

Friday
20 December 2019

Volume 669
No. 4



**HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

Friday 20 December 2019

House of Commons

Friday 20 December 2019

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Members Sworn

9.34 am

Mr Speaker: Will Members wishing to take their seats please come to the Table?

The following Members took and subscribed the Oath, or made and subscribed the Affirmation required by law:

Kerry Gillian McCarthy, *for* Bristol East

Darren Paul Jones, Bristol North West

Marsha Chantol De Cordova, Battersea

Right honourable Julian Richard Smith, Skipton and Ripon

Stephen Mark Flynn, Aberdeen South

Speaker's Statement

9.37 am

Mr Speaker: I will now announce the arrangements for the ballot for the election of Deputy Speakers. The ballot will be held in Committee Room 8 from 10 am to 1.30 pm on Wednesday 8 January. Nominations shall be submitted to the Table Office between 10 am and 6 pm on Tuesday 7 January. Nomination forms and the briefing note with more details about the election are available in the Table Office, the super-hub and Vote Office. I hope this is helpful to colleagues.

ADJOURNMENT (CHRISTMAS)

Ordered,

That this House, at its rising on Friday 20 December 2019, do adjourn until Tuesday 7 January 2020.—(*Mr Rees-Mogg.*)

ALLOCATION OF SELECT COMMITTEE CHAIRS (TIMING)

Ordered,

That the following provisions shall have effect in this Parliament in relation to Standing Order No. 122B (Election of select committee chairs);

(1) In paragraph (3), the reference to “a week” shall be read as “three weeks”; and

(2) In paragraph (5), the reference to “two weeks” shall be read as “four weeks”.—(*Mr Rees-Mogg.*)

European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill

Second Reading

Mr Speaker: I inform the House that I have not selected any of the reasoned amendments.

Before I invite the Prime Minister to move the Second Reading, I must announce my decision on certification for the purposes of Standing Order No. 83J (Certification of bills etc. as relating exclusively to England or England and Wales and being within devolved legislative competence). On the basis of material put before me, I must inform the House that, in my opinion, the Bill does not meet the criteria required for certification under the Standing Order.

9.40 am

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

I also beg that we come together, as a new Parliament, to break the deadlock and, finally, to get Brexit done. Now is the moment, as we leave the European Union, to reunite our country, and allow the warmth and natural affection we all share for our European neighbours to find renewed expression in one great new national project of building a deep, special and democratically accountable partnership with those nations we are proud to call our closest friends. Because this Bill, and this juncture in our national story, must not be seen as a victory for one party over another or one faction over another; this is the time when we move on and discard the old labels of “leave” and “remain”. In fact, the very words seem tired to me as I speak them—as defunct as “big-enders” and “little-enders” or as “Montagues” and “Capulets” at the end of the play. Now is the time to act together as one reinvigorated nation, one United Kingdom, filled with renewed confidence in our national destiny and determined, at last, to take advantage of the opportunities that now lie before us. The whole purpose of our withdrawal agreement is to set this in motion and avoid any further delay.

Jonathan Edwards (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (PC) *rose*—

The Prime Minister: In the hope that the hon. Gentleman does not wish to have any further delay, I give way to him.

Jonathan Edwards: The Bill contains provisions not to extend the transition phase—phase 2 of Brexit. Is there not a danger of that strengthening the hand of the European Union in those negotiations? Why has the Prime Minister boxed himself into a corner?

The Prime Minister: On the contrary, I think that most people would agree that this strengthens our negotiating position; if we have learnt anything from the experience of the last three years, it is that drift and dither means more acrimony and anguish. There would be nothing more dangerous for the new future that we want to build than allowing the permanent possibility of extending—

Several hon. Members *rose*—

The Prime Minister: I think I am coming to the point that hon. Members wish to discuss. There would be nothing more dangerous than extending the implementation period, in a torture that, as we all remember, came to resemble Lucy snatching away Charlie Brown's football or Prometheus chained to the Tartarian crag, his liver pecked out by an eagle and then growing back, as hon. Members on both sides of the House will recall, only to be pecked out again, with the cycle repeated forever. This Bill, unlike Opposition Members, learns the emphatic lesson of the last Parliament and rejects any further delay. It ensures that we depart from the EU on 31 January, and at that point Brexit will be done—it will be over. The sorry story of the last three and a half years will be at an end and we will be able to move forward together. The Bill ensures that the implementation period must end on 31 December next year, with no possibility of an extension, and it paves the way for a new agreement on our future relationship with our European neighbours, based on an ambitious free trade agreement—

Several hon. Members *rose*—

The Prime Minister: No, I will not give way. This will be with no alignment on EU rules, but instead with control of our own laws, and close and friendly relations. This vision of the United Kingdom's independence, a vision that inspires so many, is now, if this new Parliament allows, only hours from our grasp. The oven is on. It is set at gas mark 4; we can have this done by lunchtime—or a late lunchtime. The new deal that I negotiated with our European friends will restore our great institutions to their rightful place as the supreme instruments of British self-governance. Once again, this House will be the only assembly able to legislate for this United Kingdom, and British courts will be the sole arbiters of those laws, and above them all will be the sovereign British people, masters of their own fate, controlling their own borders, laws, money and trade.

Throughout our new immigration system, we will not only welcome those with talent, but go out of our way to attract people of ability, regardless of nationality or background. We are able to do this only because the freedoms offered by leaving the EU allow us, once again, to control overall numbers and bear down on unskilled immigration with our new points-based system.

Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP): Will the Prime Minister give way?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. and learned Lady is against control of immigration, I would like to hear her explain why.

Joanna Cherry: The Prime Minister has spoken about welcoming people to these islands. Clause 37 of his Bill removes the Government's existing obligations with regard to unaccompanied children seeking asylum in the European Union who want to join their family members in the United Kingdom. Lord Dubs has described this removal of a right as “mean-spirited and nasty”. Can the Prime Minister tell me why he is making this mean-spirited and nasty move?

The Prime Minister: I am afraid that the hon. and learned Lady has totally misunderstood, or possibly misrepresented, the purpose of what we are doing here.

We remain proud of our work in receiving unaccompanied children. We will continue to support fully the purpose and spirit of the Dubs amendment, but this is not the place—in this Bill—to do so. The Government remain absolutely committed to doing so.

Among the many other advantages of this deal is, of course, the fact that we will be able to sign free trade deals with the booming markets of the world, a power that no British government have enjoyed for the past 46 years. We will cast off the common agricultural policy, which has too often frustrated and overburdened our farmers. We will release our fishermen from the tangled driftnets of arcane quota systems.

Mr Owen Paterson (North Shropshire) (Con): I offer my heartiest congratulations to my right hon. Friend. No communities will be more keen to get control back than fishing communities. Will he guarantee that we will not make the mistake of the 1970s and allow the allocation of fishing resources to be a bargaining chip in the treaty negotiations? Will he guarantee that we will become a normal independent maritime nation and conduct negotiations on an annual basis for reciprocal deals to mutual advantage?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend perfectly understands what we need to do to restore to this country the advantages of its spectacular marine wealth, and that is exactly what we will do, once we become an independent coastal state. I remind the House and Opposition Members that one party in this House of Commons is committed to not just reversing the will of the people, but handing back control of Scotland's outstanding marine wealth to Brussels, and that is the Scottish National party—that is what they would do. I look forward to hearing them explain why they continue to support this abject policy and abject surrender.

Under this Bill, this House also regains the authority to set the highest possible standards, and we will take advantage of these new freedoms to legislate in parallel on the environment, and on workers' and consumers' rights. I reject the inexplicable fear—

Lisa Nandy (Wigan) (Lab) *rose*—

The Prime Minister: I give way, with pleasure, as I think the hon. Lady may want to talk about this inexplicable fear.

Lisa Nandy: The Prime Minister is right to say that he has won a mandate to get Brexit done, but what he has not earned is the right to shoehorn into this legislation measures that are a direct attack on some of the most vulnerable children in the world. If he thinks that people in towns such as mine, who believe that we should deliver Brexit, want to see us turn our back on decency, tolerance, kindness, warmth and empathy, he is wrong. Will he take these measures about child refugees out of this Bill?

