict legalistic interpretation of “duty of care”. I want to ensure that we apply our moral duty to do what we can for innocent British nationals; I can give her that assurance

**Chris Law** (Dundee West) (SNP): I am left a little bit perplexed, particularly following the Minister’s last response. Can he confirm, with a yes or no answer, whether all these young British children are the legal responsibility of Britain and the UK Government?

**Dr Murrison:** The difficulty is that if they are not unaccompanied or orphaned, they are in the care of their parents. I think the hon. Gentleman is confusing two things. It is important to ensure that children in this country and anywhere else remain in the care of their parents wherever possible. As a parent, I can say that it is vital that children remain in a family setting. That is what we will seek to ensure. The state abrogating responsibility for children is an extreme measure, and we will seek to keep families together wherever we can.

**Mr Speaker:** I am most grateful to the Minister and to colleagues for taking part. *[Interruption.]* Yes, I will take points of order. The day would not be complete without them.

## Points of Order

1.20 pm

**Thangam Debbonaire** (Bristol West) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I would like to ask your advice about what measures you think the House should be taking to deal with the possible security risk of the Government’s programme motion, which tomorrow sets us up so that all Members, staff and others will be leaving at the same time, when there is no public transport and the likelihood that there will not be enough taxis. Ministers may be able to go home in their ministerial cars, but for everyone else, including staff, this is surely a security risk. What advice can you give us about what precautions we can take?

**Mr Speaker:** I am very grateful to the hon. Lady for her point of order. I have not got immediate advice. I will consult the Parliamentary Security Director and report back to the House as expeditiously as I can. She has raised a serious point and it does warrant a serious response, and a serious response has to be a considered one, based on consultation. I hope that that is helpful to her for now.

**Justine Greening** (Putney) (Ind): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. The House is about to start a debate that is vital for our country’s future national interest, yet we have just a few hours to debate the principles of the Bill and, after that, just a few more hours in a matter of a couple of days in this House to table and debate amendments to the Bill. The Bill itself is not just a few clauses, but 115 pages long, with a long explanatory text. This House has a duty of care to the people of our country to make sure that we scrutinise and amend legislation and to hold the Government to account as appropriate. It is simply not possible to do that under the current programme motion, yet there is no chance even to debate the issue of what an appropriate amount of time for the programme motion would be; we will simply have a vote on it. Can you therefore give the House some advice about an appropriate amount of time to take on this Bill and, perhaps more importantly, your reflections on the importance of the duty of care this House holds to the British people to make sure that the legislation we will have to live under is scrutinised properly?

**Mr Speaker:** Everybody who has a responsibility to make a judgment, which means to vote on this matter, has an equal responsibility to study the legislation as carefully as possible before either speaking or voting. I recognise the very real constraint that now applies to Members trying to discharge that obligation, but doing anything about that is not within the gift of the Chair. What I would say to the right hon. Lady and others is that the House has ownership of this matter in the sense that the House is ultimately the determinant of the allocation of time, and the House will have to make its own judgment about that. However, I do not treat what the right hon. Lady has said lightly. If she talks to others and they feel like-minded, they must make their own representations or reach their own judgment about how to proceed. We will have to leave it there, I am afraid, for now.



## European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill

### *Second Reading*

**Mr Speaker:** I inform the House that I have now considered advice on the certifiability of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill under Standing Order No. 83J, with which I am sure colleagues are all closely familiar—Certification of bills etc. as relating exclusively to England or England and Wales and being within devolved legislative competence—and I have concluded that the Bill does not meet the criteria for certification.

I inform the House that I have not selected either of the reasoned amendments.

1.24 pm

**The Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):** I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

We come together now, in the very best traditions of this House, to scrutinise this Bill and then take the decision that this country expects: to make the verdict of the British people the law of the land so that we can leave the European Union with our new deal on 31 October.

I of course wish that this decision on our national future had been taken through a meaningful vote on Saturday, but I respect perfectly the motives of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset (Sir Oliver Letwin), although I disagree with the effects of his amendment.

I regret, too, that after Saturday's vote the Government have been forced to act on the advice of the Cabinet Secretary and to take the only responsible course, which is to accelerate our preparations for a no-deal outcome.

Today, we have the opportunity to put all that right, because if this House backs this Bill and if we ratify this new deal, which I believe is profoundly in the interests of our whole United Kingdom and of our European friends, we can get Brexit done and move our country on—and we can de-escalate those no-deal preparations immediately and turn them off next week, and instead concentrate on the great enterprise of building a new relationship of the closest co-operation and friendship, as I said on Saturday, with our European neighbours and on addressing our people's priorities at home.

**Frank Field (Birkenhead) (Ind):** A number of people, before they vote today, will be very concerned about various rights that are enshrined in Europe but might be vulnerable if, and hopefully when, we leave. One of those sets of rights is rights for working people. Will the Prime Minister give an undertaking, so that we have it on the record—the Bill is quite clear—that if the Government agree with enhanced rights for working people that will become the law of the land here, but that if the Government disagree with a single one or a number of enhanced rights he will bring those proposals before the House and we will have the chance to vote to instruct the Government to accept them?

**The Prime Minister:** I can of course give the right hon. Gentleman the assurance that not only will this country maintain the highest standards both for environmental protection and of course for workers' rights,

but in the event that this House wishes to have higher standards than those proposed by the EU or if this House wishes to adopt standards proposed by the EU and the Government disagree, there will of course be an amendable motion to give this House the opportunity to have its say. We will ensure that that is the case.

If we pass this Bill tonight, we will have the opportunity to address not just the priorities of our relations with the EU but people's priorities at home. I believe that if we do this deal—if we pass this deal and the legislation that enables it—we can turn the page and allow this Parliament and this country to begin to heal and unite.

For those, like me, who believe our interests are best served by leaving the European Union and taking back control, this deal delivers the biggest restoration of sovereignty in our parliamentary history and the biggest devolution of power to UK democratic institutions.

**Catherine McKinnell (Newcastle upon Tyne North) (Lab):** I absolutely recognise that people who voted for Brexit did not necessarily vote on economic lines. However, the Government are refusing to publish an impact assessment of this deal. The Prime Minister is expecting MPs to vote for something that we know will damage this country economically, without revealing the impact assessment. What do this Government have to hide?

**The Prime Minister:** If I may, I say to the hon. Lady that I understand the point she makes, but she has had an answer, I believe, from my right hon. Friend the Chancellor yesterday. I think it will be clear to everybody that the best way to avoid any disruption from a no-deal Brexit is to vote for this deal today—to vote for this deal to get it done. I think that will unleash a great tide of investment into this country and be a demonstration of confidence in the UK economy. By voting for this deal tonight, we will deliver a powerful, positive shot in the arm for the UK economy, and I hope very much that she will do so.

Once more, under this agreement, British people will be able to live under laws made by representatives whom they alone elect and can remove—laws enforced by British judges in British courts.

**Mr Dominic Grieve (Beaconsfield) (Ind):** The Prime Minister must recognise that the arrangements that he has come to for Northern Ireland precisely do not deliver that for the people of Northern Ireland. Of course, opinion may be divided in Northern Ireland on whether they want that or not, but the reality is that the vassalage clauses—as they have been described by the Leader of the House in the past—will continue to apply to Northern Ireland after the transition has ended for the rest of Great Britain. How does the Prime Minister square that with the recovery of sovereignty promised to the entirety of the British people?

**The Prime Minister:** We can square that very simply by pointing out that, yes, of course, there are transitory arrangements for some aspects of the Northern Ireland economy, but they automatically dissolve and are terminated after four years unless it is the majority decision of the Assembly of Northern Ireland to remain in alignment with those arrangements either in whole or in part. The principle of consent is therefore at the heart of the arrangements.



Under the Bill, British farmers will escape the frequently perverse effects of the common agricultural policy; British fishermen, liberated from arcane quotas, will be free to fish in a way that is both more sensible and sustainable; and this House will be free to legislate for the highest possible standards.

**Lady Hermon** (North Down) (Ind): The Prime Minister will be well aware that four pages in the Bill address and enlarge the responsibilities of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. That is all very well and good, but there is not a single sentence in the Bill that explains the new consent process contained in the Prime Minister's Brexit deal. I say clearly to the Prime Minister: do not take the people of Northern Ireland for fools. We are not fools. He needs to explain in detail how his new consent process will operate—in detail, please.

**The Prime Minister:** The process for consent is of course set out in detail in the unilateral declaration made between us and the Republic of Ireland. The hon. Lady will understand that it is, as I have indicated to the House, a process by which there are a small minority of economic arrangements in which Northern Ireland remains in alignment, such as sanitary and phytosanitary and manufactured goods, for four years, unless and until by a majority vote of the Stormont Assembly Northern Ireland elects to remain in alignment. Otherwise, for the vast majority of the Northern Ireland economy, Northern Ireland exits with the rest of the UK whole and entire, able to do free trade deals from the outset and participate in all the other benefits of Brexit. I hope that that point commends itself to the hon. Lady.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood** (Bournemouth East) (Con): I congratulate the Prime Minister on getting us to this critical point in the long Brexit journey. Clause 36 relates to parliamentary sovereignty, and I invite him to confirm that the UK will retain its own sovereign military capability as outlined in paragraphs 92 and 99 of the political declaration and not be committed to any EU mission, military initiative or procurement project unless we do so voluntarily.

**The Prime Minister:** My right hon. Friend alludes to an important change that we have been able to secure in the course of the negotiations, and he is right that full independence will be retained in the vital sphere of defence and security. I am grateful to him for drawing attention to it.

The House will be free not only from the common agricultural policy but from the common fisheries policy, and free to legislate for the highest standards. That is a crucial point for the House to grasp.

**Mr Owen Paterson** (North Shropshire) (Con): Will the Prime Minister give the House a categorical assurance that we will not make the mistake of the 1970s and use our marine resources and fish stocks as a bargaining chip to be traded during the upcoming negotiations? Will he guarantee that we will take total, 100% control of all our waters and resources within the exclusive economic zone and, like any other independent marine nation, will then annually engage in common-sense negotiations of a reciprocal nature with our marine neighbours?

**The Prime Minister:** I can happily give that assurance to my right hon. Friend, who has campaigned long and valiantly on those issues. I can confirm that we will take back 100% control of the spectacular marine wealth of this country, not least the marine wealth of Scotland, which the SNP would discard as senselessly as the superfluous catch dictated by the common fisheries policy.

The House will be free to legislate for the highest possible standards. Let me stress that nothing in the Bill undermines workers' rights or the House's natural desire to protect our environment. On the contrary—

**Tracy Brabin** (Batley and Spen) (Lab/Co-op): I know that the Prime Minister has been doing a good job trying to reassure MPs such as me from towns that voted leave, but can he explain the loopholes on workers' rights in the document that would not give us the security we would need on non-regression for manufacturing communities that need those workers' rights?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Lady raises an important point. People will need reassurance about that. There can be no regression. The UK will maintain the highest possible standards. Let me make the point more clearly. If the EU decides that it wishes to introduce new legislation on social protection, it will be automatic that the House will consider that. As I say, there will be an amendable motion by which the Government will give parliamentary time for the implementation of that measure. That is the opportunity that the Bill gives us. In essence, it takes back to the House the powers to decide such matters. I do not believe that we should shy away from those responsibilities or lack confidence in our collective ability to use those powers for the public good.

It is thanks to the efforts of Labour and Conservative Members that the House is already ensuring that this country does more to tackle climate change than almost any other country in the EU. Our Environment Bill will enshrine the highest standards possible.

**Melanie Onn** (Great Grimsby) (Lab): I am sorry to say that there is a difficulty and a fundamental issue of trust in the Prime Minister's word. If he tells the House that he is committing to reviews of matters such as unfair dismissal protections, including reducing the qualifying period from two years to one year, and anomalies in employee terms and conditions in relation to TUPE regulations, will the Government write into the Bill the date by which BEIS will begin the consultations on those really important rights?

**The Prime Minister:** We have already said that we will set out how we propose to address the concerns of hon. Members on unfair dismissals and TUPE. I understand the hon. Lady's desire to get cracking—my right hon. Friend the Business Secretary will write to Members with more details—but I can certainly commit to her now across the Floor of the House that we will indeed commit to a date for the implementation of those measures.

Our Environment Bill enshrines the highest standards in law: far-reaching and legally binding targets to reduce plastics, restore biodiversity, and clean up our air and water.

**Mr Pat McFadden** (Wolverhampton South East) (Lab): Does the Prime Minister agree with himself when he said:

“We should go into those renegotiations with a clear agenda: to root out the nonsense of the social chapter—the working time directive and the atypical work directive and other job-destroying regulations.”?

If that is what he said then, why should we believe a word he says on this now?

**The Prime Minister:** Because it is absolutely clear on the face of the Bill and from what I have said that this country will maintain the highest possible standards and will give this House the collective ability to keep pace with Brussels and, indeed, to do better.

As I say, we have the highest possible environmental standards. We will match the environmental standards that Brussels brings forward. Indeed, we now have the opportunity to do better. I have stressed for four years—*[Interruption.]* No, that is not true. It is said from a sedentary position that we have always had the opportunity to do better. I am afraid that that is mistaken. There are plenty of ways in which we are currently prohibited from going forward with higher standards. Under the Bill, we will have the power in this House to do something for which I think the people of this country have yearned for years, which is to strengthen controls on the live transport of animals. I hope we will do that now. That is currently forbidden under EU law.

On fiscal measures, we will now have the power to cut VAT on sanitary products. As for the protection of workers, we will now be able, under the Bill, to take action against employers and agencies who undercut our laws, including where agencies bring in overseas labour from the EU so that local people do not get a look in. That is currently impossible within the EU.

Clause 34 and the accompanying provisions in schedule 5 include a duty on any Minister—to get to the point that has been raised—who introduces relevant legislation to make it clear that workers’ rights will not be weakened in any way. Whether it is tackling air pollution or enhancing biodiversity, this country can do better than simply sticking with EU norms. We can achieve our vision of a dynamic, high-wage, low-tax market economy precisely because we champion high skills and high standards.

**Kate Hoey** (Vauxhall) (Lab): Like the Prime Minister, I would like to get out of the European Union as speedily as possible. What more can he do to reassure the people of Northern Ireland, who feel they are being cut off? They could perhaps have accepted some regulations on trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland because that happens at the moment, but they have been absolutely astonished to find that trading between Northern Ireland and Great Britain is somehow now treated as if they are sending something to a foreign country. That is not acceptable.

**The Prime Minister:** I am very grateful to the hon. Lady. It is very, very important that we stress—I must make myself absolutely clear—that Northern Ireland is leaving the EU with the rest of the UK, whole and entire. We have achieved with this deal what I think few people thought was possible: Northern Ireland is leaving the EU as part of a single customs territory with the rest of the UK. On her specific point, there will be no checks between NI and GB, nor would she expect there to be. It is made absolutely clear in article 6 of the protocol.

It is up to the UK Government to insist on unfettered access for trade NI-GB. I give way with pleasure and with respect to the right hon. Member for Belfast North (Nigel Dodds).

**Nigel Dodds** (Belfast North) (DUP): I am very grateful to the Prime Minister. It is quite clear that whatever he says about Northern Ireland in the UK customs union, de facto the European Union customs code applies in Northern Ireland, if the protocol comes into place, which requires exit declarations from Northern Ireland to Great Britain.

**The Prime Minister** *indicated dissent.*

**Nigel Dodds:** Yes, it does. The Brexit Secretary said yesterday they would have to be corrected by HMRC. Is the Prime Minister saying that at the end of December 2020 Northern Ireland will not go into the protocol if there is a free trade agreement, and that if we are in the protocol and a free trade agreement is agreed we will automatically come out of it, and that that will be written into law?

**The Prime Minister:** For the clarification of the right hon. Gentleman—I know he realises this already—there are no checks GB-NI. There will be some light—touch measures to ensure there is no illegal trade—*[Laughter]*—in endangered animal species and banned firearms, which I think he would agree was sensible. The most important point is that even these measures evaporate and are terminated automatically. They automatically dissolve unless a majority of the Northern Ireland Assembly in Stormont votes to keep them.

Furthermore, to get to the right hon. Gentleman’s point, there is a further sense in which these measures are transitory. They all may be replaced in the great work of beginning the free trade agreement and the new partnership that we intend to build between the UK and the EU—a work in which I devoutly hope Northern Irish Members will be involved in building a whole UK-whole world free trade policy. That is the prize before us. The UK, and the UK alone, will control these vital standards as we leave.

For those who share my belief in the transformative power of free trade, perhaps the single greatest engine of global prosperity, a new deal, enabled by this Bill, will allow us to sign free trade agreements around the world.

**Angela Smith** (Penistone and Stocksbridge) (LD): Schedule 5A to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 lists workers’ retained European Union rights. The directive on work-life balance for parents and carers is omitted from the schedule, along with many others in the same vein. How can those omissions be consistent with the Prime Minister’s commitment to the highest possible standards for workers’ rights?

**The Prime Minister:** We have been very clear that we will maintain the highest possible standards, but I am very happy to study what the hon. Lady says and can assure her that whatever the House believes has been omitted can easily be replaced.

**Caroline Flint** (Don Valley) (Lab): I think we agree across the House that there is a climate emergency and that the UK must be a leader, not a follower, when it

comes to low-carbon living. I welcome the pledge that the Environment Bill will enhance and not reduce the UK's standards, but will the Prime Minister commit today to reinforce that ambition with a clear non-regression clause, as we have on workers' rights, and write it into the Bill. Would that not provide some of the reassurance the House needs about not only protecting but enhancing environmental standards?

**The Prime Minister:** I can indeed make that commitment, and I thank the right hon. Lady for the work she is doing to champion the environment. I remind her and the House that our Environment Bill will set up, for the first time, legally binding targets and an office for environmental protection to enforce those targets in this country. The crucial thing that will reassure her is that in the event of the EU bringing forward new legislation, we in this Government will bring forward an amendable motion so that the House may choose to match those standards.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I must make some progress. This new deal will allow us to sign free trade agreements around the world, encouraging innovation, lowering prices, maximising opportunities for world-beating British companies to find new markets and bringing good new jobs to communities who, for too long, have been left behind. Let me repeat: in any future trade negotiations with our country, our national health service will never be on the table.

I wish to say something not just to those who think that Brexit is a great opportunity, as I of course do, but to the 16 million who voted to remain.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I identify one in my hon. Friend the Member for Thirsk and Malton (Kevin Hollinrake).

**Kevin Hollinrake** (Thirsk and Malton) (Con): On workers' rights, the EU requires employers to offer 14 weeks of maternity pay. In the UK, we offer 39 weeks of maternity pay. If we wanted to reduce workers' rights, why would this Government not have done that already?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend makes exactly the right point: this Government wish to have the highest possible standards for workers across the country because we believe that that is the right way forward for the British economy. I am glad he made that point.

I wish to address the 48%, whose concerns must always be in our minds. The revised political declaration sets out a vision of the closest possible co-operation between the UK and our European friends—a

“relationship...rooted in the values and interests that the”

European

“Union and the United Kingdom share...anchored in their common European heritage.”

To British citizens living in EU countries and to EU citizens who have made their homes here and who have contributed so much, I say that this Bill protects their rights, ensuring that they can carry on living their lives as before.

**Angus Brendan MacNeil** (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): The Prime Minister and some of his Ministers say they are against live animal exports. Does that mean from Dover to Calais, or longer journeys from GB—for example, Stranraer—to Northern Ireland, or longer journeys still, such as to the Hebrides, the Orkneys and the Shetlands? When he says he is ending live animal exports, what does he mean? We need details. Are they short journeys to the continent only or longer journeys, including to Northern Ireland?

**The Prime Minister:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman—he rather makes my point for me, because what he may not realise is that animals are currently being shipped from this country to Spain and, indeed, to north Africa in conditions of extreme distress. I do not believe that it is the will of this House, or indeed, of the hon. Gentleman, that we should continue on that basis.

I say to those who care, like me, for the rights of EU nationals living in this country: I argued during the referendum that we should guarantee their rights in this country immediately and unilaterally, and I regret that this did not happen, but the Bill today completes that job.

**Mr Iain Duncan Smith** (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con): My right hon. Friend is being characteristically generous in giving way. So that we are absolutely clear, going back to the Northern Ireland issue, I ask him again: is it his and the Government's intention—as I understand and still understand it to be—that in the phase in which we negotiate a free trade agreement, we would negotiate it on the basis that Northern Ireland would form a whole and singular part of that agreement and therefore be treated exactly the same as Kent?

**The Prime Minister:** I can give exactly that assurance. That is exactly what this Bill does and what this agreement has secured.

**Rosie Cooper** (West Lancashire) (Lab): Prime Minister, my constituents voted to leave, by 55% to 45%, but they want to ensure and believe—and it is a question of trust—that there will be certainty and decent rights for all workers as we leave the EU, and in the future. I welcome the announcement of an employment reform Bill, but given that he had his pen out in answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Batley and Spen (Tracy Brabin), will he set the date and tell us when he is going to put it in this Bill so that we know when it will happen?

**The Prime Minister:** I can confirm that we will be doing that, but it is probably best done in the course of the Bill, and we should get on with the debate as fast as possible.

Let me come to our compatriots in Northern Ireland. This Bill upholds in full the Belfast/Good Friday agreement, as Lord Trimble has attested, and our unwavering commitment to Northern Ireland's place in the Union.

**Sammy Wilson** (East Antrim) (DUP): Prime Minister, the central plank of the mechanisms for ensuring that both communities are protected in the Belfast agreement—I state this from the agreement—is

“to ensure that all sections of the community can participate and work together...and that all sections...are protected”



[Sammy Wilson]

and

“arrangements to ensure key decisions are taken on a cross-community basis”.

How does that square with the terms of this agreement under which, as the Prime Minister has stated in this House, decisions will be made on a majority basis?

**The Prime Minister:** I am very grateful to the right hon. Gentleman. I thank him and his party for the work they have done to help us to change this deal very, very much for the better, and he played an instrumental role in that.

On the point that the right hon. Gentleman raises, he knows that this is a reserved issue, and I simply return to my point: the salient feature of these arrangements is that they evaporate. They disintegrate. They vanish, unless a majority of the Northern Ireland Assembly elects to keep them. I think that it is up to Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly to assemble that majority if they so choose. Further, there is an opportunity to vary those arrangements in the course of the free trade agreement and the new partnership that I hope he will join us in building together.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** This new deal explicitly respects the territorial integrity of the UK. It takes the United Kingdom, whole and entire, out of the EU, and, of course, there is a set of special provisions applying to Northern Ireland—

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. I apologise for interrupting the Prime Minister, but a lot of Members are bellowing in a rather bellicose fashion at him, although he has already made it clear that at the moment, he is not giving way. He has taken a lot of interventions and he may take more, but he is proceeding with the development of his case.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, I give way to the hon. Member for Belfast East (Gavin Robinson).

**Gavin Robinson** (Belfast East) (DUP): I am very grateful to the Prime Minister for giving way. I have heard clearly not only what he has tried to do this afternoon to assure the House, but his answer to the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith). How can the Prime Minister square the pledge he has given—that Northern Ireland can fully benefit from free trade agreements—with the provisions in the agreement he reached at article 13(8) that require the EU to have a say in whether we secede from the protocol arrangements?

**The Prime Minister:** There is absolutely no provision for the EU to have a say. As the hon. Gentleman knows, there are special provisions in the agreement that apply to Northern Ireland in respect of trade in goods, sanitary and phytosanitary measures and the single electricity market. The benefit of that temporary four-year alignment is that it allows us to avoid a hard border in Northern Ireland—that is its great benefit—and to respect the Good Friday process, but those arrangements are automatically terminated after—

**Sammy Wilson** (East Antrim) (DUP): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Speaker:** I gently say to the right hon. Gentleman, who has already had an opportunity to question the Prime Minister, that I hope it is a point of order rather than a point of frustration.

**Sammy Wilson:** The Prime Minister has claimed to the House today that the agreement does not rule out the interpretation that he has given to the House, but paragraph 8 of article 13 states quite clearly that any “subsequent agreement between the Union and the United Kingdom shall indicate the parts of this Protocol which it supersedes” and that the EU will have a say in that. How then can he claim to the House that we have total freedom of decision making?

**Mr Speaker:** The right hon. Gentleman is an experienced denizen of the House. His point of order is a matter of consuming interest within the Chamber and beyond, but he is a cheeky chappie, because it is not a matter for adjudication by the Chair. He has made a point, in his own way and with considerable alacrity, to which the Prime Minister can respond if he wishes and not if he does not.

**The Prime Minister:** I will respond by just repeating the point that those arrangements are automatically terminated after four years unless a majority in the Northern Ireland Assembly expressly decides to retain any or all of them, so those arrangements naturally and legally dissolve into full alignment with the whole UK. The default position is alignment with the UK unless, as I say, there is a majority vote in the Assembly against that alignment. In any event, those arrangements can be replaced by the future relationship based on the free trade agreement that we will conclude with the EU.

At the same time, the agreement ensures that Northern Ireland is part of the UK customs territory and benefits immediately from any UK trade deals. Clause 21 gives effect to those measures in the protocol. Apart from those special provisions, there are no level playing field provisions covering only Northern Ireland. Nothing in the new deal requires different treatment of Northern Irish services, which account for over 70% of the economy, and nothing in the revised political declaration would oblige Northern Ireland to be treated differently in the future relationship with the EU, which we will soon begin to negotiate.

**Owen Smith** (Pontypridd) (Lab): I cannot believe for a minute that the Prime Minister is seeking in any way to deceive the House, but he has said repeatedly today that there will be no differences between the way Northern Ireland is treated and the way Kent or anywhere else in the rest of the UK is treated. Why, then, does the impact assessment produced by his own Government, slipped out late last night, make it quite explicit, in paragraph 241, that goods

“moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland will be required to complete both import declarations and Entry Summary (ENS) Declarations”,

which

“will result in additional...costs”

in Northern Ireland? How can the Prime Minister square that fact with the bluster and rhetoric he is serving up today?

**The Prime Minister:** The House will know full well that these are transitory arrangements. If the people of Northern Ireland choose to dissent from them, they melt away, unless by a majority they choose to retain them. I repeat: there will be no checks between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Nothing in the revised political declaration obliges Northern Ireland to be treated any differently in the future relationship, and I would expect Northern Ireland Members to be involved intimately in devising a whole-UK whole-world trade policy—and, indeed, the whole House.

**Mr Steve Baker** (Wycombe) (Con): Is not the fundamental point that, to deliver the UK whole, secure and prosperous out of the EU, Members of this House need to vote for Second Reading and, yes, vote for the programme motion so that it can all be done on time, and then stand firm behind the Prime Minister and his negotiating team, so that he has the power to deliver just the relationship that is being urged upon him to put before the House in due course?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend has given excellent advice to the House, and I thank him very much for his support. I wish to stress that the whole House will be involved in devising that future partnership.

**Jim Fitzpatrick** (Poplar and Limehouse) (Lab): I am grateful to the Prime Minister for his reassurance that workers' rights—avoiding a race to the bottom, no regression, and so on—will be written into the Bill, because it is a huge issue for many Opposition Members and needs to be recognised by many Government Members. Can he give the same reassurance that consumer protection will also be written into the Bill?

**The Prime Minister:** I can indeed give the hon. Gentleman that assurance. *[Interruption.]* There will be no race to the bottom. For right hon. and hon. Members who wish to be involved in the building of our future partnership, there will be every opportunity at every stage for the House to be involved, and quite properly so. *[Interruption.]*

**Mr Speaker:** Order. There is so much noise in the Chamber that I fear that the hon. Member for North Dorset (Simon Hoare), who enjoys the exalted status as Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, cannot draw attention to the fact that he wishes to intervene in the debate, which is regrettable for the hon. Gentleman.

**The Prime Minister:** I am delighted to repeat our unequivocal commitment to consumer standards and protections.

**Simon Hoare** (North Dorset) (Con): Will the Prime Minister give way?

**The Prime Minister:** I know that that will be welcomed by my hon. Friend.

**Simon Hoare:** Thank you for your good offices, Mr Speaker.

Trying to square the difficult circle of delivering Brexit under the umbrella of the Good Friday agreement and maintaining peace on the island of Ireland was always going to be a big ask. Not everybody will be happy with what the Prime Minister's is bringing forward, but all communities should be happy that nobody is talking about a coach and horses being driven through the Good Friday agreement and that there are no communities, particularly on the border, that now fear a resurrection of violence, bloodshed and hatred. He is to be congratulated.

**The Prime Minister:** I am very grateful to the Chairman of the Select Committee for his remarks. I intend to bring the whole House into the process of decision making and into our confidence and to draw on the expertise of the House.

**Caroline Lucas** (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green) *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** That will be the case not least in environmental matters, on which I know the hon. Lady speaks with great authority.

**Caroline Lucas:** The Prime Minister has been giving so many reassurances to Labour Members that I wonder whether he could give one to me about the trapdoor at the heart of this Brexit deal. We know that if no arrangement is agreed by the end of December next year, we risk crashing out with no deal. Can he reassure me that he will extend that transition and guarantee now at the Dispatch Box that we will not crash out at the end of December next year?

**The Prime Minister:** I can indeed assure the hon. Lady that there will be no crashing out, because we will negotiate a great new friendship and partnership within the timescale. I know that hon. Members on both sides of the House have every confidence in the Government to do that. They said we could not change the withdrawal agreement in the 90 days we had, that we would never get rid of the backstop and that we would not get a new deal, but we did get a new deal—we got a great deal—for this House and this country, and we will get a great new free trade agreement and a new partnership for our country.

Before us lies the great project of building a new friendship with our closest neighbours across the channel. That is the common endeavour of our whole nation, and that will begin with clause 31, which will give Parliament a clear role, including the hon. Lady.

**Liz Kendall** (Leicester West) (Lab): Is it not the case that to secure a deal with the EU, the Prime Minister had to make a choice over Northern Ireland? The choice that he made was to sign up to EU trading rules to secure frictionless trade with Ireland and the rest of the EU. Is not the truth that at the end of all the negotiations that the rest of the UK will face, we will be confronted with exactly the same dilemma? Either we remain close and sign up to the rules, in which case we give up our say—so what is the point of Brexit?—or we break totally free, in which case what is the price?

We have not made that choice. The Prime Minister has made it over Northern Ireland, and we face it over the rest of the UK. This is not getting Brexit done; it is continuing the agony for years to come.

**The Prime Minister:** Obviously I have a vision of this country having a very close friendship and partnership with the EU, but also being able to engage in free trade deals around the world. I think that those objectives are compatible, and I think that the way in which they can be made compatible is evident in this great new deal that we have done, but it is of course open to the hon. Lady to work with us to take it forward.

**Joseph Johnson** (Orpington) (Con) *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I give way with pleasure to the right hon. Member for Orpington. [*Laughter.*]

**Joseph Johnson:** I congratulate the Prime Minister on securing a deal. I never doubted it for a minute. [*Laughter.*] Can he reassure me that the moment the Bill receives Royal Assent—hopefully sooner rather than later—he will work tirelessly, along with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, to secure the closest possible relationship with European science and research funding programmes?

**The Prime Minister:** I thank my right hon. Friend and brother very much for what he has said. He has worked tirelessly in that sphere himself. I know how much he values such co-operation, as, indeed, I know how much Members throughout the House value it. We will protect, preserve and enhance it, and, as I have said, Members throughout the House will be involved in that process, but, as I have also said, under clause 31 Parliament is given a clear role.

**Charlie Elphicke** (Dover) (Ind): I thank the Prime Minister for giving way; he is being incredibly generous. He will no doubt have heard, as I have, the dire warnings in certain quarters that if we leave the European Union, there will be problems at Dover and chaos on the roads of Kent. Can he assure the House, and me, and my constituents, that with this deal there will be no problems at the channel ports and no problems on Kent's roads?

**The Prime Minister:** I can indeed give that assurance, and the best way to avoid any problems whatever is to vote for this deal tonight.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** By your leave, Mr Speaker, I shall make some progress.

Let us pause for a second and reflect on the scale of the choices before us. If we rejected this new deal, what would the House be saying to the country and to the world? What alternative course of action is open to us? Is it to undo Brexit and cancel the greatest democratic exercise in the country's history? Even now, I find it impossible to believe that any democrat would contemplate such a course. Time and again, the House has promised to honour the referendum, and the fact that the Leader of the Opposition is now proposing a rerun shows a regrettable contempt for the verdict of the British people. The House has repeatedly rejected a second referendum, and, in my view, must emphatically do so again.

**Eddie Hughes** (Walsall North) (Con): Does the Prime Minister agree that a referendum took place and a decision was made by the British people? It is up to

Parliament to accept that decision and work with it. Those are not my words, but the words of the Leader of the Opposition.

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend has encapsulated the point perfectly, and I think that the Leader of the Opposition should reflect on what he has said.

**Stephen Hammond** (Wimbledon) (Ind): I worked closely with my right hon. Friend when he was Mayor of London, and I know how much he valued the contribution of EU citizens. I have the great good fortune to represent a constituency that contains one of the highest proportions of EU citizens. May I ask my right hon. Friend to look again at the arbitrary deadline for applications for settled status?

**The Prime Minister:** I am delighted to say that the settled status scheme is proceeding apace, and we have every hope that the entire 3.4 million will have registered by the time of the deadline. However, the best way to give all our citizens confidence and security, and to give all our friends confidence and security—particularly those 3.4 million—is to get this deal through tonight, because that is how we will protect their rights.

I know that some colleagues have been contemplating certain amendments that are not about delivering the new deal, but rather about trying to change its fundamentals. What would that say to our European friends about our good intentions? That we are proposing to come back to Brussels to ask for a third agreement? That we will put it to a fifth vote, perhaps after another six months or another year? Is there anyone who seriously believes that the EU would reopen the withdrawal agreement again? On the contrary, our European friends could not be clearer. The deal on the table is the one contained in the Bill. The decision for the House is whether to ratify this deal, rather than going round in circles in a futile effort to construct a new one.

Then there is the question of yet further delay. I know that some colleagues have been contemplating the timetable for the Bill and asking whether scrutiny should take longer. I do not think that we in this House should be daunted by the task that is before us. Let us work night and day, if that is what it takes to get this done. Our European friends are not showing any enthusiasm about agreeing to the delay for which Parliament has asked.

**Vicky Ford** (Chelmsford) (Con): I congratulate our Prime Minister on achieving this deal. I had always thought that it would be enormously challenging to get all the other 27 leaders to agree to change the existing deal. However, this deal needs to be voted through not only by us but by the European Parliament, and it needs to be ratified across Europe. Does the Prime Minister agree that if we do not support the programme motion tonight, we will add great, great uncertainty and will push up the risk of no deal?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend is completely right. Those who have argued for three years that they are motivated primarily by a desire to avoid no deal have only one logical course of action tonight, and that is to vote for a programme motion that will ensure that we leave with a deal on 31 October. Doing anything else would, I am afraid, mean this House abdicating its



responsibilities and handing over to the European Council the decision on what happens next: whether the EU will offer a short delay, a long delay, or no delay. The decision will be down to the EU.

The public do not want further delay. The House has discussed these issues for three and a half years. What on earth will the public think of us if the House votes again tonight not to get on with it—not to deliver Brexit on 31 October, but to hand over control of what happens next to the EU, closing the path to leaving with a deal on 31 October and opening the path to no deal in nine days' time? Members claim that they want more weeks or months, or perhaps even years, in which to debate this matter, but the public will not be deceived about the real purpose of such delay. When we are so nearly at the end of this process, are Members really going to tell their constituents that at the last hurdle they chose to hand the decision to Brussels?

Even if the European Council were to agree with Parliament on a further delay, what would happen in the period after 31 October? As my hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford (Vicky Ford) rightly said, there would be yet more of the uncertainty that is holding our country back. I invite Members to picture the businesses in our constituencies freezing their investments, the jobs that will never be created, the contracts that British firms will neither bid for nor win and the exports that will never leave our shores.

**Michael Fabricant** (Lichfield) (Con): My right hon. Friend will know that the Mayor of the West Midlands is in very close contact with manufacturers in the area, including Jaguar Land Rover. They are saying that the most damaging thing to manufacturing and industry as a whole is the uncertainty due to delay. They—not just me, not just the Mayor, but manufacturers—want the deal done and the deal done now.

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend is right, and the consequence of not getting this done and not voting through this deal tonight is to continue with the creeping paralysis that is affecting certain parts of our economy.

**Gareth Snell** (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Lab/Co-op) *rose—*

**The Prime Minister:** Perhaps even worse—*[Interruption.]* Perhaps even worse, if we do not get this thing done we face the continuing acrimony and the abuse that I am afraid is still heard—perhaps increasingly heard—on both sides of the argument.

**Gareth Snell** *rose—*

**The Prime Minister:** The divisions will continue. *[Interruption.]* I give way to the hon. Gentleman.

**Gareth Snell:** May I start by thanking the right hon. Member for Broxtowe (Anna Soubry) and the hon. Members for Nottingham East (Mr Leslie) and for Ilford South (Mike Gapes) for helping getting me noticed? I must have been hard to spot.

May I bring the Prime Minister's attention to clause 31, which is basically the amendment that my hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Lisa Nandy) and I tabled to the last meaningful vote? However, whether by accident or

by sneak, the Prime Minister has managed to add a small addendum, which means that any future vote would have to comply almost exclusively with the political declaration, meaning that this House would be constrained in what it could set as the future negotiating mandate. Can the Prime Minister explain why that has appeared? Also, on the purpose of scrutiny, this Bill specifically disapplies section 20 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 which requires a 21-day resting period for all international treaties; why has the Prime Minister decided to do that on this, and is that something he plans to do on any future trade arrangements?

**The Prime Minister:** On the hon. Gentleman's point about clause 31, the intention is very clear: the intention is to allow the House to participate actively and fully in the building of the future partnership. If he reads the political declaration, he will see that there is plenty of scope within that political declaration for very active and full participation by all Members of the House in devising that partnership.

On the hon. Gentleman's second point about the deadline in the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act, there is in my view ample time for us to get this done. The House of Commons has been discussing this issue for three and a half years. We have chewed over this question again and again; our constituents will not be fooled by any further delay—they will not understand why that is necessary—and if we delay again, I am afraid that we will miss an opportunity to heal the divisions between us, and the paralysis will continue. Let me make it absolutely clear: there is no way—

**Several hon. Members** *rose—*

**The Prime Minister:** No, I won't give way.

**David Linden** (Glasgow East) (SNP): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Speaker:** I hope it is a genuine point of order; I hae ma doots.

**David Linden:** It is indeed a genuine point of order concerning the programme motion. The BBC breaking news app is reporting that the Prime Minister has said that if he loses the programme motion he will withdraw the Bill. Given that the Prime Minister is talking about working with the House, has he given you any notice, Mr Speaker, that if the programme motion falls he will pull the Bill tonight?