The Prime Minister: I understand where the hon. Lady is coming from but, like the hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry), she is wrong on this point. We remain absolutely committed to ensuring that this country will continue to receive unaccompanied children. We have led Europe and received thousands already—this country has a proud record—and we will continue to do so.

I thought that the hon. Member for Wigan (Lisa Nandy) was going to say that this House would be unable to legislate or regulate on the environment in a way that is superior to the European Union, but that is what we will now be able to do. I reject the idea that our proceedings must somehow be overseen and invigilated by the EU and measured against its benchmarks. The very essence of the opportunity of Brexit is that we will no longer outsource these decisions; with renewed national self-confidence, we will take them ourselves and answer to those who sent us here. It was this Parliament, and this country, that led the whole of Europe and the world in passing the Factory Acts and the clean air Acts of the 19th century, which improved industrial working conditions by law.

This House should never doubt its ability to pioneer standards for the fourth industrial revolution, just as we did for the first.

That epoch-making transformation, as with all the pivotal achievements of British history, reflected the combined national genius of every corner of this United Kingdom. In this new era, our success will once again be achieved as one nation. This new deal in the Bill ensures that the United Kingdom will leave the EU whole and entire, with an unwavering dedication to Northern Ireland's place in our Union.

Gavin Robinson (Belfast East) (DUP) *rose*—

The Prime Minister: On that point, I will happily give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Gavin Robinson: I am grateful to the Prime Minister for taking my intervention—I almost thought we had fallen out. He knows that he now has the strength from the election to deliver Brexit. He also knows that we want to deliver Brexit, but we want to do so as one nation, so I am glad that that phraseology is being re-injected into the debate. However, he needs to understand the concerns about the customs arrangements for Northern Ireland, the tariff differentials and the potential for checks, and he needs to understand the concerns we share because we want to ensure that we leave as one nation. We are not going to resolve those issues today, but will he commit to proper, thorough and detailed reconsideration, using the strength that he has to deliver for the entirety of this country?

The Prime Minister: Of course, I understand the point that the hon. Gentleman raises, but let me remind him that the deal commits to unfettered access, but in all parts of the UK. It respects the territorial integrity of the UK, and it ensures that Northern Ireland is part of the UK customs territory and would therefore benefit immediately from any of our new free trade deals as soon as they are in force.

Let me remind the House that the special provisions applying to Northern Ireland, which ensure a very important thing—that there is no hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland—are subject to the consent of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Unless the Assembly specifically withholds its consent, and unless it insists on continuing with this approach, then those arrangements would automatically lapse into full alignment with the rest of the UK. I believe that these arrangements serve the interests of Northern Ireland and the UK as a whole. It is a great deal for our whole country.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

The Prime Minister: No, I will not give way.

We must now begin building our future relationship with the EU. Our aim is to provide a close friendship between sovereign equals, to promote our common interests, inspired by pride in our European heritage and civilisation. Clause 3 of the political declaration invokes that spirit, establishing

“the parameters of an ambitious, broad, deep and flexible partnership” rooted in our shared “history and ideals” and

“standing together against threats to rights and values from without or within”.

I am absolutely determined that this great project will be the project not of one Government or one party, but of the British nation as a whole, so Parliament will be kept fully informed of the progress of these negotiations.

Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): Will the Prime Minister give way?

The Prime Minister: No. We should be fortified by a renewed sense of confidence. [*Interruption.*] In all fairness, I think that I have given way quite a few times.

The policy of the Liberal Democrats is now to have another referendum. They have abandoned revoke and now want another referendum. When they have worked out their policy, I will give way.

We should be fortified by a renewed sense of confidence that while our democratic institutions have been tested as never before, if this House comes together now to support the Bill, as I hope it will, history will record that the first act of this new Parliament, in its earliest days, was to break the ice floes and find a new passage through to unsuspected oceans of opportunity. So now is the moment to come together and write a new and exciting chapter in our national story, to forge a new partnership with our European friends, to stand tall in the world and to begin the healing for which the people of this country yearn. And it is in that spirit of unity that I commend this Bill to the House.

9.55 am

Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab): Over the past three and a half years, the Government's mishandling of Brexit has delivered nothing but political gridlock, chaos and economic uncertainty. It has paralysed our political system, divided communities and nations, and become a national embarrassment on an unprecedented scale.

We recognise the clear message from the British public last week, however they voted in the referendum of 2016, and understand their determination to end the never-ending cycle of the Brexit debate, and get back to solving the day-to-day issues that challenge them in their daily lives. We must listen and understand that we cannot go on forever debating what happened in 2016. We have to respect that decision and move on.

However, understanding all that does not mean that we as a party and a movement should abandon our basic principles or ever give up the demand for a fairer and more just society. We warned before the general election that the Prime Minister's Brexit deal was a terrible deal for our country, and we still believe that it is a terrible deal today.

Michael Tomlinson (Mid Dorset and North Poole) (Con): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Jeremy Corbyn: I will give way later on.

This deal will not protect or strengthen our rights, or support our manufacturing industry and vital trading relationships, or protect our natural world in a time of unprecedented climate crisis. Neither will it address the deep inequality in our system, nor secure the interests of every nation and region in the United Kingdom.

Instead, under the Conservatives, this deal will be used as a battering ram to drive us down the path of yet more deregulation and towards a toxic deal with Donald Trump that will sell out our national health service and push up the price of medicines to benefit US drug corporations. It will take us away from the essential principles that we believe in: a country that looks after everybody and protects those communities left behind by the excesses of the free market.

This deal does not bring certainty for communities, for business or for the workforce. In fact, it does the opposite and hardwires the risk of a no-deal Brexit next year. I am sure that that will delight many Government Members, but it will not delight those who suffer the consequences in communities and workplaces all across the country.

That is why Labour will not support the Bill, as we remain certain that there is a better and fairer way for this country to leave the European Union—one that would not risk ripping our communities apart, selling out our public services or sacrificing hundreds of thousands of jobs in the process.

This deal is a roadmap for the reckless direction in which the Government and the Prime Minister are determined to take our country. They have done their utmost to hide its likely impact, and they continue to use gimmicks and slogans to turn attention away from their real intentions.

Sir David Evennett (Bexleyheath and Crayford) (Con): But the people have voted in a general election and supported the Prime Minister's deal. As a democrat, surely the right hon. Gentleman should pay heed to the people.

Jeremy Corbyn: I am disappointed in the right hon. Member, but in the spirit of Christmas I wish him well. He has not been listening to what I have said.

Nothing exposes the Government's intentions more clearly than the steps that they have already taken on workers' rights. For all the promises over the past few weeks that they are the party to protect rights at work, at the very first opportunity they have removed the basic provisions they said would be part of this Bill. That does not bode well for the separate Bill that the prime minister is now saying he will bring forward on workers' rights. If he wants to assure people that their rights are safe in his hands, he should commit to legislate to ensure that workers' rights in Britain will never fall behind European Union standards in future, and support amendments to enshrine that commitment within the Bill.

Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con): All of us in the House are concerned with workers' rights and, indeed, the rights of those who are approaching retirement. The Leader of the Opposition put his policy to the British people, inasmuch as anyone could discern it, in a general election. He was slaughtered. What bit of that message does he not understand?

Jeremy Corbyn: The Prime Minister, your leader—if I may say so, Mr Speaker—said that workers rights were going to be protected. They are not, in this Bill.

Dr Rupa Huq (Ealing Central and Acton) (Lab): Is not the whole point that the withdrawal agreement seems to be diminishing all the time? This is worse than the agreement from the previous Prime Minister, the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May). There are things that have vanished from the one that we had before the election. It is not only workers' rights that have been downgraded. It is parliamentarians' rights, because the legislature's ability to scrutinise the Executive has been taken away. It is bad for democracy.

Jeremy Corbyn: My hon. Friend is absolutely correct.

Robert Halfon (Harlow) (Con): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Jeremy Corbyn: No.

I move on to one of the most appalling parts of the Bill and what the Prime Minister has presented to us this morning. I want to make it clear that the Government's removal of protections in the Bill for unaccompanied children seeking asylum is nothing short of an absolute disgrace and a piece of dishonesty towards those people who at the moment are very, very concerned. Throughout the previous Parliament and for his whole life—I was talking to him last night—my good friend Lord Dubs has worked tirelessly to ensure that children affected by the worst aspects of global injustice can be given sanctuary in this country. Now this Government, in their first week in office, have ripped up those hard-won commitments. That is a move that the director of the charity Safe Passage has described as “truly shocking”, saying that it could have “potentially tragic consequences”. I simply say this, coming up to Christmas: shame on this Government for abandoning children in this way.

On the environment and food safety standards, the deal points to a complete realignment towards the far weaker protections and standards that operate in the United States. If the Government are set on pursuing a trade deal with the United States—with President Trump—with precious few bargaining chips to hand, the brutal reality is that Britain will have to lower its standards. [Interruption.] That is the brutal reality. The European Union has made it clear that a future trade deal with the EU will depend on maintaining a level playing field on standards and protections. The choice we now face is between keeping the highest environmental and food standards in order to get a future deal with the European Union and slashing food standards to match those of the United States, where there are so-called “acceptable levels” of rat hairs in paprika and maggots in orange juice—[Interruption.] It is true. If Members think that this is a piece of imagination on my part, let me say that when I was first told about it I, too, thought that it could not be the case. I checked it out, and it absolutely is. We are about to strike a new race-to-the-bottom deal with the United States, and everyone should be aware of that, and warned about it.

Turning to the arrangements with Northern Ireland, the Prime Minister has emphatically claimed that “there will be no checks between Northern Ireland and GB”, and that “we have a deal that keeps the whole of the UK together as we come of the EU”. These claims are

simply not true. We know from the analysis carried out by his own Treasury that under his deal there will be an abundance of checks and customs declarations in the Irish sea. Not only will that have a huge impact on Northern Irish businesses and society but it will have implications for the rest of Britain's economy and manufacturing industry. The Treasury's own analysis spells it out: the more the Government diverge from EU trading regulations in future, the more checks and disruptions will be put in place between Britain and our biggest trading partner. More checks and more disruption are deeply damaging for our trade and for our manufacturing sector, and they bring the threat of taking a wrecking ball to our vital supply chains and the hundreds of thousands of jobs that rely on them. Car manufacturers, the chemical industry and all those who rely on just-in-time supply chains will feel a devastating impact from all of this.

That makes it even more incredible that since agreeing their deal the Government have yet to produce a single bit of evidence or analysis to show that it will have a positive impact on the economy or our communities in any way. I say to all Members, new and old, that it is our job in Parliament to question, scrutinise and hold the Government to account, day to day. If we believe that the Government are taking the wrong approach, we should never be afraid to oppose. When it comes to our future relationship with the European Union and the rest of the world we cannot let the Government act in an undemocratic and secretive way. Trade deals with the EU and the US, or anybody else for that matter, must be done transparently.

This country is about to embark on a major change of direction as we leave a 40-year economic partnership for an unknown future under the terms of the withdrawal deal. We need an approach that puts jobs and living standards first, and builds the strongest co-operation with our European neighbours, based on openness, solidarity and internationalism. That is the approach that will bring an end to the Brexit crisis and bring our country together.

10.8 am

Dr Liam Fox (North Somerset) (Con): This debate is the beginning of a promise fulfilled—not simply a promise fulfilled by my party, although it is certainly that, but a promise fulfilled by this Parliament to the people of this country. When we embarked on the Brexit process we—Parliament—offered a decision to the British people. We said that we could not or would not make a decision about our future relationship with the European Union, but that the people of this country would take that decision and Parliament would respect it.

We have had three years of betrayal of that pact with the British people in the previous Parliament, when Members simply would not honour the manifesto commitments on which 80% of them had been elected. Those who wilfully signed up to a manifesto saying that they would honour the referendum result, but then came to the House and betrayed that, did not enjoy their first democratic contact with voters. I am proud that many of my new hon. Friends are taking the place of those who did not honour that.

This is also an historic opportunity for you, Mr Speaker, to repair some of the damage done to the reputation of the Chair of this House by some of your predecessor's decisions. We wish you well in that great task.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is absolutely right not to enter into constant extensions to the implementation period with the European Union. Nothing would give the EU less incentive to come to a final agreement with the UK than embarking on such a process. We have had the torture of the last few years in which there were endless increases in the timeframe, and we need not go through that again.

Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay) (Con): Given that Australia negotiated trade deals with Japan, South Korea and China, all within 18 months, and that we have had 47 years of integration, does my right hon. Friend agree that there is no reason why we cannot negotiate a good trade deal with the EU by the end of next year, as long as there is good will on its side?

Dr Fox: My hon. Friend puts his finger on the most important point. We will face not a technical issue, but a political issue. Indeed, the political declaration sets out that we will have no tariffs, no fees and no quotas in the economic relationship. That is what normally takes up the time in trading agreements, so it is entirely possible that this agreement can be done. The debate we will embark on is not about tariffs, fees and quotas, but regulatory alignment. That will be the central debate in our negotiations with the European Union.

We need to see the issue in a wider global context. At the World Trade Organisation meeting in Buenos Aires, it became clear that there are two ways forward in the global trading system. One is the concept of harmonisation—a highly legalistic regulatory means of doing business, which says, “This is the way we do it today, so this is the way we will always do it in the future.” Against that, there is the wider concept of outcome-based equivalence, which says, “Yes, we know what standards we need to meet, but we want to find our own ways, our own rules and our own efficiencies in achieving them.” The EU is now in a real minority, as it is virtually only the EU that takes the route of harmonisation.

There are those in the forthcoming negotiations who will say that, to have access to the single market, Britain must accept dynamic alignment—in other words, we must automatically change our rules in line with the EU. The Prime Minister will have 100% support from the Conservative party if he rules out any concept of dynamic alignment, which would leave Britain in a worse place in terms of taking back control than we are in as a member of the European Union.

The debate we are embarking on is about a clear choice. At no point in the European debate was there the option of maintaining the status quo: we either had to embark on our own course, controlling our own borders, our funds and our future; or we remained tied to an economic and political model of the European Union that is utterly dependent on ever-closer union. I have never believed that ever-closer union is in Britain's national interests, and if the bus has the wrong destination on the front, the best thing to do is to get off, which was what the British people decided to do.

Mr Iain Duncan Smith (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con): I agree with my right hon. Friend. Does he recall that the Leader of the Opposition spent his time sneering at the standards in the United States—a democratic and advanced economy? However, if we

[Mr Iain Duncan Smith]

look at its standards on campylobacter infection and salmonella, it has fewer deaths per capita than the UK or the European Union. It gets there by different methods, and it gets there better than we do, so we should stop sneering.

Dr Fox: I hope that my right hon. Friend will forgive me if I do not take too much notice of the anti-wealth, anti-American, anti-trade, tired old leftie rhetoric we get from the soon-to-be-forgotten Leader of the Opposition.

The debate before us is clear. The Prime Minister is leading Britain in a direction that will produce a confident, outward-looking country. For many of us, we were leaving the European Union not because it was foreign, but because, in an era of globalisation, it was not foreign enough—it spent too much time gazing at its own navel and worrying about political integration. We are embarked on an historic and correct course for our nation.

I return to where I began: the question of trust. In the spirit of the season, let me say that I hope that even Hugh Grant will watch our seasonal offering this year—“Democracy Actually”.

10.14 am

Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP): It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for North Somerset (Dr Fox). As I was listening to him, I could already see coming back the red lines that caused the problem for the previous Prime Minister. We are to do a trade deal by the end of 2020 but, at the same time, we are not to have any degree of alignment with the European Union. When we hear talk of writing into the Bill that there will be no extension, that is a matter of politics. If the Government can legislate for that today, they can equally legislate to remove that burden before the end of 2020. I predict that that may indeed end up being the position, because the harsh reality is that that deadline means that the risk of a no-deal Brexit, which we all fear, is very much back on the table.

Scotland could not have been clearer last week. We did not vote for Brexit, and returning the SNP with a greater mandate shows that Scotland still totally and utterly rejects Brexit. Yet the Prime Minister is blindly hurtling towards the cliff edge with these deeply damaging Brexit plans, which will leave us poorer and worse off. This legislation will hit our economy, cost thousands of jobs in Scotland, sell out our food and drink sector and harm people's livelihoods. The Scottish National party will not vote for this flawed and deeply damaging legislation.