**Mr Speaker:** The Prime Minister has not given me any indication on that matter, and we must leave him to develop his case.

**The Prime Minister:** Let me be very clear, to come to exactly the point the hon. Gentleman raises, that I will in no way allow months more of this. *[Interruption.]* No, I will not give way. If Parliament refuses to allow Brexit to happen and instead gets its way and decides to delay everything until January, or possibly longer, in no circumstances can the Government continue with this. And with great regret I must go directly to the point that the hon. Gentleman raises: with great regret I must say that the Bill will have to be pulled, and we will have to go forward, much as the right hon. Gentleman the

[The Prime Minister]

Leader of the Opposition may not like it, to a general election. I will argue at that election—[*Interruption.*] No, I will not give way. At that election I will argue “Let’s get Brexit done,” and the Leader of the Opposition will make his case to spend 2020 having two referendums—one on Brexit and one on Scotland—and the people will decide.

There is another path. [*Interruption.*] No, I won’t give way. And that is to accept, as I have done, that this deal does not give us everything that we want, and all of us can find clauses and provisions to which we can object, as we can in any compromise, but it also gives us the opportunity to conclude that there is no dishonour in setting aside an entirely legitimate desire to deliver the perfect deal in the interests of seizing the great deal that is now within our grasp—of seizing the opportunity to begin healing the divisions, and to satisfy the aching desire of the British public that we would just get Brexit done and to move on to do what those who sent us here want us to do, which is to address their priorities.

**Karl Turner** (Kingston upon Hull East) (Lab): Will the Prime Minister give way?

**The Prime Minister:** No.

For three and a half years this Parliament has been caught in a deadlock of its own making—

**Karl Turner** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** Sit down.

**Karl Turner** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** Sit down.

**Karl Turner:** Will the Prime Minister give way?

**Mr Speaker:** Order. Notwithstanding the fact that the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull East (Karl Turner) must emphatically be the loudest Member of any Parliament anywhere in the European Union, he cannot insist that the Prime Minister gives way if the Prime Minister is disinclined to do so. I think the Prime Minister may be approaching his peroration, to which we should listen.

**The Prime Minister:** I think I have given way quite a lot during this speech and I wish to wind up because I know that hon. Members will wish to make their own contributions to the debate.

For three and a half years, this Parliament has been caught in a deadlock of its own making, and the truth is that all of us bear a measure of responsibility for that outcome, yet by the same token we all have the same opportunity now. The escape route is visible. The prize is visible before us: a new beginning with our friends and partners; a new beginning for a global, self-confident, outward-looking country that can do free trade deals around the world as one whole entire United Kingdom. The deal is here on the Table. The legislation to deliver it is here before us. A clear majority in the country is now imploring us to get Brexit done in this House of Commons. I say to the House: let us therefore do it and let us do it now and tonight. I commend this Bill to the House.

2.27 pm

**Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington North) (Lab): On Saturday, we warned that, if the House passes the Government’s deal, it would be a disaster for our country. Now, as we look through the details of the Bill, we see just how right we were: page after page of what amounts to nothing less than a charter for deregulation and a race to the bottom; a deal and a Bill that fail to protect our rights and our natural world, fail to protect jobs and the economy, and fail to protect every region and nation in the United Kingdom. The Bill confirms that Northern Ireland is really in the customs union of the EU and goods will be subjected to tariffs. On Saturday, the Prime Minister said there would be no checks, but yesterday the Brexit Secretary confirmed to the Lords European Union Committee that under the Government’s proposals Northern Irish businesses that send goods to Great Britain will have to complete export declaration forms, and today the Government estimate—this is the Government’s estimate—that exit declaration forms will be between £15 and £56 per customs declaration. So the Prime Minister was at best—I am being generous here—mistaken on Saturday. The more divergence, the harder that border will become and the greater danger and risk it will put on the historic Good Friday agreement.

**James Cartlidge** (South Suffolk) (Con): Does the right hon. Gentleman think that we should still leave the European Union—yes or no?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** We are challenging this Bill today and that is the whole point of this debate. As the hon. Gentleman well knows, my party’s policy is that we would negotiate an appropriate deal with the EU and allow the people to make the final decision. This deal leaves open the possibility of the UK crashing out of the EU without a deal by the end of next year.

**Lisa Nandy** (Wigan) (Lab): I do not disagree with what my right hon. Friend said, but does he understand why those of us in seats that voted heavily to leave, and who stood on a manifesto in 2017 that said that we would respect the result of the referendum, feel very strongly that this Bill must be allowed to proceed to Committee so that we can engage in the detail and see whether it is possible to get a Brexit deal that protects our constituents? For many people back home in towns such as Wigan, this is an article of faith in the Labour party and in democracy, and those of us who are seeking to engage in the detail do so not because we will support a Tory Brexit—our votes at Third Reading are by no means secure—but because we want to see if we can improve the deal and keep people’s trust in our democracy.

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I thank my hon. Friend for that intervention, and I also thank her and other colleagues, some of whom represent seats that voted heavily to leave, for their engagement, for the discussions and for the constructive way in which all that has been approached. I do understand the concerns in those constituencies and communities. I know that she supports the principle of a customs union, which the Labour party placed in its manifesto and has restated since. My view is that we should vote against this Bill this evening for the reasons that I have set out. I understand her view that it is possible to amend it in Committee—that is always the process in Parliament—but my recommendation would be to vote against this Bill. However, I understand and

respect the way in which she has approached this and the way in which she represents her community and her constituency. She will join me in being pretty alarmed at the stress that the manufacturing industry is under at the moment. If we do not have a customs union, manufacturing in this country will be seriously under threat.

**Mr David Lammy** (Tottenham) (Lab): For many areas that rely heavily on manufacturing, the deal as it has been set out, which includes leaving the customs union and single market, inevitably means tariffs, which inevitably means less manufacturing and fewer jobs in those areas.

**Jeremy Corbyn:** My right hon. Friend's constituency, which I know very well, was once a centre of manufacturing in Britain, but the Government of Margaret Thatcher put paid to that. He is right that, in the event of tariffs being introduced on manufactured goods and in the event of WTO conditions, the opportunities for sales in the European market, which are obviously huge at present, would be severely damaged. I ask colleagues to think carefully about what I see as the dangers behind the Prime Minister's approach, because he does not offer a safety net—[*Interruption.*] There are so many people trying to intervene. Can I deal with one at a time, please? That would be kind. The Prime Minister does not offer a safety net—[*Interruption.*]

**Mr Speaker:** Order. If I may gently say to the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr Seely), it is at the very least a tad tactless, when he has just been advised that the Leader of the Opposition is dealing with one intervention first, immediately to spring to his feet. I enjoin him to remember his emotional intelligence.

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I do not think there is any process that allows an intervention on an intervention on an intervention. I think you would probably notice it, Mr Speaker.

**Gloria De Piero** (Ashfield) (Lab): I am minded to vote in favour on Second Reading not because I support the deal but because I do not; I want to improve the deal so that it reflects the manifesto that I stood on and respects the referendum result, and so that we leave with a deal that protects jobs and trade. Does my right hon. Friend understand my motivation?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I thank my hon. Friend for that intervention. Having on several occasions spent time with her in her constituency, talking to people in her community and visiting factories and enterprises in the area, I fully understand both her concerns and their concerns. I commend her for her work in representing that area and the obvious friendship that exists between her and all the people she represents—she is a great MP. She wants to represent her constituency and her constituents' concerns. I hope that she will understand why I believe this Bill should not be given a Second Reading, but I am sure she will agree with me that to bring this Bill for debate less than 17 hours after it was published is a totally unreasonable way of treating Parliament, and I hope she will join me in the Lobby this evening in opposing the programme motion.

It is no wonder that some Conservative Members are suddenly so keen to jump on board with this deal, because it opens the door to the no-deal exit that this House has voted against on numerous occasions.

**Mr Bob Seely** (Isle of Wight) (Con): Does the right hon. Gentleman understand that the reason so many Opposition and Government Members want to get the Bill through is that we want to avoid no deal? The best way of doing that is to support this deal, so why will he not support it?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I do not know what has happened to the hon. Gentleman's maths, but so far three Members have intervened who have expressed disagreement with the Bill and want to get a better deal to get a customs union, which is hardly the position he adopts, so he should be careful of assuming that all my colleagues over here, who are desperate to represent hard-up communities that have been so disgracefully treated by this Government, are suddenly jumping on board with him. I have news for him: they are not.

It is plain and simple: this Bill is a charter for a Brexit that would be good for the hedge fund managers and speculators, but bad for the communities that we represent, our industries and people's jobs and living standards. Industries from chemical processing to car manufacturing are all deeply worried about how the Bill will operate.

**Stella Creasy** (Walthamstow) (Lab/Co-op): One of the reasons so many of us are concerned about the programme motion is how little time we have to bottom this out. The Prime Minister tells us that things will be better if we leave the European Union. He just said that he would look at the European work-life balance directive, but on 2 September the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy already ruled out to me implementing it. It is a directive that would give people carers' rights and care leave that our constituents do not currently have. Does my right hon. Friend agree that one of the problems with rushing this through is not just what we will lose, but what we will miss out on because this Prime Minister will not give any commitments on them?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I thank my hon. Friend for that intervention. Of course, she is absolutely right that, while the Prime Minister claims that there is no intention in his mind to undermine workers' rights—I cannot see into his mind, so I do not know, but that is what he says—there is no legal protection within this Bill for dynamic alignment with the European Union on consumer rights, environmental protections, workers' rights and much else besides. I therefore urge colleagues to think very carefully about how they vote on the Bill tonight.

**Mr Baker:** I treasure the interview that the right hon. Gentleman and I gave to Sky News before he became Leader of the Opposition, when the only thing that we agreed on is that we should leave the European Union on democratic grounds. What has changed since he became leader of the Labour party? Can he not see that, if he votes against the programme motion, he and his whole party will be seen as voting against delivering Brexit?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** Parliament needs to do its job and that is what we should be given the chance to do; we should not be rushed into this 17 hours after the Bill's publication. I would also say—I was a trade union organiser and official before I came into this House—you do not give up what you have won and gained; you protect what you have and try to get better in the future. The Bill undermines workers' rights in our country and



[Jeremy Corbyn]

in our society, and those who vote this thing through in its present form will find that many of our current rights will be severely damaged.

**Jim McMahon** (Oldham West and Royton) (Lab/Co-op): This place can be quite intimidating at times. I came here believing that people who sounded a bit posh and walked around with an air of entitlement somehow knew what they were doing. If nothing else, I thank the Prime Minister for disproving that at least.

**Jeremy Corbyn** *rose*—

**Jim McMahon:** I was catching a breath—the Prime Minister wore me out; I was getting up and down so much earlier.

Opposition Members are genuinely agonising over the best way forward in reconciling constituencies that have very different views on Brexit, and I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the work he is doing to try to retain that coalition. Regardless of where people come from, surely it is important that we have the right information and the right risk assessment. Is it not wrong that the risk assessments are incomplete and that the Government's own advisers have not even been able to rate their risk assessments because of the lack of time?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. As a distinguished former leader of his local authority, he knows the importance of going through documents in detail and having a chance to take advice on the implications. Even with the greatest brains in the world—I am sure this House does contain the greatest brains in the world, there is no doubt about that—17 hours is not very long to deal with 40 clauses and 110 pages of legislation.

The Prime Minister is trying to blindside Parliament to force through this deal, and this Parliament must challenge him.

**Marsha De Cordova** (Battersea) (Lab): Does my right hon. Friend share my concern that, should it be passed, this Bill will open us up to a free trade agreement with the US that will have huge ramifications for our valued national health service and for the food we eat?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** Yes, it will. The only way forward for the Prime Minister would be to go on to WTO rules and then to seek a special trade deal with the United States. I do not know whether the Prime Minister has noticed, but Donald Trump adopts an “America first” policy. Donald Trump's attitude towards trade is, to put it most generously, one-sided towards the USA. There will be no equitable deal with the USA, and those companies in the USA that want to get control of our health service will come knocking on the door to take over our national health service.

This is a Bill of huge significance and complexity, and it will decide the future of our country, of our economy and of the economic model we follow. Accepting the programme motion will mean that all 40 clauses have to be considered and voted on within 48 hours, starting this evening. That would be an abuse of Parliament and a disgraceful attempt to dodge accountability, scrutiny and any kind of proper debate.

**David Hanson** (Delyn) (Lab): Has my right hon. Friend noticed that clause 36(1) says

“It is recognised that the Parliament of the United Kingdom is sovereign”?

Yet the Prime Minister will not give this Parliament of the United Kingdom the chance to fully scrutinise his proposals.

**Jeremy Corbyn:** My right hon. Friend makes a strong case that Parliament should have the opportunity to properly scrutinise what the Executive want to do. I do not think the Prime Minister has really taken that into account in his botched and speedy procedure and in his obsession with getting all this stuff through in a few days.

What the officials once said would take four weeks to properly scrutinise is now being done in one day. Colleagues on both sides of the House should simply ask themselves why. So much for Parliament taking back control. Parliament is being treated as an inconvenience that can be bypassed by this Government.

There is a crucial element to this. When we in this House deal with major issues for the country, we need the information and we need—

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Jeremy Corbyn:** If hon. Members hang on a second, I will deal with this. No economic impact assessment whatsoever has been made or presented to this House. At the very least, this House should have that assessment and that expert advice in order to scrutinise the Bill. The Chancellor of the Exchequer does not seem to think it is relevant that this Bill and their deal need that kind of scrutiny—even more so in the light of today's dire public finance figures.

**Anna Turley** (Redcar) (Lab/Co-op): My right hon. Friend is absolutely right that there has been no economic impact assessment of the Bill, so many of us have to rely on the impact assessment of the previous Prime Minister's withdrawal agreement, which showed a detrimental impact on the north-east to the degree of 7% of our GDP. How can that be justified to our industry and manufacturing in the north-east, which are already so far behind the rest of the country?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** Indeed. My hon. Friend represents a constituency that has suffered grievously from the Tory Government's industrial non-strategy. SSI Redcar was closed down, and there are huge issues for manufacturing investment across her region and across her constituency. This House knows full well—and if Conservative Members cared to listen, they would know full well—that this proposal will damage manufacturing industry and therefore jobs, particularly in the north-east, which is the only part of the country with a manufacturing surplus on trade with Europe and the rest of the world.

**Catherine McKinnell:** The Prime Minister shakes his head, but every single Member represents people who voted leave and people who voted remain. Nobody voted for a wing-and-a-prayer, cake-and-eat-it, blindfold Brexit with no economic impact assessment of the biggest transformation of our economy in peacetime history.

Does my right hon. Friend agree that this is a completely unacceptable way to bring forward this legislation? It is not fair on this House, and it is not fair on the people who will lose their jobs as a result.

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I commend my hon. Friend for what she says and the way she says it. We all represent people who voted in different directions in the referendum, or who did not vote at all. We all have to represent them, but in making these decisions, we have to ask ourselves this question: if this deal is good for our country, why have the Government not produced a single scrap of evidence showing that?

**Lady Hermon:** I am enormously grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for giving way. Let me pay tribute to a former Labour leader, Tony Blair, who was the architect of the Good Friday agreement, which delivered much needed peace and stability to Northern Ireland after 30 years of atrocious violence that affected all communities right across the island of Ireland.

I am extremely concerned that the Labour party, the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues have anxiety that the Prime Minister's new Brexit deal, in some way, undermines the Good Friday agreement and its achievements. Will he please take a few moments to explain his concerns? I think that is really important.

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I thank the hon. Lady for her intervention, and I am sure she and the whole House would agree that the Good Friday agreement was an historic step forward that has brought relative peace to Northern Ireland. My concern is that this Bill creates a customs frontier between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK—the Prime Minister told the DUP conference that that is something he would not do—and requires the certification of goods before they can be sent from Northern Ireland to the rest of the UK, and it therefore creates a different trading relationship.

Although there might not be an aspiration at the moment to put any physical customs points on the road borders between Northern Ireland and the Republic, I gently say that the direction of travel is not a good one. The hon. Lady knows as well as I do that, as soon as we start doing that, we will end up seriously undermining the historic achievements of the Good Friday agreement.

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I return the right hon. Gentleman to a simple fact, about which I am concerned. Does he recall that he once sponsored a Bill to repeal the European Communities Act 1972? Can he explain what has changed and why, in voting against this Bill, he will be voting against repealing the 1972 Act?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I also recall that I strongly supported the social chapter to try to bring social justice across Europe, and I just remind the right hon. Gentleman of his historic achievement of bringing in universal credit and all the damage that has done to so many people in this country.

The only economic evidence we can go on is the economic assessment carried out under the previous Prime Minister, and that was clear.

**Janet Daby (Lewisham East) (Lab):** Does my right hon. Friend agree that we should not vote for anything that could make our country poorer, and this Brexit deal would do exactly that? Does he also agree that the previous referendum should have been regarded as illegal due to the overspend by the Prime Minister? The only way forward is a people's vote.

**Jeremy Corbyn:** People voted in different ways in the referendum in 2016—that is obvious—but nobody voted to lose their jobs, or to find that their regulations and living conditions had been damaged. The function of Parliament is to hold the Government to account and scrutinise this agreement. A bare bones free trade agreement, which is what the Prime Minister is promising, would dramatically hit our country's GDP, and would disproportionately hit the poorest regions and make everybody in this country worse off. It would also lock in the existing privatisation of our national health service, and nothing in this Bill protects our health service or public services from future trade deals.

**Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley) (Lab):** Does my right hon. Friend acknowledge that many EU nationals in this country are really afraid, because they do not know what their future is going to be? An Italian flower seller in a market in my constituency has lived here 15 years and has been constantly asked, "When are you going home?" Today, I have received an email from a doctor in the constituency, who said of a colleague:

"There are significant concerns about the tardy response by the 'Brexit department', for want of a better name for that organization, in that there has been no confirmation of—

this German doctor's residency and—

"status going forward.

He is obviously very anxious and distracted by this situation.

We need to keep primary care morale up in the current difficult times and our valued European doctors—

and nurses—

need to feel confident about their future within the UK.

This doctor has been a cornerstone of the NHS in Wales for over 20 years."

My right hon. Friend knows very well that we are losing doctors and nurses, and we cannot afford to do it.

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I thank my right hon. Friend for that intervention. She says it with heartfelt passion and she is right: there are many people who have come to this country from all over the world, made their homes here and made a massive contribution to our lives and our society, and every one of us owes our health to those people who work in our NHS, whether they come from Commonwealth countries, other countries or the European Union. They should not be put through the strain either of the Windrush hostile environment or the sword of Damocles hanging over many at the moment because they know they have only five years' definite stay in this country. I will just remind the House that in July 2016, my party, through Andy Burnham, then our shadow Home Secretary, moved a motion guaranteeing permanent rights and residence of EU nationals. The Prime Minister was the only Tory to support it at that time. I do not know what has happened to him since then.

On trade and investment, will the Chancellor do his job and provide the House with a comprehensive economic impact assessment on this deal? At the very least, will he do so before Report stage? This Bill falls hugely short in all areas.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I have given way a great deal, as I am sure all Members would agree. I am going to make some progress and then give way to my hon. Friend the

[Jeremy Corbyn]

Member for Poplar and Limehouse (Jim Fitzpatrick) and the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas).

On jobs and manufacturing, this deal will reduce access to the market of our biggest trade partner and leave our manufacturers without a customs union. As we have heard in many interventions, Members have heard desperate pleas from businesses in their constituencies all saying that they need frictionless supply chains. So I ask all Members to do the right thing: let us work together to make sure that a comprehensive customs union is hard-wired into our future relationship with the EU.

**Jim Fitzpatrick:** I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for giving way. He knows that we disagree on elements of this Bill and this issue. As his former Whip, with my Whips tie on, may I ask him for an assurance that Labour Members who exercise their conscience this evening and do not follow the whip will not have that whip removed, any more than he had it removed when he exercised his conscience?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I believe in the powers of persuasion and tonight I would like to persuade my hon. Friend: come with us, vote against this Bill and vote against the programme motion, because I believe, and I think he may agree with me, that that is in the interests of his constituents.

**Caroline Lucas:** Does the Leader of the Opposition share my concern that this Brexit deal could lead to a loss of freedom of movement within the island of Ireland for international family members of Irish or UK citizens? In other words, it imposes the equivalent of a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, denying families their reunification rights. Will he acknowledge that this is a barely mentioned but worrying aspect of yet another way in which this deal breaches the Good Friday agreement?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** Yes, I understand and accept the hon. Lady's concerns on that. She is eloquently making the case for far more scrutiny of this Bill, so I am sure she will be joining me in opposing the programme motion this evening, because it will prevent just that kind of scrutiny. I note that the programme motion allows just one hour for consideration of all Lords amendments, however many there may or may not be.

**Karl Turner** *rose*—

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I will give way to my hon. Friend, with his quiet demeanour, but let me just say, on workers' rights, that by removing any level playing field provision the Government are asking us to give them a blank cheque on rights at work.

**Mr Speaker:** It is a great relief to the House; I was worried that the hon. Gentleman might explode in the atmosphere, which would have been a most unfortunate scenario.

**Karl Turner:** I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition for eventually giving way. I was incredibly concerned when I was reminded by my wife earlier today that we spent longer choosing a sofa

than this House has to debate this incredibly important Bill. The important point is this: the Prime Minister's own legislative adviser, Nikki da Costa, has said and advised him that she thinks this House needs at least four weeks to debate this important legislation in order for it to go through both Houses. We have just not got enough time to debate this—does my right hon. Friend agree?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** My hon. Friend makes a strong point. We got the Bill at 8.15 last night and this afternoon at 1 pm we start debating it—that is utterly ludicrous. We are then going into Committee stage. The Bill then goes to the Lords and comes back, as I said in response to the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion, for a one-hour debate on Lords amendments. These are serious issues that have huge implications for communities, factories, jobs and people. This should not be dealt with in this way.

**Peter Kyle** (Hove) (Lab): Over the past couple of years, Members from across the House have asked many, many questions about the customs relationship between the EU and the UK post Brexit, but nobody thought to ask whether customs arrangements within their own country would be affected. Does my right hon. Friend agree that the Prime Minister should have, at that Dispatch Box, apologised to the businesses in Britain that trade within Britain and are now going to have start filling out forms that they would never have had to fill out before?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** Indeed, and that is just one aspect of the Bill that has been revealed today. I suspect much more will come up.

**Rachael Maskell** (York Central) (Lab/Co-op): One reason why we need greater scrutiny is that as a result of the Bill, the relationships in Northern Ireland fundamentally change the decision-making processes. The stakes are so high and the risk is evident for us all to see. Does my right hon. Friend agree that we need proper scrutiny and more time to consider the Bill, for the sake of peace?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** Indeed, the Northern Ireland peace process—the Good Friday agreement—is one of the most significant things that this House has ever done. We should understand the threat that the Bill brings.

I was speaking about workers' rights, on which the Government want us to trust them. The provisions in the Bill will mean that the Government merely have to inform the House if they propose to diverge from EU standards. Am I correct in understanding that no notification, let alone a vote, would be required if the measure is currently contained in secondary legislation? The provisions fall way, way short of those in the Workers' Rights (Maintenance of EU Standards) Bill introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Melanie Onn), and the TUC concluded:

“The deal itself does not meet the TUC's tests that any brexit outcome must protect jobs, rights, and peace in Northern Ireland. By moving away from a close economic relationship with the EU, the deal would be a disaster for working people's jobs and livelihoods. The deal would not require”—[*Interruption.*]

I am surprised that Government Members do not want to hear what the TUC says about the deal. The TUC continued:

“The deal would not require government to maintain existing rights, would not require rights to keep pace with those across the EU, and would leave workers with a significantly reduced ability to enforce the rights they do have.”



The TUC concluded by saying:

“It would do nothing to improve employment rights in the UK, now or in future.”

The Government talk about maintaining world-class environmental standards, but actions speak louder than words, so can I ask the Prime Minister—

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I am not giving way for a while.

Why has the Prime Minister, instead of entrenching non-regression environmental standards into the Bill and the deal, taken out the level playing field commitments? I always say, Mr Speaker, that on all these issues you do not have to take my word for it; manufacturers and industry are deeply concerned about this deal. Environmental campaigning groups and green groups are deeply concerned. I challenge the Prime Minister to name a single trade union in this country that backs this deal. He knows that he cannot, and they have made their views very clear through the TUC.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Jeremy Corbyn:** No, I will not give way. That is not all—[*Interruption.*]

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. The Leader of the Opposition has made it clear that he is not giving way at the moment. There is a fine line between beseeching someone and hectoring, and Members are in danger of falling on the wrong side of that dividing line. The Leader of the Opposition is entitled to continue with his speech, and he will do so until he is ready to give way.

**Jeremy Corbyn:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Kevin Hollinrake:** Can I beseech the right hon. Gentleman to give way?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** The Prime Minister and I agree on very little, but we both give way a great deal. I am not going to give way for the moment.

Clause 30 makes it worryingly clear that if no trade deal with the EU is agreed by the very ambitious date of December next year, Ministers can just decide to crash the UK out on World Trade Organisation terms. That is not getting Brexit done; it is merely pushing back the serious threat of no deal to a later date. Let us be clear: as things stand the Bill spells out the deeply damaging deal that the Prime Minister has negotiated—and he knows it, which is why he is trying to push it through without scrutiny. Labour will seek more time to scrutinise. We will seek a clear commitment on a customs union, a strong single market relationship, a hard-wired commitment on workers’ rights, non-regression on environmental standards and the closure of loopholes to avoid the threat of a no-deal Brexit once and for all.

Lastly, the Prime Minister’s deal should go back to the people; we should give them, not just Members of this House, the final say. They always say that the devil is in the detail; I have seen some of the detail and it confirms everything we thought about this rotten deal. It is a charter for deregulation across the board, paving the way for a Trump-style trade deal that will—[HON. MEMBERS: “Oh!”] Government Members do not like

hearing this bit, so I will say it again: it will pave the way for a Trump-style trade deal that will attack jobs, rights and protections and open up our precious national health service and all the history and principles behind it, and other public services, to even more privatisation. That is exactly what the Prime Minister set out in his letter to the President of the EU Commission, when he said that alignment with EU standards

“is not the goal of the current UK Government.”

There we have it in his own words. That is a vision for the future of our country that my party, the Labour party, cannot sign up to and does not support. That is why we will be voting against Second Reading tonight and, if that vote is carried, we will vote against the programme motion, to ensure that this elected House of Commons has the opportunity to properly scrutinise this piece of legislation.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. Just before I call the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith), I will take a point of order from Yvette Cooper.

**Yvette Cooper** (Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. The Home Affairs Committee was due to take evidence from the Home Secretary tomorrow afternoon. I have been trying to speak to the Home Secretary today, because she has now informed the Committee that she does not want to give evidence tomorrow. We have offered to change the timing of the sitting to tomorrow morning—

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel)** *indicated assent.*

**Yvette Cooper:** I can see the Home Secretary nodding; I hope she can now agree to give evidence tomorrow morning, because we have been seeking to get this session in the diary since the beginning of August.

**Mr Speaker:** This is a matter of diary management between the right hon. Lady and the Home Secretary, but I think the general principle is that if a Minister has for some reason to duck out of appearing before a Select Committee, which sometimes has to happen, an alternative arrangement is made.

**Priti Patel** *indicated assent.*

**Mr Speaker:** I am grateful to the Home Secretary for signalling, with her usual good nature, that she is willing to appear before the Committee.

**Yvette Cooper** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** Well, all right: because I am in a generous mood, I will take one more.

**Yvette Cooper:** Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. I would be grateful if the Home Secretary confirmed that she is able to attend, because the sitting was due to be on preparations for Brexit.

**Mr Speaker:** I think the matter will be resolved speedily. [*Interruption.*] I do not require any help from a Member on the third row who thinks he has some role to play in these matters. He has absolutely no contribution to make whatsoever.

3.7 pm

**Mr Iain Duncan Smith** (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con): Although I am not on a time limit, I know that time is short, so I will be as brief as I possibly can to ensure that everybody else can get in.

Some 25 years ago, the Maastricht treaty finally passed into UK law. I remember with some fondness going on many occasions through the Lobby to vote against the Government—heaven forbid—and I was always joined by the jolly figure of the current Leader of the Opposition, the right hon. Member for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn). We shared many a conversation about how terrible it was and how, given the opportunity, we would one day join together to repeal the European Communities Act 1972. I am sorry to say to the Leader of the Opposition, in genuine friendship, that I would love to know what happened in the intervening 25 years that changed his mind about the European Union such that he now no longer wishes to repeal that Act. I miss our friendship and would like that to be put on record. *[Interruption.]* As my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr Baker) said, it was literally the only thing we ever agreed about.

Today, I am going to—

**Stephen Timms** (East Ham) (Lab) *rose*—

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I will not give way just yet, because I am conscious of time and will be very brief.

I rise to congratulate my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on what I thought was an excellent speech and to say that, absolutely, without a shadow of a doubt, I will support the Government tonight in both votes—on Second Reading and, massively importantly, on the programme motion. We did not have programme motions during Maastricht. Some people might recall that we had to have 100 hours in Committee before we could actually get a limit on speeches. Sometimes, I wonder whether that would not be a good thing, but not tonight, it has to be said. There is a reason for that—we have had more than 100 hours in Committee over the past three and a half years. The reality is that, if there is anything about this arrangement that we have not now debated and thrashed to death, I would love to know what it is.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I will give way in a minute.

Those who say that they do not have enough time in the next few days, because they have so many things to debate forget that there was a White Paper published last year—I see my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Sir David Lidington) sitting on my left—that contained, sadly, most of the elements of the withdrawal agreement. That was debated, and the issue has been debated in meaningful vote after meaningful vote. Many of the things in the agreement have not changed. I for one would like to see more of it changed, and I will come back to that in a second.

**Stephen Timms:** I just want to emphasise the need for scrutiny. In an earlier intervention, the right hon. Gentleman said that this Bill is repealing the European Communities Act 1972. In fact, in clause 1, it reimposes it. Surely that should be scrutinised properly by the House.

**Mr Duncan Smith:** The right hon. Gentleman has known that for more than a year now. There is no surprise there. I certainly have real concerns about that

matter, but I have to say to him that I have known about it for some time. This did not pop up suddenly in my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's agreement. We have thrashed this out through the White Paper and in meaningful vote after meaningful vote. Honestly, we have to ask ourselves the question: has this House not debated that element to absolute destruction?

**Mr Kenneth Clarke** (Rushcliffe) (Ind): I thank my right hon. Friend for giving way. I regret that I am on a different side from him on this occasion, as I was on Maastricht, but I am enjoying his speech as much as I did then.

Does my right hon. Friend accept that, until very recently, there was no suggestion that England, Scotland and Wales were going to go into their own customs union and single market, and that the whole of Ireland, including Northern Ireland, was going to go into a single market and customs union with the continent of Europe? Indeed, that was expressly ruled out only a few months ago by the present Prime Minister. At the moment that issue is due to be disposed of in three hours, with other issues being disposed of tomorrow morning. If every member of the DUP tries to speak, they will be reduced to a three-minute time limit in their speeches, and that also applies to other Members of the House. Having spent more than 100 hours over Maastricht, when he occupied quite a lot of the time himself, why on earth does he think that we should not debate such important constitutional issues?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I say to my right hon. and learned Friend that, absolutely, I am very happy to debate it. He touches on the one issue that was not in the White Paper and is different, and I accept that. I am sure that, had the Opposition sat down with the usual channels and carefully discussed the really serious elements on which they wanted more time, it may have been possible to have allowed that. The reality is that they have taken the position from day one that they would oppose this Bill, but make no other propositions. We could, for example, go round the clock—he and I agree about that. We have time. After all, what is the weekend for? I do not have any problem with that. I have a simple point to make, which is that those who argue endlessly that there is not enough time are really arguing that they do not like the idea of the deadline of 31 October and do not want to stick to it. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said that it is in law and that we are going to stick to that.

**Emma Little Pengelly** (Belfast South) (DUP) *rose*—

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I want to move on in a second. I will not give way, as I am conscious that others want to speak. I just want to get through these points. I might take another intervention but not immediately.

**Alan Brown** (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP) *rose*—

**Mr Duncan Smith:** With due respect to the hon. Gentleman, he does intervene a lot. The reality is that we have also spent a lot—*[Interruption.]* I do not mean that rudely, I just genuinely mean that he does intervene a lot.

There is a very good video doing the rounds. I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke) has not seen it, but it would

be good if he had. It is not about him; it is about many others who have argued here for one case, but who now, since the referendum, seem to have managed to change their views massively. The streets of Westminster are marked by the skid marks of politicians who have done U-turns on the position they took directly after the referendum. We had pledged to implement the referendum. I note that, when the result first came out, the shadow Secretary of State for Brexit said on two occasions that the referendum would have to be implemented and that freedom of movement would end when we left. Now, of course, the Opposition are shifting their position around and they want to delay. More than that, the Leader of the Opposition has said that he now wants to make certain that the Bill cannot possibly go through.

That brings me very briefly to two points that have been made. One is on a second referendum, which some Members want to include in an amendment to this Bill. They want more time to do that. I have a simple point to make: those who want a second referendum argue very carefully that it should not contain a question about leaving, which strikes me as bizarre. More importantly, why should any member of the public, or any one of our constituents, who voted in the first referendum—

**Mr Grieve:** Will my right hon. Friend give way?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** One second. May I just finish my point?

Why should any of our constituents believe any one of us now? We promised them at the time of the previous referendum in 2016 that we would implement it. We then came into this House and voted to implement it and voted to implement article 50. Why, when we go back to them, should we be able to say, “Don’t worry. Trust us. Despite what we said to you last time, and although we have now reneged on that, we’re going to give you another chance, because we think that, somehow, you might change your decision, and if you do not, you need to trust us that we will stand by the decision that you have not changed, even though you gave us that decision earlier.”? That, frankly, is utterly absurd.

**Mr Grieve:** I am very grateful to my right hon. Friend for giving way. It may have been inadvertent, but he did suggest that those advocating a people’s vote or second referendum did not want to put the option of leaving in it. That is, I have to say to him, entirely inaccurate. Perhaps he would like to consider this: he believes that this debate should be curtailed. One thing that I have learned is that, if we want to get public acceptance of a decision that people do not like, the process of debate is absolutely key. Therefore, he will maximise the resentments when, in fact, an opportunity exists for him to go back to the people and ask them to confirm that the deal is what a majority want.

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I am always grateful to receive an intervention from my right hon. and learned Friend, but I have to tell him that I disagree with him. The British people voted to leave the European Union, so they clearly like it and they like the idea that we are going to get on with it. I do not know who he is talking to in his constituency, but I have to tell him that most of those in my constituency—even those who voted remain—keep on saying, “Whatever else we do, let us get this done and get it done now.” My right hon. and learned Friend will know full well, because he has played a very

significant part in all these debates under two Prime Ministers, that he has not missed a single opportunity to table amendments and to debate almost every single part of this agreement that now sits in front of us. I have no problem with that, and I respect him entirely. He remains a friend. Despite the fact that we disagree, I refuse to be rude or antagonistic. I simply say that he knows he has played his full part.

**Frank Field** *rose*—

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I will give way for the very last time to the right hon. Gentleman.

**Frank Field:** I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for giving way. Is not one of the real problems faced by this and the previous Parliament that when we voted, for whatever reason, to give the decision back to the people, we decided to be not representatives but delegates? On this one issue only, we are delegated to carry out the wishes of the majority. That does not mean that we should ignore the minority, but why, after saying that we should be delegates, are the same people advocating a second a referendum in which we would be delegates, when they cannot manage the first one?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I always love giving way to the right hon. Gentleman—in fact, I will call him my right hon. Friend in this particular moment—because he talks common sense. When we passed the European Union Referendum Act 2015, we made it very clear—and we confirmed this after the referendum—that, although we are a House of representatives and not delegates, we were handing back to the British people the sovereign power that comes from them to us for the period of a Parliament. We gave that power back to them to make the decision. They have made that decision, and as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister knows, we now must act on it. As far as I am concerned, the deal has flaws and includes things that I do not particularly like, but I recognise that the overarching priority right now is to deliver on the referendum and leave the European Union, and this remains the only way that we can achieve that. I absolutely agree with the right hon. Gentleman on that.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I am not going to give way any more; I have given way enough.

If there is any attempt in this process to amend the Bill to keep us in a customs union, I would simply argue that I thought it was made very clear throughout—and there were many comments by Opposition Members, including the Leader of the Opposition, to this effect—that leaving the customs union was part of the package of leaving. [*Interruption.*] Others will disagree. I do not say that they are wrong. I simply say that I think it was pretty explicit throughout the whole referendum campaign that the jewel in the crown of leaving was being able to set our own trade negotiations and trade deals. Taking that power back is a really critical part of taking back control. If we handed that power back, it would be an enormous mistake. It also has to be said that such an amendment—this will be up to Mr Speaker, of course—would be a wrecking amendment, because it is not possible to go back and ask the EU to change the deal one more time. Such an amendment would therefore



[Mr Duncan Smith]

wreck the Bill and there would be only one reason for it: to stop this Bill and prevent us from leaving the European Union. Although others will want to do that, I do not agree with them.

We all have to make difficult choices. I do want the Government to engage enormously with our colleagues from Northern Ireland, because there is very much an issue regarding them leaving with us when we strike a future trade deal. It is really important that we engage with them, because we must leave as one Union, not separated or separable.

**Emma Little Pengelly:** The right hon. Gentleman has said to the House that very little has changed and that we do not need further debate, but the Prime Minister and members of the Government repeatedly said—just a few weeks ago—that they would never accept a border down the Irish sea. This change in the agreement is the most fundamental change to our Union since the Act of Union. That merits debate and discussion, and this House needs to listen to that discussion.

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I genuinely agree with the hon. Lady that it merits discussion, but I also think that there is another key element. There are lots of things in the implementation period that many of us dislike, and there are things that I dislike—not least some of the arrangements I am discussing with the hon. Lady. But the key question is surely this: to what degree can the hon. Lady’s party discuss and agree with the Government that when we finally strike that free trade deal, we leave as one Union and do not continue with those arrangements? That is the point of the question I asked earlier.

In conclusion, although there are some things that we disagree with and dislike, the honest truth is that we are faced tonight with two votes on a simple question—do we now want to give reality to the referendum in 2016, when the British people voted to leave the European Union? If we delay one more time, not only will we have defied them; worse than that, the British people will utterly lose faith in this place. This place has to be their representative body, but it will seem to them that it is no longer. Let us get this done and start the process tonight.

**Emma Little Pengelly:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I have serious concerns that there has been some mistake in the printing of the withdrawal agreement Bill. We have repeatedly heard reference in the speeches of the Prime Minister and others to clauses and measures under which the terrible arrangements for Northern Ireland would disappear on the signing of a free trade deal with the EU. I cannot find those clauses. During the Leader of the Opposition’s speech, I took the opportunity to look at the Bill again, but I cannot find those clauses in my copy. Could you give me clarity on how we can get some certainty? Perhaps my copy has some missing pages or there has been some form of misprint, or perhaps the Government could outline where these clauses exist, because I cannot find them.