We reject this toxic Brexit legislation and make it clear that this UK Government cannot drag Scotland out of the European Union before gaining the legislative consent of the Scottish Parliament. My question to the Prime Minister is this: will he accept that the devolved Administrations have the right to withhold their legislative consent? Will he now enter into constructive dialogue with those who seek to defend our rights—our Parliament in Edinburgh and our First Minister? We know the reality is that this Prime Minister will ignore Scotland; he will keep ploughing ahead despite the fact that Scotland voted to remain in the European Union. At last week's general election, Scotland voted decisively to escape Brexit and to put Scotland's future in Scotland's

hands. The Prime Minister has no mandate to drag Scotland out of the European Union. It is clearer than ever that the people of Scotland must have their say over their future, rather than the broken Brexit Britain that he wishes to impose on us.

Our economy will be smaller, weaker and poorer as a result of our leaving the European Union. Why? Because of the ideology of the Brexit fanboys—those in the Leave.EU campaign who now run this Government. Despite the Prime Minister's assertions, Brexit is already having an impact on our economy. Analysis in the “State of the Economy” report by Scotland's chief economist shows that continuing uncertainty is resulting in a half a billion pound shortfall in business investment in Scotland. That is the price of Brexit. It does not matter whether it is this Brexit or another Brexit—the analysis shows that all forms of Brexit will harm Scotland's economy and result in lower household incomes.

Mr Shailesh Vara (North West Cambridgeshire) (Con): The right hon Gentleman will be aware that we were told before the referendum that if the country voted to leave, there would be economic Armageddon—rising unemployment, rising interest rates and so on. None of that actually materialised. Why does he persist in scare-mongering when those things did not materialise? It is about time he had confidence in the United Kingdom and saw that the cup is half full, rather than half empty. Look at the evidence!

Ian Blackford: We have looked at the evidence, and I have just set out the fact that investment is lower in Scotland. When the Brexit vote happened, the pound fell but inflation rose.

Let me give the hon. Member two examples to illustrate the stupidity of those who want to push ahead with this project. We have recently lost 2,000 well-paid jobs from the European Banking Authority and the European Medicines Agency, which used to be centred here in London. The Prime Minister sits in his seat and laughs about the loss of those institutions, and about our loss of influence over new medicines coming to the United Kingdom. That is what Brexit is going to do.

“Scotland's Place in Europe” provided detailed analysis of Brexit's macroeconomic implications for the Scottish economy, outlining that membership of the European single market and customs union is the least-worst option for jobs and investment. We sought to compromise with the UK Government on that, but they are now ripping us out of these markets, and risking great instability and economic chaos. Conservative Members are quite prepared to reduce jobs and opportunities simply on the basis of ideology. Membership is vital for trade. In 2017, Scotland exported £14.9 billion of goods to the European Union. Closing down membership of the single market and customs union means closing down opportunities for Scottish businesses.

The Government are looking to lock down opportunities not just for goods, but for people. Approximately 209,000 EU citizens live in Scotland. They bring new skills and expertise, which are absolutely vital to our industries and the local economy. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) mentioned unaccompanied minors, but on the basis of the Prime Minister's response, it is clear that he has not read his own Bill or the explanatory notes. Let me read what the explanatory notes say:

“Clause 37 amends subsection (1) of section 17 of the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018 to remove the obligation to seek to negotiate such an agreement and replace it with a requirement to make a statement to Parliament.”

That is the harsh reality. I urge Conservative Members to think very carefully, because they are about to bring up the drawbridge and remove unaccompanied minors’ right to come to the United Kingdom. What a disgrace! That is an indication of who the real separatists and isolationists are, and we should be very afraid of what this Conservative Government seek to do.

The Prime Minister is simply not interested in Scotland’s economy. He has made it clear with his manifesto mantra that this is all about getting Brexit done. Getting the Prime Minister’s Brexit done will leave the United Kingdom £70 billion worse off than if it had remained in the European Union, according to a study by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research. We know that the Tories could not care less about Scotland, because Scotland is being singled out for unfair treatment. We are the only United Kingdom country to be taken out of the European Union against our will, with no say whatsoever over our future. England and Wales voted leave, and England and Wales will leave; Northern Ireland is getting a special deal and the right to decide its own future; but the Prime Minister offers Scotland nothing—hee-haw, diddly-squat. That is what we get from this Government in their so-called precious Union: nothing but disrespect for our Government and our rights.

Geraint Davies (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op): The right hon. Gentleman mentions England and Wales, but in the last election 16.5 million people voted for remain parties and 14.5 million for leave. The remain vote was divided. Does he not agree that the least this Government can do is to provide democratic scrutiny and a soft Brexit that allows alignment on workers’ rights and the environment and, importantly, scrutiny over trade deals with the United States and elsewhere?

Ian Blackford: Of course there must be effective scrutiny. The legislation offers no guarantees on workers’ rights and environmental standards, and no protection for the NHS from a future trade deal with the US. Brexit will hit jobs and living standards, and it may leave Scottish businesses facing a competitive disadvantage with businesses in Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister can talk about trade deals all he wants, but the harsh reality is that a basic trade agreement of the type he wants to negotiate will lead to GDP being lower by the equivalent of £1,600 per person compared with EU membership. People will be worse off, but if they watch or listen to this debate, they will hear Conservative Members laughing. That shows the seriousness with which those hon. and right hon. Members treat these crucial issues.

Is it any wonder that the people of Scotland, armed with the facts and aware of the deceit from the Vote Leave campaign and the Brexiteers in No. 10, came out in huge numbers last week and backed the Scottish National party to escape this Government’s disastrous Brexit? Escaping Brexit is now the only option to protect our economy. We have tried time and time again to compromise, but the Tories are simply not listening to Scotland.

That was why Scotland’s First Minister wrote to the Prime Minister yesterday asking for power to be transferred from the United Kingdom Government to the Scottish Parliament to hold a referendum on independence.

The Scottish Government have a clear democratic mandate from the 2016 Holyrood election to offer the people of Scotland a choice over Scotland’s future within the term of this Parliament. There is a significant and material change in the circumstances that prevailed in 2014. Let me nail once and for all this issue about the referendum being “once in a generation”. The fact of the matter is that in the declaration that both Governments signed, it was made clear that it would not obstruct a future independence referendum.

Last week we won that mandate again. Scotland must consent to its own future. Westminster, in its arrogance and ignorance, has treated Scotland with contempt for too long. It would simply be undemocratic to ignore the will, the voice and the ask of the Scottish people. If the Tories think that Scotland does not want independence, let them give us our say. What is to be feared from more democracy? Everything has changed, and that is why the Scottish National party today demands that the Prime Minister, if he is not running scared, gives Scotland its choice—its right to choose its own future.

We have a way out of this Brexit mess, and I appeal to those in Scotland who have supported other parties to come with us and complete the powers of our Parliament. We can escape Brexit, and we can take on our own responsibilities. There is a better way, which will secure our economy, and allow us to tackle inequality and deal with the climate emergency. It is not this Tory Brexit; we can save ourselves from that. It is time for Scottish independence. [*Applause.*]

Mr Speaker: Order. Come on; let us start as we mean to go on. To help everybody, I am going to bring in an informal six-minute limit so that everybody has equal time to get through.

10.28 am

Mrs Maria Miller (Basingstoke) (Con): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is a great pleasure to rise to speak in this debate, and to welcome your approach to chairing debates in this Chamber. Thank you very much.

So much has been said on Brexit already that people who tune in to watch our debate on the Parliament channel could be forgiven for thinking that they are watching a rerun. I know that it is Christmas, but come on; we need to move this debate forward. It is not good enough to repeat the same arguments that have been made in this place for the last three years. People expect more from us than that.

Time away from this place can be a valuable thing. All returning Members of Parliament have had six weeks away—six weeks to listen to the people we represent, who we were talking to throughout the campaign. I know from speaking to colleagues, not just on the Government Benches but across the House, that we were all getting a similar message. People felt frustrated about the way Parliament was acting. Regardless of their political party, they felt we were locked in a stand-off on Brexit—that the country was trapped in a situation that we should not be in and that we should be allowed to move forward. This withdrawal agreement gives us the opportunity to move forward and get Brexit done, so that we can start to focus on the issues that we know our constituents feel are so important.

But today’s debate gives us another opportunity, which all of us, whether new or returning Members of Parliament, need to seize: the opportunity to start to

[Mrs Maria Miller]

rebuild trust in this democratic institution. If we do not, it does not just damage the Government or the Front Bench of our party. If people do not have trust in their representatives in Westminster, who are here to speak on their behalf, it damages all of us. We have to take that very seriously.

Mike Amesbury (Weaver Vale) (Lab): Does the right hon. Member trust that we will get a good free trade deal within 11 months, rather than the average of five to seven years?

Mrs Miller: The hon. Gentleman needs to reflect on the Conservative party manifesto, which could not have been clearer and could not have been voted for by more people throughout the country. People want to see this issue resolved and they do not want deadlock, regardless of whether they voted to leave or remain in the first place.

We have an opportunity to rebuild trust. The Prime Minister made a compelling case in his opening remarks when he said that we have to bring the country together. That is our responsibility as Members of Parliament, and it is a shared endeavour. This angry politics, which I am afraid we heard from those on the Labour Front Bench, has to end. It is our responsibility to set the right tone for our political debate in this country. I am afraid that, so far in this debate, that tone has not been struck by all Members. We have an opportunity to introduce a kinder politics in our country, which will help to reduce the amount of abuse that I know so many Members have had to endure over recent years.

I voted to stay in the EU, but I am a democrat, and that is why I will support the Government's withdrawal agreement today. I have supported every opportunity to take forward our departure from the EU since the referendum three years ago. Politics is not about constructing ivory towers. It is not about trying to put our ideology on the table at every opportunity. It is about finding solutions to very difficult problems. That is why we are sent here to Parliament. The withdrawal agreement is the start of the solution to one of the most difficult problems that our Parliament has faced in a generation. I urge Members from across the House to reflect deeply on that before they cast their vote today, regardless of what their party leaders are saying, because I think the voice of the nation spoke last Thursday, and we have to listen.

10.34 am

Hilary Benn (Leeds Central) (Lab): It is a great pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Basingstoke (Mrs Miller). I agree with her argument that we need to be able to disagree agreeably, as I think President Obama once put it.

If the Secretary of State is looking for some consolation for his Department being abolished at the very moment that we leave the European Union, let me tell him that it will also mean that he will no longer have the untrammelled joy of appearing before the Brexit Select Committee. I thank all Members who have served on the Committee and our wonderful team of Clerks and advisers, who have supported us with their expertise.

At the heart of this Bill is a gamble—a gamble with our nation's economy. The Prime Minister has so much confidence in the Government's ability to finalise a new

relationship with the European Union by this time next year that this Bill will prevent, by law, any extension of the transition period beyond December 2020. If he succeeds, his gamble will have paid off—although I wonder how detailed an agreement he will manage to achieve in that time—but if he fails, the cliff edge of a no-deal Brexit beckons in just 12 months' time.

The pillar on which that confidence is built is the argument that because we have been aligned with the European Union for the past 40 or so years, that deal should be easy to reach. That argument would have force only if the Government were planning to stay as closely aligned to the other 27 member states and their rules, but we know that that is not the case. The Government want to move away from European rules and regulations. Indeed, the Prime Minister said it today: no alignment with EU rules. As that intention becomes clear to our EU negotiating partners, it will make the negotiations not simple, but much more complicated.

No doubt the Bill will be passed today. The question that the House has to address is: can a deal be completed when, as we have just heard, it took Canada seven years to reach an agreement? Can it be completed in 12 months, when we know that we have to negotiate not just tariffs and quotas and rules of origin, but services—80% of the British economy is built on the service sector—data, aviation, medicine safety, co-operation on consumer rights, security, access to databases that have helped to keep us safe from terrorism, which we will lose if we do not get this right, foreign policy, co-operation on climate change, and a long list of other matters of huge importance for the British economy and British society?

Tim Loughton (East Worthing and Shoreham) (Con): The right hon. Gentleman has spent the last 12 months claiming that the Prime Minister never wanted to get a deal, and then he got one, and that the Prime Minister was not serious, and therefore he had to produce a Bill to hamstring Parliament and stop it progressing. Can he admit, just for once, that we have a deal—a deal that is going to happen this year—and use all his expertise and good services to rally round this Parliament, this Government and this country to make sure that we agree it by the end of year, so that we can all move on at last?

Hilary Benn: The Bill that the last Parliament passed did not hamstring the Prime Minister, because he achieved a renegotiation. However, to be fair, all he did was accept 95% of his predecessor's deal and replace the previous backstop with a backstop that had been offered the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May), but rejected on grounds that were clearly set out by the current Prime Minister to the Democratic Unionist party conference in November 2018—namely, that he would never, ever accept a border in the Irish sea, which is what he has promptly now done, which reminds us that it is not always wise to take the Prime Minister at his word.

Stephen Timms (East Ham) (Lab): I wonder whether my right hon. Friend has read the Government's impact assessment for this Bill, which says at paragraph 241:

"Goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland will be required to complete both import declarations and Entry Summary...Declarations,"

thereby flatly contradicting what the Prime Minister has been saying.

Hilary Benn: My right hon. Friend makes an extremely powerful point. We have been told repeatedly that there will be no border in the Irish sea; there is now going to be a border in the Irish sea. That will have consequences for the way in which trade is conducted.

This Bill is also a gamble because of the clause that says that no Minister is able to apply for an extension. Quite why the Government need to legislate to prevent something from happening that they have already made clear they have no intention of allowing to happen—an extension to the transition period—escapes me, but I gently point out to the House that the point of no return will be next June. Under the withdrawal agreement, if a further extension has not been agreed between the parties by then—and the Government are ruling it out—there will be no possibility of extending the period. I say to the Government that they will need to be really, really confident about how the negotiations are going by June next year—not very far away—if they are to be certain that they will not need that additional time to get what they want.

There is no doubt that the Prime Minister is looking for a hard Brexit, because a free trade agreement of the type he has put before the British people—and for which, I grant him, he has won a mandate—has already been assessed by the Government as the second worst outcome for the economy after a no-deal Brexit. It is extraordinary that the House has still not been presented with an economic assessment of the single most important decision that we are going to take and the nature of the future relationship—nothing; silence. History will record that that was an act of irresponsibility.

I say to the House—in particular to new Members on both sides, whom I congratulate on their election—that, as these negotiations unfold, businesses that we represent will be coming to us; they will want issues to be raised in the negotiations and will be concerned about the outcome of the negotiations. Some of the things they are looking for will not be consistent with the policy that the Government have set out. This should not be about ideology; it is about the practical implications of having thrown away—because that is what Brexit does—the best trading relationship we have with any countries in the world. It is about what kind of new long-term arrangements will be put in place, on which our jobs, our factories and our communities depend. If the Government get it wrong, it will be a question not of getting Brexit done but of some industries being done over by Brexit.

Matt Western (Warwick and Leamington) (Lab) *rose*—

Hilary Benn: I give way for the last time, in view of the time available.

Matt Western: My right hon. Friend is making such a powerful speech. Does he not agree that the great concern for this place has to be that it was promised that we would take back control? The greatest deceit of all is the fact that there will be no scrutiny in this place of any element of the trade deals and the impact they will have on our economy.

Hilary Benn: I agree with my hon. Friend: that is a matter of great regret.

I come to my final point. Our leaving the European Union will create great cheer on the Government Benches, just as it will sadden many of us on the Labour side.

The divisions it has created will not easily be healed: many people still think that this is a terrible mistake that will weaken our economy and our influence in the world.

In the modern age, it is how we use our sovereignty that will determine how well we can advance our interests and protect our citizens. If we have learned anything from the events of recent times, it is that if we are to deal with the great challenges we face as a world—climate change, the movement of people around the globe, threats to peace and security, making sure that the global economy works in the interests of all—we can do it only by working together. We are about to walk away from one of the most important relationships that enables us to do that. I say to the Government that we will hold them to account as the process develops and unfolds.

Mr Speaker: I make an appeal to Members: if we all take nine minutes, quite a few of you are not going to get in. Please—I have given an informal limit to give a bit of flexibility, but do not take advantage of Members who come later.