**Mr Speaker:** I am sorry, but the hon. Lady, in the course of her attempted point of order, frankly elevates me to a status that I do not enjoy. It is well beyond my limited capabilities to know the precise order of clauses,

or that which is present and that which is not. My counsel to the hon. Lady is that in her pursuit of her mission, she could make a point of intervening on colleagues who speak with a compendious knowledge of the contents of the Bill to seek to extract from them the information that she seeks. I can see many pointy-headed, brilliant brains on the Government Benches who are doubtless going to rise to celebrate the merits of the Bill and whom she could usefully question on this matter.

**Catherine McKinnell:** Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Speaker:** Oh, very well. Whether it will profit the hon. Lady, I do not know, but I am offering my benevolent assistance within the limits of my modest capabilities.

**Catherine McKinnell:** I, too, noted that the Prime Minister referred to checks and declarations on GB-Northern Irish goods as being “transitory”. He also said that they would “melt away” unless a majority of Northern Ireland chose to retain them. I share the concerns of the hon. Member for Belfast South (Emma Little Pengelly) that that is not in fact correct and that perhaps there has been some confusion between the future decision relating to a single market and being in a customs union. Does it not highlight the challenge that we face that the Prime Minister appears to need additional time to consider the real implications of the decisions being taken that will have a significant impact not only on this country, but in particular on our trading relationship with Northern Ireland and on trade from Northern Ireland to the European Union? This really adds to the weight of concern about the lack of time to properly scrutinise such issues in this debate.

**Mr Speaker:** I have two points. First, I do not sniff or cavil at the concern that the hon. Lady raises about the allocation of time, but ultimately the House has ownership of time in the simple sense that it determines acceptance or otherwise of the programme motion. Secondly—please do not take this as a pejorative observation, as I am just trying to take a holistic view of the situation—what she is really saying is that there is great disagreement about what is or is not the case. It calls to mind the fact that people often say, “Well, give us the facts and then we’ll make a judgment.” Sadly, it is not so simple. There is no agreement on what the facts are, and I am afraid that that has to come out in the course of the debate, which, as I say, is well beyond the competence of the Chair.

If there are no further points of order, we can now proceed, because I think that the leader of the Scottish National party, the right hon. Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber (Ian Blackford), is in a state of heightened animation at the prospect of being able to orate to the House.

3.27 pm

**Ian Blackford** (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP): Indeed, Mr Speaker, as always.

It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith). We do not perhaps agree on the destination for which we should be heading, but he certainly makes his case with passion.

The points of order that have just been made absolutely demonstrate that we must have proper scrutiny of absolutely fundamental legislation that is going to affect all of us, our children and our grandchildren for decades to come. We must be able to tease out the facts.

The Government in London have an obligation to negotiate with parties from Northern Ireland, as the right hon. Gentleman said, but also to negotiate with the devolved Administrations in Edinburgh and in Cardiff. In the spirit of generosity that is suggested by the Government, there has to be real dialogue and negotiation with all parties that are involved in this.

The simple fact remains that while we on the SNP Benches have no desire to leave the European Union, it is regrettable that over the past three years we have not had the opportunity to explore in detail a compromise position, which may have been staying in the single market and customs union and would have resolved many of the difficulties that we now face with Northern Ireland.

I thank the right hon. Gentleman for reminding us that we spent 100 hours in Committee on Maastricht.

**Mr Duncan Smith:** More than that.

**Ian Blackford:** More than 100 hours—so what on earth are we doing pushing this Bill through over a couple of days? I appeal to everybody—and I mean everybody; I am looking at Government Members—to let this House do its job and to have proper scrutiny of something that is so absolutely fundamental.

**Sir William Cash (Stone) (Con):** Having been at the heart of the Maastricht rebellion, I will make a very simple point: first, there was no manifesto commitment to the Maastricht treaty; and, secondly, there was no referendum.

**Ian Blackford:** I am not sure what the relevance of that intervention was at all.

**Anna Soubry (Broxtowe) (IGC):** Is not one of the most critical points that not only is this a new deal but I can find no part of it that actually meets a single promise made by the leave campaign in the referendum? Not one of its promises has been met by anything in this very important new agreement. It must be right that this place should scrutinise it because not only are people—inadvertently, I am sure—standing up and asserting things that do not appear to be the case, as we have already heard, but, as we all look through this huge, weighty document, which contains new parts, we discover on almost every turn of the page something new that should be scrutinised.

**Ian Blackford:** The right hon. Lady is absolutely correct. The Bill was published only last night. Effective scrutiny takes time. I can see many Government Members who, if this was happening with the boot on the other foot, would be screaming like mad that this House was not being able to express its democratic obligation to look at things carefully.

The transition period will end at the end of 2020. If the Government wish to seek an extension to transition, they have to apply for it by the summer of next year. Does anybody in this House really think that the United

Kingdom will be able to conclude a complex trade arrangement with the European Union by the summer of next year, giving us the security of knowing that we do not need that extension? Quite frankly, they are living in a fantasy land if they do. On that basis, I say to Members all around the House, but particularly to Opposition Members who are tempted to vote with the Government this evening: be careful, because you are writing a blank cheque to the Prime Minister and the Vote Leave campaign that runs this Government to drive the United Kingdom out of the European Union on a no-deal basis at the end of next year—and, friends, there is nothing you can do to stop it.

**Alan Brown:** My right hon. Friend makes an excellent point, but I want to go back to what he said about the ridiculous timescales whereby, even if this Bill passes, all this stuff has to be done by the summer. Yesterday evening, I was in a Delegated Legislation Committee considering a technical paper on railway safety. Even then, the Government transition period was two years. As I said in the Committee, we have two years for railway safety transition, but this lot think they can get a free trade agreement and future arrangements done in a few months. It is a joke.

**Ian Blackford:** My hon. Friend is quite correct.

It simply is not feasible that the Government can negotiate from scratch—because let us remind ourselves that none of this has yet started; it cannot start yet. They have not started that trade agreement process. When we look at the years it has taken for Europe to conclude trade deals with other countries, we can see that this is a fantasy. Anybody who thinks that that is possible is quite simply deluded.

**Stephen Kerr (Stirling) (Con):** The right hon. Gentleman is making a great stooshie about time in relation to this Bill, but was it not the case that, when the SNP Scottish Government introduced their continuity Bill in the Scottish Parliament, they operated a ruthless guillotine to prevent proper scrutiny? That is the case; they ran a guillotine on that Bill, and there was a very limited amount of time allowed for debate and scrutiny, yet he complains about that happening here. *[Interruption.]*

**Ian Blackford:** Oh, my goodness! The continuity Bill, which was dictated by legislation that was going through this place, was not an international treaty. That is a completely bogus comparison for anybody to make. It is no wonder that people are laughing.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Ian Blackford:** Let me make some progress. I will happily take interventions later on—*[Interruption.]* I have not even started yet.

It will come as no surprise to the House that Scottish National party MPs will not vote for this Bill that seeks to implement the destructive Brexit deal, and I commit all 35 of our MPs to not doing so. We will be united. Scotland voted to remain: 62% of those who voted in Scotland voted to remain, and we are the only part of the United Kingdom being taken out of the European Union, the single market and the customs union against our will. England voted to leave; Wales voted to leave; and Northern Ireland is getting a

[*Ian Blackford*]

differentiated deal—there may be issues with it, but it is getting a differentiated deal—and that at the very least puts Scotland at a competitive disadvantage. Scotland is being sidelined and silenced, but Scotland will not be silenced. The SNP is here to fight this toxic Tory Government. Scotland's voice must be heard, and we must be respected.

**Rory Stewart** (Penrith and The Border) (Ind): What about London?

**Ian Blackford**: I really have to question whether Conservatives are thinking about these interventions before they make them. Scotland is a country. London is a city. There is a world of difference between them. This reminds me of the Prime Minister's statement that a pound spent in Croydon was worth more than a pound spent in Strathclyde. What about London, indeed! Our Scottish Parliament must be respected and have its say on the legislative consent motion for this Bill. I say to the right hon. Member for Penrith and The Border (Rory Stewart) that this is the difference: Cardiff and Edinburgh must provide consent to this Bill, but that is not the situation for the city of London.

Members should note that the Scottish Government have now lodged in the Scottish Parliament a legislative consent memorandum for this Bill. It concludes by recommending that the Scottish Parliament withhold legislative consent. We were told after our referendum in 2014 that we were to lead the UK. Under the respect agenda, we were told that we were an equal partner and that our opinions would be respected, yet here we are today, with our Parliament and our views being disregarded, and our rights as EU citizens about to be taken from us against our will.

**Mr Ellwood**: First, I want to take the right hon. Gentleman back to what he said earlier. It is absolutely right that we scrutinise the Bill and ask ourselves whether there is time for a new deal to be done in the next year before time runs out, but the voices that are questioning that now are the same ones that were questioning whether the Prime Minister would come back with a deal.

Secondly, the political declaration gives an indication of where we want to go. Work has been done on that. Thirdly, we are dealing with two aligned trading systems that work together today and that need to diverge, rather than two divergent systems that need to come together. It can be done. It is possible, and I ask him not to say that it will be the Conservative party's default position to seek no deal in a year's time. I will not be seeking that, and I will not be supporting it.

**Ian Blackford**: I have respect for the right hon. Gentleman, but the Prime Minister's deal is worse than the previous Prime Minister's one, and he should not conflate what has happened over the last few months with the challenges of doing a trade deal. If the Government do not negotiate a trade deal in a timely manner next year, there is nothing the right hon. Gentleman can do, there is nothing I can do and there is nothing that a single Member of this House can do.

**Mr Ellwood**: Yes, there is—clause 30 of the Bill.

**Ian Blackford**: It does not give us the right to seek an extension. That right rests with the Government, and if the Government have not asked for an extension by the summer, that is it—we are out of Europe on a no-deal basis, and it is the end of the story.

The House will be aware that the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales wrote a joint letter to the Prime Minister reminding him that the UK Government are required to seek legislative consent for this Bill from both legislatures. The Prime Minister must make it clear that consent will be sought from the devolved institutions and that the will of the devolved institutions will be respected. That, after all, was the promise made by the Tory Government to the people of Scotland—that our devolution settlement would be protected and respected, not ignored. That promise has already been broken in their shameful power grab at the time of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, which gave UK Ministers the powers to restrict the competences of the Scottish Parliament unilaterally and without agreement.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr Robin Walker)** *indicated dissent.*

**Ian Blackford**: I see the Minister shaking his head, but I am afraid that that is a matter of fact. That was the first time in the 20-year history of devolution that any Government legislated on devolved matters without Scotland's consent. That shameful act was a direct and deliberate downgrading of our devolution settlement. It disrespected those who voted in the devolution referendum of 1997 and the Scotland Act 1998, which defined the limitations of Westminster's powers and established that this place could not interfere without consent, and it undermined the Sewel convention, breaking once again the promises that the Conservatives made to the Scottish people. SNP Members made their anger known at those actions. I pleaded on that day—before you threw me out of the House, Mr Speaker, and I do not quibble with your judgment—that Scotland would not stand for it, and we will not.

Let Members on all Benches be warned: if they support the Government today, they will show disregard for the Scottish Parliament and the sovereign will of the Scottish people, and there will be a price to be paid. It is worth noting that in their letter to the Prime Minister, the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales were clear that that extension must be sought.

**Jane Dodds** (Brecon and Radnorshire) (LD): Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that this Bill is extremely damaging to people in Wales and that the rights that he is talking about for Scotland should also be afforded to Wales? This Bill is damaging to the people of Wales, including the farmers whom many of us represent, and to our businesses. I thank him for giving me the opportunity to speak.

**Ian Blackford**: I am most grateful to the hon. Lady, because she makes a valuable point. I want to thank the Welsh Government, who have worked hand in hand with the Scottish Government. Quite simply, our rights are being diminished by what this Government are doing, and we have a responsibility across not only Governments in the devolved areas but parties to work together to make these points.



The devolved institutions must be given a full opportunity to scrutinise this legislation. The fact remains that the Scottish Parliament is in recess and is having to be recalled because of this Government's desire to ram legislation through at short notice. Here we are today with the Government pushing on ahead. *[Interruption.]* People watching can see the chuntering, shouting, complaining and laughing that we get from Scottish Conservative Members every single time we are in this place. The UK Government are ploughing on against the requests of the leaders of the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments. It is clear that this Prime Minister has no respect for devolution.

That should come as no surprise to us because the Conservatives have opposed devolution every step of the way. A leopard does not change its spots. At every step in the Brexit process, Tory Governments have sought to frustrate parliamentary scrutiny and to frustrate our Government, but they simply do not care. The Prime Minister does not care about process, Parliament or the rule of law.

**Kevin Brennan** (Cardiff West) (Lab): The right hon. Gentleman has been very generous in giving way. There have been some press reports that the SNP is abandoning the idea of having a second referendum, but in the joint letter he cited from the First Minister of Wales and the First Minister of Scotland I am pleased to say that they both called for such a referendum and for an extension to allow it to happen. Will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that that is still the SNP's position?

**Ian Blackford**: We have been four-square behind a people's vote over the course of the last year, and indeed I spoke at the rally in London on Saturday, so I absolutely stand by the words of our First Minister in that letter.

**Patricia Gibson** (North Ayrshire and Arran) (SNP): A number of people have raised concerns today about the lack of scrutiny and the lack of time to look at this Bill. My right hon. Friend has pointed out that Scotland has of course been ignored in this process—a nation that voted significantly to remain in the EU. Does he share my concern that, in among all this, we continue to forget, conveniently for some perhaps, the fact that this referendum was won on a very narrow margin across the UK? The Electoral Commission has said that electoral law was broken, but that has been swept under the carpet, and I call into question the legitimacy of the result at all.

**Ian Blackford**: I think there are very legitimate questions to be answered, and my hon. Friend is quite correct. I am conscious of time and I have taken a number of interventions, but I am not far from the end and I wish to move on and conclude. *[Interruption.]* Really? "Thank God for that" is what we get from Government Members. That is the disrespect that is shown to the Scottish people. Perhaps they should stand up and put it on the record. That is an absolute disgrace.

It is simply an insult to democracy that the Government are trying to push this Bill through in limited time, and I urge Members—I urge even those on the Government Benches—to ask themselves: is this really how they want things to be done? Even the previous director of legislative affairs at No. 10, Nikki da Costa, stated in

May that this Bill would take "more than four weeks". What has changed? Moreover, it was agreed that this legislation must not be passed until the UK Government have published an economic impact assessment of their deal, yet on "BBC Breakfast" on Saturday, the Brexit Secretary confirmed that no economic analysis has been done by this Government on the final deal. That is the height of irresponsibility. There is no economic analysis on a deal that is going to have a fundamental impact on the lives of all our citizens.

Each and every one of us in this House knows—because we have seen the evidence, we have listened to the experts—that there is no such thing as a good Brexit. In every scenario, Brexit threatens jobs, it risks environmental standards, it risks workers' rights, it unravels co-operation and opportunities and, importantly, it poses questions about the future values that the UK has fostered hand in hand with the European Union. This Government are closing their eyes, putting their head in the sand and hoping that the sun comes out—the sunny uplands that the Brexiteers talk about—but that is reckless and it is foolish. The arrogance and the incompetence of the Government cannot and must not be allowed to go unchecked. Our priority today must be to ensure that an extension is negotiated and secured with the European Union, so this House can scrutinise fully and properly the significant lasting changes that this legislation will mean.

In closing, I want to touch on some of the substantive points about why, in no circumstances, will the SNP ever vote for Brexit and this shameful deal. Despite our efforts to compromise, this legislation will take us out of the European Union, out of the single market and out of the customs union. With the Prime Minister's deal, under a free trade agreement Scotland's GDP would be around 6.1% less, or £9 billion worse off, than if we stayed in the European Union. That is equivalent to £1,600 per person in Scotland. That is the cost of the Prime Minister's Brexit for Scotland. Northern Ireland businesses will have easier access to the European single market while simultaneously enjoying "unfettered" access to the UK market. There is significant uncertainty as to how the economic impact may play out, but it could see Scottish business losing market share with direct competitors. The risk is that supply chains may be reorganised to take advantage of Northern Ireland's preferential access to the single market. It may even play a role in location decisions in some cases.

The SNP is significantly concerned that the removal of the commitments on environmental protection from the withdrawal agreement, and restricting them to the non-binding political declaration, opens the door to UK divergence from EU standards. The political declaration remains weak in relation to human rights, and in particular on the importance of continuing UK compliance with the European convention on human rights.

Scotland will be worse off—unfairly disadvantaged—despite our will to remain. Therefore, I urge Members not to sell out Scotland. Listen to the will of the Scottish people, protect our devolution settlement, respect our democratically expressed wishes and stand by the rights of the Scottish people, businesses, farmers, crofters, fishermen, students, doctors and nurses. Stand by them and vote to stop this disastrous deal and to give the Scottish Parliament, and therefore the Scottish people, their say.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** We will begin with a time limit of six minutes on each Back-Bench speech, although I do not know how long that will last.

3.51 pm

**Sir David Lidington (Aylesbury) (Con):** The Bill and the agreement that it seeks to implement represent a compromise. It is a compromise that I believe is acceptable, but I will not conceal the fact that I and many other Government Members will find elements of it difficult and uncomfortable. My decision to support the Government tonight rests above all on what I and the great majority of Members on both sides of the House pledged to the electorate in 2016—that we would, however we campaigned and however we voted, respect the decision that they took in the referendum.

When I look through the Bill, I see that much of it is familiar territory. That is hardly a surprise as much—indeed, most—of it ratifies precisely the same negotiated text as that negotiated by my right hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May). Of course, one significant change has been in relation to Northern Ireland. As my hon. Friend the Member for North Dorset (Simon Hoare), the Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, said in an intervention earlier, there are advantages to what is in the deal. The guarantee of an open border on the island of Ireland is not only vital to allow trade and, indeed, normal economic life for people living in the border counties to continue, but is essential in my judgment for the maintenance of peace and security in the border areas. It is also important for the maintenance of the Union. When I look at the demographics of Northern Ireland as someone who passionately wants to see the Union continue and grow stronger, I conclude that for that to happen the Union will need to command the support—or at the very least the acquiescence—of a large number of people who identify as Irish or who are non-aligned in their affiliation.

**Mike Amesbury (Weaver Vale) (Lab):** Is the creation of a hard border in the Irish sea maintaining the Union?

**Sir David Lidington:** I shall come on to that point, but I want to say a few sentences about the consent mechanism. I understand the disquiet that has been expressed by those on the Unionist Benches about the design of the mechanism. It is nevertheless worth noting that that mechanism gives to Stormont a power that is unique in Europe. No other regional Parliament or Assembly anywhere else in Europe has the power, unilaterally, to decide to end the application of a set of European Union rules and regulations to its territory.

Having said that, I do want to recognise the fact that elements of the new package as regards Northern Ireland have aroused genuine disquiet and anger in Unionist communities across Northern Ireland. There is a perception that they have been treated unequally and that their place in the United Kingdom has been made less secure. I ask my right hon. Friends on the Government Front Bench urgently to seek ways to address those concerns and to assert the Government's continued commitment to the Union.

**Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP):** First of all, Unionists are greatly dismayed at what has happened in relation to the withdrawal agreement, but does the right hon. Gentleman also recognise the issues for businesses, including

in the agrifood sector, in my constituency? The cost implications for Lakeland Dairies, which has two factories in Northern Ireland and two factories in southern Ireland, will be enormous. The Government have not given that full consideration. There will be an impact on Unionist opinion and on business.

**Sir David Lidington:** I recognise the concerns expressed by business, although I also note that the view expressed by business representative organisations in Northern Ireland has generally been that Parliament should go ahead with this deal and enact the legislation, but then address the concerns that the hon. Gentleman rightly identifies that they raised. I therefore ask my right hon. Friends on the Front Bench to also act swiftly to minimise the impact that additional inspections and red tape required by the new policy will impose on Northern Ireland businesses. That might include financial support, particularly to small and medium-sized enterprises to enable them to buy and operate new systems; efforts to simplify or dedramatise checks and form-filling required; and for the Government to give urgent priority to such measures as seeking a veterinary agreement with the European Union and other such arrangements that would enable the risks to Northern Ireland business to be minimised.

**James Brokenshire (Old Bexley and Sidcup) (Con):** Will my right hon. Friend give way?

**Sir David Lidington:** If my right hon. Friend will forgive me, time is limited.

I believe that this House also needs to take account of the shift we are seeing in attitudes among other Governments in the European Union. Sometimes I think that colleagues in this House are a little guilty of wishful thinking. Frankly, those Governments are no longer hanging on, hoping somehow that the United Kingdom will change its mind. They are impatient. They are increasingly exasperated with all political parties and at the ability of the UK political system to take a decision on this matter. As far as the EU Governments are concerned, they want this brought to an orderly conclusion as soon as possible in a way that does as little harm as possible to the interests of the EU27. That interest includes the future constructive and close relationship that they—like, I believe, most in the House—wish to see between this country and the continuing European Union.

There are strategic challenges that face our country and every other European democracy. We debate them when we are spared time from debating Brexit: climate change, terrorism, serious and organised crime, and the mass movement of people. As European democracies, we are having to confront those challenges in the context of a shifting balance of world power, with a Russia that is aggressive and actively seeking to divide democratic European states, a China that is assertive and offering economic opportunity but championing a model for government and society at odds with that embedded in our own democratic and liberal values, and a United States whose unquestioning support for European security and a rules-based international order can no longer be taken for granted. I believe that because of the referendum result we have to leave, and we need to get on with the task of trying to build a different but close and enduring partnership with our European neighbours and allies

and to work together to meet the challenges that confront us all as fellow democracies on a shared continent. Passing this Bill will enable us to take one step closer towards starting on that task.

4 pm

**Jo Swinson** (East Dunbartonshire) (LD): Brexit will be bad for our country and that is why Liberal Democrats will be voting against this Bill tonight. We know that it will be bad for the economy, because the Government's own assessment in November 2018 looked at the impact of a free trade agreement on the British economy and concluded that it would mean that our economy would shrink by more than 6%—greater than the amount that the economy shrank during the financial crash.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer says that this will self-evidently be good for our country and economy, but I do not know when we decided to do away with the idea of having any financial responsibility and looking at the actual numbers. This Government have not even bothered to do a proper economic impact assessment. I am sure that we do not all agree with the right hon. Member for Surrey Heath (Michael Gove), who said that he had “had enough of experts”—actually, I would quite like the Government to get the experts to look at this, thank you very much.

We know that Brexit will be bad for our NHS. We have already lost 5,000 nurses from other EU countries from our NHS. At a time when we face a huge shortage of nurses, we can ill afford to lose 5,000 EU nurses and to lose more in future. The truth is that freedom of movement is good for our NHS. It is good for our public services and good for our economy.

**Dr Philippa Whitford** (Central Ayrshire) (SNP): Does the hon. Lady recognise that the fact that more than 40% of applicants for settled status are being given only pre-settled status is increasing the insecurity of European citizens?

**Jo Swinson:** The hon. Lady is right: the way that this country is treating those 3 million citizens from other EU states is shocking.

This Brexit deal will be bad for our security, because it will rob our police of the ability to use the European arrest warrant, which, since 2004, has seen 1,600 criminals extradited back to the UK to face justice. This Brexit deal will be bad for our United Kingdom family of nations. It beggars belief that this Conservative Prime Minister has agreed to a deal that will see a border down the Irish sea—something he said that he would never do. There are people who will try to use this to break up our country, but we must not let them break up our family of nations. Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland are stronger working together.

**Mr Paul Sweeney** (Glasgow North East) (Lab/Co-op): I thank the hon. Lady, my constituency neighbour, for giving way on that vital point. By sacrificing the idea of a customs union for the sake of their English nationalist agenda, the Conservatives are rending the fabric of the United Kingdom itself. What a shameful act by a so-called Unionist party.

**Jo Swinson:** I entirely agree. The hon. Gentleman is right to say that this Government are acting in a nationalist way. The Prime Minister of our country should take his responsibilities to protect the United Kingdom, our family of nations, much more seriously.

We also know that this Brexit deal will be bad for environmental protections, because even the weak protections that had been agreed by the former Prime Minister have been removed from the withdrawal agreement and put in the political declaration, where they are not worth the paper that they are written on. On workers' rights, the same is true. There are no guarantees or protections that we will retain the advantage that we have as current members of the European Union, nor indeed that we will keep pace with future regulation.

**Mr Seely:** Will the hon. Lady give way?

**Jo Swinson:** I am pressed for time, so I will not give way further.

I caution any MPs—in particular, friends on the Labour Benches—against believing the promises of this Prime Minister when it comes to workers' rights, and I speak as a former employment relations Minister in the coalition Government, so I know a little about what I am talking about when it comes to what the Conservatives want to do to workers' rights. We cannot believe the promises that they make on this. Who would you trust on workers' rights—Frances O'Grady and the TUC, who say that this deal would trash workers' rights, or the Prime Minister, who has been giving out all these assurances today but is prepared to say anything and sell out anyone if it is in his own personal interest? He cannot be trusted and no one shall be fooled. He is sinking, and the question tonight is: will Labour Members throw him a lifeline by voting for his bad Brexit deal? People will remember what they choose. We are here because of the Conservative party's bizarre obsession with Europe and because of the former Prime Minister, David Cameron, who seemed to make his renegotiation and the decision on benefit arrangements about Polish plumbers, rather than about the big picture of what is in our country's interests. This is not a small decision; it is a big decision about our future.

We live in an uncertain world. In the east, we have the rise of Putin and China; in the west, we have the uncertain, unpredictable, duplicitous President Trump in the White House; and as President Trump says, in No. 10 Downing Street, we have Britain's Trump. In these circumstances, should we go it alone? Or are we better and stronger working in close collaboration with our nearest neighbours across the EU in a community of 500 million people, where we share values, where we have much more clout on the international stage, where we have a single market for businesses without tariffs or regulations and with the ability to stand up to the tech companies to protect our consumers, where we are better able to address the climate emergency and take co-ordinated action to lead the world on something that threatens our very survival? Together the future is brighter.

This is not about institutions; this is about who we are. Wanting to stay in Europe is about choosing the kind of country we want to be: open or closed, generous or selfish, standing united with our friends or standing alone in the world, saying no to the bully boy populists in the Kremlin and the White House or following their example, fighting for our children's futures or closing off their opportunities to live, work and study across the EU. We Liberal Democrats are clear: we will continue to stand up for what is best for our country, let the public have the final say on this bad Brexit deal and give them the chance to choose to remain in the EU. The most signed petition in parliamentary history was from



[Jo Swinson]

6 million saying they wanted to revoke article 50. Hundreds of thousands marched on the streets on Saturday for a people's vote. People are joining the Liberal Democrats in record numbers. Together we can stop Brexit. Whatever the result tonight, this is not over. I will never give up on our children's future.

4.8 pm

**Mr John Whittingdale** (Maldon) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for East Dunbartonshire (Jo Swinson), the leader of the Liberal Democrats. I give her and her party credit for consistency. No one has ever been in any doubt about where they stand on Europe. Unfortunately, that is not the case for the Labour party, whose leader, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith) has already pointed out, supported leaving the EU for a long time, fought an election on the wish to respect the result of the referendum and said consistently that a second referendum was out of the question.

Members will be aware that the hon. Member for Cardiff West (Kevin Brennan) was forced to abandon his 60th birthday party as a result of the House sitting on a Saturday. The House may not be aware that he and I were born on precisely the same day and that, as a result of the programme motion, I have now postponed my own 60th birthday party. However—unlike, I suspect, the hon. Gentleman—I regard that as a small price to pay, and one that I am very willing to pay, if the result is that we get Brexit done.

Members have said that the Bill is being rushed through and that there has not been time to look at it properly. I have been privileged to serve as a member of the Select Committee on Exiting the European Union since 2016, and we have spent an awful lot of time scrutinising the process by which the UK will leave the European Union. We looked at the withdrawal agreement as originally proposed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May), and, of course, we have taken numerous sessions of evidence for the purpose of further examination.

As was pointed out by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green, many parts of this withdrawal agreement are similar to what was presented by the previous Prime Minister. The major differences between the agreement that we are considering today and the previous one are the changes that have been made, first, to the Northern Ireland protocol, and secondly to the political declaration and the direction of travel for our future trading agreements.

Like the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Leader of the House and my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green, I did not support the Government in the first two meaningful votes, but I did support them in the third, because I wanted us to fulfil the promise that had been made that we would leave the European Union by 29 March.

**Sir William Cash:** Will my right hon. Friend give way?

**Mr Whittingdale:** I will give way briefly.

**Sir William Cash:** I just wondered whether my right hon. Friend was aware that the provisions relating to parliamentary sovereignty and those dealing with the

protection of vital national interests, both of which are included in this Bill, would not have appeared in the previous Bill.

**Mr Whittingdale:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend, because I was about to say why I regarded this Bill as being a considerable improvement on the previous agreement, and he is right to point that out. The agreement that we are considering this afternoon does address the principal concerns that a number of us had, particularly about the so-called backstop and the risk that this country could be locked indefinitely into membership of the customs union, which would prevent us from achieving one of the great prizes offered by Brexit, the ability to negotiate our own trading agreements.

**Lady Hermon:** I am enormously grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for allowing me to intervene. He has mentioned that the Prime Minister's new deal contains very different provisions for Northern Ireland. They are particularly different, and very complex, in the context of the new consent arrangements. That being the case, why on earth does the Bill to which we are being asked to give a Second Reading not contain a single sentence explaining those very complex consent mechanisms?

**Mr Whittingdale:** I have heard the hon. Lady express those concerns, I have heard them expressed by our friends in the Democratic Unionist party and I take them seriously. The Prime Minister gave an assurance that these measures were transitory and that they would be self-dissolving after a certain period. I hope that he will continue to talk to the hon. Lady and to colleagues in the Democratic Unionist party and will assure them that that is the case. Obviously, I hear what she says about the Bill, and I hope that she can receive an assurance on that point.

**Mr Grieve:** Will my right hon. Friend give way?

**Mr Whittingdale:** If my right hon. and learned Friend will forgive me, I feel that I must press on.

As I was saying, I believe that this is an improvement on what we were offered before, but there are still elements that I do not like. I am not happy with the idea that, for 15 months we will be, in the words of the Leader of the House, essentially a vassal state, taking orders from the European Union without being able to vote on them and continuing to pay in. I am willing to pay that price as long as there is a clearly defined end point after which we will be free to set our own rules and to reach the trading agreements that I want to see and no longer be subject to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice.

**Dr Whitford:** Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr Whittingdale:** If the hon. Lady will forgive me, I must press on.

I congratulate the Prime Minister on having defied all the sceptics. My right hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and The Border (Rory Stewart), sitting next to me, at least has had the grace to say that he was wrong when he said that the Prime Minister could never reach a new deal with the European Union. There are others in the Chamber who said that repeatedly but who have been less honest in now accepting that.

**Richard Graham** (Gloucester) (Con): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

**Mr Whittingdale:** I must press on if my hon. Friend will forgive me.

I do believe, however, that, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Sir David Lidington) said, the European Union has reopened this deal once but it is not going to do so again. When I and my colleagues in the Exiting the European Union Committee—its Chairman, the right hon. Member for Leeds Central (Hilary Benn), is sitting opposite me—have been to see Mr Barnier, Mr Selmayr and Mr Verhofstadt, they have all asked us, “What is it that will get a majority in the House of Commons?” That is what they have wanted to know. That is what I hope we will be able to show them tonight.

There is no question about it: the European Union is as fed up with this dragging on as I think the entire United Kingdom is. It wants to get the matter settled. To be honest, those who vote against tonight will, I suspect, find fault in whatever deal is put forward; actually, their agenda is stopping Brexit. This represents an opportunity finally to settle this matter and to deliver what the people voted for now coming on three and a half years ago. I hope that the House will—at last—vote in favour of the deal that is before us and in favour of the programme motion in order that we can get it delivered and fulfil the promise by 31 October.

4.16 pm

**Hilary Benn** (Leeds Central) (Lab): It is a great pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Maldon (Mr Whittingdale), who is the vice-chair of the Exiting the European Union Committee, and with whom I have the pleasure to serve. May I also say to the right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Sir David Lidington) that he is absolutely right that the vast majority of the withdrawal agreement is as it was before, which is why I cannot understand why the Government did not publish in draft the bits of the Bill that have been available in Whitehall for ages so that Members had a chance to read them a long time ago, rather than scrabbling around since eight o'clock last night, because it would have dealt with some of the justifiable objections to the speed with which the Government are trying to push this through?

I do not know whether that earlier draft contained clause 36, but I must say my eyes widened when I read this statement:

“It is recognised that the Parliament of the United Kingdom is sovereign.”

Do we really need to say that about ourselves in legislation—was that ever in doubt? I suspect the reason it is in there is to soften the blow when certain Government Members realise—although the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith) made the point—that the European Communities Act will be repealed and then the provisions will be stuck back in for the length of the transitional period.

The other thing we have learned about is the consequences of the new Irish protocol for trade between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom, and I return to the point that was put to the Prime Minister by several Members, but to which there was no answer: the question why goods moving from Northern Ireland

to the rest of the United Kingdom will require an exit summary declaration, because, as I understand it, that is only necessary if goods are leaving the customs territory of the European Union. Is that correct, because I thought we were told—it says it in the new protocol—that Northern Ireland will be in the customs territory of the United Kingdom? So the question is this: if Northern Ireland is in the customs territory of the United Kingdom what are those goods exiting, because they are in the United Kingdom customs territory? I am afraid there has been no answer, because I do not think the attempted explanations really square.

**Ian Murray** (Edinburgh South) (Lab): My right hon. Friend raises the most compelling point about the Northern Ireland protocol. Is he also as astonished as I am that in some of the slight impact assessments on the Northern Ireland protocol everything about customs administration, VAT, tariffs administration, agrifood regulation and manufactured goods regulation is non-monetised—the Government do not even know how much this is going to cost?

**Hilary Benn:** I was surprised when I read that in the impact assessment, and the truth is that a whole load of questions remain about how the system will work. How will we identify goods at risk, as it is described, of passing into the Republic of Ireland? That is for another day.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Hilary Benn:** I will give way one more time.

**Richard Graham:** The right hon. Gentleman wrote in September that it would be

“utterly irresponsible for the Government to be rushing headlong towards”

no deal. Now that the House knows that the Government have a deal on the table, surely he and all his colleagues, who were elected on a manifesto pledge to respect the result of the referendum, should support this deal, rather than risk no deal. Is it not the case that no deal will ever be good enough for him?

**Hilary Benn:** The direct answer to the hon. Gentleman, with whom I also have the pleasure of serving on the Exiting the European Union Committee, is that to attempt to say to Members that the choice has to be between a bad deal—this is worse than the previous Prime Minister's deal—and no deal is not a very attractive proposition. During the passage of this Bill—if it gets its Second Reading—I hope that we will attempt to improve some elements of it.

Clause 30 goes to the heart of the point about no deal, because the withdrawal agreement makes provision for the possibility of an extension to the transition period, which, at present, will end in 14 months' time. Clause 30 says that the House can agree to a further extension, but it requires a Minister of the Crown to move the motion in the first place. The situation I am worried about is what if the Minister of the Crown fails to come to the House, does not move a motion proposing that the Government should request to the joint committee that the transitional period be extended, and the answer is that we would fall out without a deal in 14 months' time if an agreement had not been reached. The House

[Hilary Benn]

has voted on several occasions to make it clear that it is opposed to leaving with no deal, and there are arguments on either side as to whether people think that is a good thing or a bad thing, so I flag this up at this stage, because we will need to deal with that point—I gather that an amendment is on its way if it has not already been tabled—and to safeguard against it.

There is a second related problem to clause 30. What happens if a deal has not been negotiated by the end of December 2022 when the two-year extension has been applied for and secured? Now we would be facing exactly the same difficulty: the possibility of exiting without an agreement at the end of the transition period. In those circumstances, there is no way under the agreement that the British Government can get a further extension, so we have to find a way of ensuring that a deal is concluded by that time.

Ministers claim that, because of the high degree of alignment, it will all be done really quickly. I would just observe that took three and a quarter years to get to this point, and it took Canada six to seven years to get an agreement. Michel Barnier said this morning that he thought it would take around three years to negotiate such a deal, so we will be looking for assurance from the Minister in Committee that under no circumstances will the United Kingdom leave the European Union at the end of the transition period without a deal. I think another amendment may be on its way about that. The same point is relevant to citizens' rights, which have not been raised much in the debate so far. We could do with clarification from Ministers, because if the transition is extended, will they also change the deadline by which EU citizens have to apply for settled status?

As I said on Saturday, I will not be voting for the Bill, above all because of the political declaration—I do not have a problem with the withdrawal agreement—which is not the right approach to take, because it is not good for business. I am very surprised, like other hon. Members, that the Government have just blithely said, “We are not going to undertake an economic assessment,” and I assume that the reason for that is simple. They did one before which showed that a free trade agreement is the second-worst outcome up for the economy after no deal, and they do not really want to have to point that out again.

My final point is about clause 31, and it links to the economic impact of the political declaration. The clause deals with the oversight of negotiations on the future relationship, and it appears to give Members some oversight, some say, over the nature of the negotiations on the future relationship, but proposed new section 13C(3) of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 says:

“A statement on objectives for the future relationship...must be consistent with the political declaration of 17 October 2019”.

I simply point out that if, in one, two or three years' time, the House realises that the objectives of such a free trade agreement are not in our economic interests, because we finally realise the damage it will do to the economy—we have seen what businesses have said and the concerns they have expressed—the current wording of the clause gives no opportunity for Parliament to get a Government to change those objectives. I do not think we should accept the Bill on that issue, as it is currently worded.

4.25 pm

**Mr Dominic Grieve** (Beaconsfield) (Ind): It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Leeds Central (Hilary Benn).

I am conscious that we are at the end of a long process and that we are all very tired and very weary. We have also said some quite hard things about each other, including within our own political parties, so I would not want this evening to pass without acknowledging that those who come forward to argue that we should leave on these terms have a perfectly valid point. Indeed, in trying to honour the 2016 referendum result, they have a powerful argument.

My difficulty in considering this Bill is that I have tried to cast my mind a little forward to what this Bill can and cannot do. Although this Bill is undoubtedly needed if we are going, I think there is a slight tendency to lose sight of some of its realities. For example, I listened carefully to the hon. Member for Ashfield (Gloria De Piero), who said that she will vote for the Bill but that she wants to change it. We have to understand that, as this is an international treaty, the scope for changing the treaty is out of the question.