10.43 am

Damian Green (Ashford) (Con): Thank you, Mr Speaker; I hope to give some time back to the House by being very brief. All I want to do is to try to put today's debate and Bill in their wider context, because they are so hugely important to the future of this country.

I simply want to make two points. The first is that those of us who voted and campaigned for remain should respect the result of the referendum. Some of us tried to do that straight afterwards. We took the view that the British people had taken a decision and that those of us on the losing side of the argument should make the best of that—do what we regarded as the best for our country in the context of leaving. Sadly, many people on whose side I fought in that referendum campaign did not take that decision and have spent the past three and a half years trying to subvert it. I have thought throughout that, sadly, that was the wrong course for them to take.

A lot of the problems that we have faced in politics in this country for the past few years stem from that wrong decision and the desire to continue fighting the last war. To those of my friends on both sides of the House who until now have not accepted the 2016 decision, I make an appeal: now, after the general election result, please accept the decision, please let us move on and please accept that that game is over.

Caroline Lucas *rose*—

Damian Green: I will of course give way to one of my comrades in arms in that referendum.

Caroline Lucas: I think that the right hon. Member is in danger of rewriting history. Those of us who wanted to go back to the people were not undermining democracy—more democracy does not undermine democracy. What does undermine democracy is a Bill that is essentially an Executive power grab, completely deleting all the provisions that would have allowed for parliamentary scrutiny. If he is standing up for democracy, will he explain why is he happy about a Bill that is reducing democracy?

Damian Green: I do not agree with the hon. Lady's analysis of the Bill. Furthermore, it is impossible to say that we need a new referendum when we have not implemented the results of the first one; that has been the central problem. I urge her and others to use all the energy and passion at their disposal to help us as a country to forge a new friendly relationship with our fellow democracies in the rest of Europe. They are neighbouring countries, they are friends and they are democracies: we should be able to establish a new and friendly relationship with them. That is my first point—an appeal to those who campaigned to remain.

My second point is an appeal to all those on both sides of the argument. We have to stop defining ourselves and each other simply as remainers or leavers. If we continue to define everyone purely by how they voted in 2016, we will never make progress as a Parliament or a country. The last few years have been miserable for democracy in this country.

Alison McGovern (Wirral South) (Lab) *rose*—

Damian Green: My attempt to be brief is clearly being foiled, but of course I will give way.

Alison McGovern: Does the right hon. Gentleman think that his party's conduct in the general election is consistent with the test that he just set?

Damian Green: Yes, I do. In a sense, it is less important that I think that than that, as is quite clear as I look at this House today, the British people think that. I do not think that that is a fruitful avenue for the hon. Lady to pursue.

As I was saying, the last few years have been miserable for democracy in this country. The more we hark back and fight the old battles, the longer that misery will persist. I hope that this Bill, this debate and the fact that we will have left by the end of next month mean that Members on both sides of the old European argument and both sides of the House take the chance to move on, so that we can begin the healing process that this country desperately needs.

Mr Speaker: Sir Jeffrey Donaldson will speak next, after which there will be a maiden speech with no interruptions.

10.48 am

Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson (Lagan Valley) (DUP): We supported Brexit. We want Brexit to happen, and we acknowledge and recognise that the Government have won a mandate to take forward their withdrawal agreement. But there is a major contradiction at the heart of that agreement that causes us great concern.

At one level, the agreement does say that Northern Ireland should continue to have unfettered access to the rest of the UK for trade. But then there are customs arrangements that inhibit our ability to have that unfettered access. That is our major concern—one that we hope the Government can address.

The Prime Minister talks about taking back control, and that is what we want. Yet for Northern Ireland, there is to be a new joint committee between the European Union and the United Kingdom that will make major decisions about Northern Ireland. In a sense, there is to be shared control of Northern Ireland on key issues. It is also the case that that arrangement cannot change

unless the EU consents to change it, so the EU has a veto over changing the arrangements under the control of that joint committee. Northern Ireland, therefore, will not quite be taking back control. The European Union will continue to have a significant say on key matters relating to Northern Ireland.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): It is clear that a number of issues will make Northern Ireland a less Unionist region of the United Kingdom. Fishermen who bring fish back to Portavogie will be subject to a tariff, and the meat sector will also face tariffs. Does my right hon. Friend agree that Northern Ireland will end up being less Unionist than Liverpool, Leicester, Manchester, Newcastle and London, and that we should be the same as, not different from, everywhere else in the United Kingdom?

Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson: That brings me to my second point. The Prime Minister has been clear that he wants the United Kingdom to leave the European Union as one nation, and over the past few days he has spoken often of his one nation Conservatism. Northern Ireland is my part of the United Kingdom and, in leaving the European Union, I want the Prime Minister to treat it the same as the other parts. We want to hear how the Government are going to achieve that, given the withdrawal agreement's special provisions for Northern Ireland and how they will impact on and change the relationship between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom.

We welcome the withdrawal agreement's provision for the Assembly to have a say, but I am not so sure that it will operate in the way described earlier by the Prime Minister. He said that the special arrangements would continue only if the Assembly supported them, but I think it is the other way around: they will continue unless the Assembly stops them. That would require a vote in the Assembly. The Government know that we have issues with how that vote would be exercised and what it would mean for the principle of consent at the heart of the Belfast agreement. We want to continue our discussion with the Government about how that will operate in practice. We want the Assembly to have a say, but we also want to ensure that that say can be exercised in a fair manner that respects the principle of consent, as set out in the Belfast agreement.

Of course, we hope that what is agreed in the future relationship will negate the need for many of the special arrangements for Northern Ireland. The joint committee will have a say on that, however, and it is not a given that all of the future relationship arrangements will apply to Northern Ireland. We want to continue that discussion with the Government, because we want Northern Ireland to benefit fully from the future relationship and any free trade agreement arranged with the European Union. We have a land border with the European Union and an agri-food sector that trades across it, and we recognise that arrangements have to be made to facilitate that ongoing trade, but we do not want barriers against trade with the rest of our own country. That is absolutely essential.

That brings me to my third point: the customs arrangements. The Prime Minister has said that there will be no checks on goods going from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, or from Northern Ireland to Great Britain. As the Leader of the Opposition reminded us, a

Treasury report says clearly that there will be checks and customs controls on goods travelling between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, to ensure that the correct tariffs are applied and that goods meet EU standards. It is clear that those checks will take place. We want to work with the Government to mitigate the impact on Northern Ireland business of the requirement for those checks. We want to hear more on that from the Government. We will see what we can do in Committee with regard to the commitment in the agreement and that made by the Prime Minister that there will be unfettered access in relation to trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

We would like to be able to support what is happening, but we have grave concerns about the potential impact on the Northern Ireland, where economic prosperity goes hand in hand with political stability. The peace process cannot just be about the politics of Northern Ireland; it has to be about prosperity for Northern Ireland as well. The Prime Minister has said that he wants all of the United Kingdom to prosper. That has to include Northern Ireland. We need to ensure that these arrangements work for Northern Ireland and do not become a barrier to trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

10.55 am

Suella Braverman (Fareham) (Con): I welcome you to your place, Mr Speaker; I am delighted to see you sitting there. Given that many of us are talking about manifestos, I wish you well in delivering your manifesto commitments to stand up for Back Benchers and to uphold democracy. I know that you will discharge your duties with aplomb.

This is my first contribution in the Chamber since my promotion to the position of mum. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr Baker), who served as my proxy during my maternity leave, my wonderful staff, and the Conservative party for its support over the past six months. A general election was not necessarily part of the maternity leave plan, but baby Braverman threw himself into the campaign and, I am sure, was critical in winning over some of those undecided voters.

Can the people trust their politicians? That might seem like a trite question, but it is pertinent in the context of Brexit. As the Prime Minister has said, that precious contract of trust between citizen and state, between voter and politician, has been stretched to breaking point over the past year. Pledges, promises and manifesto commitments all evaporated in the face of an obstructionist Parliament, where the majority of politicians thought they knew better than the majority of the British people. That Parliament wanted to stop Brexit and succeeded in doing so. It let our country down and in doing so broke faith with the British people. Let us not diminish the severity of that breach of trust, for it is only thanks to the trust that people place in us that we have even the right to set foot in this Chamber. It is only at their behest that we serve. As the Prime Minister has said, we are the servants and they are our masters. I hope that we never, ever forget that again.

When I served as a Brexit Minister, I was responsible for drafting the original Bill. I am very glad to see that much of that work has survived and that this new version reflects the changes secured by the Prime Minister

in his renegotiated and new deal. The Bill is critical. It provides all the legal protections for the 3 million EU citizens and the legal provisions for the implementation period, the financial settlement and the Northern Ireland protocol. Legally, formally and technically, it brings an end to our membership of the European Union.

I believe, however, that there is another reason why this is possibly the most fundamentally important Bill that this Parliament will consider—namely, trust. It is through the passage of this Bill that we will begin the process of rebuilding trust with the British people, honour our solemn vow to get Brexit done, and take the first step outwards. And when we take that first step, we will do so confidently. As the Prime Minister said during the campaign, the first step is often the hardest. The first step has been difficult for our nation. It has been fraught with argument, indecision and doubt, and will be taken later than anticipated. However, when we take that first step, through the enactment of this Bill, we will do so confidently and looking forward with optimism, in the knowledge that it is what millions of people around the country want us to do, that it is borne out of legitimacy and integrity, and that it derives from a noble aspiration for sovereignty and out of a heartfelt call for freedom—[*Interruption.*]—something that Opposition Members who still live in denial about the referendum seek to deny.

Historically and traditionally, the UK has been viewed around the world as a beacon of justice, a symbol of fair play and the home of democracy. That has been called into question over the last year. Through the enactment of this Bill, we will be able to reclaim our reputation as the home of democracy, to seize the opportunity to write our history, of which our successors can be proud, and to restore our credibility as a nation where people can trust their politicians and a nation that does not break its promises.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Speaker: We now come to a maiden speech. I remind Members that there should be no interruptions. I call Claire Hanna.

11 am

Claire Hanna (Belfast South) (SDLP): I anticipated having a wee bit more time to craft my maiden speech and to reflect our outlook. But, put simply, Brexit is an emergency and I was elected to do all I can to mitigate the impact of Brexit for the people I represent. Also, as a Northern Irish politician and a mum of three, the opportunity to speak for five minutes uninterrupted was too exciting.

I am aided in making this speech by some of the convention around Members' first opportunity to address the House. I send my very best wishes to my predecessor, Emma Little Pengelly. It is fair to say that we operate at opposite ends of the political spectrum, but I know that she operated with hard work and diligence during her time in this House.

It is my great pleasure to be able to speak about my home, South Belfast, which is in many respects an exemplar for what Northern Ireland—and, indeed, any community—can be. It is diverse, well integrated and forward looking, and is doing reasonably well economically. It is a place where difference is genuinely respected. We do not all have the same views or the same vision for the

[*Claire Hanna*]

future in South Belfast, but we do work the common ground. I am deeply grateful to all those in South Belfast who in enormous numbers elected me to serve them last week. I will do my best to do that every day, as well as to encourage all that is good in our constituency and shine a light on all that needs to change.

South Belfast, like Northern Ireland as a whole, is a place that overwhelmingly voted against Brexit. The pro-European majority of Members in Northern Ireland, I must tell the House, is a more diverse and united political movement than I believe we have ever seen in our troubled history. For Northern Ireland in particular, Brexit has sharpened all the lines that the Good Friday agreement was designed to soften—around identity, borders and sovereignty. We should have been spending the last few years talking about reconciliation, regeneration, social justice and equality; that is what all political action should really be about. Instead, we have spent morning, noon and night talking about Brexit—a problem that did not need to exist and which, particularly in Northern Ireland, reopens old wounds and limits our horizons.

Brexit sundered the body politic and the social consensus across these islands in unimaginable ways. It fed off people who felt lost and disenfranchised in the political system, and I fear that it will leave them feeling much worse. It is one of the reasons that Northern Ireland has now been without a Government for over 1,000 days, leaving Members such as myself and my hon. Friend the Member for Foyle (Colum Eastwood) with no other forum through which to hold Government to account. The Government relied on the fatigue that people had about Brexit—wary to get Brexit done, without a meaningful debate about the decisions that are going to be required, or the impact on our two islands and their intertwined futures. I believe and fear that the political bluster of slogans is eventually going to have to meet reality.

I am glad that, due to the solidarity of the EU 27—and, indeed, Members from across the House—this withdrawal agreement means that there will not be a border on the island of Ireland, but I deeply regret that it creates an economic border in the Irish sea.

From the day and hour that Brexit was conceived, it was very clear to many of us that, wherever it landed, Brexit would create the borders of the past. As those of us on the island of Ireland know, Brexit and borders have both a practical and symbolic significance. Make no mistake about it: there is no good way to do Brexit. But this version is markedly worse than its previous iterations. It creates barriers to trade and introduces new levels of bureaucratic complexity. It is silent on workers' rights, and on social justice and the rebalancing of the global economy. It will damage Britain's economy. It will cause significant collateral damage to Ireland—north and south. It will further erode the resources available to public services, which are already reeling from a decade of austerity that has—certainly where I live, and I suspect here too—decimated the health service, gripped working families and emboldened inequality.

Beyond the economy, Brexit up-ends the delicate balance that in Northern Ireland has allowed us to imagine our shared and equal future together. We in Northern Ireland know the value of the EU. As my political hero and predecessor in this House, John Hume, so often said, the EU is the greatest peacebuilding and

conflict resolution project anywhere in the world, and those of us particularly affected by conflict have a duty to reflect its principles. I am afraid that our concerns have been dismissed by those of you who will never have to live with the consequences of these actions.

The cross-community and cross-party coalition of support in Northern Ireland that exists to maximise our access to the EU includes business, trade unions, agriculture, retail and most of civil society. In fact, in that way it mirrors the coalition of support for the Good Friday agreement, which was actually inspired by and modelled on the EU's founding principles. It was about being able to compromise without losing your identity, without sacrificing your principles and without sacrificing your aspiration.

Neither the EU nor the Good Friday agreement is about nations, and neither is about territory. They are about relationships and working together for the common good. They are about seeing challenges and finding solutions. But we know that the challenges of the present and the challenges of the next century are global: the climate emergency, tax justice, war and humanitarian relief. Those challenges need international co-operation, solidarity and partnership, not isolation and retreat. The world is getting smaller and our responses need to get bigger. Brexit prevents young people from creating a world with a big horizon; that is a generational injustice that we are overseeing.

We will vote against the narrow and restrictive view of the future articulated in this Bill. We will work with fair-minded people of all parties to limit, by amendment, the damage as best we can. We will seek to minimise the damage to the Good Friday agreement, which, for those of us in Northern Ireland, is the only viable pathway to a better future, under whichever constitutional arrangement people desire that future. That agreement is at its core about relationships, in three strands: within Northern Ireland; between the north and south of Ireland; and between our Ireland and yours. I deeply regret that Brexit in any form will damage the relationships in each of those strands, and I implore Members of this House to work with us to limit that damage.

11.7 pm

Mr Owen Paterson (North Shropshire) (Con): I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on resuming the Chair, and wish you the very best of luck in your office.

I heartily congratulate the new hon. Member for Belfast South (*Claire Hanna*) on a very fine and fluent maiden speech. It is never easy to make a maiden speech and it is certainly not easy to make it just one or two days after taking the Oath, especially in a high-profile debate such as this. She spoke clearly and put her point of view. I appreciate the manner in which she touched on her predecessor, Emma Little Pengelly, with whom I had a very good relationship and probably more in common politically. The hon. Lady could also have touched on her predecessor but one from her own party, Alasdair McDonnell, who I worked with closely for three years when I was the shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and for two years when I was the real Secretary of State.

Above all, I heartily congratulate the hon. Lady on turning up. It is most important that her point of view for the future of Ireland is represented in this House. She quite rightly mentioned John Hume. Through the

most terrible years, the Social Democratic and Labour party Members bravely made their case about where they would like Ireland to go. They were looking to a united Ireland down the road, but they always turned up here and participated in local, national and European elections; they always participated fully in the democratic process. I am therefore pleased to see the hon. Lady and the hon. Member for Foyle (Colum Eastwood) back here. They will not be at all surprised that I do not agree with them, but I hope that we will be working together. I congratulate her on her fine speech at a very key moment.