Of course we can provide some safeguards. We can put in a referendum lock and, indeed, I will vote for that in due course, but I do not want to burden the House with that this evening. We can try to change some of our domestic law, but that is a little like a letter of wishes to one's children—there is no guarantee that the children will decide to carry it out.

If my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister wishes to follow the passage of this legislation with a general election, which I can understand—I, for one, will no longer be in this House—the new Parliament, over the next year, will have to reconsider the issues raised by this withdrawal agreement and this Bill, and nothing we do can fetter the rights of this House to change completely the expression of intentions that we may decide to enact.

What is clear is that this Bill reveals a number of things that can be described as truths. First, the intention of the Government, both in the treaty and in the drafting of the Bill, is to take us towards a free trade agreement that, in reality, is likely to be very hard to negotiate, and it will have to be negotiated in the next year.

As a consequence, the risk of our crashing out at the end of 2020 is very great, because otherwise we will have to lengthen the transition, which has been described, of course, as “vassalage.” Indeed, it is a form of vassalage, which is a rather emotive word, but the reality is that we will be bound by rules that we cannot influence.

I see a very great risk that, far from the argument that the Bill will bring our problems to an end, we are just postponing the issues in a way that will continue to divide us, even though I would very much like us not to be divided.

**Lady Hermon:** I am enormously grateful to the right hon. and learned Gentleman for allowing me to intervene. He has been a great friend to Northern Ireland for a long time, and he has been a great defender of the Good Friday/Belfast agreement since it was signed 21 years ago. I would be enormously grateful to him if he explained to the House his concerns, if any, about how this new Brexit deal, brought back in triumph by the



Prime Minister, has caused such anxiety in Northern Ireland that it actually undermines the great achievement of the Good Friday agreement.

**Mr Grieve:** I am grateful to the hon. Lady for that, and I was coming on to the issue as my next point, because the other big impact of this legislation is on Northern Ireland. Of course, there is a lock mechanism, and I listened to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, who said that it could “melt away” if there was a double majority—of both communities—to remove it in four years’ time, although that does mean that for four years Northern Ireland is locked into arrangements that the Government have decided are not desirable for the rest of the United Kingdom. But what was glossed over is that article 13.8 of the Northern Ireland protocol makes it clear that any future arrangements thereafter are a matter for negotiation. So the suggestion that we can get a satisfactory free trade agreement for ourselves and then insist that Northern Ireland be included within it is simply wrong.

I have to say that as someone who has always seen himself as a modern Unionist, wanting to recreate or help to develop the Union of the United Kingdom in slightly different ways from those traditionally stated in relation to both Scotland and Northern Ireland—I have family coming from both—this matters to me a lot. It seems to me that this is an extraordinary move for a Unionist party to make, because the reality is that the more we detach ourselves, through our own free trade or whatever other routes we take, or if we crash out, the greater the difference we are going to emphasise, and the stronger and harder the border down the Irish sea will be. There may be some in Northern Ireland who welcome that, for perfectly valid reasons of their own, but for Unionism this is a very odd thing to do. In the Scottish context, it raises a perfectly clear grievance, whereby Scotland would say, “If Northern Ireland can have these arrangements, why cannot we?”

**Luke Graham** (Ochil and South Perthshire) (Con): I have listened to the right hon. and learned Gentleman’s speeches for a great deal of time and have a lot of respect for him, but on this issue I disagree with him. I ask him to reflect on the parallel he has just drawn between Scotland and Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland is a war-torn Province that has been subject to a civil war, and it is completely irresponsible for any politician to draw a parallel between Scotland and Northern Ireland in this context. Northern Ireland has a very specific history; it is subject to treaties to maintain peace on the island of Ireland. That is why it is having special treatment, and it is why Unionists support that and are trying to work so hard to have a deal that works for all parts of the United Kingdom, but it is not equivalent to Scotland.

**Mr Grieve:** I value my hon. Friend and neighbour—in terms of our rooms—far too much to ignore what he has to say, but I have to say to him that my Unionism extends to Scotland in a very big way, and I think he knows that. Admittedly one can make powerful arguments to the contrary on this, as indeed he and his colleagues have done—it is such a pleasure to have them here as dotted Conservative representatives from north of the border. That has given me such pleasure, but we cannot ignore the arguments that will be made by those who disagree with us. I simply make the point that I think I

know enough about the situation to see that that argument is going to be made in a context where, on the evidence of the 2016 referendum, a majority in Scotland wanted to remain.

It is not that Scotland is the same as Northern Ireland—I wish to reassure him on that point. There are exceptional features to Northern Ireland, but I simply say that we, as a Unionist party, are creating an extra layer of difficulty for ourselves, which we will have to argue our way through. Of course, that may be an inherent consequence of Brexit; it is one reason why I regret so much the 2016 result, although I acknowledge that we cannot ignore it. However, I have suggested repeatedly—I will not go over this now—that there is a better way of trying to address this issue: by going back and getting confirmation that this is what people really want, because of the nature and consequences of what we are about to do.

My final point is about why I will vote against this Bill on Second Reading. I might have abstained otherwise, but I very much regret the programme motion, which is treating the House in an insulting way. It also says something about this Government that worries me. I am a Conservative—even though I have lost the Whip I remain a Conservative—and to see a Government, on a constitutional measure, playing bully-boy tactics with this House can only be counterproductive to the very aims they would like to achieve. This is not the quiet government I came here to try to deliver, and I therefore regret very much that I will vote against the programme motion and against the Government on Second Reading.

4.35 pm

**Sammy Wilson** (East Antrim) (DUP): I would love to vote today for a Bill that would take us out of the EU, but unfortunately we find ourselves in a position where we cannot support this Bill. I want to make something clear: allegations have been made that the agenda of those who oppose the Bill today is to keep us in the EU, but neither I nor my party has any desire to stay in the EU, nor does the record of my party indicate that. What we demand is that, as we are part of the United Kingdom and took part in a United Kingdom-wide referendum, as part of the United Kingdom we leave on the same terms as the rest of the United Kingdom. That is not the case with this Bill, nor with this agreement.

The Prime Minister has said that if we do not agree to this Bill, we will not get another chance—that if we do not agree this deal, the agreement will not be reopened. I have heard those arguments made before; in fact, the Prime Minister just ignored them when they were made previously, because he knew that they were untrue. Given the enormity of the issues involved, I do not believe that we should vote for the Bill tonight.

A number of arguments have been made. The first is that this is our chance to take back sovereignty. It is not a chance to take back sovereignty in Northern Ireland; indeed, Northern Ireland will be left out of that move towards taking back sovereignty. Let us just look at the facts about Northern Ireland: we will be left in an arrangement whereby EU law on all trade, goods and so on will be applied to Northern Ireland. We will be in a situation where, despite what the Prime Minister says, we will be subject to the full implementation of EU customs regulations. Goods moving from GB into Northern

[Sammy Wilson]

Ireland will be subject to declarations, checks and the imposition of tariffs. We found out yesterday that, despite the promise of unfettered access to the UK market, checks will occur in the opposite direction for the thousands of firms in Northern Ireland that currently export to GB. At the moment they do not face any impediments or costs, but they will face them now.

**Mr Jonathan Djanogly** (Huntingdon) (Con): The right hon. Gentleman, a fellow member of the Exiting the European Union Committee, will know that a stream of Northern Ireland businessmen and farmers' representatives have come to the Committee to beg that we deliver a deal. That is the right thing for the United Kingdom and for businesses in Northern Ireland and, indeed, the south of Ireland.

**Sammy Wilson:** That is right, but the one thing that they have always demanded is that we have unfettered access to the market, which is our main market. We sell five times more to GB than we do to the Irish Republic, yet as a result of this Bill and our being trapped in the customs union, we now find that we will be subject to checks.

**Alex Chalk** (Cheltenham) (Con): But should the right hon. Gentleman not also weigh in the balance the fact that a widget maker in Northern Ireland would not only have access over the border into the Republic, but would also be able to take advantage of any trade deals that the United Kingdom as a whole was able to secure with third countries? Is that not an advantage that he should weigh in the balance?

**Sammy Wilson:** I am glad of that intervention, because it brings me to the very next point that I wish to make, on the issue of sovereignty. Although the Prime Minister has claimed that what the hon. Gentleman says is the case, the withdrawal agreement makes it quite clear that it is not. According to article 5, paragraph 1, that access will be available only depending on whether the agreement or trade deal conflicts with EU protocols. It must not conflict with the protocols in the agreement. It says:

“provided that those agreements do not prejudice the application of this Protocol.”

Those are the only conditions under which we can take part in the free trade arrangements that the Government may set up with other countries.

On the issue of sovereignty, we are part of the EU regulations, we are part of the EU customs code, we have checks down the Irish border, and we are subject to any future trade deals on which the United Kingdom agrees, subject to whether they conflict with EU protocol. The Prime Minister said, “Oh, but it will all dissolve if there is a free trade arrangement that allows it to be dissolved.” But again, it has been made quite clear that it is only if the EU agrees to release us from the protocols that we can take the benefits of that free trade arrangement.

**Luke Graham:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Sammy Wilson:** I will not give way, because I have very little time.

That is the issue of sovereignty. Northern Ireland will be left as a semi-detached part of the United Kingdom. In the long run, of course, the whole focus of attention

will move from Westminster to Dublin. Who will speak for us in Europe when these regulations come through? Who will speak for us in Europe when the customs rules are affecting us? It will not be the UK Government. Increasingly, the focus will be on the Dublin Government.

The second argument is that we can vote our way out of the arrangements. The mechanism for voting our way out of them is now a simple majority vote. I never thought that I would hear a Prime Minister who has insisted that we adhere to the rules of the Belfast agreement suddenly bring up its central premise in this way. The first issue that was addressed in the Belfast agreement was what kind of checks and balances should be in place to protect both communities when it come to the operation of the Assembly. The Belfast agreement said that, to give those protections and ensure that all sections of the community could participate and work together, arrangements would be put in place “to ensure that key decisions are taken on a cross-community basis.”

There is no greater and no more divisive a decision than this issue of our relationship with the EU, yet the safety valve in the Belfast agreement has been taken away. The Prime Minister said, “Oh, it has been taken away because it is a reserved matter anyway.” These are not reserved matters. Indeed, the very reason why we have a whole section in the Bill about what the Northern Ireland Assembly can and cannot do is that they are devolved matters, yet on these devolved matters, and on this one issue in particular, the Government have agreed to take away the central principle of consent. That will do damage when it comes to the operation of the Assembly in future. We cannot be selective like that, and certainly not on an issue such as this.

I come now to the last issue. I nearly choked when the Prime Minister said, “Don't worry about it, because all of these changes that will affect Northern Ireland will be light-touch. It is not really a boundary down the Irish sea; they are just light-touch regulations.” These light-touch regulations require firms to make declarations when they sell goods to another part of their own country and to pay duties for goods that come from a part of their own country, which incur costs. I would at least have had some respect had the Prime Minister said, “I have a deadline of 31 October. I have to get this round. I am therefore having to make concessions and, unfortunately, Northern Ireland is a concession, and you will understand that.” What I cannot take is a Prime Minister who thinks that I cannot read the agreement that has been published, and who thinks that I cannot see in that agreement what the impact on Northern Ireland will be—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. I am immensely grateful to the right hon. Gentleman.

In a bid to accommodate the maximum number of remaining colleagues, there will now be a four-minute limit on Back-Bench speeches with immediate effect. Interventions are part of debate, but I simply counsel colleagues to be sparing in them, because it will stop other people speaking.

4.43 pm

**John Redwood** (Wokingham) (Con): This Parliament is letting the public down. Three years and four months ago, I and 17.4 million people voted to leave the European Union. We voted to take back control of our laws, our

borders and our money, and we are still waiting for that to happen. We were told by the then Prime Minister that he would send a letter announcing our decision immediately after the result, and under the treaty we expected to be out after two years with or without agreement by the European Union.

Instead, we find ourselves today having yet another debate after so many groundhog days in this place, with the same people rehearsing the same arguments, as around half the Members of the House of Commons—we will find out whether it is more than half—are still trying to stop any kind of Brexit, and are forcing those of us who believe in Brexit to dilute what we are trying to do and delaying our enjoying the fruits of our Brexit vision.

Let us look at the agreement, because it is far from ideal from the point of view of a leave voter. I am delighted that the Prime Minister has today reassured us that we will completely take back control of our fish, and that we will decide how that amazing resource is nurtured, looked after and used by our country. That is very welcome. I also accept that the documents show that we will not have to go into battle with our troops on a vote that we have lost, and that we are not about to be sucked into losing the sovereign control of our Government and Parliament over our foreign and defence policy.

But we are still in trouble with the powers of the European Court of Justice over our laws. I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Stone (Sir William Cash) for contributing to the Bill, because there is now a sovereignty clause, and I hope it works; it is a definite improvement. However, I am extremely worried by the situation in Northern Ireland.

**Jim Shannon:** Does the right hon. Gentleman not understand that Unionists believe that our sovereignty has been removed by this agreement and that being a Unionist in Northern Ireland is very different from being a Unionist in the rest of the United Kingdom, including the right hon. Gentleman's constituency? Does he not feel that Unionists have been duped and deceived in how this agreement has been brought forward?

**John Redwood:** I do not like the provisions on Northern Ireland for the reasons that the hon. Gentleman and his colleagues have set out. I want the whole country to leave, and Northern Ireland to be a full part of the United Kingdom under the same arrangements. If there are any different arrangements, I certainly want a consent mechanism that is acceptable to the representatives from the Democratic Unionist party and the people they represent.

I am also extremely worried about the money in this set of proposals. We never talk about the money, and so many MPs seem to think that giving billions away to the European Union is just fine. Taking back control of our money was central to the campaign. Indeed, it was very contentious, because people argued about exactly how much it was. I do not think it has been properly quantified. The liabilities are potentially large and long lasting, and there is no attempt in the agreement or the Bill to control them.

**Mr Paterson:** Could my right hon. Friend give us his best estimate of what he thinks the bill will be?

**John Redwood:** Well, we are told £39 billion, but I think that is a very low estimate; I think it will be considerably more than that and will stretch many years

into the future under some of the headings that we are providing for. My worry is that the EU will be the main driver in deciding what the bill is because there is not a satisfactory dispute resolution procedure. The EU could levy the bill, saying that it is European law and that it knows best what we should be paying. We have to be extremely careful.

If the Bill does make any progress tonight—that is not looking very likely from some of the things people are saying—I hope that there will be considerable concentration in Committee on whether there are mechanisms for having better discipline over the money, because we voted to take back control of the money. I want some of that money for hospitals, schools and other public facilities in my constituency, and I hope that many other Members of Parliament take the same view. It would be very galling indeed if we found that we were technically out of the European Union but were still paying it a great deal of money.

I approach this agreement in a spirit of disappointment, but I think the Prime Minister was deeply damaged and undermined by the European Union (Withdrawal) (No. 2) Act 2019, which greatly reduced the bargaining leverage of the United Kingdom Government, and I think people recognise that. It is strange that that legislation, which might as well be renamed the “breaking the Prime Minister's promises” Act, is permissible because surely we either have confidence in our Government and in the Prime Minister to be able to keep his word, or we do not have confidence in our Government collectively, in which case we can get a different Government. This Prime Minister has said that he will take us out on 31 October. There is a lot of support for that in the country, and I hope that we can find a way to make it take place. The Prime Minister has said that we would preferably leave with a deal, but that if we cannot get a decent deal we will leave without a so-called deal.

I think the language is totally misleading. There is no such thing as a no-deal Brexit. There is either leaving and signing a withdrawal agreement or leaving and not signing a withdrawal agreement. Were we to leave not signing a withdrawal agreement, there is an aviation agreement and a Government purchasing agreement, there are haulage and customs arrangements, and there is a general agreement on facilitation of trade through the WTO, so we would have a managed WTO exit, which I think would work extremely well.

I want to spend that money in Britain to promote growth and a stronger economy. I want the free trade agreements that I think we might be able to generate with the rest of the world. If we just left, the EU would want to negotiate a free trade agreement with us, but all the time it thinks it has a chance of our not leaving it is not going to offer anything or be positive about that, because it thinks it might, from its point of view, do something better.

4.50 pm

**Mr David Lammy** (Tottenham) (Lab): I am very grateful to have just a few moments to make a contribution to this important debate.

I think it has now been 1,216 days since the referendum, and it is clear that all of us in this House are weary and fatigued by, and some of us are certainly fed up with, the groundhog day of constant debate about this subject. In my constituency only the weekend before last, two



[Mr David Lammy]

men were knifed to within an inch of their lives. While we were sitting in the debate on Saturday, I saw an email from a constituent who was complaining that his 10-year-old son had just been mugged. I would so much prefer that we were talking about law and order and crime in our country. This morning, the GP practice that served me and my family growing up in Tottenham for most of my life was described as inadequate by the inspectorate. Again, I wish we were discussing health in this Chamber, not constantly returning to this issue.

As I reflect on where we are, and think about very good colleagues and friends on the Opposition Benches who are minded to vote for this Bill, I think of what connects constituencies such as mine and their constituencies in other parts of the country, and that is most certainly a degree of deprivation and poverty that our country should have escaped from by 2019 but is very real on our high streets when we look at the proliferation of betting shops and abandoned shops, when we visit our estates, and when we look at the prospects for too many of our young people.

**Mr Ben Bradshaw** (Exeter) (Lab): My right hon. Friend refers to people feeling frustrated, bored and fatigued. Does he agree that none of those things is an excuse for making what could be a very, very bad decision in haste, which is what the Government are trying to make us do today?

**Mr Lammy:** My right hon. Friend is absolutely right. As much as this decision is one that needs to be taken, we should not make it haste and we should think very, very carefully about the implications for our country.

**Mr Jim Cunningham** (Coventry South) (Lab): Like my right hon. Friend, we in Coventry have many issues with young people and knife crime, and some instances of more serious crimes. Does he agree that it is totally illogical that the Government rejected the previous Bill and expect us all to support a Bill that makes people worse off? People in Coventry and the west midlands are concerned about their jobs and funding for universities.

**Mr Lammy:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who brings me to the tenor of what I want to say.

On the Government's own estimates, with a Canada-style free trade deal we would see in our country a reduction in GDP of 6.7%. When we use a figure like that, it almost does not mean anything, but in a constituency—

**Kevin Hollinrake** *rose*—

**Mr Lammy:** I will not give way; I am going to make progress.

In a constituency like Tottenham, it means everything. It means that the knife crime that I am worried about could get considerably worse. I do not want the South Side of Chicago in Tottenham. It means that the jobs that we need may not be there. I think of the constituencies that good friends represent in other parts of this country. If we leave a £220 billion European market and leave the single market and the customs union, we will inevitably get tariffs. Tariffs will inevitably affect the manufacturing that is left, and that will surely mean a reduction in jobs

in those constituencies. How will that assist our country? On the Government's own estimates, there would be a reduction in GDP of 11% in the north-east of this country, and a reduction of 8% in the west midlands and the east midlands. That is massive; it is bigger than the 2008 crash. The truth is that, while there has been some recovery in London, there has been very little outside London in parts of the midlands, the north-west and the north-east. How can we seriously contemplate making things worse for those people?

We have been talking about a trade deal with the United States. I went on an all-party visit to the United States in July and we sat with Republicans and Democrats to talk about the meat of what a trade deal looked like. They were all clear, as was the trade union body in America, that there would of course be a reduction in labour standards because their labour standards are lower than ours. They were clear about wanting some of our agriculture, our pharmaceuticals and our healthcare. They also raised issues about Hollywood getting its grip on our creative industries. Why would we do that? How will that help our people?

So, we would get tariffs and a massive drop in growth, yet I stand here prepared to vote for this deal, but only on the basis that we put it back to the British people so that they can have the final say: do they want this deal or do they want to remain? I am prepared, despite the poverty and hardship in my own constituency, to go for this deal, but on that one condition. That is how we get this done. That is how we bring our country together. We must actually use democracy to say, "Do you really want this deal?" That is the only way forward. The rest is noise. As weary as we are, I cannot walk through the Lobby and knowingly wave this through with so little scrutiny on behalf of my constituents.

4.57 pm

**Mr John Baron** (Basildon and Billericay) (Con): For those of us who felt compelled to vote down the previous withdrawal agreement and deal, I would suggest that this deal has indeed been worth waiting for, and, as indicated last week, I will support it in the Lobby tonight. The Prime Minister has proved his critics wrong. The withdrawal agreement has been reopened. The harmful backstop has been removed, and we have secured a better deal. All those who previously argued that that was not possible should perhaps now reflect.

No one is pretending for one moment that this is a perfect deal. As someone who voted leave, there are aspects of the transition period that I do not like. I question an element of the Bill. I question the EU's say over our affairs, given that we voted to leave in June 2016. However, I also accept that compromises are required in any negotiation. Although I have qualms about the transition period to December 2020, they are manageable. For me, the elephant in the room was always the backstop. It alone could have trapped the UK indefinitely in a structure of the EU's making. It alone could have denied us Brexit. It alone could have denied us the referendum result, and it alone would have made a bad deal—trade deal or no trade deal—more likely. That is no longer possible.

Now that the previous backstop has been banished, the pressure is on both sides to negotiate and agree a good trade deal. A good trade deal is therefore now

more likely, not less likely, because the backstop has been removed. It takes two to tango. Both sides can now simply walk away, but it is far more likely—given their common starting positions, and the fact that it is in their common interests—that they will negotiate a good trade deal. No longer will there be any risk to the entire UK of not being able to benefit from trade deals that we might strike with the faster growing economies outside the EU, and meanwhile the Northern Ireland-Ireland border is kept open.

I suggest to the House that concerns about workers' rights are somewhat misplaced, given the assurances provided by the Prime Minister and the fact that such regulations could be watered down only if Parliament voted to do so. We should have more confidence in our ability in this place to decide what is right, and such decisions will now be made here in Westminster, not by remote EU bureaucrats.

I urge colleagues on both sides of the House to vote for the Prime Minister's deal this evening. It makes a good trade deal more likely, and it keeps the Irish border open, while ensuring that the whole UK leaves the customs union. Let us be honest with people outside this Westminster bubble. It has taken three and a half years to get to this point, and we still have not left. It is about time that we finally delivered on the referendum result. Let us now heal the wounds in this country and move on.

5.1 pm

**Anna Soubry (Broxtowe) (IGC):** It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay (Mr Baron). I will not be voting for the Bill this evening, because it is nothing more than a charter for a no-deal Brexit. The safeguards in the withdrawal agreement negotiated by the previous Prime Minister that would have ensured that we would not leave without a deal at the end of the implementation period in 2020 have now been removed. It is quite clear that the so-called backstop for England, Wales and Scotland has gone. The reason why so many Conservative Members who opposed the previous Prime Minister's deal on all three occasions it came to this House are now so keen to vote for this Bill and this agreement is that it will deliver the hard no-deal Brexit they believe in, and in some cases have done for decades.

The hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay referred to the backstop having been removed, but the reality and truth is that for Northern Ireland the new backstop is an arrangement that will be there in perpetuity. As this House knows, the right hon. Member for East Antrim (Sammy Wilson) and I disagree on many things, but on this issue we are at one. In his speech, he made a number of serious assertions about the impact of not only the Bill but the withdrawal agreement on the Union and, in particular, Northern Ireland, and some Conservative Members sat and shook their heads, querying that. It concerns me that because of this terrible programme motion, there will be nothing to allow any Member, Committee or independent organisation to scrutinise and check whether his assertions are correct or false. Having read this Bill and the protocol twice, I think he is right, and we need to be sure.

**Mr Baron:** The right hon. Lady referred to me, so I thank her for giving way. Some of us were shaking our heads because we disagree with one or two of the

factual statements made by the right hon. Member for East Antrim, but we are happy to pursue that conversation afterwards. As somebody who served in the troubles in the 1980s, I know that the Union means a lot to many ex-soldiers on both sides of the House. I can assure the right hon. Lady that we do not take this lightly. If I genuinely believed that this was a threat to the Union, I would not be supporting it.

**Anna Soubry:** The hon. Gentleman should listen to the voices from Northern Ireland—and it is not just the DUP or the hon. Member for North Down (Lady Hermon); it is from across the community. This is a genuine threat, and it is incredible that Members of the Conservative and Unionist party are prepared to vote through this Bill when its attendant protocols will undoubtedly mean that there will be a separate arrangement for Northern Ireland in perpetuity. There is nothing in the Bill that will allow things to change.

I would also ask: how much better is our country since we had this referendum? Are we a happier, gentler people, and are friends, families and communities more united or are we divided now in a way that we have never experienced before? This Bill will do nothing to heal divisions; it will actually increase the divides in our society. That is a concern.

I believe with a passion that not one single promise that was made by the leave campaign has been fulfilled in any way, shape or form. We were promised a deal before we left. We were promised that Northern Ireland would not be treated any differently, and we were promised that it would keep and preserve the United Kingdom. We were made a promise that we would have the same trading relationship that we currently enjoy as a member of the single market and the customs union, and none of those things has been delivered in the Bill or any of the attendant documents.

I agree with the right hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr Lammy). He and I disagree on so many things, but on this we are at one. If this is so good, it should go back to the people. That should not be by way of a general election, which will solve nothing just as the 2017 general election did not solve anything—

**John Mann (Bassetlaw) (Lab):** It'll get rid of you!

**Anna Soubry:** This now needs to go back to the British people. And may I just say that I do not actually mind losing my job, but I do care about the jobs of my constituents? I will do the right thing by my constituents, their children and their grandchildren, and by their jobs. That is why this matter must go back for a people's vote now that we have clarity on Brexit and see what a disaster it is across the United Kingdom.

5.6 pm

**Rory Stewart (Penrith and The Border) (Ind):** In this whole debate, I believe there have essentially been two principles. One of them is the principle of how to honour the result of that referendum, and the second is the principle of how to take a deal safely and responsibly through Parliament. My big beg to the House—here I am speaking to colleagues who voted for Brexit—is let us, please, in these very final stages, do it properly. This is their great founding moment. This document is an opportunity for them to create an enormous constitutional change that can last for the next 40 years, so please do it

[Rory Stewart]

properly—do it properly through the House of Commons. I know that is a very difficult thing to say, but this is possible to do.

I could make an argument about the philosophical principle here, but the reason to do this is essentially a reason of trust. We have heard a lot about trust from Brexiteers today, and for every kind of reason: there is every reason for Brexiteers to be enraged. They voted to leave, but they did not leave on 31 March, and they are in a boiling rage. They were promised we would leave on 31 October, and they want to leave. I get it. But it is also really important that we think about the other half of the population, and we have to think about how to do this legitimately.

This is not easy to do, but I promise this as somebody who voted remain and has backed a Brexit deal from the moment of that referendum again and again and again. I have done so for no reason at all: I am not a member of this Conservative party any more—I do not get any bonus points for voting for a second referendum—and I literally have nothing to gain from backing this Brexit. I am backing it for one reason only, which is that people voted for it, and I promised to respect the result of that vote. However, in return, people deserve scrutiny. This is a hell of a big document, and we cannot pretend that two and a half days is long enough to scrutinise it.

I know there will be many voices in the Chamber saying, “We’ve been talking about this long enough. What are we going to scrutinise anyway? What speeches are we going to hear that we haven’t already heard, and anyway the whole place is a talking shop.” We cannot think like this. This is our Parliament, and we cannot do down our Parliament. As the right hon. Member for Wokingham (John Redwood) has said again and again, this was an exercise in regaining the sovereignty of Parliament. If it is about regaining the sovereignty of Parliament, treat Parliament with respect. If we are taking back control from a European court to a British court, treat the British court with respect. If you are taking back control from a European Parliament to a British Parliament, treat Parliament with respect. If you are taking back control, show that you are worthy to exercise that control.

All I am asking for is a little patience. Three days in Committee and three days on Report and we could have the Bill done in the House of Commons by 31 October and taken in the Lords. I promise you, this founding moment for you, instead of being poisoned with the stain of illegitimacy and associated with bullying tactics and a casual attitude to the Supreme Court, the monarchy and the Parliament, could be done in an honourable, responsible and proper fashion of which you can be proud for the next 40 years.

5.10 pm

**Jonathan Edwards** (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (PC): It has been obvious to me for some considerable time that Brexiteer politicians have never fully understood the consequences of their policies. That is why during the referendum they were able to claim that they wanted to end free movement while staying in the single market; why they said that leaving the customs union was compatible with the Good Friday agreement; why they claimed the new free trade agreement with the EU would be the easiest

in history; and how the British state would be able to sign trade deals around the world based on divergence from EU tariffs and regulations while maintaining frictionless access to the European economic area. The Bill clearly shows that all of those claims are completely false.

Because of the obsession of the British Government and the Labour Opposition with ending free movement, the British state will have to leave the single market. The new FTA with the EU will not be negotiated until after the British state has left the European Union, meaning that this continues to be a blind Brexit.

Compatibility with the Good Friday agreement has only been vaguely achieved by effectively keeping Northern Ireland in the customs union and the single market, ending the economic coherence of the British state. Far from removing the backstop, as claimed by the British Government and the Prime Minister, it is now enacted as policy in the withdrawal agreement for Northern Ireland—a frontstop, as some have called it. In my country, people are asking, “If it’s good enough for Northern Ireland, why isn’t it good enough for Wales?”

We now know that it would be impossible to sign trade deals with the likes of the United States without drastically reducing our access to the European market. Writing last week in the *Evening Standard*, the right hon. Member for South West Hertfordshire (Mr Gauke), the former Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said that assessments indicated that for every £1 gained from international trade agreements, £33 would be lost through loss of access to European markets owing to the need to diverge on standards and the extra costs of tariffs.

“Get Brexit Done” is the latest slogan that we have heard ad nauseam from the British Government, but allowing the Bill to move to the next stages would not mean an end to Brexit. It would not even be the beginning of the end; it would simply be the end of the beginning as we enter phase 2 and start discussions on the trade agreements. The British Government will be negotiating one of the most complex trade deals in history, different from all others in history as it will seek to build barriers rather than break them down. They hope to do that in just over a year. As has been mentioned many times, the EU’s free trade agreements with South Korea, Canada, Singapore, Japan and Vietnam have taken between six and eight years to negotiate, with some of them still awaiting ratification.

**Angus Brendan MacNeil:** The hon. Gentleman is right to draw attention to the EU free trade agreements. We have probably got the best in the world. Any free trade agreements the UK has, say with the United States, will be only about a fortieth of what we will lose with the European Union. In total, from the 6% to 8% we lose with the European Union, a free trade agreement with every country in the world will only make up about 1.4% of GDP—a huge loss.

**Jonathan Edwards:** The Chair of the International Trade Committee speaks with great experience. That is, of course, why the British Government are refusing to publish the impact assessments on the deal.

The British Government will be negotiating the new FTA from a position of extreme weakness. We all know that at the end of the transition we will face the exact same situation as we currently face—further delays and extensions or a no-deal cliff edge.



My party will base our approach to the next stages of the Bill on some key areas. First, we will demand impact assessments on the withdrawal agreement in time for consideration and scrutiny. Secondly, we will seek membership of the customs union—not a customs union—with the European Union. A customs union would mean that the UK would have to open up its markets to any trade deals the EU makes, while not having reciprocal access to those other markets. Thirdly, we will be calling for the UK to remain in the single market. Fourthly, the Bill as it currently stands denies the voice of our democratically elected Parliament in Wales, y Senedd.

If this Government respected the principle and legitimacy of devolution, they would require any future free trade deal struck by the British Government with the European Union to have the consent not only of this House but of the Senedd, the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly. As the Bill currently stands, the Parliament of Wallonia, a constituent part of Belgium, would have more influence over the future trading relationships between the British state and the European Union. That is simply not good enough.

5.15 pm

**Justine Greening** (Putney) (Ind): I would like to make a brief contribution on what is planned in the Bill, how the Government propose to take it forward, and where they are taking our country. They seem to be the pertinent questions tonight.

On what is planned in the Bill, I have deep concerns. The situation as the Bill pertains to Northern Ireland should not be just brushed away by Members of my former party, the Conservative and Unionist party. They are real issues that affect real people. To simply ignore them because it is inconvenient to take them on board is not only inappropriate but ultimately dangerous. I was very much struck by the speech by the right hon. Member for East Antrim (Sammy Wilson), a representative from Northern Ireland. He talked about two issues that go to the heart of the problems we are trying to grapple with, which affect Northern Ireland but have wider application. On cross-community concerns, the understanding in the Good Friday agreement was that communities had to go forward together if that agreement was going to work. We in this House should learn from that. We are a United Kingdom, yet we seek to go forward with this Brexit deal in a way that ignores the very clear concerns of the other nations in the United Kingdom—not just Northern Ireland, but Scotland and Wales.

**Mr Sam Gyimah** (East Surrey) (LD): Does my right hon. Friend agree that this is a seminal moment? The Conservative and Unionist party is handing over legal, political and administrative control of Northern Ireland to the EU—almost like the United States handing over control of Alaska to Russia—and giving the people consent six years after this has taken place. That surely cannot be acceptable.

**Justine Greening**: It is very concerning that the rules Northern Ireland will have to live under will, in many regards, be set by the European Union, a body in which it will not have representatives. Ultimately, that is a recipe for something failing politically.

The point about consent matters. It is absolutely unacceptable for people in Northern Ireland to be thrown into an important new political arrangement

and mechanism, with no say over whether it happens to them. Equally, it is unacceptable for the rest of the UK to face the same situation, going into a form of Brexit that many people who campaigned for Brexit, including Nigel Farage, who heads the Brexit party, feel is not the Brexit they campaigned for. He has called this deal Brexit in name only. I obviously understand that there is disagreement over what Brexit means, but that is one of the reasons why, three and a half years later, we are reaching this moment today.

Many Members who campaigned for Brexit, not least the Prime Minister, held up a Brexit deal by voting against one they felt did not deliver on that referendum result. I respect their view, but that brings me on to my point about how the Bill is being taken forward. Frankly, it is absolutely hypocritical for people who held up Brexit because they thought it was the wrong one, to then decide that their version should be fast-tracked and steamrollered through this House because we have run out of time. It is down to their actions that we are three and a half years down the road and we have not moved forward. It is entirely unacceptable to ram this through in two days, and it simply stores up problems for our United Kingdom by doing it this way.

I see no problem with taking longer and giving this House of representatives time to genuinely air the important issues about this proposal, have them understood, and have the Government able to respond to them. We have heard some of them today, but we have not heard, for example, about clause 29, which talks about what could be an important role for the European Scrutiny Committee in raising issues on EU legislation that comes through during the withdrawal agreement period, when we will simply have to take those rules but have no say about how they are set. The clause says that a motion can come before the House and be voted on. What happens then? Nobody knows.

Those are significant issues, but perhaps my biggest problem with the Bill is that it does not address the underlying issues of inequality of opportunity, which I believe sat behind and drove many of the concerns that resulted in people voting for Brexit in communities such as the one in which I grew up in Rotherham. In the end, I believe that we will have to come back and tackle those, and my concern is that Brexit does not.

5.20 pm

**Caroline Lucas** (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): I am very happy to follow the powerful speech by the right hon. Member for Putney (Justine Greening). The decision facing this House could not be more serious, nor could the stakes be higher. This is a debate about the kind of country that we want to become and the kind of values that we want to enshrine. I want to speak out for all those who do not share this Government's vision of a mean-minded little Britain with our borders closed and our horizons narrowed; and for those who do not accept a future that betrays the hopes and dreams of our young people, who, let us remember, overwhelmingly voted to remain—we should think about their futures when we vote tonight. I want to speak out for those who are concerned about the threat that this deal poses to the fragile peace in Northern Ireland; for those who, like me, are proud to stand up for the precious right to be able to freely work and study, and live and love, in 27 other countries; for those who celebrate the role of and contribution made by the 3 million EU citizens in

[*Caroline Lucas*]

our country; for those who recognise that, imperfect though it undoubtedly is, the EU remains the greatest international venture for peace, prosperity and freedom in history; and for those who do not believe that democracy stopped in its tracks three and a half years ago.

As many others have said today, democracy is a process, not a single event. Since that referendum, we have had one general election, two Prime Ministers and a wealth of further information about the costs and complexities of Brexit, and the lies and lawbreaking that stained that poll on 23 June 2016. The Prime Minister has changed his mind on more occasions than it is possible to count, most recently over the prospect of a border in the Irish sea. It is wrong that the British people are apparently the only people who will not be allowed to change their minds.

**Steve Brine** (Winchester) (Ind): I am listening to what the hon. Lady says, as always. If another referendum were to come forward—that is not out of the question, although I think it is unlikely—and it were, say, to confirm a leave vote by 52% to 48%, would the hon. Lady accept that, or would she continue her campaign?

**Caroline Lucas**: I would both accept that and recommend that, if the Kyle-Wilson amendment was the kind of amendment that was put, it meant that it would not even have to come back to this Parliament—it would go straight into law. That is what should happen.

This Brexit is the hardest of hard Brexits. It is led by the hard right and, frankly, the rich and the reckless. It is yanking Britain completely out of the customs union and single market—the most advanced examples of international economic co-operation in history, which crucially, protect us with the strongest regulatory framework on earth, with high standards for food safety, workers' rights and environmental protection.

The so-called guarantees on workers' rights that are given in, for example, proposed new schedule 5A to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 are utterly worthless. They simply require a Minister of the Crown to make some statement about whether or not workers' rights are going to be rolled back, and if they cannot get around to making that statement, that is fine, too, because they do not have to unless it is "practicable". When it comes to workers' rights, we know what the Government's agenda is. This is not some kind of conspiracy theory.

**Mr Seely**: Will the hon. Lady give way?

**Caroline Lucas**: No, I will not. The Government have told us what their plans are. This Prime Minister has openly said that Brexit offers us an opportunity to "regulate differently" and when he says that, I do not think that he means increasing those standards—call me cynical.

**Mary Creagh** (Wakefield) (Lab): Does the hon. Lady agree that this is a recipe for regulatory chaos, not just between us and the EU, but within the four nations of the United Kingdom, where different environmental standards will apply?

**Caroline Lucas**: I completely agree. That brings me on to the environment. Again, when we look at the so-called reassurances, we are supposed to believe that

the Environment Bill can answer the question of how we properly regulate in the absence of the Commission and the European Court of Justice, yet the Environment Bill, when given any scrutiny, as on the Environmental Audit Committee, shows, for example, that the office for environmental protection is insufficiently independent, is answerable to Government, not Parliament, and cannot levy fines, which has been the one thing in the past that has finally made the Government come into line on issues such as air pollution. The environmental principles are also very weak. They simply sit there in a policy statement, which we have not even been allowed to see, rather than in the Bill. On the sector targets, there are only four out of the 10 headline goals of the 25-year environment plan and they do not even have to be met until 2037. That is inadequate, especially when the interim targets are themselves not legally binding. So let us be clear: this is all about a race to the bottom on social and environmental standards.

When I say that I support a confirmatory ballot and that I would vote to remain, I do not for a moment mean that we should go back to how things were before the referendum in 2016. The referendum outcome was a resounding radical rejection of the status quo and of an economy that brutally fails so many, forces parents to use food banks to feed their kids, demonises immigrants and condemns us to climate breakdown. It was also a powerful and furious comment on our broken democracy. Brexit laid bare the extent to which our government structures are derelict. When citizens were deprived of a credible representative power that clearly belongs or is accountable to them, it led to anger with the most remote authority of all. The EU was blamed for the UK's structural elitism and held responsible as the source of all the powerlessness, yet Brexit shows no sign of giving us back control or changing the way we rule. Instead, the apparatus of government has been hijacked by the Vote Leave campaign.

I recoil from the economic vandalism of this hardest of Brexits and I worry deeply about the race to the bottom. But I understand that a way forward must be found, so I will compromise if the Government do. I will not oppose the passage of the Bill through the Commons if they attach a confirmatory ballot to it and allow the British people to have their say. Three and a half years after the 2016 referendum, so much has changed, including, I believe, the will of the British people. That is what the vast majority of polls indicate. If the Government are so certain that this Brexit is exactly what the British people want, why are they so afraid to put it back to them?

5.27 pm

**Sir William Cash** (Stone) (Con): In the time available, I will make a few points regarding clauses 29 and 36, which I authored myself in negotiation with the Government because I was so concerned about article 4 of the protocol and part 4 of the agreement.

The entire Bill is ultimately about sovereignty. I would go further: we need not only to reaffirm that, as these clauses do, but to increase the monitoring and scrutiny of these arrangements within the framework of the House. The ports regulations were pushed through a few years ago. Similar provisions will be pushed through in the transitional period, when the EU will take control of us in the legislative process, and we will have no

means of defence except by reference to the kind of clauses that I have produced and which I am glad the Prime Minister has accepted.

Section 1 of European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 is clear and unambiguous: we will repeal the 1972 Act on 31 October. That is the law of the land, as I have said repeatedly. It is clear and unambiguous and it is the law. Lord Denning, without doubt the greatest jurist in modern history, specifically stated that where Parliament wishes to assert its supremacy, it can do so by stating clearly that a domestic statute is to apply, notwithstanding European law, and this would include sections 2 and 3 of the 1972 Act. He stated clearly:

“If the time should come when our Parliament deliberately passes an Act with the intention of repudiating the Treaty or any provision in it or intentionally of acting inconsistently with it and says so in express terms”,

as section 1 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 clearly does,

“it would be the duty of our courts to follow the statute of our Parliament.”

Nothing could be clearer. I would add to that mix the fact that there are principles of sincere co-operation under article 4 of the treaty, and of wrongful reason in international law, which I have no time to go into.

This is the gravamen of the question, and the manner in which I believe we will be able, through the mechanisms provided under clauses 29 and 36, to give protection. I am deeply concerned about the provisions relating to Northern Ireland, and I agree with what others have said on that subject.

**Kate Hoey:** I appreciate what the hon. Gentleman has managed to get into the Bill, but will he clarify a little further how it could help a situation that is extremely concerning to all who care about Northern Ireland?

**Sir William Cash:** The hon. Lady is a member of my Select Committee. Let me simply add, having set up evidence sessions with departmental Select Committees and having taken control of the manner in which the report is produced on that evidence, that Ministers will be under an obligation to allow the motion to be moved, and furthermore we will be able to vote on it. The bottom line, therefore, is that there will be real opportunities for the House to express its views in conjunction with any Select Committee that is brought into the arena with the European Scrutiny Committee. We will work effectively with those other Committees, as we have already done, for the purpose of adducing that evidence. We will then, I believe, be in a position to rely on the fact that the Floor of the House of Commons will determine the outcome of that evidence, and when there is a vote on it, we will then be able to apply the principles of parliamentary sovereignty in line with the judgment of Lord Denning, which I do not need to repeat.

These measures go to the very marrow of our body politic, which is the birthright of our citizens, forged over centuries in war and peace throughout our history. We had a referendum, and we had a decision from the British people. We must implement that decision, and anyone who opposes the Bill is effectively undermining our democracy and our self-government.

5.32 pm

**Owen Smith** (Pontypridd) (Lab): It is a pleasure, and instructive as ever, to follow the hon. Member for Stone (Sir William Cash), who has wanted this sort of dramatic, draconian, destructive Brexit to be brought about in our country for 30 years and more. He is obviously pleased because he thinks he is standing on the verge of achieving that, but I sincerely hope he is wrong.

There are many deplorable things in this Bill, and we could spend hours enumerating them, but unfortunately we do not have those hours because the Government are trying to railroad the debate through in a few short hours. I will therefore concentrate on Northern Ireland, a part of the country where I have worked, to which I have devoted a great deal of my life, and which I feel is being extremely ill served by the Government. Of all the awful things that they have done in respect of this Bill, the cavalier, reckless way in which they have treated Northern Ireland is the most deplorable.

I want in particular to talk about the prosperity and the political stability of Northern Ireland, two things that have gone hand in hand since the Labour Government created a carefully crafted, uniquely balanced peace settlement through the Good Friday agreement, which is now in jeopardy as a result of the way in which the current Government are handling this matter. The worst thing about the way in which they have handled it just today is the deceitful caricature that has been presented. We have been told by the Prime Minister that there will be no additional burdens, no additional checks and no new border. None of these things are going to happen to Northern Ireland; Northern Ireland will be just the same as Kent.

None of those things are true—that is the fact of this—and I do not know whether the Prime Minister simply did not understand what was in his Bill or he was misrepresenting what was in it, because late yesterday evening the Government did sneak out an impact assessment and it makes very clear that the 20,000-odd businesses in Northern Ireland, that do around £7.5 billion-worth of trade with GB—with the rest of the UK—are every year going to have additional checks, burdens, costs and responsibilities. They will have to submit import and export documents. They will be subject to checks at the border. All agrifoods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland will be subject to checks. That is at point 261 of the official sensitive assessment.

There will be a new border—an agrifood goods border. All goods entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain will do so via a border inspection post. What sort of non-border has a border inspection post? There will be impacts to businesses in Northern Ireland in terms of their distribution. Point 278 points out that there would be extra checks, costs, delays and burdens for businesses in Northern Ireland.

There will be new risks. Point 294 states that “economic risks associated with the proposals could include reduced trade, business investment and consumer spending due to uncertainty and divergence in regulation within the United Kingdom.” That is not just for Northern Ireland; it is for the whole UK.

Finally, is this going to do anything good for the people of Northern Ireland? No, because the document concludes that it will drive up prices and increase the costs to consumers in Northern Ireland. All that extra



[*Owen Smith*]

cost will undermine the political stability in Northern Ireland, as we have seen here today, and it is a disgrace that the Government have not admitted it and have concealed it.

5.36 pm

**Mr Owen Paterson** (North Shropshire) (Con): It is a great pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Pontypridd (*Owen Smith*); we share a Christian name—I think we are the only two Members of Parliament with the name—and I share his concerns about Northern Ireland, which I will come to in a minute, but I do not think we have that much else in common.

People are looking at this debate absolutely exasperated; people were told that this Parliament would give them the power of decision to decide whether we stayed in the European Union or whether we left, and we have this collision, which I have mentioned on numerous occasions before, between direct democracy and representative democracy. The representatives here have royally let down the people of this country, because for the first time the people have gone against the wishes of their elected Members, and the elected Members here have used every possible technique to thwart them, and they know it.

We promised to take back control. All Conservative Members were elected on a manifesto to leave the single market, leave the customs union and leave the remit of the European Court of Justice. Does this Bill do the business? It is a start. It is a very good start; that would be my judgment. There are numerous things in it which I do not like, but it does set the process in train for us to honour what we promised the people.

**Sir William Cash:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that one of the most cardinal sins we can commit in this House of Commons is to vote for a Bill knowing full well what it says and then to reverse those votes in effect at a later date?

**Mr Paterson:** I totally agree with my hon. Friend. It was also wicked to promise the people that we would respect their judgment and not deliver it.

So this Bill does begin to bring laws back. It does not yet begin to bring money back, but there is, I am pleased to say, with this version light at the end of the tunnel, which is a free trade agreement, which is where we should have gone from the very beginning. That is what President Tusk offered us back on 7 March 2018, but we have inherited all this baggage from the previous negotiations and, in my opinion, an awful lot of that remains, which I regret.

There are two big areas that I am still very unhappy about. First, I am concerned that the transition period could be used to take advantage and to ruin what is left of our fishing industry. That is a wonderful natural resource. I find it completely extraordinary that Members such as the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (*Caroline Lucas*) talk in glowing terms about the environmental benefits of the EU; we throw back 1 million tonnes of healthy fish dead, because of the stupidity of the way the common fisheries policy is managed. I was delighted to learn from my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's

reply to me earlier that we will bring back complete control of our exclusive economic zone and all our resources so that we can manage them in a modern way, as I wrote in a Green Paper way back in 2005. However, I am worried about what will happen during the transition.

Secondly, I am concerned about Northern Ireland. I wrote an article just 10 days ago saying that I was worried about antagonising the Unionists. There is great interest in republican activity, but I am concerned about the Unionist community, which the hon. Member for North Down (*Lady Hermon*) has mentioned on numerous occasions. We had an incident on the Newtownards Road last night. I hope that the Lord Chancellor will give us some assurance in his reply to the debate that all the arrangements in the current protocol will be dissolved when we conclude a free trade agreement with the European Union and that this sovereign UK Parliament and Government will pass a law to move Northern Ireland into the free trade agreement on a level pegging basis with the rest of the United Kingdom. That might alleviate some of the concerns in Northern Ireland.

If those two issues can be resolved, I will vote for this Bill, albeit without any great enthusiasm, because it sets us on the road. Having mentioned Ireland, it is worth looking at the example of the Republic of Ireland as it emerged from the Irish Free State. Michael Collins said something in the Dáil Éireann on 19 December 1921 that pretty much reflects my views this evening:

“Now as one of the signatories of the document I naturally recommend its acceptance. I do not recommend it for more than it is. Equally I do not recommend it for less than it is. In my opinion it gives us freedom, not the ultimate freedom that all nations desire and develop to, but the freedom to achieve it”.

This Bill begins the process of establishing our full freedom, and I hope that I do not suffer the same fate as Michael Collins in wanting to see that delivered.

5.42 pm

**Nic Dakin** (Scunthorpe) (Lab): Juno Elsie Dakin was born last Thursday when this deal was being finalised in Europe. When she comes to maturity and is able to vote, she will be able to judge whether we did the right or wrong thing with the passage of this Bill. She will be able to judge whether we took steps to keep the Union together or whether it was imperilled, leading to Scotland and Northern Ireland leaving. She will be able to judge whether our place in the world is the same as it is now. She will be able to judge whether workers' rights, consumer rights and environmental rights are as strong or stronger than they are now. It is a fact that no person born this century voted in the referendum, but every person born this century will have the biggest stake in the outcome. They will have a duty, as we have a duty today, to shape wherever we get to in the best possible way to keep this great country great—to keep the great in Great Britain—and to ensure that the steps that we take today do not imperil that or put it at risk.

As the Member of Parliament for Scunthorpe, I think it is crucial that manufacturing does well out of this. In many ways, my constituents are on the frontline of Brexit. Our largest private sector employer is in its fourth month of liquidation due to the risk of a no-deal exit. My constituents desperately want certainty, which is why I am pleased that we have got to this point in the process. It is a step towards certainty, but my constituents and the manufacturing and steel sectors do not want an

outcome that is not good for industry. We do not want an outcome that leads to 25% tariffs on steel being sold into Europe, which would be disastrous for steel communities.

**Angus Brendan MacNeil:** It is a fact that the outcome most of them would want is to remain in the European Union. The current deal is the best deal, and there is no country in the EU that would accept the tawdry deal that the Prime Minister has negotiated.

**Nic Dakin:** In the end, we have to try to make this work. There is an obligation for us to work through it and, as my hon. Friend the Member for Ashfield (Gloria De Piero) said earlier, there will be an opportunity to do so if the Bill goes into Committee and if we have a decent programme motion.

Frankly, what has been said about the programme motion is outrageous. As the right hon. and learned Member for Beaconsfield (Mr Grieve) said, bully-boy tactics have been used to try to thrust the programme motion down the House's throat when we should have civilised, British behaviour. Members should sit down to agree a sensible programme motion. That is what the Labour Chief Whip wants, so the Government Chief Whip should sit down and do it so that we can work through the Bill properly and see whether we can improve it to make sure it is a good Bill for the people of this country.

Yes, people voted to come out, but they did not vote to lose out. It is our duty to square that circle, and that is what we should do.

5.46 pm

**Sir Roger Gale** (North Thanet) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Scunthorpe (Nic Dakin), who is right to say that it is our grandchildren who will reap the harvest of what we sow tonight.

It is not our grandchildren whom I am concerned about this evening. You know better than most, Mr Speaker—I have bored you to death with this for weeks—that I have a particular concern about the plight of United Kingdom citizens living in other parts of the European Union, most particularly in respect of their pension rights, the uprating of their exportable benefits and, of course, their healthcare.

Because confusion has been sown by Departments, there has been a considerable degree of distress. Over the past few weeks, I have received harrowing emails from citizens across Europe expressing their concern. They are very frightened indeed about what they may face.

I spent the greater part of last night reading the Bill and the explanatory notes. I found reference to European Union citizens living in the United Kingdom and to Swiss nationals but, scour as I could, I found not one word of comfort for United Kingdom citizens living abroad in Europe. I spoke briefly with the Prime Minister this afternoon, and I am pleased to say that he has taken this on board immediately and courteously—*[Interruption.]* I will come to my peroration in a moment. I am assured that the rights and concerns of UK citizens will be taken into account and that a confirmatory letter to that effect will be with me in the next couple of days.

There are Members who prefer the grievance to the solution, but I am not one of them; I am in the business of seeking a solution. I very much hope that what will

have been achieved as a result of my consultations with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with the Department for Work and Pensions and now with the Prime Minister will deliver something of great comfort to some very frightened elderly people. I also hope it will enable me not to have to move the amendment I have in preparation.

5.48 pm

**Peter Grant** (Glenrothes) (SNP): I am grateful for the chance to speak on this Bill.

It will not surprise anyone that I will be opposing the Bill tonight, and I will continue to oppose it because it is a bad Bill that does bad things to people who have trusted me to look after their interests. The Bill diminishes the rights of every single one of my constituents. It diminishes the rights of every single one of our constituents, and for 3 million people it potentially removes those rights altogether.

People face being threatened with deportation, not because of what they have done but because of what this Parliament and this Government are threatening to do. I cannot vote for that under any circumstances. For businesses in my constituency and everywhere else, it seeks to replace the certainty of free trade with the biggest market in the world, and preferential trade deals with many of our other trading partners as part of the EU, with the uncertainty of having no idea of what deal, if any, they will be trading under while they are still finalising their annual accounts for the financial year in which they are currently operating.

We hear a lot of people saying, “Get Brexit done”, but this Bill does not get Brexit done. The withdrawal agreement does not get Brexit done; it only starts the process. Next year, we could still be tumbling out of the EU on no-deal terms; there is nothing in this Bill or the withdrawal agreement that prevents that from happening. Until no deal is taken off the table, the businesses in my constituency and elsewhere will be faced with the greatest of all uncertainties.

Most importantly and fundamentally of all, I cannot support this Bill because it is a direct violation of the fundamental principle that brought me into politics: the sovereignty of the people. The people of my nation voted by almost two to one to reject this chaotic, ridiculous Brexit in its entirety, and that fact has been given no recognition, not a single word of it, from Her Majesty's Government over the past three and a half years.

On citizens' rights, on 25 July I asked the Prime Minister to honour the promise he made before the referendum that no EU citizen would have their rights diminished in any way. I asked him whether he would guarantee their rights to healthcare, their pension rights, their right to leave the UK and return at any time, their right to bring their family over to join, their right to vote and all the other rights currently enjoyed by EU citizens. The Prime Minister, at that Dispatch Box, replied:

“Those guarantees, as the hon. Gentleman knows, we are giving unilaterally”.—*[Official Report, 25 July 2019; Vol. 663, c. 1498.]*

So he promised all these rights to our EU citizens, which he now intends to take away, and we are supposed to trust—*[Interruption.]* The Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Worcester (Mr Walker),

[Peter Grant]

is shaking his head, but that was in *Hansard* and he can check it out for himself. I wrote to the Prime Minister at the end of July to ask him to confirm what he said, and I am still waiting for as much as an acknowledgment. I am not looking for anything fancy; a bit of scrap paper without even a signature on it would do me quite well, as that seems to be what it is about.

**Angus Brendan MacNeil:** Last week, the Queen's Speech was the most important thing to the Prime Minister, and today and previously we have been given all sorts of assurances. It almost felt as though if someone had asked him today whether he would assure them at the Dispatch Box that the moon is made of cheese, he would have given that assurance. His assurances, the Queen's Speech—it means nothing.

**Mr Speaker:** Order. I just say to the hon. Gentleman that if he continually intervenes, he will be preventing others from speaking. That may not bother him, but I am just letting him know.

**Peter Grant:** My hon. Friend makes a valid point. We have had a lot of assurances from the Prime Minister at the Dispatch Box. We know that some of them cannot be trusted, and therefore we have to assume that we should not rely too much on any of them. He also promised at that Dispatch Box that after Brexit, full control of Scottish fishing would be returned to Scotland, but in fact Government policy is precisely the opposite.

I have gone through the specific concerns that a lot of businesses in my constituency have been raising over the past several years, and I have tried to go through the withdrawal agreement and this Bill to find out what parts of those documents address the specific worries that my local businesses have. To date, I have not found a single concern that has been raised with me on which I can go back to those businesses and say, "It has been sorted if these documents go through." We get a lot of platitudes and reassuring noises, but there is absolutely nothing in any of these documents that will give businesses the certainty they are looking for. The Scottish Conservatives have even started to misrepresent the views of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce in their desperation to make it look as though the business community is telling us we should go ahead with this. What the SCC actually said was:

"On the surface this is good news but the devil is in the detail...until we see what the deal means for businesses on the ground, many are reserving judgement."

That was hailed as a ringing endorsement, because it was as good an endorsement as is going to come.

The right hon. Member for North Thanet (Sir Roger Gale) said that he was looking for solutions. The House can be satisfied that Scotland has a solution. We have a solution that will get us out of this mess, and we will apply that solution if this Bill goes forward tonight.

5.54 pm

**Mr Jonathan Djanogly** (Huntingdon) (Con): Along with most Members, I voted to trigger article 50. Since then, I have voted three times for the deals to leave that have been presented to this House. I intend to do the same again today. However, I think it would be fair to

say that over the past three years I have not been blindly stumbling through the Lobbies. Given the importance of this issue and my access to information as a member of the Exiting the European Union Committee, I have critically reviewed each stage of the admittedly tortuous negotiations, in support of a withdrawal deal that I see as critical to supporting jobs and living standards for my constituents.

On the morning of the vote on the Benn Act, I was given the opportunity, with a number of other questioning colleagues, to meet the Prime Minister. I came away from that meeting persuaded of three things: first, that the Prime Minister wanted a deal; secondly, that he would provide adequate resource to get that deal; and thirdly, that the resultant legislation could be delivered by 31 October. In effect, I decided to put my trust in our Prime Minister. So far, against the expectations of many and in difficult circumstances, the Prime Minister has delivered on the first two items on my list. It would be wrong for us not to give him the chance to deliver on the third item by the end of this month. The timetable is ambitious but doable. Personally, if we needed a few more weeks into November, I would be totally supportive of pushing on, as for me, the important thing is the deal, not a date pulled out of the ether—originally by President Macron, by the way.

Parliament has been good at stopping Brexit proposals but bad at providing Brexit solutions. There are many arguments for delay, and I could be among the first to provide a list of issues with I have the terms of the deal, which is slightly less European-centric than the previous deal that was proposed. But at no point did the previous deal have the momentum to pass through the House, as this deal does. Let us be realistic: the chances of reopening the deal again are something less than remote. If anyone is going to vote against Second Reading, they should be honest and say that it is because they want a second referendum or to revoke the triggering of article 50.

Some Members have noted the lack of time to scrutinise the Bill, but given that most of the deal is the same as the previous version, this needs to be put in context. Other issues relate to the non-legally binding political declaration, so some suggest that extra provisions on trade should be inserted, but those debates can and will have to continue once we are in the transition period. They should not be used as the subject of wrecking amendments now. We should take the opportunity we have to sort out EU withdrawal, so that business knows where we stand and citizens know their rights. We can then move on to the important future relationship issues. The reality here and now is that we cannot know about or legislate for all the things that will undoubtedly need to be covered in our FTA with the EU.

Given all that, the main reason I see for delay now is, as I said, to frustrate Brexit or to force a second referendum, and I could not support those positions. That is even more true now that we have a deal. To my mind, we should settle this Bill and then move on to the FTA and start the difficult process of bringing British people back together post Brexit, reinforcing the bonds of our Union, and creating a new, strong and lasting friendship with the EU. Given the momentum towards being able to do that that I now see exists, the opportunity should not be squandered. The Bill and the timetable have my support.



5.57 pm

**Jonathan Reynolds** (Stalybridge and Hyde) (Lab/Co-op): The argument for the Bill is that it will get Brexit done. Having listened to the debate, that appears to me to be the only argument for it; I have heard very few people advocate for the measures in the deal. I understand that, because we are all tired and a bit sick of this. I think we would all like to talk about other things, but there are two things that we should acknowledge and be straight with the public about.

The first is that this deal—or any deal—does not get Brexit done. We have years of this to come, and we all know that. This is only the end of the beginning. We have the future relationship with the EU to negotiate, and then we have future trade deals, all of which will raise the same issues of national sovereignty up against economic integration. The journalist Helen Lewis said yesterday that voting for this deal to get Brexit done was like someone saying they want their pregnancy to be over so they can get back to going to bed early and reading their favourite novels. I could not have put it better myself. The Conservative party needs to acknowledge that, to own that and to be straight about it. As MPs, our job surely has to be to ask, “Is this deal good for our constituents and for the country?” We will never make a bigger decision, and if we get it wrong, we will never be forgiven.

**Mr Gyimah:** On getting Brexit done, does the hon. Gentleman acknowledge that if this deal passes the House, we will quickly be in transition negotiations and negotiations on whether the transition is to be extended? That could cost around €10 billion a year. We should be honest with the public about that, rather than pretending it will get done this month.

**Jonathan Reynolds:** I absolutely agree with the hon. Gentleman. I am reminded of the debate on article 50. There was tremendous pressure to trigger article 50, and I personally voted for us to do that. It was a test of whether we accepted the referendum result. It is now widely recognised that the measure, the timetabling and the timescale that we imposed on ourselves were disastrous for the national interest of this country.

There are three things—just three things—that I want to know: what does this deal mean for manufacturing; what does it mean for services; and what does it mean for the Union? I recognise that not everyone voted on economic grounds. Indeed, yes, there will be a short-term boost to the economy because of investment decisions that have been deferred through the process so far, but that is not the issue. That is not the measure of success. It is about the next 10, 20 and 30 years. If we get this wrong, it will be like a slow puncture at the heart of our economy, and we will regret everything that we have done to get to that point.

Let us start with manufacturing. There is a big difference between this deal and the previous one. Essentially, the previous one offered some sort of voluntary single market alignment on goods, and that has been taken out of this deal, so what does that mean? This is quite a hard Brexit for Great Britain, so what does that mean? I genuinely ask that because no one has given anyone in this Chamber an explanation of that decision. Does it mean that just-in-time supply chains will no longer function? Does it mean that rules of origin will now be

required? Looking at the evidence, I think the answer must surely be yes. Does it pass the Nissan test? Will we see the continuation of Nissan’s business model, which has been a huge success story for this country? I have no answers to those questions, and I have 3,500 jobs of my constituents that depend on that.

Let us talk about services. The biggest problem with a bare bones FTA is what it does on services—we are a services economy. The previous deal was poor on services. This deal is equally poor. That is not a reason to walk away and pass it. So what is the plan? For all the imperfections of the single market in services, we should remember that trade in services between EU member states is freer than it is between federal states in the US or between different provinces in Canada. Moreover, the UK is a powerhouse of financial, business, legal, accountancy, consultancy and tertiary education services. What does this deal mean for them? We hear so much about fishing. With respect, the UK computer games industry is worth 10 times the value of the UK fishing industry, so let us talk about the things that really matter.

Finally, let us talk about the Union. I do not want to vote for anything that will lead to the break-up of my own country. I do not think that that is a dishonourable position to take. It is proposed that Northern Ireland should have a totally different Brexit deal. I admit that it could be a lucrative one; it could be very lucrative at the expense of the north-west of England. I can see why the Good Friday agreement requires something different for Northern Ireland. To be honest, I can also understand why it is a huge issue for colleagues in the DUP to accept and sign up to a deal in which a customs declaration is needed to export from Northern Ireland to Great Britain. For me, the bigger danger is in relation to Scotland. It is about the precedent that this sets for Scotland. I believe that England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are stronger together, and I do not want to undermine that. We have no answers on those things.

Let me just say this in my final few seconds of the four minutes that I have had to discuss the biggest issue that we will ever be asked to vote on: I recognise that it is possible that any deal could have these problems and that even the best deal possible to negotiate could be a bad deal for the UK. In that situation, the public have to absolutely be told what they are getting, and they must take responsibility for that. They have to have their eyes open about this and know what it will mean. At the minimum, that requires a scrutiny process in Parliament and, frankly, it now requires the people having the final say on this matter.

6.3 pm

**Steve Brine** (Winchester) (Ind): For me, the fundamental truth about Brexit is that it is as it always was: we cannot have Brexit and have nothing changed. What I have heard throughout the past three and a half years—and I have heard it constantly in the House today—from both ends of the divide is, “I want, I want, I want.” We want the same customs arrangements, the same citizens arrangements, the same security arrangements, and we want everything on the island of Ireland to stay the same and for its relationship with GB to stay the same. No, Mr Speaker, if everything is the same, then everything is the same. The British people chose a different path three and a half years ago, and it is up to this House to decipher that and to come up with an answer.

[*Steve Brine*]

I have voted three times for a withdrawal agreement. I have done it twice inside government, as part of the payroll, I have done it once outside government, and I will do it tonight outside of the party that I was in when I joined this House.

The statecraft required of Brexit was always significant. It was significant with a big majority, and it was very difficult with no majority. It is a huge challenge. I pay great credit to the previous Prime Minister and the current Prime Minister for that statecraft and for the compromise at which they have arrived. Way too many people in this House are still fighting the last war; we heard it from the leader of the Liberal Democrats today. So many people are still listening to respond, not actually to hear. Along with many other Members sitting here who came into this House in 2010 when I did, I cannot believe that so much of my parliamentary career so far has been spent talking about the European Union.

I just want to touch on no deal. The Prime Minister knows my view. I resigned from the Government to stand against no deal, and I had the Whip suspended because I do not believe that leaving with no withdrawal agreement is in the national interest of this country. For the political reasons of my former party, I understand the “get it done” mantra and the feeling of “please just make it stop”, but we have to be better than that. It is literally our job to do that. Not least as a former Health Minister, I know that an exit with no withdrawal agreement in place would be an act of self-harm that we simply do not need to do to ourselves.

As the Prime Minister said on Saturday, to heal this country we have to move on from this in some way. In such a fractious situation, with such a close referendum result, we have to be generous in defeat and magnanimous in victory. As Nigel Farage said—and I do not quote him often—

“For a civilised democracy to work you need the losers’ consent”. Fortunately, we can now have that because we are the dealers—the pro-dealers. The Prime Minister was true to his word and to the House that he would come back with a revised Brexit deal; he has done that. I fully understand that it is not perfect, but it is a good deal and it is a pathway to moving us on. And you know what? If you don’t want no deal, this really is your moment of truth.

As I said in the debate on the Queen’s Speech, I welcome the Environment Bill. I do not want to see us deviate at all from what the European Union pushes out with regard to environmental management, and I want to see us do even better than that.

I will not be supporting any proposals for a customs union. I voted remain to remain part of the customs union. We will have to take a different path that we have chosen.

On clause 30 and the extensions amendment, I think there are amendments that the House needs to consider carefully. I also welcome the stuff on the future relationship.

Having lost my party’s Whip over this process recently, I know that it is difficult for Members to go against their party. I know that this is difficult for Opposition Members. The Leader of the Opposition says that he wants to persuade, but I suspect that it is a slightly different story in reality. I know that it is difficult, but at the end of the day you only have to answer to yourself.

6.7 pm

**Phil Wilson** (Sedgefield) (Lab): I think everybody knows my position; I genuinely believe that any deal should go back to the people for confirmation. They have the right to compare the results of any negotiations between the UK and the EU with the promises made by the now Prime Minister and other leaders of the leave campaign back in 2016, because in 2016 there was a vote to leave, but it was not a vote on how to leave. Brexit started with a referendum and any Brexit deal should therefore be confirmed or rejected by a referendum. This started with the people, and it should end with the people.

There are some who raise the political temperature by using the language of “the people versus Parliament”, but it is those who do not want this deal to go back to the people for a final say who are being disingenuous and cynical when they use such language. There are dozens of parliamentarians in this House who want to include the people in the final decision. They are the ones who are on the side of the people, not those who use the pitch of “the people against Parliament”. But as my hon. Friend the Member for Hove (Peter Kyle) said during the debate on Saturday, the Government say they are acting on the will of the people. We now have two negotiated withdrawal agreements and the threat of no deal. It seems that, for some, the will of the people takes almost as many forms as there are forms of Brexit.

Why not ask the people once again in a confirmatory and binding vote whether they still want to go ahead? Whatever agreement we achieve should go to the people. If they want to go ahead with Brexit on that basis, it should be implemented and that should be the end of it—no third referendum and no neverendum.

The next tactic deployed by right hon. and hon. Members supporting this agreement is to say, “Let’s just get on with it. People are sick of the process; they are tired of it.” I think we all share that view, but you do not give up on an issue of this magnitude because you are tired—you keep going until you get it right. Three days for debate on this withdrawal agreement is therefore outrageous.

As an example of people’s attitudes, on Saturday the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith) said that people, metaphorically speaking, were dying for a decision on Brexit. I agree, so let them make the decision. I say to my constituents that I will vote for a deal as long as it goes back to them to confirm whether they want to go ahead with it or not. I think that is fair. I do not want the deal to get through this House and be implemented without their agreement, because for them Brexit will not be over. We do not know its impact; their jobs will be under threat; and the deal negotiated is not as good as the one we have now. We might try to reinvent the wheel, but we will find out that it is not as round as the original.

Therefore, as I have said, we need to get this over in the right way. We cannot do that if we do not even have access to an economic assessment of the basis of this deal. That is very important when one in five of the people who work in one’s constituency work in manufacturing. I genuinely believe that if we do not put this back to the people, we will live to regret it as a democratic institution and as a country. I do not want the deal to get through this House and be implemented without the people agreeing one way or the other, only to find out that for them Brexit is not over.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** There is now extreme pressure on time and therefore I would discourage interventions, though they are of course within the rules.

6.11 pm

**Sir John Hayes** (South Holland and The Deepings) (Con): I have struggled against the excesses of the European project for as long as I can remember—perhaps even as long as you can remember, Mr Speaker, and, given that you can remember everything, that is a bold claim. As it metamorphosed, if not in the eyes of its architects, then certainly in the perception of the British people, from a common market to a political union through successive treaties that I opposed in this House, I recognised that the British people were becoming less and less impressed with this project so beloved of the privileged classes.

Why did I struggle in that way? It was because this is essentially about a single matter, and no more than that—from where power is exercised, and how it is held to account. When power is detached from its effect, it first becomes careless and ultimately opens itself up to corruption.

As I have watched these matters being debated in this place, I have considered the two misassumptions that prevail among those who take a different view from my own. The first is about sovereignty. It is the Crown that is sovereign, not this Parliament, and the Ministers of the Crown have a mission to govern. Parliament's job is to legislate and to hold those Ministers to account, but it is not this House's purpose or role to govern, yet we have been constantly told, over the course of the consideration of this matter, that Parliament should do just that.

Secondly, there is a misassumption among the unreconstructed remainers about the character of allegiance. Pan-Europeanism may have a certain appeal to elements of the bourgeoisie, but it is no substitute for the shared sense of patriotism belonging that nourishes individual purpose and nurtures national pride.

Our legitimacy here depends upon the electors' faith in the bond between those they choose to represent them and the people. Rejecting this deal risks breaching the trust on which that faith is founded. To face our democratic duty and to face down the alliance of nitpickers and doom-mongers is critical to maintain popular faith in the character of our democratic system of government.

There are some who agonise about the details of this deal who, frankly, would accept nothing that was negotiated: nothing would ever be quite good enough. No detail would ever be entirely perfect or well formed enough for those critics. Their endeavours are at best mischievous, and, at worse, malign.

Time and tide wait for no man, and the tidal wave of popular discontent about what this Parliament has done must not be resisted. G. K. Chesterton spoke of the people who had “not spoken yet”. Now their voices ring loud and clear. They are tired of waiting. They want Brexit, and they want it now.

6.14 pm

**Liz Kendall** (Leicester West) (Lab): Many Members on both sides of the House understand the risks that this deal poses to the economy and their constituents'

jobs and livelihoods. They understand the risks that it poses to the Union of the United Kingdom, too. But for some Members, the even greater concern is the risk that not getting a deal through Parliament poses to trust in politics and our democracy as a whole.

I have thought long and hard about this issue. While Leicester as a whole voted remain, my constituents voted leave by around the same margin as the country, and they voted leave for all sorts of different reasons—because they are fed up with the quality of local jobs and wages and problems in the NHS; because there are not enough affordable homes or local school places; or because they believe that levels of immigration are too high. Some had never voted before, and all wanted change. Believe me, I know the risk to our democracy and to trust in our democracy, especially among people who feel that their views have been ignored for years. But I believe that those who voted leave will feel even more betrayed when it becomes clear that this deal will not sort Brexit out, will not provide answers to their problems and will not deliver the changes that they desperately want and need.

We have not even begun the negotiations over our future trading relationship with the EU, which will take years to conclude. In the end, we will face exactly the same dilemma for Great Britain as the Prime Minister faced over Northern Ireland. Either we will decide that we want to stay as close as possible and sign up to EU standards and regulations to get frictionless trade, as the Prime Minister has chosen in Northern Ireland, or we will decide that we want to break with those standards, with all the implications that that has for our service sector and manufacturing, which rely on both the customs union and single market alignment.

The Government have never been honest with the British people about the inevitable choice that Brexit brings. They are at it again with this Bill, promising the ERG, “Of course we'll break free from all this nasty EU regulation and red tape,” and at the same time promising Labour MPs, “Of course we have no intention of slashing workers' rights and environmental standards.” Both cannot be true. If we want frictionless trade, we will have to sign up to EU rules but give up our say over how those rules are decided—in which case, what is the point of Brexit? If we want to break free from those rules, the EU will not give us frictionless trade—in which case, what is the price of Brexit, and crucially, who will pay?

The truth is that what the Prime Minister and the ERG want from the free trade agreement and their vision of the UK as a low-tax, small-state, deregulated country will not improve the quality of my constituents' jobs and livelihoods or give them more say and control. It will guarantee a race to the bottom. It will not put more money into housing, schools or the NHS. It will risk the economic growth on which our public services depend.

We have to put the real, inevitable choice on Brexit back to the British people, alongside the option to remain. That is the only way it will have any legitimacy and the only way we will get Brexit done. Otherwise, we will simply end up back here again and again, and that would pose the biggest risk of all to our democracy and trust in politics.



6.18 pm

**Mr Tobias Ellwood** (Bournemouth East) (Con): It has been a long three years, but two themes have arisen in this debate. One, echoed by the hon. Member for Leicester West (Liz Kendall), is the frustration with the length of time it has taken us to get anywhere, and the other, in the same breath, is an entrenched position on a preferred outcome of Brexit. The two do not tally. It is against that backdrop that I congratulate the Prime Minister and his Front-Bench team on coming to the House with a deal we can discuss that has been approved by the EU.

The realpolitik has not changed. The parliamentary maths means that we will not get the pure outcome that we want. The thing that has changed is the frustration of the nation, who are looking at us asking, “Why haven’t you moved forward?” Labour Members have moved forward in their position: they have kicked the can down the road in wanting a second referendum, because they are divided about which way they want to go, but they have not made it clear what such a second deal would be. However, here is a deal. They want to have a second deal, but they have no appetite to go around this buoy again. The Liberal Democrats want to disregard the referendum completely and go to revoking article 50. The DUP has genuine concerns, and we must listen to those. As the part of GB that has a land border with the EU, those concerns will I hope be addressed in Committee.

We should all admit that this unusual form of democracy—a referendum, with its closeness, that took place three years ago—is testing our democratic process. With our appreciation and understanding, how should we interpret something that has been so close? I ask the Government Front-Bench team to qualify and make firm the position on clause 30. The idea has been put forward already—spun—that this is an attempt to take us to no deal. I think I am right in saying that it is the Government’s position that we want to depart with a deal, and I hope that will be confirmed today.

I would like to say that we have a simple choice. With opinion so divided, do we have the courage to compromise and seek a strong, close and workable relationship that 100% of the nation can live with and tolerate—not just the half who actually voted to leave, but the other half who might be wanting a second referendum, which would provide further delay and further division?

I would also say that I agree with contributors in saying how this has been damaging to British politics, to this Parliament and, let us be honest, to the Conservative party—my party—in our complexion and outlook. We have a repair job to do once we are on the other side of Brexit. It has also been distracting. We have had a spending review, but it hardly got any airtime whatever. There are domestic issues that the nation wants us to look at. It has been distracting on the international level as well; our voice is missed on the international stage, as events in Turkey and Syria underline.

Today is a real opportunity to clear the fog of Brexit, find a place of compromise, break the impasse and move the nation forward.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. I call Tom Brake, with a three-minute limit.

6.21 pm

**Tom Brake** (Carshalton and Wallington) (LD): First, it is worth noting that this House had more time to debate the Wild Animals in Circuses Act 2019, which affected 19 animals, than we will have on this particular Bill. The Institute for Government has said that the timetable appears to have been deliberately “designed to frustrate... scrutiny”. Clearly, it was, and I think the grin that kept on spreading across the face of the Leader of the House when he announced the business confirmed that.

It is right that Members have focused on Northern Ireland during this debate, and I want to focus on the tariffs that will be applied to goods or intermediary goods at risk of being sold into the Republic of Ireland. I want some clarity about what goods we are actually talking about, and how on earth they are going to be tracked. There is no technological solution that provides the granularity required accurately to track the movements of goods, because multiple goods may share the same pallet, never mind the same lorry. Consequently, it is hard to see how all companies will not have tariffs levied on them up front, and then be required to seek a rebate.

The impact on businesses in Northern Ireland is clearly going to be significant, and we have heard about the export forms that they will have to complete to send goods to Great Britain. All this is of course coming to them courtesy of a party that was apparently in favour of reducing red tape to businesses. The impact assessment—it looks only at the legislation, not at the impact of Brexit—says that costs will be running at £167 million per year. Interestingly, it says that the benefit to business is precisely zero.

The Chancellor has said that it is self-evidently in our economic interest to go for Brexit. We have focused extensively on the issue of no deal, but it is worth focusing on this deal and on whether there is in fact any economic interest in it for the United Kingdom. We know from the various analyses looking at comparable deals that we are each going to be at least £2,000 worse off, that the hit on wages is 6.4% and the hit on GDP is 6.7%, and that the non-tariff barriers are going to be catastrophic for the automotive and chemical sectors, for example.

How do we get out of the mess we are in? As other Members have said, there is only one way forward, and that is through a confirmatory vote. Certainly, the Liberal Democrats are adding our names to the Kyle-Wilson amendment, and I hope that amendment will secure the support of the House so that we can proceed with the sensible way out of the catastrophe that we are facing.

6.25 pm

**Mr Bob Seely** (Isle of Wight) (Con): I am voting for the deal because the country voted to leave. My folks on the Isle of Wight voted to leave and it is a pleasure to represent them and speak on their behalf.

One of the things that confuses me about the Labour party—and indeed the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas)—is the extent to which the European Union is used as a device to improve standards or for the development of a social Europe. The common agricultural policy has been bad for the environment, and the common fisheries policy kills millions of fish needlessly every year. Yet the Liberals, the Greens and the Labour party worship the institution of the European

Union as though it were good for animals and for the environment. They want live animal exports; we want to ban them but are not allowed to do so under European Union legislation.

On human beings, the EU minimum for annual leave is 20 days; in this country, it is 28. Maternity leave is 14 weeks minimum paid in the European Union and 35 weeks minimum here. The posting of workers to other countries to undercut pay is illegal here and allowed in the rest of the European Union. Eighteen weeks of parental leave is allowed per person per child in the UK, but only up to the age of eight in the EU. If Labour Members want higher standards, they should leave the European Union, not attempt to stay in it.

The second point I will make, above the din of the Opposition trying to ignore what I am saying, is that 104 Labour MPs are in majority leave seats, 52 have leave majorities of 60% and eight have leave majorities of more than 70%. We are getting into North Korean percentage territory here. If I were them, I would be listening to my constituents more than I would my party leadership, because their constituencies are likely to be there longer than the leadership, which might be there for weeks or months. The constituencies will be there for many years to come.

It is easy for me to support the Bill because I voted for Brexit, as did my constituency. But I very much respect Members on both sides of the House who are voting for Brexit or allowing it to happen despite not having supported it. For me, the most important thing is that we finally get on and deliver something that is recognisably Brexit, so that we can move on and, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Sir David Lidington) says, talk about all the other important things we need to discuss in both domestic and international policy. That is why I will support the Bill.

6.27 pm

**Marion Fellows** (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): The Scots Language Centre defines “thrawn” as meaning twisted, crooked and distorted, which—in my opinion—applies to the Prime Minister’s explanation of his Bill this afternoon. Across the Chamber, Members have asked the Prime Minister questions about what he said, and none of them seemed reassured in any way.

“Thrawn”, referring to a person, means stubbornness and absolute conviction, which I have in equal measure, because I will vote against the Bill and the programme motion because I am stubborn in wanting the best for the people of Motherwell and Wishaw and have the firm conviction that Scotland will be damaged if the Bill is passed. Its needs and economic interests are ignored by the Bill’s contents. I stubbornly refuse to vote to make my constituents poorer, limit free movement of people, lower environmental standards and reduce workers’ rights.

The Prime Minister referred to the law of the land in his speech. Perhaps he should remember that the Court of Session has a watching brief on his actions in relation to the Act of Parliament that requires him to apply for an extension from the EU.

The Prime Minister also referred to “a great tide of investment” that will come after we leave the EU. Will he tell that to those who have already lost their jobs in the financial services and in manufacturing and other sectors across the UK?

The deputy director of the Institute for Government says:

“Anyone who claims meaningful legislative scrutiny is possible on this timetable is—at best—misguided.”

I smell a rat. The Prime Minister is trying to rush the Bill through so quickly—could it be that it will not stand up to intense scrutiny?

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber (Ian Blackford) that the Bill completely ignores the wishes of the majority of the people of Scotland. NI differentiation does not help Scotland. Ignoring Scottish Parliament legislation does not help the people of Scotland. Devolution is being totally disrespected. Independence is now the only answer.

6.30 pm

**Steve Double** (St Austell and Newquay) (Con): It is a pleasure to speak in this debate. After almost three and a half long years, it is refreshing to get to the point where we can actually debate the proposed legislation that will take us out of the EU. It has been a wandering and, at times, tortuous path, but at last we are here. I am sure that, if the Bill progresses and passes Third Reading this week, many people across the country will breathe a huge sigh of relief that we are getting on with it. The last thing we need in this country is delay, dither, procrastination and prolonging the uncertainty.

During the debate today, I received a text message from the chief executive of one of our most prominent businesses in Cornwall. It is one of our largest companies and employs hundreds of people, both in Cornwall and across the country. He was concerned that the voice of business was not being heard enough in this debate. There is a clear message from the business community: get on with it, back the deal and pass the Bill. It is concerned about the economic impact that further delay and dither will have on consumer confidence and business investment. I am convinced that, if we can pass the Bill, we will see a release of confidence and investment in our country and in our economy.

In the time I have left, I want to address a couple of specific points. Many Members have talked about supporting the deal only if it is attached to another referendum. What I say to them is this: where is the mandate for that? In 2015, when I was first elected, I stood on a manifesto commitment that if the Conservative party won that election we would bring an in/out referendum on the EU. That was the mandate for that referendum. In 2017, the vast majority of Members were elected on a manifesto commitment to deliver on that referendum result.

**Patricia Gibson:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Steve Double:** I am not going to take interventions.

I say respectfully to Opposition Members that, if they wanted a second referendum, they should have put it in a manifesto and voted for a general election last month. They could have had the election last month and, if they had won, they could have had their second referendum. There is no mandate for a second referendum.

I welcome the measures in the Bill to protect the rights of EU citizens resident here. I believe the Government are doing the right thing. We need to send a clear message from this House that all EU citizens resident in the UK are welcome to stay. I respectfully say to Opposition

[*Steve Double*]

Members that the reason some EU citizens do not feel welcome is that what they hear from some Members is that the Government do not want them. That is blatantly untrue.

We have an opportunity tonight to come together across the House to vote for the deal and to back the result of the referendum. That is what we should do.

6.33 pm

**Michael Tomlinson** (Mid Dorset and North Poole) (Con): I want to make two very brief points. First, on workers' rights, one does not have to be a member of the European Union to protect workers' rights. Rights in this country already go above and beyond those of the European Union. Let me give the House four examples: the living wage, sick pay, maternity and annual leave. They are all protected by legislation passed in this sovereign Parliament. We will continue to do so, certainly on this side of the House.

My second point relates to the programme motion. Many of those who are today complaining about the programme motion are the same people who rushed through the Benn Act. Where were the voices complaining about the lack of time for parliamentary scrutiny when that Act was pushed through? It seems as though this is not an "in principle" objection to scrutiny, but one of convenience and political dogma. If hon. Members like the Bill, it seems that they are happy to be rushed through. If they do not like it, they are not, and that seems to be the case even more strongly this evening.

6.34 pm

**Robert Courts** (Witney) (Con): For as long as I have been alive, this country has struggled with its position in Europe. We have been tied by geography and culture to that continent, but by history and language to the wider English-speaking world. The country's attitude can perhaps be summed up as being like that of a passenger in a car who has constantly been asking to slow down or change direction. The increased integration that has always been envisaged in the European project, and which was made inevitable by the euro, has meant that at some stage, this country inevitably had to deal with the consequences of joining a political union while trying to persuade itself that it was just a trade bloc. So it was that 40 years of drift were succeeded by three years of division.

We have a chance to end all that tonight, because we are approaching the moment of decision in a country that is crying out for direction. It will not be possible for much longer for someone to continue to say that they respect the referendum result—remembering that 80% of us in this House were elected on manifesto commitments to carry out the referendum result—but that they want a deal, because we have one here. Further delay will be interpreted by the public either as blocking Brexit or as an inability to put party politics aside in the national interest. I suggest that the country will never be brought back together by telling the majority of the people in it that their decision was wrong. The only way that the country can be unified is by backing a compromise deal that brings democratic control of this country's laws to this country, while ensuring the continuation of the co-operation, trade and culture that are valued by us all, but which those who voted to remain fear losing.

This is such a deal, but it is a compromise. There are elements in all of it that many of us may have reservations about—I entirely understand that—but it does satisfy most of the requirements of the referendum: it guarantees an open border in Ireland; it has a smooth handover for business; and it sets the path for an independent free-trading future. I ask all those with concerns to stand behind the Government and engage, with a view to influencing the next stage in ensuring that we have the free trade agreement. We must be clear: most of the objections that we have heard tonight really should be reserved for discussions on the future relationship. Only by voting for the Bill tonight can the country be moved forward—that includes the programme motion.

The country is crying out for a decision and for us to move on. Any delay will just lead to more discord. The time has arrived for us to move on—we must grasp it tonight.

6.37 pm

**Richard Graham** (Gloucester) (Con): When the Prime Minister said that the odds were a "million to one" against no deal, some of us had doubts. I would have agreed with the right hon. Member for Leeds Central (Hilary Benn) that it was "utterly irresponsible" for this Government to be rushing towards no deal, if it were true. Now the Prime Minister has produced a deal, surely all those here against no deal can come together to support it. However, too many Members will never support leaving, despite the pledge that they were elected on. They want a second referendum to overturn the original one. The leader of the Liberal Democrats, the hon. Member for East Dunbartonshire (Jo Swinson), goes further: she would not accept the wrong result of a second referendum, so contrary to what some people argue, a second referendum will not bring us together. We cannot trust the Opposition parties to carry out the result of a referendum that goes the wrong way any more than they have so far.

Some say that there is not enough time to debate the Bill. My right hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and The Border (Rory Stewart) said that he wishes that there were three more days to debate it, but as the Institute for Government said, there are some for whom no amount of debate will be enough. Then there is the Leader of the Opposition, who said that his greatest worry is the serious threat to manufacturing from not being in a customs union. Therefore, he should support both the Bill on Second Reading and the programme motion, table an amendment in Committee and, if that does not work, put it in Labour's manifesto, campaign on it in an election, form the next Government and negotiate that in the free trade agreement. The point is that the customs union, let alone the NHS, has nothing to do with the Bill. The manufacturers I know are a lot more concerned about what the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Chancellor will do to them than they are about the deal.

There are changes on the Northern Ireland protocol that are very relevant, but because they are internal matters, between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, they can be resolved between us, which is why it is so important that the Democratic Unionist party supports a deal to make sure it does not get the worst possible result for Northern Ireland, which would be no deal.



Let our constituents be clear: there will never be a perfect deal, any more than there will be a perfect job or a perfect marriage. I said three years ago that we needed a deal that few would love but most could live with, and there is enough in the political declaration to reassure those who are open to being reassured on environmental and workers' rights, enough to respect the Good Friday agreement, and enough to reassure all those elected to respect the result of the referendum that we are delivering on the pledge that what the people decided we would implement. That is why we should all vote for the Bill and leave the EU in a sensible way.

6.40 pm

**Nick Thomas-Symonds** (Torfaen) (Lab): The Bill will have profound economic, social and political consequences for our country for decades. The jobs and livelihoods of our constituents depend upon our deliberations on the Bill and on our ability to look carefully at its profound consequences. I have listened carefully to over 30 contributions from the Back Benches and commend in particular those from my right hon. Friends the Members for Leeds Central (Hilary Benn) and for Tottenham (Mr Lammy) and my hon. Friends the Members for Scunthorpe (Nic Dakin), for Stalybridge and Hyde (Jonathan Reynolds), for Sedgefield (Phil Wilson) and for Leicester West (Liz Kendall).

The Government, having tried unlawfully to shut down Parliament altogether, now try to shut down the ability of Members to properly scrutinise the most important piece of legislation that has been brought to this House for generations. Weariness with the politics of the last three years is no good reason to wave through a Bill of such huge significance in less than 36 hours. Rather, it is our duty to subject every clause of this monumental Bill to close examination and to understand its full impact on people's lives up and down the country.

There was and is no good reason for the Government not to have extended the time allocated. *[Interruption.]* The Prime Minister comes in at an opportune moment: it was at his behest that we sat last Saturday, when it suited him, yet this week we are closing down deliberations on Thursday. It is not only unnecessary; it is reckless and an abomination to this House of Commons. The treaty of Rome had 22 days in Committee, Maastricht 23 days. Whatever one's view of the Bill, the Government's conduct is totally and utterly unacceptable.

I have read the Bill. It is no wonder that the Government and the Prime Minister are trying to ram it through in three days with so little scrutiny. Whatever people's views across the House, the papers before us do not represent a secure future for our constituents.

**James Gray** (North Wiltshire) (Con): The hon. Gentleman says we are not giving enough time for this discussion. Can he explain therefore why in this very important Second Reading debate the Labour party ran out of speakers some hour ago?

**Nick Thomas-Symonds**: There were over thirty contributions from the Back Benches, including some excellent contributions from the Benches behind me.

The withdrawal agreement and the Bill, even if passed, do not end matters. Rather, they open up a whole new series of disputes, and what do we hear today? The party

that championed employment tribunal fees now asks us to trust them on workers' rights. The Foreign Secretary at the weekend told us of smart regulations. Let me translate that: this Tory Party does not want to protect our rights; it wants to shred them. I quote:

"the weight of employment regulation is now back-breaking", and that includes

"the collective redundancies directive, the atypical workers' directive, the working time directive and a thousand more".

Who said that? The man sitting opposite me: the Prime Minister himself. He wants us to take his word on employment laws, but he mocks them when he gets the chance. He will never care about the working people of this country. The Prime Minister promised virtually everything in the debate earlier today, but if he was so concerned about protecting workers' rights and about safeguarding our environment, he would have left those provisions in a legally binding withdrawal agreement and would not have shifted them to the non-binding political declaration. Why should we believe a word that he says now? That is why the TUC, Unison, Unite and the GMB all recognise that his eleventh-hour comments today are worthless.

**Alex Sobel** (Leeds North West) (Lab/Co-op): My hon. Friend is making a very good speech. Does he agree that, as there is no mention of environmental rights in the Bill, there will be no surety in regard to the environment? Should that provision not be put back into legislation?

**Nick Thomas-Symonds**: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The damage that the Bill does to workers' rights is just the tip of the iceberg. It will create a border in the Irish sea and impose burdens on Northern Ireland-Great Britain trade, something that the Prime Minister himself promised would never happen. Clause 21 makes that explicit, yet, extraordinarily, the Prime Minister continued to deny it when he opened the debate. What did he talk about? Light-touch measures to deal with illegal trade in endangered animal species and to ban firearms. That completely contradicts what the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union eventually told the House of Lords European Union Committee yesterday:

"The exit summary declarations will be required in terms of NI to GB".

I do not know why the Prime Minister is shaking his head. That is what the Bill says. The Prime Minister should read the Bill.

**Alan Brown**: I agree that we cannot trust this Prime Minister when it comes to workers' rights. The hon. Gentleman mentioned the TUC. Is he disappointed that so many Labour Back Benchers seem happy to take the Prime Minister's word? It looks as though they will go into the Lobby and vote for the Bill.

**Nick Thomas-Symonds**: I have respect for all Members who wish to try to change the Bill in Committee, but that only reinforces the point that a proper Committee stage should be allowed for the Bill. As it stands, the Bill reduces Parliament to the role of observer in the next phase of the negotiations. Clause 31(3), if the Justice Secretary wishes to read it, makes it very clear that nothing would be accepted as inconsistent with the existing political declaration. As the Justice Secretary has the Bill in front of him, he will see that clause 30

[Nick Thomas-Symonds]

also includes the trapdoor to no deal at the end of the transition period. Anyone who thinks that the Bill is a way to end no deal should read that clause and think again.

This is a flawed Bill that implements a fundamentally bad deal. It would open the door to a low-regulation, low-wage economy. This deal can only lead to a bare bones free trade agreement or to no deal at the end of next year. The Prime Minister is putting his agreement before the House and asking everyone to look away while he pushes it through. If he is so confident about his deal, why is he so afraid of scrutiny of it?

For working people, the rights and protections in our laws have been hard won. Rather than putting all that at risk by waving the Bill through, it needs to be secured for future generations. The country deserves more than this botched deal and rushed legislation. That is why we will vote against the Bill tonight.

6.48 pm

**The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland):** There comes a time in politics when we all have to look at ourselves in the mirror—me included—and ask the following question: are we up to the level of events? Are we truly going to serve the people who put us here?

I have the honour of speaking last in what I think we would all agree is the most pivotal of parliamentary debates. I suppose that, for me, there is a sort of symmetry in this, because of the long association that I have had in supporting our membership of the European Union. I was a proud remainer, someone who campaigned assiduously for membership, and for whom the result of the referendum in June 2016 came as a bitter blow.

I have just heard the word “traitor” uttered sotto voce across the Chamber. That concerns me, and it should concern us all. I do not believe that anybody in this place is a traitor. I do not believe that anybody, whatever view they might have, is somehow disloyal or dishonourable or dishonest or below the standards that we would expect in this place, because I believe that not only do we call ourselves honourable Members, we are honourable men and women. And we come here with the best of intentions: we come here in all sincerity to try and find a way through for the people we represent—to make a decision; a hard, a fast, and a specific decision at that. It is not easy, but we are here to do difficult; that is our job. We are sent here by each of our constituents to get on with it, and over the last few months the voices I hear in my constituency, as right across the country, come out loud and clear whether we were leave or remain: “For the love of God, get on with it,” is what I am being told.

I want to deal for a moment with the speech from my hon. Friend the Member for Winchester (Steve Brine), who I thought put it extremely well. He in many respects has found himself in the sort of moral dilemma that a lot of us in this Chamber have been placed in in the last three years. He resigned from the Government because of his convictions, and that is an act that speaks volumes. He put it well when he said that the best way in the circumstances—the only way—to avoid what he would regard as the problem of a no-deal Brexit is to vote for both these motions this evening. I say both these motions because the one will not work without the other.

We are left with a fixed date, a date that was not chosen by us. It was never the subject of an application that we made to extend article 50, but it was a date that was chosen by our friends in the European Union: 31 October. And 31 October was not a mere caprice plucked out of the air; it was something real and meaningful for the 27. It was in their interests; it was administratively important for them, but backed by proper reason, and therefore it is something that we should respect. For a moment let us put ourselves in the shoes of our negotiating partners. They want certainty; they want to be able to move on; and they want to know that in their negotiating partner they have somebody who they can trust and rely upon.

**Jim McMahon:** On that point, how does the right hon. and learned Gentleman feel our negotiating partners look on this Parliament, which was prorogued at a time when we could have been spending time on this issue? We would have had more than 21 days to debate it in that circumstance.

**Robert Buckland:** The hon. Gentleman, who has been here a good few years, has lived, like all of us, through this process, and the hours, the days, the months and the years that we have debated this issue amply demonstrate that every one of the 650 Members—or those who are able to take part—have had their say.

The elements of the withdrawal agreement that have been significant and different relate of course to the provisions on Northern Ireland and the future relationship, but we would be kidding ourselves if we did not admit that large elements of this agreement were elements that we have known about, we have debated and we have aired and analysed over the last few months—more than the last few months, the better part of a year.

**Sir Oliver Letwin (West Dorset) (Ind):** Before my right hon. and learned Friend goes into the detail, will he agree that we do not have to love this deal and we do not have to love the programme motion—we might even think it is a very bad deal or a very bad programme motion—but for those of us who wish to avoid the worst, it is better than the worst?

**Robert Buckland:** My right hon. Friend, in his nuanced way, makes the important point that in the pursuit of perfection we are in danger of losing the entire House. The majority of us in this Chamber have made it clear that the one thing we do not want is a no-deal Brexit. Through all the debates we have had and all the decisions we have made, that one thing has been clear.

**Mr David Gauke (South West Hertfordshire) (Ind):** Many of us are still concerned that we may end up with a no-deal exit for Great Britain. Can my right hon. and learned Friend assure me that we will make sure, in the Bill, that Parliament has an opportunity to vote before 1 July on whether the implementation period should be extended—whether for one or two years—if it does not look like we will get in the negotiations a free trade agreement by the end of the year? Will he also assure me that the Government will abide by that vote?

**Robert Buckland:** I am grateful to my right hon. Friend. What would happen if there were potential for an extension of the implementation period has been concerning Members right across the House. We believe

that we can negotiate in the time that we have now, but we accept that Parliament has a legitimate role to play, and I can bring forward an amendment that would allow Parliament to have its say on the merits of an extension of the implementation period—

**Mr Gauke:** And the Government will abide by it.

**Robert Buckland:** And the Government will abide by that.

Now, that is an example of representative democracy working well, because one of the things that we British pride ourselves on is our ability to compromise, to listen to each other, to learn from each other, to respect each other and to come to a reasonable compromise. I have done everything that I can in my political career to reflect those values, and I believe that I see many other right hon. and hon. Members who share that view.

**Wera Hobhouse (Bath) (LD):** I thank the right hon. and learned Gentleman for giving way. I have made the argument for compromise many times, and I will vote for the Government's deal, although I think it is rubbish, if he will vote for a people's vote at the same time.

**Robert Buckland:** I have to commend the hon. Lady for her persistence, but to reopen the issue in that way would be, with the greatest of respect to my hon. Friends who support it, the ultimate cop-out for this Parliament. It is time for all of us who believe in representative democracy to accept the fact that the whole concept of parliamentary representation is itself on trial. It is on trial in a way that perhaps none of us had ever envisaged. Acknowledging the fact that we are facing unprecedented challenge is something that should make us—[*Interruption.*]

**Mr Speaker:** Order. The Secretary of State is entitled to conclude his speech without being yelled at.

**Robert Buckland:** It is something that should make us focus even more determinedly upon the need to make decisions—however imperfect, however unpalatable, however untimely they might seem to hon. Members. The public demand nothing less than for us to make a positive move. The time for decision making is now. The time for proposing nothing, opposing everything and seeking to play old-fashioned politics is over. We have to get on with this. As somebody who spent my life believing in the concept of our membership of the European Union, that comes as bitter gall to me, but it is not about me or individuals; it is about all of us.

**Lady Hermon:** The Justice Secretary says that it is time for decisions. Before making a decision, I would like the Justice Secretary to give the Unionist community of Northern Ireland a complete assurance that there is nothing in the Prime Minister's new Brexit deal that undermines the constitutional status of Northern Ireland and the consent principle of the Good Friday agreement.

**Robert Buckland:** I am able to give the hon. Lady an unequivocal assurance. There is nothing to undermine that—nothing we do will undermine it—and she can be assured of that fact.

On that important point, I commend this Bill to the House.

*Question put,* That the Bill be now read a Second time.

*The House divided:* Ayes 329, Noes 299.

**Division No. 4]**

**[7 pm**

**AYES**

Adams, Nigel	Crabb, rh Stephen
Afolami, Bim	Crouch, Tracey
Afriyie, Adam	Cruddas, Jon
Aldous, Peter	Davies, David T. C.
Allan, Lucy	Davies, Glyn
Amess, Sir David	Davies, Mims
Argar, Edward	Davies, Philip
Atkins, Victoria	Davis, rh Mr David
Austin, Ian	De Piero, Gloria
Bacon, Mr Richard	Dinenage, Caroline
Badenoch, Mrs Kemi ( <i>Proxy vote cast by Leo Docherty</i> )	Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Baker, Mr Steve	Docherty, Leo
Baldwin, Harriett	Donelan, Michelle
Barclay, rh Stephen	Dorries, Ms Nadine
Baron, Mr John	Double, Steve
Barron, rh Sir Kevin	Dowden, rh Oliver
Bellingham, Sir Henry	Doyle-Price, Jackie
Benyon, rh Richard	Drax, Richard
Beresford, Sir Paul	Duddridge, James
Berry, rh Jake	Duguid, David
Blackman, Bob	Duncan, rh Sir Alan
Blunt, Crispin	Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
Boles, Nick	Dunne, rh Mr Philip
Bone, Mr Peter	Ellis, rh Michael
Bottomley, Sir Peter	Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
Bowie, Andrew	Elphicke, Charlie
Bradley, Ben	Eustice, George
Bradley, rh Karen	Evans, Mr Nigel
Brady, Sir Graham	Evennett, rh Sir David
Braverman, Suella ( <i>Proxy vote cast by Mr Steve Baker</i> )	Fabricant, Michael
Brereton, Jack	Fallon, rh Sir Michael
Bridgen, Andrew	Field, rh Frank
Brine, Steve	Field, rh Mark
Brokenshire, rh James	Fitzpatrick, Jim
Bruce, Fiona	Flint, rh Caroline
Buckland, rh Robert	Ford, Vicky
Burghart, Alex	Foster, Kevin
Burns, rh Conor	Fox, rh Dr Liam
Burt, rh Alistair	Francois, rh Mr Mark
Cairns, rh Alun	Frazer, Lucy
Cartlidge, James	Freeman, George
Cash, Sir William	Freer, Mike
Caulfield, Maria	Fysh, Mr Marcus
Chalk, Alex	Gale, rh Sir Roger
Champion, Sarah	Garnier, Mark
Chishti, Rehman	Gauke, rh Mr David
Chope, Sir Christopher	Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Churchill, Jo	Gibb, rh Nick
Clark, Colin	Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
Clark, rh Greg	Glen, John
Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth	Goldsmith, rh Zac
Clarke, Mr Simon	Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Cleverly, rh James	Gove, rh Michael
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey	Graham, Luke
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse	Graham, Richard
Collins, Damian	Grant, Bill
Cooper, Rosie	Grant, Mrs Helen
Costa, Alberto	Gray, James
Courts, Robert	Grayling, rh Chris
Cox, rh Mr Geoffrey	Green, Chris
	Green, rh Damian
	Griffiths, Andrew



Hair, Kirstene  
 Halfon, rh Robert  
 Hall, Luke  
 Hammond, rh Mr Philip  
 Hammond, Stephen  
 Hancock, rh Matt  
 Hands, rh Greg  
 Harper, rh Mr Mark  
 Harrington, Richard  
 Harris, Rebecca  
 Harrison, Trudy  
 Hart, Simon  
 Hayes, rh Sir John  
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver  
 Heappey, James  
 Heaton-Harris, Chris  
 Heaton-Jones, Peter  
 Henderson, Gordon  
 Herbert, rh Nick  
 Hill, Mike  
 Hinds, rh Damian  
 Hoare, Simon  
 Hollingbery, Sir George  
 Hollinrake, Kevin  
 Hollobone, Mr Philip  
 Holloway, Adam  
 Hopkins, Kelvin  
 Howell, John  
 Huddleston, Nigel  
 Hughes, Eddie  
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy  
 Hurd, rh Mr Nick  
 Jack, rh Mr Alister  
 James, Margot  
 Jarvis, Dan  
 Javid, rh Sajid  
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil  
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard  
 Jenkyns, Andrea  
 Jenrick, rh Robert  
 Johnson, rh Boris  
 Johnson, Dr Caroline  
 Johnson, Gareth  
 Johnson, rh Joseph  
 Jones, Andrew  
 Jones, rh Mr David  
 Jones, Mr Marcus  
 Kawczynski, Daniel  
 Keegan, Gillian  
 Kennedy, Seema  
 Kerr, Stephen  
 Knight, rh Sir Greg  
 Knight, Julian  
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi  
 Lamont, John  
 Lancaster, rh Mark  
 Latham, Mrs Pauline  
 Leadsom, rh Andrea  
 Lefroy, Jeremy  
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward  
 Letwin, rh Sir Oliver  
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma  
 Lewer, Andrew  
 Lewis, rh Brandon  
 Lewis, Mr Ivan  
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian  
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian  
 Lidington, rh Sir David  
 Lloyd, Stephen  
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Lee Rowley*)  
 Lopresti, Jack

Lord, Mr Jonathan  
 Loughton, Tim  
 Mackinlay, Craig  
 Maclean, Rachel  
 Main, Mrs Anne  
 Mak, Alan  
 Malthouse, Kit  
 Mann, John  
 Mann, Scott  
 Masterton, Paul  
 May, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Maynard, Paul  
 McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick  
 McPartland, Stephen  
 McVey, rh Ms Esther  
 Menzies, Mark  
 Mercer, Johnny  
 Merriman, Huw  
 Metcalfe, Stephen  
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria  
 Milling, Amanda  
 Mills, Nigel  
 Milton, rh Anne  
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew  
 Moore, Damien  
 Mordaunt, rh Penny  
 Morgan, rh Nicky  
 Morris, Anne Marie  
 Morris, David  
 Morris, Grahame  
 Morris, James  
 Morton, Wendy  
 Mundell, rh David  
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll  
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew  
 Nandy, Lisa  
 Neill, Robert  
 Newton, Sarah  
 Norman, Jesse  
 O'Brien, Neil  
 Offord, Dr Matthew  
 Onn, Melanie  
 Opperman, Guy  
 Parish, Neil  
 Patel, rh Priti  
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen  
 Pawsey, Mark  
 Peacock, Stephanie  
 Penning, rh Sir Mike  
 Penrose, John  
 Percy, Andrew  
 Perry, rh Claire  
 Philp, Chris  
 Pincher, rh Christopher  
 Platt, Jo  
 Poulter, Dr Dan  
 Pow, Rebecca  
 Prentis, Victoria  
 Prisk, Mr Mark  
 Pritchard, Mark  
 Pursglove, Tom  
 Quin, Jeremy  
 Quince, Will  
 Raab, rh Dominic  
 Redwood, rh John  
 Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob  
 Robertson, Mr Laurence  
 Robinson, Mary  
 Rosindell, Andrew  
 Ross, Douglas  
 Rowley, Lee  
 Rudd, rh Amber

Rutley, David  
 Sandbach, Antoinette  
 Scully, Paul  
 Seely, Mr Bob  
 Selous, Andrew  
 Shapps, rh Grant  
 Sharma, rh Alok  
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec  
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith  
 Skidmore, rh Chris  
 Smeeth, Ruth  
 Smith, Chloe (*Proxy vote cast by Jo Churchill*)  
 Smith, Henry  
 Smith, rh Julian  
 Smith, Laura  
 Smith, Royston  
 Snell, Gareth  
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas  
 Spelman, rh Dame Caroline  
 Spencer, rh Mark  
 Stephenson, Andrew  
 Stevenson, John  
 Stewart, Bob  
 Stewart, rh Rory  
 Streeter, Sir Gary  
 Stride, rh Mel  
 Stuart, Graham  
 Sturdy, Julian  
 Sunak, rh Rishi  
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond  
 Swire, rh Sir Hugo  
 Syms, Sir Robert  
 Thomas, Derek

Thomson, Ross  
 Throup, Maggie  
 Tolhurst, Kelly  
 Tomlinson, Justin  
 Tomlinson, Michael  
 Tracey, Craig  
 Tredinnick, David  
 Trevelyan, Anne-Marie  
 Truss, rh Elizabeth  
 Tugendhat, Tom  
 Vaizey, rh Mr Edward  
 Vara, Mr Shailesh  
 Vickers, Martin  
 Villiers, rh Theresa  
 Walker, Sir Charles  
 Walker, Mr Robin  
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben  
 Warburton, David  
 Warman, Matt  
 Watling, Giles  
 Whately, Helen  
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather  
 Whittaker, Craig  
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John  
 Wiggin, Bill  
 Williamson, rh Gavin  
 Wood, Mike  
 Woodcock, John  
 Wragg, Mr William  
 Wright, rh Jeremy  
 Zahawi, Nadhim

**Tellers for the Ayes:**  
**Stuart Andrew and**  
**Iain Stewart**

#### NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane  
 Abrahams, Debbie  
 Ali, Rushanara  
 Allen, Heidi  
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena  
 Amesbury, Mike  
 Antoniazzi, Tonia  
 Ashworth, Jonathan  
 Bailey, Mr Adrian  
 Bardell, Hannah  
 Bebb, Guto  
 Beckett, rh Margaret  
 Benn, rh Hilary  
 Berger, Luciana  
 Betts, Mr Clive  
 Black, Mhairi  
 Blackford, rh Ian  
 Blackman, Kirsty  
 Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta  
 Blomfield, Paul  
 Brabin, Tracy  
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben  
 Brake, rh Tom  
 Brennan, Kevin  
 Brock, Deidre  
 Brown, Alan  
 Brown, Lyn  
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas  
 Bryant, Chris  
 Buck, Ms Karen  
 Burden, Richard  
 Burgon, Richard  
 Butler, Dawn  
 Byrne, rh Liam  
 Cable, rh Sir Vince  
 Cadbury, Ruth  
 Cameron, Dr Lisa  
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan  
 Campbell, Mr Gregory  
 Carden, Dan  
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair  
 Chapman, Douglas  
 Chapman, Jenny  
 Charalambous, Bambos  
 Cherry, Joanna  
 Clwyd, rh Ann  
 Coaker, Vernon  
 Coffey, Ann  
 Cooper, Julie  
 Cooper, rh Yvette  
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy  
 Cowan, Ronnie  
 Coyle, Neil  
 Crausby, Sir David  
 Crawley, Angela  
 Creagh, Mary  
 Creasy, Stella  
 Cryer, John  
 Cummins, Judith  
 Cunningham, Alex  
 Cunningham, Mr Jim  
 Daby, Janet  
 Davey, rh Sir Edward  
 David, Wayne  
 Davies, Geraint  
 Day, Martyn  
 De Cordova, Marsha  
 Debbonaire, Thangam  
 Dent Coad, Emma  
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh

Docherty-Hughes, Martin  
 Dodds, Anneliese  
 Dodds, Jane  
 Dodds, rh Nigel  
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.  
 Doughty, Stephen  
 Dowd, Peter  
 Drew, Dr David  
 Dromey, Jack  
 Duffield, Rosie  
 Eagle, Ms Angela  
 Eagle, Maria  
 Edwards, Jonathan  
 Efford, Clive  
 Elliott, Julie  
 Ellman, Dame Louise  
 Elmore, Chris  
 Esterson, Bill  
 Evans, Chris (*Proxy vote cast by Mark Tami*)  
 Farrelly, Paul  
 Farron, Tim  
 Fellows, Marion  
 Fletcher, Colleen  
 Forbes, Lisa  
 Foxcroft, Vicky  
 Frith, James  
 Furniss, Gill  
 Gaffney, Hugh  
 Gapes, Mike  
 Gardiner, Barry  
 George, Ruth  
 Gethins, Stephen  
 Gibson, Patricia  
 Gill, Preet Kaur  
 Girvan, Paul  
 Glindon, Mary  
 Godsiff, Mr Roger  
 Goodman, Helen  
 Grady, Patrick  
 Grant, Peter  
 Gray, Neil (*Proxy vote cast by Patrick Grady*)  
 Green, Kate  
 Greening, rh Justine  
 Greenwood, Lilian  
 Greenwood, Margaret  
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic  
 Griffith, Nia  
 Grogan, John  
 Gwynne, Andrew  
 Gyimah, Mr Sam  
 Haigh, Louise  
 Hamilton, Fabian  
 Hanson, rh David  
 Hardy, Emma  
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet  
 Harris, Carolyn  
 Hayes, Helen  
 Hayman, Sue  
 Healey, rh John  
 Hendrick, Sir Mark  
 Hendry, Drew  
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen  
 Hermon, Lady  
 Hillier, Meg  
 Hobhouse, Wera  
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret  
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon  
 Hollern, Kate  
 Hosie, Stewart  
 Howarth, rh Sir George

Huq, Dr Rupa  
 Hussain, Imran  
 Jardine, Christine  
 Johnson, Diana  
 Jones, Darren  
 Jones, Gerald  
 Jones, Graham P.  
 Jones, Helen  
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan  
 Jones, Ruth  
 Jones, Sarah  
 Jones, Susan Elan  
 Kane, Mike  
 Keeley, Barbara  
 Kendall, Liz  
 Khan, Afzal  
 Killen, Ged  
 Kinnock, Stephen  
 Kyle, Peter  
 Laird, Lesley  
 Lake, Ben  
 Lamb, rh Norman  
 Lammy, rh Mr David  
 Lavery, Ian  
 Law, Chris  
 Lee, Karen  
 Lee, Dr Phillip  
 Leslie, Mr Chris  
 Lewis, Clive  
 Linden, David  
 Little Pengelly, Emma  
 Lloyd, Tony  
 Long Bailey, Rebecca  
 Lucas, Caroline  
 Lucas, Ian C.  
 Lynch, Holly  
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan  
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid  
 Mahmood, Shabana  
 Malhotra, Seema  
 Marsden, Gordon  
 Martin, Sandy  
 Maskell, Rachael  
 Matheson, Christian  
 Mc Nally, John  
 McCabe, Steve  
 McCarthy, Kerry  
 McDonagh, Siobhain  
 McDonald, Andy  
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm  
 McDonald, Stuart C.  
 McDonnell, rh John  
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat  
 McGinn, Conor  
 McGovern, Alison  
 McInnes, Liz  
 McKinnell, Catherine  
 McMahan, Jim  
 McMorris, Anna  
 Mearns, Ian  
 Miliband, rh Edward  
 Monaghan, Carol  
 Moon, Mrs Madeleine  
 Moran, Layla  
 Morden, Jessica  
 Morgan, Stephen  
 Murray, Ian  
 Newlands, Gavin  
 Norris, Alex  
 O'Hara, Brendan  
 O'Mara, Jared  
 Onwurah, Chi

Osamor, Kate  
 Owen, Albert  
 Paisley, Ian  
 Pearce, Teresa  
 Pennycook, Matthew  
 Perkins, Toby  
 Phillips, Jess  
 Phillipson, Bridget  
 Pidcock, Laura  
 Pollard, Luke  
 Pound, Stephen  
 Powell, Lucy  
 Qureshi, Yasmin  
 Rashid, Faisal  
 Rayner, Angela  
 Reed, Mr Steve  
 Rees, Christina  
 Reeves, Ellie  
 Reeves, Rachel  
 Reynolds, Emma (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Pat McFadden*)  
 Reynolds, Jonathan  
 Rimmer, Ms Marie  
 Robinson, Gavin  
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey  
 Rodda, Matt  
 Rowley, Danielle  
 Ruane, Chris  
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd  
 Ryan, rh Joan  
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz  
 Shah, Naz  
 Shannon, Jim  
 Sharma, Mr Virendra  
 Sheerman, Mr Barry  
 Sheppard, Tommy  
 Sherriff, Paula  
 Shuker, Mr Gavin  
 Siddiq, Tulip  
 Simpson, David  
 Skinner, Mr Dennis  
 Slaughter, Andy  
 Smith, Angela  
 Smith, Cat  
 Smith, Eleanor  
 Smith, Jeff

Smith, Owen  
 Smyth, Karin  
 Sobel, Alex  
 Soubry, rh Anna  
 Spellar, rh John  
 Starmer, rh Keir  
 Stephens, Chris  
 Stevens, Jo  
 Stone, Jamie  
 Streeting, Wes  
 Stringer, Graham  
 Sweeney, Mr Paul  
 Swinson, Jo  
 Tami, rh Mark  
 Thewliss, Alison  
 Thomas, Gareth  
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick  
 Thornberry, rh Emily  
 Timms, rh Stephen  
 Trickett, Jon  
 Turley, Anna  
 Turner, Karl  
 Twigg, Stephen  
 Twist, Liz  
 Umunna, Chuka  
 Vaz, rh Keith  
 Vaz, rh Valerie  
 Walker, Thelma  
 Watson, Tom  
 West, Catherine  
 Western, Matt  
 Whitehead, Dr Alan  
 Whitfield, Martin  
 Whitford, Dr Philippa  
 Williams, Hywel  
 Williams, Dr Paul  
 Wilson, Phil  
 Wilson, rh Sammy  
 Wishart, Pete  
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
 Yasin, Mohammad  
 Zeichner, Daniel

**Tellers for the Noes:**  
**Nic Dakin and**  
**Nick Smith**

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Bill read a Second time.*

## EUROPEAN UNION (WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT) BILL (PROGRAMME)

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 83A(7)),*

That the following provisions shall apply to the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill:

### *Committal*

(1) The Bill shall be committed to a Committee of the whole House.

### *Proceedings in Committee*

(2) Proceedings in Committee of the whole House shall be completed in two days.

(3) The proceedings shall be taken on each of those days as shown in the first column of the following Table and in the order so shown.

(4) The proceedings shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion at the times specified in the second column of the Table.

## Table

<i>Proceedings</i>	<i>Time for conclusion of proceedings</i>
<i>At today's sitting</i>	
Clauses 1 to 4; new Clauses relating to Part 1; new Schedules relating to Part 1	Three hours after the commencement of proceedings on the Motion for this Order.
<i>Second day</i>	
Clauses 21 to 23; Schedule 3; Clause 24; Clauses 29 to 34; Schedule 4; Clauses 35 and 36; new Clauses relating to any of Clauses 21 to 23, Schedule 3, Clause 24, Clauses 29 to 34, Schedule 4, Clause 35 or Clause 36; new Schedules relating to any of Clauses 21 to 23, Schedule 3, Clause 24, Clauses 29 to 34, Schedule 4, Clause 35 or Clause 36	Six hours after the commencement of proceedings on the Bill on the second day.
Clauses 7 to 14; Schedule 1; Clause 15; Schedule 2; Clauses 16 and 17; new Clauses relating to Part 3; new Schedules relating to Part 3	Six hours after the commencement of proceedings on the Bill on the second day
Clauses 18 to 20; Clauses 5 and 6; Clauses 25 to 28; Clauses 37 and 38; Schedule 5; Clause 39; Schedule 6; Clause 40; new Clauses relating to any of Clauses 18 to 20, Clauses 5 and 6, Clauses 25 to 28, Clauses 37 and 38, Schedule 5, Clause 39, Schedule 6 or Clause 40; new Schedules relating to any of Clauses 18 to 20, Clauses 5 and 6, Clauses 25 to 28, Clauses 37 and 38, Schedule 5, Clause 39, Schedule 6 or Clause 40	Nine hours after the commencement of proceedings on the Bill on the second day
New Clauses relating to a further referendum in connection with the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union, new Schedules relating to a further referendum in connection with the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union, remaining new Clauses, remaining new Schedules, remaining proceedings on the Bill	Twelve hours after the commencement of proceedings on the Bill on the second day.

*Proceedings on Consideration and up to and including Third Reading*

(5) Any proceedings on Consideration, any proceedings in legislative grand committee and proceedings on Third Reading shall be taken in one day in accordance with the following provisions of this Order.

(6) Any proceedings on Consideration and any proceedings in legislative grand committee shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion six hours after the commencement of proceedings on the Bill on that day.

(7) Proceedings on Third Reading shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion eight hours after the commencement of proceedings on the Bill on that day.

*Programming committee*

(8) Standing Order No. 83B (Programming committees) shall not apply to proceedings in Committee of the whole House, to any proceedings on Consideration or to other proceedings up to and including Third Reading.

*Consideration of Lords Amendments*

(9) Proceedings on consideration of Lords Amendments shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion one hour after their commencement.

*Subsequent stages*

(10) Any further Message from the Lords may be considered forthwith without any Question being put.

(11) The proceedings on any further Message from the Lords shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion one hour after their commencement.—(*Jeremy Quin.*)

*The House divided: Ayes 308, Noes 322.*

**Division No. 5]****[7.16 pm****AYES**

Adams, Nigel	Costa, Alberto
Afolami, Bim	Courts, Robert
Afriyie, Adam	Cox, rh Mr Geoffrey
Aldous, Peter	Crabb, rh Stephen
Allan, Lucy	Crouch, Tracey
Amess, Sir David	Davies, David T. C.
Argar, Edward	Davies, Glyn
Atkins, Victoria	Davies, Mims
Austin, Ian	Davies, Philip
Bacon, Mr Richard	Davis, rh Mr David
Badenoch, Mrs Kemi ( <i>Proxy vote cast by Leo Docherty</i> )	Dinenage, Caroline
Baker, Mr Steve	Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Baldwin, Harriett	Docherty, Leo
Barclay, rh Stephen	Donelan, Michelle
Baron, Mr John	Dorries, Ms Nadine
Barron, rh Sir Kevin	Double, Steve
Bellingham, Sir Henry	Dowden, rh Oliver
Benyon, rh Richard	Doyle-Price, Jackie
Beresford, Sir Paul	Drax, Richard
Berry, rh Jake	Duddridge, James
Blackman, Bob	Duguid, David
Blunt, Crispin	Duncan, rh Sir Alan
Boles, Nick	Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
Bone, Mr Peter	Dunne, rh Mr Philip
Bottomley, Sir Peter	Ellis, rh Michael
Bowie, Andrew	Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
Bradley, Ben	Elphicke, Charlie
Bradley, rh Karen	Eustice, George
Brady, Sir Graham	Evans, Mr Nigel
Braverman, Suella ( <i>Proxy vote cast by Mr Steve Baker</i> )	Evennett, rh Sir David
Brereton, Jack	Fabricant, Michael
Bridgen, Andrew	Fallon, rh Sir Michael
Brine, Steve	Field, rh Frank
Brokenshire, rh James	Field, rh Mark
Bruce, Fiona	Fitzpatrick, Jim
Buckland, rh Robert	Flint, rh Caroline
Burghart, Alex	Ford, Vicky
Burns, rh Conor	Foster, Kevin
Burt, rh Alistair	Fox, rh Dr Liam
Cairns, rh Alun	Francois, rh Mr Mark
Cartledge, James	Frazer, Lucy
Cash, Sir William	Freeman, George
Caulfield, Maria	Freer, Mike
Chalk, Alex	Fysh, Mr Marcus
Chishti, Rehman	Gale, rh Sir Roger
Chope, Sir Christopher	Garnier, Mark
Churchill, Jo	Gauke, rh Mr David
Clark, Colin	Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Clark, rh Greg	Gibb, rh Nick
Clarke, Mr Simon	Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
Cleverly, rh James	Glen, John
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey	Goldsmith, rh Zac
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse	Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Collins, Damian	Gove, rh Michael
	Graham, Luke
	Graham, Richard



Grant, Bill  
 Grant, Mrs Helen  
 Gray, James  
 Grayling, rh Chris  
 Green, Chris  
 Green, rh Damian  
 Griffiths, Andrew  
 Hair, Kirstene  
 Halfon, rh Robert  
 Hall, Luke  
 Hammond, Stephen  
 Hancock, rh Matt  
 Hands, rh Greg  
 Harper, rh Mr Mark  
 Harris, Rebecca  
 Harrison, Trudy  
 Hart, Simon  
 Hayes, rh Sir John  
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver  
 Heappey, James  
 Heaton-Harris, Chris  
 Heaton-Jones, Peter  
 Henderson, Gordon  
 Herbert, rh Nick  
 Hinds, rh Damian  
 Hoare, Simon  
 Hoey, Kate  
 Hollingbery, Sir George  
 Hollinrake, Kevin  
 Hollobone, Mr Philip  
 Holloway, Adam  
 Hopkins, Kelvin  
 Howell, John  
 Huddleston, Nigel  
 Hughes, Eddie  
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy  
 Hurd, rh Mr Nick  
 Jack, rh Mr Alister  
 James, Margot  
 Javid, rh Sajid  
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil  
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard  
 Jenkyns, Andrea  
 Jenrick, rh Robert  
 Johnson, rh Boris  
 Johnson, Dr Caroline  
 Johnson, Gareth  
 Johnson, rh Joseph  
 Jones, Andrew  
 Jones, rh Mr David  
 Jones, Mr Marcus  
 Kawczynski, Daniel  
 Keegan, Gillian  
 Kennedy, Seema  
 Kerr, Stephen  
 Knight, rh Sir Greg  
 Knight, Julian  
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi  
 Lamont, John  
 Lancaster, rh Mark  
 Latham, Mrs Pauline  
 Leadsom, rh Andrea  
 Lefroy, Jeremy  
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward  
 Letwin, rh Sir Oliver  
 Lewer, Andrew  
 Lewis, rh Brandon  
 Lewis, Mr Ivan  
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian  
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian  
 Lidington, rh Sir David

Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Lee Rowley*)  
 Lopresti, Jack  
 Lord, Mr Jonathan  
 Loughton, Tim  
 Mackinlay, Craig  
 Maclean, Rachel  
 Main, Mrs Anne  
 Mak, Alan  
 Malthouse, Kit  
 Mann, John  
 Mann, Scott  
 Masterton, Paul  
 May, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Maynard, Paul  
 McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick  
 McPartland, Stephen  
 McVey, rh Ms Esther  
 Menzies, Mark  
 Mercer, Johnny  
 Merriman, Huw  
 Metcalfe, Stephen  
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria  
 Milling, Amanda  
 Mills, Nigel  
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew  
 Moore, Damien  
 Mordaunt, rh Penny  
 Morgan, rh Nicky  
 Morris, Anne Marie  
 Morris, David  
 Morris, James  
 Morton, Wendy  
 Mundell, rh David  
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll  
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew  
 Neill, Robert  
 Newton, Sarah  
 Norman, Jesse  
 O'Brien, Neil  
 Offord, Dr Matthew  
 Opperman, Guy  
 Parish, Neil  
 Patel, rh Priti  
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen  
 Pawsey, Mark  
 Penning, rh Sir Mike  
 Penrose, John  
 Percy, Andrew  
 Perry, rh Claire  
 Philp, Chris  
 Pincher, rh Christopher  
 Poulter, Dr Dan  
 Pow, Rebecca  
 Prentis, Victoria  
 Prisk, Mr Mark  
 Pritchard, Mark  
 Pursglove, Tom  
 Quin, Jeremy  
 Quince, Will  
 Raab, rh Dominic  
 Redwood, rh John  
 Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob  
 Robertson, Mr Laurence  
 Robinson, Mary  
 Rosindell, Andrew  
 Ross, Douglas  
 Rowley, Lee  
 Rudd, rh Amber  
 Rutley, David  
 Scully, Paul  
 Seely, Mr Bob

Selous, Andrew  
 Shapps, rh Grant  
 Sharma, rh Alok  
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec  
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith  
 Skidmore, rh Chris  
 Smith, Chloe (*Proxy vote cast by Jo Churchill*)  
 Smith, Henry  
 Smith, rh Julian  
 Smith, Royston  
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas  
 Spelman, rh Dame Caroline  
 Spencer, rh Mark  
 Stephenson, Andrew  
 Stevenson, John  
 Stewart, Bob  
 Streeter, Sir Gary  
 Stride, rh Mel  
 Stuart, Graham  
 Sturdy, Julian  
 Sunak, rh Rishi  
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond  
 Swire, rh Sir Hugo  
 Syms, Sir Robert  
 Thomas, Derek  
 Thomson, Ross  
 Throup, Maggie  
 Tolhurst, Kelly  
 Tomlinson, Justin

Tomlinson, Michael  
 Tracey, Craig  
 Tredinnick, David  
 Trevelyan, Anne-Marie  
 Truss, rh Elizabeth  
 Tugendhat, Tom  
 Vaizey, rh Mr Edward  
 Vara, Mr Shailesh  
 Vickers, Martin  
 Villiers, rh Theresa  
 Walker, Sir Charles  
 Walker, Mr Robin  
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben  
 Warburton, David  
 Warman, Matt  
 Watling, Giles  
 Whately, Helen  
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather  
 Whittaker, Craig  
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John  
 Wiggan, Bill  
 Williamson, rh Gavin  
 Wood, Mike  
 Woodcock, John  
 Wragg, Mr William  
 Wright, rh Jeremy  
 Zahawi, Nadhim

**Tellers for the Ayes:**  
**Stuart Andrew and**  
**Iain Stewart**

#### NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane  
 Abrahams, Debbie  
 Ali, Rushanara  
 Allen, Heidi  
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena  
 Amesbury, Mike  
 Antoniazzi, Tonia  
 Ashworth, Jonathan  
 Bailey, Mr Adrian  
 Bardell, Hannah  
 Bebb, Guto  
 Beckett, rh Margaret  
 Benn, rh Hilary  
 Berger, Luciana  
 Betts, Mr Clive  
 Black, Mhairi  
 Blackford, rh Ian  
 Blackman, Kirsty  
 Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta  
 Blomfield, Paul  
 Brabin, Tracy  
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben  
 Brake, rh Tom  
 Brennan, Kevin  
 Brock, Deidre  
 Brown, Alan  
 Brown, Lyn  
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas  
 Bryant, Chris  
 Buck, Ms Karen  
 Burden, Richard  
 Burgon, Richard  
 Butler, Dawn  
 Byrne, rh Liam  
 Cable, rh Sir Vince  
 Cadbury, Ruth  
 Cameron, Dr Lisa  
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan  
 Campbell, Mr Gregory

Carden, Dan  
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair  
 Chapman, Sarah  
 Chapman, Douglas  
 Chapman, Jenny  
 Charalambous, Bambos  
 Cherry, Joanna  
 Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth  
 Clwyd, rh Ann  
 Coaker, Vernon  
 Coffey, Ann  
 Cooper, Julie  
 Cooper, rh Yvette  
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy  
 Cowan, Ronnie  
 Coyle, Neil  
 Crausby, Sir David  
 Crawley, Angela  
 Creagh, Mary  
 Creasy, Stella  
 Cruddas, Jon  
 Cryer, John  
 Cummins, Judith  
 Cunningham, Alex  
 Cunningham, Mr Jim  
 Daby, Janet  
 Davey, rh Sir Edward  
 David, Wayne  
 Davies, Geraint  
 Day, Martyn  
 De Cordova, Marsha  
 De Piero, Gloria  
 Debbonaire, Thangam  
 Dent Coad, Emma  
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh  
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin  
 Dodds, Anneliese  
 Dodds, Jane  
 Dodds, rh Nigel

Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.  
 Doughty, Stephen  
 Dowd, Peter  
 Drew, Dr David  
 Dromey, Jack  
 Duffield, Rosie  
 Eagle, Ms Angela  
 Eagle, Maria  
 Edwards, Jonathan  
 Efford, Clive  
 Elliott, Julie  
 Ellman, Dame Louise  
 Elmore, Chris  
 Esterson, Bill  
 Evans, Chris (*Proxy vote cast by Mark Tami*)  
 Farrelly, Paul  
 Farron, Tim  
 Fellows, Marion  
 Fletcher, Colleen  
 Forbes, Lisa  
 Fovargue, Yvonne  
 Foxcroft, Vicky  
 Frith, James  
 Furniss, Gill  
 Gaffney, Hugh  
 Gapes, Mike  
 Gardiner, Barry  
 George, Ruth  
 Gethins, Stephen  
 Gibson, Patricia  
 Gill, Preet Kaur  
 Girvan, Paul  
 Giindon, Mary  
 Godsiff, Mr Roger  
 Goodman, Helen  
 Grady, Patrick  
 Grant, Peter  
 Gray, Neil (*Proxy vote cast by Patrick Grady*)  
 Green, Kate  
 Greening, rh Justine  
 Greenwood, Lilian  
 Greenwood, Margaret  
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic  
 Griffith, Nia  
 Grogan, John  
 Gwynne, Andrew  
 Gyimah, Mr Sam  
 Haigh, Louise  
 Hamilton, Fabian  
 Hammond, rh Mr Philip  
 Hanson, rh David  
 Hardy, Emma  
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet  
 Harrington, Richard  
 Harris, Carolyn  
 Hayes, Helen  
 Hayman, Sue  
 Healey, rh John  
 Hendrick, Sir Mark  
 Hendry, Drew  
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen  
 Hermon, Lady  
 Hill, Mike  
 Hillier, Meg  
 Hobhouse, Wera  
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret  
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon  
 Hollern, Kate  
 Hosie, Stewart  
 Howarth, rh Sir George

Huq, Dr Rupa  
 Hussain, Imran  
 Jardine, Christine  
 Jarvis, Dan  
 Johnson, Diana  
 Jones, Darren  
 Jones, Gerald  
 Jones, Graham P.  
 Jones, Helen  
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan  
 Jones, Ruth  
 Jones, Sarah  
 Jones, Susan Elan  
 Kane, Mike  
 Keeley, Barbara  
 Kendall, Liz  
 Khan, Afzal  
 Killen, Ged  
 Kinnock, Stephen  
 Kyle, Peter  
 Laird, Lesley  
 Lake, Ben  
 Lamb, rh Norman  
 Lammy, rh Mr David  
 Lavery, Ian  
 Law, Chris  
 Lee, Karen  
 Lee, Dr Phillip  
 Leslie, Mr Chris  
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma  
 Lewis, Clive  
 Linden, David  
 Little Pengelly, Emma  
 Lloyd, Stephen  
 Lloyd, Tony  
 Long Bailey, Rebecca  
 Lucas, Caroline  
 Lucas, Ian C.  
 Lynch, Holly  
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan  
 Madders, Justin  
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid  
 Mahmood, Shabana  
 Malhotra, Seema  
 Marsden, Gordon  
 Martin, Sandy  
 Maskell, Rachael  
 Matheson, Christian  
 Mc Nally, John  
 McCabe, Steve  
 McCarthy, Kerry  
 McDonagh, Siobhain  
 McDonald, Andy  
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm  
 McDonald, Stuart C.  
 McDonnell, rh John  
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat  
 McGinn, Conor  
 McGovern, Alison  
 McInnes, Liz  
 McKinnell, Catherine  
 McMahan, Jim  
 McMorrin, Anna  
 Mearns, Ian  
 Miliband, rh Edward  
 Milton, rh Anne  
 Monaghan, Carol  
 Moon, Mrs Madeleine  
 Moran, Layla  
 Morden, Jessica  
 Morgan, Stephen  
 Morris, Grahame

Murray, Ian  
 Nandy, Lisa  
 Newlands, Gavin  
 Norris, Alex  
 O'Hara, Brendan  
 O'Mara, Jared  
 Onn, Melanie  
 Onwurah, Chi  
 Osamor, Kate  
 Owen, Albert  
 Paisley, Ian  
 Peacock, Stephanie  
 Pearce, Teresa  
 Pennycook, Matthew  
 Perkins, Toby  
 Phillips, Jess  
 Phillipson, Bridget  
 Pidcock, Laura  
 Platt, Jo  
 Pollard, Luke  
 Pound, Stephen  
 Powell, Lucy  
 Qureshi, Yasmin  
 Rashid, Faisal  
 Rayner, Angela  
 Reed, Mr Steve  
 Rees, Christina  
 Reeves, Ellie  
 Reeves, Rachel  
 Reynolds, Emma (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Pat McFadden*)  
 Reynolds, Jonathan  
 Rimmer, Ms Marie  
 Robinson, Gavin  
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey  
 Rodda, Matt  
 Rowley, Danielle  
 Ruane, Chris  
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd  
 Ryan, rh Joan  
 Sandbach, Antoinette  
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz  
 Shah, Naz  
 Shannon, Jim  
 Sharma, Mr Virendra  
 Sheerman, Mr Barry  
 Sheppard, Tommy  
 Sherriff, Paula  
 Shuker, Mr Gavin  
 Siddiq, Tulip  
 Simpson, David  
 Skinner, Mr Dennis  
 Slaughter, Andy  
 Smeeth, Ruth

Smith, Angela  
 Smith, Cat  
 Smith, Eleanor  
 Smith, Jeff  
 Smith, Laura  
 Smith, Owen  
 Smyth, Karin  
 Snell, Gareth  
 Sobel, Alex  
 Soubry, rh Anna  
 Spellar, rh John  
 Starmer, rh Keir  
 Stephens, Chris  
 Stevens, Jo  
 Stewart, rh Rory  
 Stone, Jamie  
 Streeting, Wes  
 Stringer, Graham  
 Sweeney, Mr Paul  
 Swinson, Jo  
 Tami, rh Mark  
 Thewliss, Alison  
 Thomas, Gareth  
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick  
 Thornberry, rh Emily  
 Timms, rh Stephen  
 Trickett, Jon  
 Turley, Anna  
 Turner, Karl  
 Twigg, Stephen  
 Twist, Liz  
 Umunna, Chuka  
 Vaz, rh Keith  
 Vaz, rh Valerie  
 Walker, Thelma  
 Watson, Tom  
 West, Catherine  
 Western, Matt  
 Whitehead, Dr Alan  
 Whitfield, Martin  
 Whitford, Dr Philippa  
 Williams, Hywel  
 Williams, Dr Paul  
 Wilson, Phil  
 Wilson, rh Sammy  
 Wishart, Pete  
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
 Yasin, Mohammad  
 Zeichner, Daniel

**Tellers for the Noes:**  
 Nic Dakin and  
 Nick Smith

*Question accordingly negated.*

**Jeremy Corbyn:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. On Saturday, this House emphatically rejected the Prime Minister's deal. [*Interruption.*] Conservative Members are too hasty; I have not finished yet. Tonight the House has refused to be bounced into debating a hugely significant piece of legislation in just two days, with barely any notice and no analysis of the economic impact of this Bill. The Prime Minister is the author of his own misfortune. I make this offer to him tonight: work with us—all of us—to agree a reasonable timetable, and I suspect that this House will vote to debate, scrutinise and, I hope, amend the detail of this Bill. That would be the sensible way forward, and that is the offer I make on behalf of the Opposition tonight.

**The Prime Minister:** Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. Let me say in response how welcome it is—even joyful—that, for the first time in this long saga, this House has accepted its responsibilities, come together and embraced a deal. I congratulate Members across the House on the scale of our collective achievement. Just a few weeks ago, hardly anybody believed that we could reopen the withdrawal agreement, let alone abolish the backstop, and certainly nobody thought that we could secure the approval of the House for a new deal. We should not overlook the significance of this moment. I pay particular tribute to those Members of the House who were sceptical and who had difficulties and doubts, but who decided to place the national interest ahead of any other consideration.

However, I must express my disappointment that the House has again voted for delay, rather than a timetable that would have guaranteed that the UK was in a position to leave the EU on 31 October with a deal. We now face further uncertainty, and the EU must now make up its mind about how to answer Parliament's request for a delay. The first consequence is that the Government must take the only responsible course and accelerate our preparations for a no-deal outcome. Secondly, however, I will speak to EU member states about their intentions and, until they have reached a decision, we will pause this legislation.

Let me be clear: our policy remains that we should not delay and that we should leave the EU on 31 October. That is what I will say to the EU, and I will report back to the House. One way or another, we will leave the EU with this deal, to which this House has just given its assent, and I thank Members across the House for that hard-won agreement.

**Ian Blackford:** Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. I must say that I find the response of the Prime Minister quite extraordinary, because the facts of the matter are—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr Speaker:** Order. The right hon. Gentleman is entitled to raise a point of order and he is entitled to be heard. Let us hear the right hon. Gentleman, and then we will expedite progress.

**Ian Blackford:** The fact of the matter is that this is yet another humiliating defeat this evening for the Prime Minister, who has sought to railroad through this House legislation that requires proper scrutiny. Rightly, this House has spoken with a very clear voice to tell the Prime Minister that he is not on. Furthermore, it is absolutely crystal clear what should now happen. There is legislation passed by this House, and it is the law of the land, that on the basis of not agreeing a deal, the Prime Minister is instructed—instructed, Prime Minister—to seek an extension. Go to Brussels and do as you have been instructed, and do not put yourself offside against this Parliament.

It is crystal clear that this is a Government in whom there is no confidence, and a Government who have sought to ignore the wishes of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish people. It is obvious to us that if we want to guarantee our rights as EU citizens, Scotland has to become an independent country. To that end, Mr Speaker, can you advise me about what we must do

in this House and what options are open to us both in securing the extension and in protecting Scotland's national interest?

**Mr Speaker:** I have a sense that the right hon. Gentleman's question is largely rhetorical, and I say that in no disobliging spirit. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman needs my advice, and even if he does, he does not need it tonight, so we will leave it there for now.

**Jo Swinson** *rose*—

**Mr Kenneth Clarke** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** Will the hon. Lady forgive me if I take the point of order from the Father of the House first? *[Interruption.]* The right hon. and learned Gentleman is being equally obliging. *[Interruption.]* Oh, very well, press on—Mr Kenneth Clarke.

**Mr Clarke:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. It is your decision; I do not think that either of us particularly minds. It is a point of order—almost.

**Mr Speaker:** May I ask the Father of the House: is it your first, sir? *[Laughter.]*

**Mr Clarke:** May I ask the Prime Minister and everybody else to reconsider the suggestion he made that we pause the progress of the Bill tomorrow? I congratulate him on winning approval for the deal he negotiated. I think I said in the House once that I would apologise to him and congratulate him if he actually got it, and he has achieved it, and the Second Reading vote was the approval of his deal. The argument is about how long the House is allowed to take over considering it. I cannot quite see the logic of pausing progress on the Bill when the whole House is expecting the next two days to be spent on it. That would enable us to see how quickly the House wishes to proceed and what sort of time is being looked for, and if people started filibustering—I hope they would not—it might enable the Government to get a majority for a timetable motion that was a modest adjustment to tonight's. Three or four days more would do it.

**Mr Speaker:** I am grateful to the right hon. and learned Gentleman, the Father of the House, for his point of order. I await the development of events, but it is not unreasonable for me to say that, as of now and unless there has been any change, my understanding is that the Leader of the House intends to make a business statement—I have a draft copy—that sets out the Government's intentions for the coming days. I say that cautiously in case the Government have changed their mind, but I do not think they have and I do not expect them to do so. We will hear from the Leader of the House ere long.

**Jo Swinson:** Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. Twice in the last three days, the Prime Minister has failed to force his bad Brexit deal through the House without adequate scrutiny. He continues in an irresponsible vein to talk up the prospect of no deal. Is it not time to end the brinkmanship and replace it with some statesmanship; to seriously and respectfully engage with our European friends to secure an extension to article 50



[Jo Swinson]

to enable the House to pass legislation for a people's vote; or, if he prefers, to allow proper scrutiny of his Bill or to call a general election? All of those things require a decent extension to article 50: he should be a statesman and go and secure it.

**Mr Speaker:** I am grateful to the hon. Lady.

**Nigel Dodds:** Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. First, on the Second Reading vote, many hon. Members—certainly in my hearing—voted for it although they were against the contents of the deal. They said that they would want to see changes to it. The House has made a wise decision to allow further time for detailed examination of some of the most important legislation that we will ever have to consider, particularly given the impact on Northern Ireland. As the Prime Minister reflects on the votes on Saturday and studies the votes tonight, I suggest that he should talk to us again about what can be done even at this late stage to ensure that we join in this great quest to get Brexit done, but as one United Kingdom.

**Mr Speaker:** I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his point of order.

**Mrs Anne Main (St Albans) (Con):** Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. May we have a clarification from the Chair that the Second Reading was passed with a significant majority? The leaders of the Liberal Democrats and the SNP keep saying that it has not been passed. Can you clarify that Second Reading was passed with a majority?

**Mr Speaker:** That is undeniably true. I am not sure that my clarification was required for Members, but for the benefit of those observing our proceedings the hon. Lady makes a fair point. It is important to be clear: the Second Reading of the Bill was carried, as I announced, by 329 votes to 299. It was the programme motion that was defeated by 322 to 308. That is by way of being a public service broadcast.

**Lucy Powell (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op):** Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. I wondered if you could clarify for me how “getting Brexit done” sits with pausing Brexit. This feels like a very churlish reaction to what is a straightforward request, which is for the House to have a short amount of time. Do those two things equate in your mind?

**Mr Speaker:** I am grateful to the hon. Lady for her point of order. I think the fairest thing I can say to her is: it is a factual point, of which the Leader of the House and, I am sure, the Prime Minister will be aware. As a result of the fact that the programme motion was turned down—it is very encouraging that the former Government Chief Whip, the right hon. Member for Derbyshire Dales (Sir Patrick McLoughlin) is nodding vigorously—we could not proceed, I must advise the House, with the start of Committee consideration, for which there is currently no authority.

If I may say so, people are entitled to their own views about the attitude of one leader or another, but I certainly am not going to make any charge of churlishness

at all. To be fair, the Prime Minister is, in pragmatic fashion, accepting the immediate implications of the result. It is literally a time to pause and consider how to proceed. I make no other point beyond that.

**Sir Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire Dales) (Con):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Can you confirm that the Prime Minister had no alternative other than to do what he has done tonight? The previous Labour Government passed timetable motions—Bills had to have such a motion to proceed. Therefore, the action of Members tonight to vote against the timetable motion means that we cannot continue with the business, which we could do until the changes were made by the previous Labour Government.

**Mr Speaker:** I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman requires my endorsement. Suffice it to say that a book could be written on the subject of the genesis of programme motions and he may well be tempted to pen it, but whether it would prove to be a bestseller is another matter.

**Mr Kenneth Clarke** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** If the right hon. and learned Gentleman will forgive me, I will come first to the right hon. Member for Dwyfor Meirionnydd (Liz Saville Roberts), whom I have kept waiting.

**Liz Saville Roberts (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Can you explain to me and to people outside, now that the Government have chosen to pause legislation and, by doing that, to extend the Brexit process—[*Interruption.*]

**Mr Speaker:** Order. I accept that feelings are running high, but the right hon. Lady must be heard.

**Liz Saville Roberts:** The Government and people outside will appreciate that there is now more opportunity to release the economic impact assessments that we should all have sight of before we make such material decisions.

**Mr Speaker:** The right hon. Lady makes her own point in her own way. It requires no comment from me, but I thank her for saying what she said.

**Ms Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab)** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** I will come to the hon. Member for Wallasey (Ms Eagle), but first I will call the Father of the House.

**Mr Clarke:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I am grateful for your indulgence. Would it be in order for the House to adjourn for an hour, so that the Leader of the House could come back with an amended timetable motion to put to the House for its approval?

**Mr Speaker:** I would not be inclined to accept that without notice. What I would say to the right hon. and learned Gentleman is that it would be potentially orderly, but I have to, if he will forgive me for saying so, read the runes. I have no sense, notwithstanding the argument he has advanced, that that is the wish of the Government.

The fact that the Prime Minister has just exited the Chamber seems to me rather to reinforce that view. I make no criticism at all. I am simply saying that he has left the Chamber. I do not think he has any appetite for the preference of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, which I hope he can bear stoically and with fortitude. If the Leader of the House wanted to do that, he would have said so and he has not, so he does not.

**Ms Angela Eagle:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition offered the Conservative party a proper discussion on a different programme motion, which would have given us more time for the release of impact assessments and so on, and more time to discuss a very complex and important Bill. That has not been addressed. It is correct that we cannot proceed tonight, but if an agreement was reached between Front Benchers we could surely re-establish a timetable and scrutinise the Bill properly—if we did not have a Prime Minister who was behaving like a two year old and playing silly games?

**Mr Speaker:** I note what the hon. Lady says. The position is as I have explained. As colleagues will understand, senior figures in this place anticipate different scenarios and it is not uncommon for them to communicate those to the Chair. The Leader of the House did me the courtesy of informing me in advance of what the Government's attitude would be in the event of a particular result. He has not departed from that view, so I am telling the House what the Government's current intention is, about which colleagues will hear more in the business statement. That is very much a matter for the Government, and I am not trying to choke off what the hon. Lady wants; I am simply telling her that we are where we are, as things stand.

Colleagues, the orderly thing to do at this point is simply to proceed with what would be the choreography—I think I have a sense of how it is going to proceed—with, in the first instance, the money resolution, to be moved formally.

**The Comptroller of Her Majesty's Household (Jeremy Quin):** Not moved.

**Mr Speaker:** The Ways and Means resolution—to be moved formally.

**Jeremy Quin:** Not moved.

## Business without Debate

### DELEGATED LEGISLATION

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),*

#### EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (GAS)

That the draft Gas Tariffs Code (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 10 July 2019, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.—(*Jeremy Quin.*)

*Question agreed to.*

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),*

#### EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

That the draft Freedom of Establishment and Free Movement of Services (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 11 July 2019, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.—(*Jeremy Quin.*)

*The Speaker's opinion as to the decision of the Question being challenged, the Division was deferred until tomorrow (Standing Order No. 41A).*

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),*

#### EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (AUDITORS)

That the draft Statutory Auditors, Third Country Auditors and International Accounting Standards (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 15 July, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.—(*Jeremy Quin.*)

*The Speaker's opinion as to the decision of the Question being challenged, the Division was deferred until tomorrow (Standing Order No. 41A).*

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),*

#### EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (AGRICULTURE)

That the draft Agriculture (Miscellaneous Amendments) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 25 July 2019, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.—(*Jeremy Quin.*)

*Question agreed to.*

**Mr Speaker:** With the leave of the House, I propose to take motions 10 to 18 together.

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),*

#### EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (SEA FISHERIES)

That the Common Fisheries Policy and Animals (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I., 2019, No. 1312), dated 7 October 2019, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7 October 2019, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

#### EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (AGRICULTURE)

That the draft Common Organisation of the Markets in Agricultural Products and Common Agricultural Policy (Miscellaneous Amendments etc.) (EU Exit) (No. 2) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 25 July 2019, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

#### EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (HEALTH AND SAFETY)

That the Railways (Safety, Access, Management and Interoperability) (Miscellaneous Amendments and Transitional Provision) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I., 2019, No. 1310), dated 7 October 2019, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7 October 2019, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

#### ROAD TRAFFIC

That the draft Heavy Commercial Vehicles in Kent (No. 1) Order 2019, which was laid before this House on 04 September, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

That the Heavy Commercial Vehicles in Kent (No. 2) Order 2019, which was laid before this House on 4 September 2019, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

That the draft Passenger and Goods Vehicles (Tachographs) (Amendment etc.) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 18 July, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (REPRESENTATION OF  
THE PEOPLE)

That the draft European Parliamentary Elections Etc. (Repeal, Revocation, Amendment and Saving Provisions) (United Kingdom and Gibraltar) (EU Exit) (Amendment) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 23 July 2019, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

BROADCASTING

That the draft Small-scale Radio Multiplex and Community Digital Radio Order 2019, which was laid before this House on 20 June 2019, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (CONSUMER  
PROTECTION)

That the draft Human Medicines and Medical Devices (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 24 July, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.—(*Jeremy Quin.*)

*Question agreed to.*

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),*

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (FINANCIAL SERVICES)

That the draft Financial Services (Miscellaneous) (Amendment) (EU Exit) (No. 3) Regulations 2019, which were laid before this House on 15 July, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.—(*Jeremy Quin.*)

*The Speaker's opinion as to the decision of the Question being challenged, the Division was deferred until tomorrow (Standing Order No. 41A).*

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),*

LEGAL AID AND ADVICE

That the draft Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (Legal Aid for Separated Children) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Order 2019, which was laid before this House on 22 July 2019, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.—(*Jeremy Quin.*)

*Question agreed to.*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

*Ordered,*

That, for the remainder of the current Session, paragraph (2)(a) of Standing Order No. 10 (Sittings in Westminster Hall) shall not apply.—(*Jeremy Quin.*)

**Mr Speaker:** We come now to petitions—[*Interruption.*] We will take the business statement first, which will have a bigger audience than the petitions.

**Business of the House**

7.54 pm

**The Leader of the House of Commons (Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I think I am petitioning to make another statement.

Owing to the loss of the programme motion, I have to make a statement, because the Bill now stands referred to a Committee under Standing Orders 83A and 63. I mention that for the convenience of the House. I have no option but to make a business statement, as we cannot continue with the business previously set out for tomorrow. The business for the rest of the week is:

WEDNESDAY 23 OCTOBER—Continuation of the debate on the Queen's Speech on the NHS.

THURSDAY 24 OCTOBER—Conclusion of the debate on the Queen's Speech on the economy.

FRIDAY 25 OCTOBER—The House will not be sitting.

7.55 pm

**Valerie Vaz (Walsall South) (Lab):** I thank the Leader of the House for making a business statement and not a point of order. He heard Her Majesty's Opposition and will know that we stand ready to work with the Government. The Opposition Chief Whip is a very reasonable person and will be very happy to discuss a proper way to proceed through the usual channels.

This is important. It was only earlier this week that the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union was not clear on the tariffs going from Northern Ireland to Great Britain and from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. As the right hon. Member for Belfast North (Nigel Dodds) has made clear, this is really important for the Union.

I am obviously disappointed, as are right hon. and hon. Members who have prepared for the Queen's Speech debate. This is no way to conduct business. We have been moved around—jerked around, quite frankly—by the Government in a shambolic way. This has not been done in an orderly fashion. We now have the votes on the Queen's Speech on Thursday. I would be grateful if the Leader of the House clarified that there will be votes on Wednesday and Thursday.

**Mr Speaker:** Just before I call other colleagues, I want to make something clear. I thought it emerged in the course of points of order and my responses to them, but just in case there is any doubt, the technical term for the status of the Bill is that it is in limbo. That is the technical term, advised to me by the Clerks. I refer Members to the ruling of the Chair on 10 July 2012 and to paragraph 28.58 of "Erskine May". Any motion to enable the Bill to proceed to Committee or beyond requires notice and so will be considered on another day. One could have had an indication of intent, but there does exist a requirement for notice. That, I think, completes the picture.

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** I was fascinated to hear that the Bill was in limbo. Theologically speaking, it is reported that Pope Benedict XVI abolished limbo. I wonder whether the Bill is not in the heaven that is having been passed, or in the hell of having failed, but in purgatory, where it



is suffering the pains of those in purgatory. *[Interruption.]* Original sin is beyond the immediate competence of my answer on this statement.

To reply to the right hon. Lady, discussions always take place between Whips Offices, as is well known. The difficulty was that the Opposition wanted the debate to continue past 31 October, which is the deadline for leaving the EU.

I would like to correct the right hon. Lady on the issue relating to tariffs. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union did not say anything about tariffs. It was not a tariff issue. There are no tariffs between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Nick Thomas-Symonds** (Torfaen) (Lab): Forms.

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** Forms and tariffs are completely different things. I am so sorry that the Opposition are confused, after so many years of debate on this subject, between a form and a tariff. No doubt we can provide specialist expertise to explain the difference.

The interruption of the Queen's Speech debate has a wonderful historical tradition. We always take the First Reading of the Outlawries Bill immediately after the Queen's Speech as a sign that the House is allowed to debate what it chooses and is not there to oblige the Crown. Perhaps more relevantly in these circumstances, there is the deadline of 31 October. We on the Government Benches are trying to meet that deadline by getting the deal through. The House has voted for that deal, but it seems to will the end but currently not the means.

**Mr Iain Duncan Smith** (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con): Given everything else, the Government must clearly have an understanding of the limit beyond which it will be not be possible to go with the Bill in respect of leaving the EU by 31 October and completing its progress. In the light of that, has my right hon. Friend kept in reserve the consideration that it may be possible for the House to sit through the weekend if necessary, and, if necessary, to sit around the clock to achieve whatever is required to meet that deadline of the 31st?

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** The problem—the constraint—is, of course, the fact that this is a bicameral legislature. However long we sat, the House of Lords would also have to sit, and the deadline is Thursday week. Even if we were to sit around the clock, having the hours that we were to have had today, given the time required for the House of Lords, there would still be very little time left; and after people have complained that the time is insufficient, it might be peculiar if they were then to say that an even shorter time was sufficient. I welcome the intent of my right hon. Friend's question, but I do not think that that will work.

**Pete Wishart** (Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP): I thank the Leader of the House for his short business statement. He is absolutely right: he has met his obligations according to the Standing Orders of the House by making the statement. I also thank him for not making it through a point of order, as he did on Saturday. He has done the right thing by addressing the House with a business statement on which we can question him about certain aspects of what he has said.

I listened carefully to the Leader of the House. He described the current withdrawal agreement Bill as “in limbo”. I was hearing from the Prime Minister, and I think that several journalists in the Press Gallery were being briefed today, that the Prime Minister was prepared to withdraw the Bill if the programme motion was not passed. That was a very clear statement. Will the Leader of the House therefore clarify the “limbo” that he has described? When are we likely to see the withdrawal agreement before the House again? I remind the Leader of the House that the 31st is next Thursday. The Prime Minister is committed to adhere to the Benn Act and seek an extension. I think that the Leader of the House should explain how these competing tensions will be resolved.

The Queen's Speech debate is to return to the House. That is right, too, and I congratulate the Leader of the House. It is right for the House to consider the Queen's Speech properly and to have an opportunity to vote on it. However, we need to know will happen beyond that. There is only one week until the Prime Minister's self-imposed deadline, so what is going to happen?

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** I hate to quibble with the hon. Gentleman, but it is not a self-imposed deadline. It is a deadline that was selected by the European Union. Members may recall that the previous Government went to the European Union suggesting a deadline around June. It was rejected by the EU, which set a deadline of 31 October. In a remarkably short space of time, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister renegotiated the deal, which nearly everybody had said was impossible, and the deadline has remained fixed.

The hon. Gentleman raised the question of limbo, and how that correlates with my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's reference to the Bill's being withdrawn. The key thing to remember about limbo is that to enter it, one cannot still be alive, and therefore the Bill is no longer a live Bill.

**Mr Speaker:** Oh, we are wallowing in the realms of metaphysical abstraction, as Burke would have said, and almost certainly did, albeit not in relation to this Bill.

**Philip Davies** (Shipley) (Con): May I urge my right hon. Friend to reconsider the point made by our right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith)? I think we all know that the people who voted against the programme motion tonight did not really want more time to consider the Bill; they wanted to frustrate Brexit. They wanted to block it. Nobody is fooled. Why do the Government not play them at their own game? The Father of the House, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke), said that another three days would do it, so why do we not start the Committee stage tomorrow? The extra three days that seem to be required could be Friday, Saturday and Sunday. We could sit till any hour on all three days, and we could then see how much appetite there really is for extra scrutiny of the Bill. I suspect that if the Leader of the House were to do that, he would find that, actually, not much scrutiny would be required from Opposition Members.

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for a characteristically good idea on how we might be able to proceed. The only difficulty is that the programme

[Mr Rees-Mogg]

motion has been voted down, and to sit in the way my hon. Friend suggests would require another programme motion, and there is no indication that that would meet with greater satisfaction from the Opposition. The House of Lords also has to consider this Bill in due time, so I fear that his great solution is not going to be a way forward.

**Margaret Beckett** (Derby South) (Lab): I had not intended to seek to intervene on this exchange, but I am so offended by the remarks of the hon. Member for Shipley (Philip Davies) that I feel inclined to do so.

**Philip Davies:** The truth hurts.

**Margaret Beckett:** It is not the truth; it is in fact something that we are only allowed to call a terminological inexactitude—in other words, it is absolute rubbish to suggest that people who voted against this programme motion only did so to delay Brexit or because they are opposed to Brexit. Any hon. Member who understands their duties in this place should never have voted for this programme motion in the first place. I say further that the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith), who is a former leader of the Conservative party, is equally at fault in not understanding when the sensible thing to do is to accept with good grace the very generous and sensible offer immediately made by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition.

Finally, on the question of limbo, I rather thought one had to be pure of soul to get in, so not many people are going to end up there.

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** I think the original understanding of limbo—one that is no longer widely accepted—is that it was a place for the souls of the unbaptised and for those who died before salvation was brought to us at the point of the Resurrection, but I think the understanding now is that that is rather a narrow interpretation.

The issue of what motivates people to vote in this House is one that is always very difficult to settle. I have always accepted that right hon. and hon. Members in this House want what is best for the country, but think that there are different ways to do it. But we must draw conclusions from people's actions, and I do not think it is unreasonable to conclude that people who voted against the Second Reading of this Bill and against the programme motion are not the greatest admirers of the proposals towards Brexit.

**Mr Mark Harper** (Forest of Dean) (Con): In the exchange that the Leader of the House and I had yesterday, I said, and he agreed with me, that if people voted against the programme motion they would have blocked Brexit. They have indeed done that for a period, and that is a fact. The question in front of us all is whether they have blocked Brexit permanently, and that is something I think we should deal with. I am grateful to those Members who have taken the difficult personal decisions on behalf of their constituents to vote for Second Reading, and I urge my right hon. Friend and others on the Treasury Bench to think about ways in which we can deliver Brexit on 31 October—to

get it done—while allowing the House more time to debate it, to see whether those two things can be reconciled. I note in conclusion that the Opposition Chief Whip did make an offer along those lines this afternoon, and that is something I think worthy of at least some consideration.

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** It is hard to see how the time could have been divided up otherwise. My right hon. Friend mentions the commitment to leave on 31 October and says that people may have voted to obstruct Brexit; they may find that all they voted for is for us to leave without a deal.

**Clive Efford** (Eltham) (Lab): It is a bit rich for the Leader of the House, having prorogued Parliament and broken the law to do so, now to complain about a lack of time. Having said that, he has had an offer from the Opposition to enter into negotiations to set out a timetable for proper scrutiny of this legislation. If he was listening this afternoon, he would have heard many Opposition Members say they were going to support the Prime Minister today but wanted more scrutiny of the Bill. He is arrogantly now taking those votes and saying, “We have to go on the 31st; away with all your desire to have further scrutiny.” That is not a reasonable position for the Government to take, so will he now listen to Parliament for a change, go away and speak to the usual channels to set out a timetable motion for proper scrutiny of this Bill? That is what the House is asking for.

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** The hon. Gentleman says that I prorogued Parliament, but there are two problems with that. Not only is it above and beyond my authority to have done such a thing, but had he listened to the Supreme Court's ruling he would have discovered that Parliament was not in fact prorogued and therefore, whether I had done it or not, nothing had come of it. The Supreme Court said that the piece of paper read out proroguing Parliament was as a blank sheet of paper, so his first point is erroneous.

As for the hon. Gentleman's second point, I do not want to be pedantic or to quibble, but we have had three and a half years—[*Interruption.*] Somebody has an important phone call; I am sorry to be interrupting personal business. We have been going over all this for three and a half years. We have had hours and hours of debate, and we need to come to a conclusion. The deadline for the conclusion was set by the European Union—[*Interruption.*] I am sure that the right hon. Member for Broxtowe (Anna Soubry) will be called by Mr Speaker if only she is patient. We have had plenty of debate, but ultimately a decision needs to be made.

**Mr Owen Paterson** (North Shropshire) (Con): We have just had the Second Reading of an extraordinarily important Bill, and Mr Speaker set a four-minute limit on Back-Bench speeches but, lo and behold, the Labour party could not put up enough speakers in the last hour. The Opposition have made an offer, and my right hon. Friend should take it up, because I do not think that they have the skills and the numbers to talk through the night, as suggested by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith). My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House may get a pleasant surprise, proceedings may dry up much earlier than he is expecting, and we may reach the Elysian fields on 31 October.

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** My right hon. Friend makes an intriguing suggestion, although far be it from me to say that Opposition Members would not be able to speak at considerable length. One of the skills of many politicians is to be able to speak at considerable—some might say inordinate—length, though I note that one of the great experts in and exponents of this is in the Chamber. The eloquence of my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley (Philip Davies) knows no bounds and entertains us all greatly on Fridays.

**Mr Speaker:** My earliest recollection of the right hon. Member for North Shropshire (Mr Paterson) speaking in the Chamber was an occasion on which he had to wait rather longer than he wanted to ask a question. He was eventually called by Madam Speaker Boothroyd, and at the end of his question—this was only 20 years ago, so I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman remembers this—Madam Speaker turned to the right hon. Gentleman, although he was just an hon. Gentleman then, and said, “Now, Mr Paterson, I hope you are satisfied.” [*Laughter.*]

**Lady Hermon** (North Down) (Ind): Since the withdrawal Bill has huge consequences for people in Northern Ireland and since the Northern Ireland Assembly is still not sitting, I wonder whether the Leader of the House could enlighten us about the steps that the Government will now take to ask all the political parties in Northern Ireland about their reaction to the fact that this Bill has received its Second Reading this evening.

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** The hon. Lady raises an important point. Everybody in the Government wishes to see the Assembly brought back together, and the consequences of not having had an Assembly have been complicated for Northern Ireland in the Brexit process. I am reluctant, however, to trespass on the territory of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland—[*Interruption.*] The hon. Lady tempts me, but she will get a better answer from my right hon. Friend than she will from me, so I hope she will forgive me. If it would be helpful, I will certainly seek a written response from the Northern Ireland Secretary. I reiterate what I said in my previous business statement: this Government take the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland not only seriously but as a fundamental statement of what our nation is, and we will do everything we can to support the United Kingdom.

**Sir Desmond Swayne** (New Forest West) (Con): I hate to be a pedant, but my recollection is that the souls of the upright and pure who preceded salvation actually ended up in Dante’s first circle. The events of this evening prove to us that we are all much further down in hell already.

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** I am reluctant to quibble with my right hon. Friend, but Dante cannot always be relied on for the theology of the Catholic Church.

**Hugh Gaffney** (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (Lab): I am a new pupil, so perhaps Mr Speaker can help me. As we are now back to the Queen’s Speech, which amendments will be selected? What about amendment (b) on the TV licence?

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** Fortunately, the matter of selecting amendments does not fall to me. It falls to wiser heads.

**Mr Speaker:** Well, I do not know whether the heads are wiser, but the heads are different. It might help the hon. Member for Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill (Hugh Gaffney) if I explain—the Leader of the House and many hon. Members know this, but some do not—that the selection is made on the day of the business and will be announced to the House. He cannot know it now, because it has not been made, but he will know it when he needs to know it.

**Vicky Ford** (Chelmsford) (Con): I start by saying how delighted I am that, finally, after more than three years, there is a deal that the majority in this House have supported. Many people outside the House will be confused, but it is clear that we could not have voted on the deal before the deal was agreed, and it was agreed only on Friday; on Saturday, it was sidetracked by an amendment; yesterday it was sidetracked by the rules of procedure; today the deal went through with a majority, but now the timetable has been sidetracked.

As someone who wants to see a deal, may I urge this on the Leader of the House? I do not know whether he is a Harry Potter fan, but I am. The great Hermione Granger, in challenging times, used a time turner. Can he work with all parties, especially those in Europe, to see how we can get this deal over the line as quickly as possible?

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** I suppose we could repeal the Act that put us on the Gregorian rather than the Julian calendar, which might buy us a few extra days.

**Gareth Snell** (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Lab/Co-op): I cannot hope to match the wit of Dante or the knowledge of Harry Potter, but might I suggest Monty Python? The injury inflicted this evening was a mere flesh wound, and if the Leader of the House is willing to bring forward a motion tomorrow with a more considered timetable for Committee, it would pass this House.

To correct the point made by the hon. Member for Shipley (Philip Davies), who is no longer in his place, some of us voted for Second Reading precisely so we could get on to the next stage for more scrutiny, and we did not support the programme motion because we did not believe there was sufficient time. There is clearly good will in this House to progress this Bill to a point of conclusion, but to do so we need the appropriate time. I urge the Leader of the House to consider that this evening.

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his point and for his very reasonable suggestion on his motives for voting. I quite understand there is sometimes a conflict between wanting something to happen and feeling that the procedures for it are unduly truncated. I am a great believer that time in this House should be used for legislation, which is our primary purpose, and I rather like and rather have a hankering for the 19th-century timetabling, when we were able to go on at considerable length and were not reduced to four-minute speeches. However, there is a pressing deadline of 31 October, and this is where I part company with him, because I feel it is very urgent to get the Bill through by then.

**Mr Peter Bone** (Wellingborough) (Con): On the selection of Queen’s Speech amendments, Mr Speaker, I remember that you once very helpfully selected one in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon and Billericay (Mr Baron).



[Mr Peter Bone]

Can we interpret from what the Leader of the House is saying that it is now impossible to get the deal through this House and the other House prior to 31 October? In that case, is it effectively dead for approval before that date?

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** “Impossible” is a very strong word, but it is very hard to see how it is possible.

I hope my hon. Friend had an enjoyable Saturday, and that it was more enjoyable after the House had risen than before.

Several hon. Members rose—

**Mr Speaker:** Point of order—[*Interruption.*] No, question to the Leader of the House from Ruth Smeeth.

**Ruth Smeeth** (Stoke-on-Trent North) (Lab): I have yet to do my first point of order, Mr Speaker. Today, many people on the Opposition Benches walked through and voted for Second Reading. All we are asking for is the opportunity to ensure that the deal, which was presented to us only last night, works for our constituents—and for my local economy. We need slightly more time. I urge the Leader of the House to find more time, so that I can do my job, scrutinise properly and make sure that I deliver Brexit in a way that works for the Potteries.

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** May I encourage the hon. Lady to make a point of order, first, because they are a good way of getting in when otherwise it would be disorderly and, secondly, because if she were able to make one that is a real point of order, it would be almost historic? I think there have been very few in your 10 years in the Chair, Mr Speaker—almost none. May I also congratulate her on her service to her constituents, on standing up for what they voted for and on her courage in doing so? As somebody who did, when on the Back Benches, occasionally break the whip, I know that it is not the easiest thing to do and that people do it because they believe strongly in the rightness of what they are voting for. So I thank her for that. I am not unsympathetic to the point about time, but this is simply about the deadline of 31 October, which was set by the EU. Therefore, we are compressed in the time available to get this Bill delivered, which is why I was willing to support the programme motion and felt it was reasonable in the circumstances.

**Mr Marcus Fysh** (Yeovil) (Con): Would my right hon. Friend consider it in order for the Opposition Chief Whip to tell us, given that he is sitting there, how long exactly the Opposition would like to discuss this for? Or is it all about delay?

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** My hon. Friend and Somerset neighbour raises an intriguing prospect: that points of order should be determined by me. Should the House wish to do this, it could of course change Standing Orders and this could be delegated to the Leader of the House, but I think you might not be entirely happy with that, Mr Speaker. So I fear I cannot answer my hon. Friend in the way he might like.

**Mr Speaker:** Not least on account of my concern for my successor, rather than for any particular concern on my part, in the light of the announcement I made a few weeks ago, the right hon. Gentleman’s surmise is correct.

**Mr Chris Leslie** (Nottingham East) (IGC): This is a question to the Leader of the House, as part of the business statement. Will he listen to lots of the voices, from different perspectives on the Brexit question, who are all puzzled why he and the Prime Minister have chosen not to enter into a continuation of the Committee stage tomorrow or on Thursday? It would be perfectly in order for them to have scheduled that, by laying those motions either this evening or at the beginning of business tomorrow. There is a jovial atmosphere this evening, but a lot of people are frustrated—not least me, as I have some amendments that are first up in that Committee stage, whenever it occurs—believing it is the choice of the Leader of the House and of the Prime Minister not to be progressing this Bill tomorrow or on Thursday. They are therefore the architects of their own fate in this regard, and forever more when people ask why this Bill did not make progress before 31 October we will be able to say, “It was his own doing.”

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** It is always a pleasure to listen to the hon. Gentleman’s dulcet tones, which we had the joy of doing last night, at considerable length. I am sorry that his amendments will not be debated now, and that instead right hon. and hon. Members have to listen to me. Had he voted for the programme motion, he would have found that his amendments were being debated. He talks much about listening, but I think he did not listen to my opening comments about the interaction of Standing Orders on the business that we had before us today. Under Standing Order No. 83A, if a programme motion that commits a Bill to the Floor of the House is lost, that Bill is then committed to a Committee, and we would have to have another resolution to pull it out of Committee. So it is not possible just to proceed tomorrow as if nothing had happened.

**Mr Speaker:** I am advised by the Clerk at the Table that the Bill is not committed to a Committee; it stands in limbo. In practical terms, so far as tonight is concerned, the House should worry not because it matters not, because it does not make any practical difference. That point can always be discussed afterwards if it takes the fancy of colleagues.

**Charlie Elphicke** (Dover) (Ind): Is my right hon. Friend not struck by the irony that those who voted against the programme motion in the hope of cancelling Brexit have in fact made a no-deal departure, which they supposedly fear, much more likely? Does he agree that a departure with a deal is more preferable? Will he introduce a programme motion tomorrow so that the House can sit for as long as it takes—all through the night, if necessary? Even if the Labour party wants to knock off early, we should be able to carry on, make sure that we get the Bill through, get out and get on with other stuff.

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for the point he raises, but we have already gone through this. We would need a further programme motion if we were to sit through the night. It seems unlikely that it would be possible to get a programme motion through when we have failed to get today’s programme motion through.

**Lucy Powell** (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op): Perhaps I could offer some advice to the Leader of the House, which I hope he takes in the spirit in which it is

intended. Many of us on the Opposition Benches share his frustration that we cannot proceed, get to some votes and start to see how the land lies, but the particular issue was the short amount of time given for proceedings in Committee. I do not see why we needed a whole day for Third Reading; we could have had a lot longer in Committee. The Leader of the House could, tomorrow morning, introduce a fresh programme motion that allows for longer in Committee, so that we can table amendments in a timely fashion. If he wants some assistance with a Gantt chart, I am always here. I do not think it is beyond the realms of possibility to find an amount of time that would suffice. We would vote for a programme motion tomorrow morning on that basis.

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** We have already lost the three hours that we would have had in Committee today. We had 12 hours set aside for Committee tomorrow, and Thursday would have been for both Report and Third Reading, not just Third Reading. It is important to have time available to consider further amendments on Report, and it would be highly unusual to truncate the Report stage so much and hand it all over to Committee.

**Wayne David (Caerphilly) (Lab):** Given that the Prime Minister decided to obey the law and apply to the European Union for an extension, if the European Union grants an extension, will the Leader of the House commit to coming back to the House with a new programme motion so that there can be adequate consideration of the Bill?

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** The Prime Minister has passed on Parliament's request for an extension; the Prime Minister has not signed that request and I do not believe it is the Prime Minister's request. It is Parliament's request for an extension, and one that I think is a great error.

**Sir Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con):** What would persuade the Government to consider bringing forward a new business motion?

**Mr Rees-Mogg:** It seems there is no point in bringing forward a new business motion, because today's has been defeated and the time that there would have been to debate the issue has been truncated, because instead of going into Committee now, we are in fact having this business statement.

**Mr Speaker:** That concludes the exchanges on the business statement. I am grateful to the Leader of the House for the information that he has proffered.

**Clive Efford:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I seek clarification of what the term "limbo" means. The Leader of the House has told us that the Bill is dead, and from that we read that it cannot be resurrected in any way for a future business statement to send it into Committee so that the House can deal with it. Can you clarify that for us?

**Mr Speaker:** If I may say so, the accurate characterisation is that the Bill is not dead, but it is inert. It is not on a journey. It is not progressing or moving from one place to another. It is inert, or alternatively it might be said to be static, but it is not a corpse. Is that adequate for the hon. Gentleman?

**Clive Efford:** Splendid.

**Mr Speaker:** I know that the Clerk at the Table would consult her scholarly cranium on this matter, and if I had erred, she would advise me that I had done, but she has not, so I have not.

**Hugh Gaffney:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I just want some clarification before the Leader of the House leaves the Chamber. He just said something very important about the Prime Minister's signature on the letter to the EU. Can you make that point clear?

**Mr Speaker:** I am very happy to oblige. It is not my responsibility to explain or communicate Government actions, but I think that this matter has been covered in the media. All the Leader of the House was saying was that he did not believe that this was the Government's request for an extension; it was Parliament's request for an extension. The Prime Minister has sent a number of letters to the European Union. The one specifically relating to the request for the extension was not signed by the Prime Minister. I am sure that that was a conscious decision on his part. People have expressed their views, but I certainly do not wish to add to any controversy about that matter. The simple fact is that the request for the extension has been submitted. I do not want to cavil at what the Leader of the House said. It is, in a sense, Parliament's request. I do not want to conduct an argument about that; it is not necessary. I hope that that is helpful to the hon. Gentleman. Parliament did want the extension. The Government did not want it. Parliament voted for the extension, so the Government passed it on as Parliament's wish.

**Gareth Snell (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Lab/Co-op):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Clearly, by virtue of those who voted for the Government's programme motion and those of us who did not but have expressed our desire to see a Committee stage, the House wishes to move to Committee stage. Can you advise me, Mr Speaker, if there is any procedure available to individual Members, or the House as a whole, that could take Committee stage forward even if the Leader of the House is resistant to doing so?

**Mr Speaker:** That is, at this point, hard to envisage. I will not say that there is no means by which that can be done; we have seen in recent times how the House can take ownership of matters, including of the Order Paper, and of scheduled business, including that leading to legislation. I do not say that there is no way that anything could be done, but I surmise from what has been said that, at present, the Government's thinking is as the Leader of the House has explained, and the Opposition's thinking is as has been outlined by the shadow Leader of the House, the supporting evidence for which is the point of order by the Leader of the Opposition and the apparent conversations between the usual channels—that is to say between the Opposition Whips Office and the Government Whips Office. I think that it is probably prudent and seemly to leave it there at this stage, though I appreciate the fertile and vivid imagination of the hon. Gentleman, which may avail the House at a later stage.

## PETITIONS

### Cavendish House in Dudley Town Centre

8.32 pm

**Ian Austin** (Dudley North) (Ind): It is my job to stand up for the people of Dudley, so I rise to present a petition signed by 1,500 residents demanding that Dudley Council and the developers that it is working with finally get Cavendish House demolished and get on with the redevelopment of this part of the town centre.

Cavendish House has stood empty for decades. It has been vandalised and is dangerous. It presents a terrible image of the town and is delaying and deterring investment. We want the council and the developers to get on with the demolition so that the site can be regenerated with the new shops and leisure facilities that we have been promised for so many years. I am really grateful to local residents such as Sarah and Simon Townend and Gordon Laird and to the staff and customers at businesses such as the Arcade Café and Gather for helping collect so many names for our petition. It is a privilege to present it on behalf of the people of Dudley.

*Following is the full text of the petition:*

*[The Petition of residents of Dudley,*

*Declares that Cavendish House tower block in Dudley should be pulled down to make way for new development and new homes; further that the former offices have been left empty since the 1990s; further that they are seen by thousands of drivers passing through Duncan Edwards Way, and have long been set aside for redevelopment; further that plans to demolish the project have been in the pipeline for years but the project has been hit by a serious of delays; further that almost 1,400 people have signed our local petition calling for this eyesore to be demolished; further notes it has been standing empty and derelict for decades; further that it presents a terrible image of Dudley and must be deterring and delaying investment in the town; further that residents are also worried that it is dangerous as residents have said that people have been getting in there; and further that residents want the council to sort it out, get it knocked down and get on with the redevelopment they have been promising me since I got elected 14 years ago.*

*The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to press upon Dudley Council's planning committee the need to pull down Cavendish House tower block to improve the appearance of Dudley Town centre.*

*And the petitioners remain, etc.]*

[P002534]

### Wycombe Islamic Mission and Mosque Trust Elections

**Mr Steve Baker** (Wycombe) (Con): I am delighted to present the petition of registered members of the Wycombe Islamic Mission and Mosque Trust, High Wycombe. In May, I was approached by a member of the largest High Wycombe mosque, who was rightly concerned about its governance. This evening, I present a petition on behalf of 1,095 members of the Wycombe Islamic Mission and Mosque Trust. The trust has approximately 9,000 members and is one of the largest, most important and most valued organisations in the town of High Wycombe.

I do not wish to tell members of the mosque how to run their affairs, but charitable status means that the management committee's conduct is open to scrutiny. The petition asks the Charity Commission to oversee a general meeting of members and long overdue elections to the management committee at the earliest opportunity—perhaps, like in this House, some members fear losing. Although the details were never made public, I understand that within the last two years a retired judge gave direction to the management committee on how it should conduct itself and on the need to comply with charity law. Other informal petitions have been organised by members. Recently, 2,000 members of the trust asked the management committee to hold elections; none have been announced. There are serious allegations of improper conduct contained in the petition.

The petition states:

The petitioners therefore request the House of Commons hears their grievance, and requests that the House of Commons urges the Minister responsible for charities to instruct the Charity Commission to oversee a general meeting of members and elections to the management committee at the earliest opportunity.

*Following is the full text of the petition:*

*[The petition of registered members of the Wycombe Islamic Mission and Mosque Trust, High Wycombe,*

*Declares that the Wycombe Islamic Mission and Mosque Trust holds dual status as a registered charity and charitable corporation, incorporated on 4 March 1983, the governing document is the WIMMT Mosque constitution 2001; further that under the constitution elections must be held to elect a new management committee, which have routinely been held every two years, and an annual general meeting no more than every 15 months; further that no elections have been held or pronounced since November 2015; further that the election process is being withheld unlawfully to prolong the tenure of the current management committee which expired in February 2018; further that no AGM has taken place since the current management committee took office; further that there is a lack of financial transparency, scrutiny and oversight, but the Trust had an income of over half a million pounds in the last financial year; further that a recent legal inquiry was manufactured to forcibly remove imams although the retired judge leading the inquiry exonerated the imams from wrongdoing; further that the inquiry breached the mutual trust and confidence of members and brought the Trust's reputation into disrepute; further that the Mosque constitution guides the charity in its obligations, duties and responsibilities in the propagation of the Islamic faith and activities; further that any proposed change to the membership policy requires the consent of the majority Sunni Muslim population of High Wycombe at a general meeting, putting resolutions before members prior to any change in policy; further that the current management committee did not abide by the provisions in the constitution when deciding to devise a new membership policy and which in effect revoked the membership of established members; further that several individuals of the Mosque management committee use their position to gain favour for their respective political parties and affiliations; further that such behaviour is prohibited both in the constitution and in guidance issued by the Charity Commission; and further that there are clear instances of nepotism.*

*The petitioners therefore request the House of Commons hears their grievance, and requests that the House of Commons urges the Minister responsible for charities to*



*instruct the Charity Commission to oversee a general meeting of members and elections to the management committee at the earliest opportunity.*

*And the petitioners remain, etc.]*

[P002535]

### ADJOURNMENT

*Resolved, That this House do now adjourn.—(Maggie Throup.)*

8.37 pm

*House adjourned.*



# Written Statements

Tuesday 22 October 2019

## BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

### ENABLE Funding Scheme

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kelly Tolhurst):** ENABLE Funding is a scheme administered by the British Business Bank which provides senior funding (effectively at commercial terms) to delivery partners and is designed to increase funding diversification for leasing and asset finance providers and peer-to-peer lenders, with the overall purpose of increasing the supply of debt to underlying small and medium-sized enterprises.

Since the scheme began in 2014, senior secured funding has been provided to various delivery partners and their receivable portfolios have been ‘warehoused’ in a special purpose entity. The aggregate sum of certain receivable portfolios reached a desired critical mass whereby a capital markets refinancing (or securitisation) can proceed, repaying the funding. The transaction is expected to complete before the end of the financial year 2019-20.

As part of the transaction, a credit enhancement in the form of a capped second loss guarantee will be agreed. The guarantee issued by the Department is capped at £66 million and the ‘second loss’ element means that the participating delivery partners will fund and suffer an agreed amount up to the first loss threshold should defaults in the portfolio occur.

The guarantee is not expected to last for more than seven years and in practice will likely be much shorter. The beneficiary is the securitisation vehicle (a newly incorporated entity) which will purchase the facilities as part of the transaction. The Department will receive a commercial fee in return for the guarantee.

As a matter of record, I will be laying a departmental minute today explaining the procedure followed and containing a description of the liability undertaken.

[HCWS29]

## TREASURY

### ECOFIN

**The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sajid Javid):** A meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) was held in Luxembourg on 10 October 2019. The UK was represented by Mark Bowman (director general, International Finance, HM Treasury). The Council discussed the following:

*Budgetary instrument for convergence and competitiveness for the euro area*

The European Commission presented the governance framework on the budgetary instrument for convergence and competitiveness for the euro area.

*Current financial services legislative proposals*

The Finnish presidency provided an update on current legislative proposals in the field of financial services.

*European Court of Auditors’ annual report*

The President of the Court of Auditors presented the auditors’ report on the implementation of the budget of the European Union for the 2018 financial year.

*The European financial architecture for development*

The chair of the high-level group of wise persons on the European financial architecture for development presented the main findings of their report to the Council. This was followed by an exchange of views.

*Implementation of the anti-money laundering (AML) action plan*

The Council held an exchange of views on the progress made in implementing the AML action plan to consider the future strategic priorities in this area.

*Anti-money laundering directive: policy towards “high-risk third countries”*

The Council held an exchange of views on the policy towards AML-related “high-risk third countries”.

*European semester 2019 - lessons learnt*

The Council held an exchange of views on lessons learnt from the European semester 2019.

*Preparation of the G20 meeting of Finance Ministers and central bank governors and of the IMF annual meetings*

The Council approved the EU’s G20 terms of reference and international monetary and financial committee statement, ahead of the annual meetings in Washington DC.

*Coalition of Finance Ministers for climate action*

The Finnish presidency presented the state of play of the coalition of Finance Ministers for climate action.

*Appointment of a member of the executive board of the European Central Bank*

The Council adopted a recommendation to the European Council on the appointment of a new member of the executive board of the European Central Bank.

*Capital markets union*

The Commission informed the Council on its plans on the capital markets union and the presidency outlined the next steps.

*Status of the implementation of financial services legislation*

The Council took stock of the status of the implementation of financial services legislation.

[HCWS30]

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Manchester Arena Attack

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):** I am announcing today the establishment by the Home Office of an inquiry, under the Inquiries Act 2005, to investigate the deaths of John Atkinson, Courtney Boyle, Kelly Brewster, Georgina Callander, Olivia Campbell-Hardy, Liam Curry, Wendy Fawell, Martyn Hett, Alison Howe, Megan Hurley, Nell Jones, Michelle Kiss, Angelika Klis, Marcin Klis, Sorrell Leczkowski, Lisa Lees, Eilidh MacLeod, Elaine McIver, Saffie-Rose Roussos, Chloe Rutherford, Philip Tron and Jane Carolyn Tweddle in the horrific attack at Manchester Arena on 22 May 2017.



The inquiry will be chaired by the honourable Sir John Saunders.

Sir John Saunders is a retired High Court judge who was nominated by the Lord Chief Justice to lead the investigation and inquest into the deaths at Manchester Arena. In accordance with section 3(1) of the Act, this inquiry will be undertaken by Sir John alone as Chair.

I am establishing an inquiry after careful consideration of advice from Sir John that this is necessary to permit all relevant evidence to be heard. This is an important step in ensuring that the families of those who lost their lives in this terrible attack get the answers that they need.

The inquiry will have the same scope as the current inquest, which will be adjourned after the establishment of the inquiry.

I will place a copy of the terms of reference for the inquiry in the Libraries of both Houses.

The inquiry's investigations will now be a matter for the chair. As the sponsoring Department the Home Office will provide support and ensure that the inquiry has the resources that it needs.

[HCWS28]

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### International Labour Organisation Recommendation 205

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mims Davies):** The 106th session of the International Labour Conference 2017 adopted recommendation 205 concerning employment and decent work for peace and resilience. International Labour Organisation (ILO) recommendations, adopted following negotiation among ILO member state Governments and business and union representatives, serve as non-binding guidelines. The Government welcome this recommendation and recognise its importance in its global context. It acts as a guide for world of work-related measures to prevent and respond to the effects of crises on economies and societies. The recommendation focuses on recovery and reconstruction in post-conflict and disaster situations. This recommendation will not have any impact on the UK as it is consistent with UK Government policies.

The constitution of the International Labour Organisation requires that the Government bring the recommendation before Parliament. I will place an explanatory memorandum and the text of the recommendation in the Libraries of both Houses later today.

[HCWS27]

# Petition

Tuesday 22 October 2019

## OBSERVATIONS

### TRANSPORT

#### Freewheelers' use of bus lanes

The petition of the residents of the United Kingdom, Declares that the Freewheelers is a voluntary organisation which transports essential supplies across the Birmingham and the Black Country as requested by the NHS and notes that the Freewheelers are not permitted to use designated bus lanes.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to consider permitting Freewheeler volunteers to use designated bus lanes to ensure that essential health equipment and materials can be delivered quickly.

And the petitioners remain, etc.—[Presented by Valerie Vaz, *Official Report*, 1 October 2019; Vol. 664, c. 1190.]

[P002525]

*Observations from The Minister of State, Department for Transport (George Freeman):*

Extending bus lane exemptions to include other vehicles, such as those delivering NHS supplies, is not a matter of national policy. This is a decision for each local authority to make when deciding on the vehicles that can use their bus lanes.

Traffic authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide traffic management schemes for their roads (under Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984) and are free to make their own decisions about the streets under their care, provided they take account of the relevant legislation. Bus lanes are provided to give buses priority over other traffic, particularly at congested times of the day, and to provide bus passengers with a more reliable service.

Traffic signs in bus lanes reflect the conditions of a traffic regulation order (TRO) made by the local authority and show which types of vehicles are allowed to use them. Buses and pedal cycles are the default types, but authorities can decide to allow other vehicles such as hackney carriages or motorcycles to use the lanes.

As well as these exceptions which are shown on the traffic sign, the TRO will usually include some unsigned exemptions. These typically apply to services which have an agreement with the authority that they may use the bus lane, such as the emergency services, when responding to a call, the postal service and refuse collection services.

Local authorities are best placed to judge how bus lanes operate on their road networks. If the Freewheelers would like this to be implemented in the Birmingham and the black country areas, they should contact the relevant highways authorities, such as Birmingham City Council and Wolverhampton City Council, with their views.





# ORAL ANSWERS

Tuesday 22 October 2019

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
<b>BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY</b> .....	791	<b>BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY—</b>	
Apprenticeship Levy .....	791	<i>continued</i>	
Business Establishment: Women .....	800	Hydroelectric Power Generation .....	803
Businesses: Dartford .....	798	New Mothers: Workplace .....	804
Electric Vehicle Technology .....	805	Offshore Wind Industry .....	801
Executive Pay .....	793	Photovoltaic and Battery Storage Systems: VAT ....	799
High Speed 2.....	795	Topical Questions .....	806
Hydraulic Fracturing .....	796	Workplace Access Rights .....	797

# WRITTEN STATEMENTS

Tuesday 22 October 2019

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
<b>BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY</b> .....	33WS	<b>TREASURY</b> .....	33WS
ENABLE Funding Scheme.....	33WS	ECOFIN.....	33WS
<b>HOME DEPARTMENT</b> .....	34WS	<b>WORK AND PENSIONS</b> .....	36WS
Manchester Arena Attack.....	34WS	International Labour Organisation	
		Recommendation 205.....	36WS

# PETITION

Tuesday 22 October 2019

	<i>Col. No.</i>
<b>TRANSPORT</b> .....	11P
Freewheelers' use of bus lanes.....	11P

No proofs can be supplied. Corrections that Members suggest for the Bound Volume should be clearly marked on a copy of the daily Hansard - not telephoned - and *must be received in the Editor's Room, House of Commons,*

**not later than  
Tuesday 29 October 2019**

STRICT ADHERENCE TO THIS ARRANGEMENT GREATLY FACILITATES THE  
PROMPT PUBLICATION OF BOUND VOLUMES

Members may obtain excerpts of their speeches from the Official Report (within one month from the date of publication), by applying to the Editor of the Official Report, House of Commons.

---

## CONTENTS

Tuesday 22 October 2019

**Speaker's Statement [Col. 791]**

**Oral Answers to Questions [Col. 791] [see index inside back page]**  
*Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy*

**British Children: Syria [Col. 813]**  
*Answer to urgent question—(Dr Murrison)*

**European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill [Col. 825]**  
*Motion for Second Reading—(Prime Minister)—on a Division, agreed to*  
*Programme motion—(Jeremy Quin)—on a Division, negatived*

**Exiting the European Union [Col. 932]**  
*Motion—(Jeremy Quin); Division deferred till Wednesday 23 October*

**Exiting the European Union (Auditors) [Col. 932]**  
*Motion—(Jeremy Quin); Division deferred till Wednesday 23 October*

**Exiting the European Union (Financial Services) [Col. 933]**  
*Motion—(Jeremy Quin); Division deferred till Wednesday 23 October*

**Business of the House [Col. 934]**  
*Statement—(Mr Rees-Mogg)*

**Petitions [Col. 945]**

**Written Statements [Col. 33WS]**

**Petition [Col. 11P]**  
*Observations*

**Written Answers to Questions [The written answers can now be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers>]**

---