Let me pick up on some of the points the hon. Lady made, because I did not entirely agree with her. I see a great future for Northern Ireland post Brexit. She and I would entirely agree that there is never, ever going to be a hard border; that is never, ever going to happen, and there is no need for it to happen. I spent some time working on this issue last year. I would like the hon. Lady to look at the concept of mutual enforcement, whereby we would recognise the standards required by the market into which we were selling, and would make it a legal obligation to ensure that our suppliers matched those standards. In the same way, those selling into Northern Ireland would have to match our standards. That would not breach the point of sovereignty, which is key to this debate; it will be entirely in our national hands, but we would respect those standards. If she and the hon. Member for Foyle would like to look at that, we might find a mutually beneficial way forward, because like her, one of my main worries about the Bill is the concept of any sort of barrier down the Irish sea, which is a clear breach of the Acts of Union—to be exact, article VI of the Acts of Union 1800, which said that there would be no taxes, barriers or impediments to trade between what was then Ireland and Great Britain. I congratulate the hon. Lady and look forward to working with her.

I touched on the central issue of this debate, which is democracy. We went through this endlessly in the last Parliament. Every week I came down here and thought, “It can’t get worse,” and it did. It is very simple. In the 2015 election campaign, David Cameron promised that if there was a Conservative majority, he would deliver an in/out, decisive referendum. The people would be given the power; they would decide, and whatever they decided—remain or leave—Parliament would honour. That was then endorsed throughout the referendum debates. It was made very clear by the then Foreign Secretary, who has now left the House, that the referendum was decisive—we, the MPs, are currently sovereign, but we will give you, the people, the power to decide this issue. It was binary. There was no talk about trade deals or crashing out. It was remain or leave.

That was then endorsed in the general election in 2017, when the two main parties got over 80% of the vote. My right hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) is not here today, but the Conservative party got the second largest number of seats in British history until this recent election. There was a further endorsement. The people were given another bite to try to get the message across at the European elections this summer, in which, amazingly, the Conservative party managed to come fifth behind the Greens, because our then withdrawal agreement was so unpalatable. The people have now had a fourth bite, and I am very proud of those people.

I was proud to represent those people eight days ago, when the windscreen wipers were on double wipe, and there were queues in the rain in Oswestry and Market Drayton. All my small villages said that it was unprecedented. At about lunchtime—in fairness, my wife got there first—we twigged that it was a rerun of the referendum. Those people had been abused. They had been traduced. They had been bombarded with propaganda leading up to the referendum and after it. Since then, they have been told that they were thick. They were told that they were racist. We in the ERG were told that we were fascists, Nazis and extremists. All we wanted was to honour the referendum, the core of which is that laws and taxes imposed upon British citizens would be levied by democratically appointed politicians—elected politicians of this House. If they passed good laws, they would be re-elected. If they passed fair taxes and spent the money well, they would be re-elected. If they did not, they would be chucked out by the electors—a very simple principle, which we have taught the world about for centuries. That is what this is about. It is staggering to hear Members this morning still quibbling and cavilling about this. Four times the people have spoken. How many more times do they have to speak to get it? They voted to leave. This Bill means that they will leave, and I am delighted for it.

Colum Eastwood (Foyle) (SDLP): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr Paterson: No; I am looking at the clock.

I touched on my fears in relation to Northern Ireland, and I want briefly to mention fishing, on which the Prime Minister gave me a splendid answer. In 2005, the Conservative party fought an election on my Green Paper, which established that the common fisheries policy is a biological, environmental, economic and social disaster. We need to replace it and take back complete control of the exclusive economic zone and all our resources, and then on an annual basis, in an amicable manner like other maritime nations, negotiate reciprocal deals on quota. That is the way ahead, but this is a day for democracy.

David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr Paterson: No; others want to speak. We are delivering what the people wanted four times, and I am delighted to support the Bill.

11.14 am

Matthew Pennycook (Greenwich and Woolwich) (Lab): I intend to be as brief as I can, not least because the Bill before us is, in essence, the one that we debated in principle back in October. I also do not intend to delve into the various ways in which the Government have revised the legislation and abandoned their previous commitments on workers’ rights, parliamentary scrutiny and oversight, and child refugees. There will be time enough for those changes to be debated in Committee. I want to focus my brief remarks on the purpose and intent of the deal that this legislation will give effect to.

There is no question but that it did its job, but after 31 January, the slogan “Get Brexit done” will be exposed as the fiction that it is, because when this Bill becomes

[Matthew Pennycook]

law, as it will, it will not mean that Brexit is done, and every single hon. and right hon. Member on the Conservative Benches who parroted that line during the recent election campaign knows full well that that is the case. Brexit is a process, not an act, and the passage of this legislation and the full implementation of the agreement by both parties is only the end of the beginning of that process and a prelude to a far more challenging phase of it.

In that next phase, the threat of a no-deal cliff edge will remain a distinct possibility, but it is not inevitable. There is, in my view, no chance that a comprehensive partnership will be concluded before the end of the transition period in December, but there is a chance that a free trade agreement can be concluded in that time. All it will require, of course, is a multitude of concessions from the Government—concessions that the Prime Minister will no doubt dress up as victories, just as he did with all those concessions he made to secure his deal in October. The reason why I do not rule out the possibility that a trade deal might be secured in less than 12 months exposes precisely the kind of agreement that the Government are aiming for.

If we set aside the very serious implications of this deal for Northern Ireland and the constitutional integrity of the United Kingdom, the deal struck in October was the product of a conscious political decision on the part of this Government to break with the approach of their predecessor and abandon the possibility—and it was only ever a possibility, not a guarantee—of a trading relationship premised on a close alignment with the EU, in favour of guaranteeing a more distant one. Ministers are apt to label their objective for the future economic relationship as a “best in class” free trade agreement. That phrase is entirely meaningless. The deal that the legislation before us seeks to give effect to will set us on a path toward, at best, I fear, the most basic form of free trade agreement possible—one likely to be focused only on tariffs and quotas in goods trade, and one that will therefore necessarily involve only minimal coverage of services and significant non-tariff barriers on trade.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds Central (Hilary Benn) alluded to, voting for this legislation today will leave the door open for the hardest form of Brexit possible, short of leaving the EU without an agreement at all—a Brexit that will entail a decisive break with the EU single market and its customs union, judicial framework and regulations. As the Government’s own economic analysis of previous deals makes clear, it will have a profoundly negative impact on our economy for years to come. We may not feel those economic consequences immediately. Indeed, there is every chance that we will see a surge in investment in the months ahead, but the harm—discernible or not to those it will impact on—will be felt and will take its toll in every constituency and every community across these isles over the coming decades.

I do not believe that a Brexit of the kind that this legislation will facilitate is the right way forward for our country or for those I represent. Indeed, I believe that it is a profound error. Each of those Members here today who share that view—indeed, each of us who served in the last Parliament—will no doubt continue to question whether we could have done more to avert this outcome, but those of us who were returned last week have a

chance today to signal our clear opposition to it and to ensure that the deal before us and its consequences are wholly owned by the Conservative party.

The deal before us was a bad deal for our country in October when the Prime Minister agreed to it. It remains a bad deal today, and I am afraid that the scale of the Government’s victory last week has done nothing to alter that fact or my very firm conviction that the right thing to do today is to vote against it in principle.

11.19 pm

Rachel Maclean (Redditch) (Con): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for calling me so early in the debate.

Mr Speaker: Don’t get too used to it.

Rachel Maclean: I was just congratulating myself on putting my tick in the right box to vote for you, Mr Speaker. It is indeed wonderful to see you in the Chair. Congratulations on your election, and I hope that it ushers in the start of a brave new Parliament, not just for me and my own speeches, but, of course, for all of us, and for the country.

In the general election that took place only just over a week ago—which seems incredible—I was returned to this place with more than 63% of the vote, the largest share ever received in the fantastic constituency of Redditch since its formation in 1997. It exceeded even the vote share of Jacqui Smith, the former Labour Home Secretary, when she represented the constituency so ably. That, I think, constitutes an overwhelming mandate for me to get Brexit done, and then move on to the priorities on which my constituents want me to focus on their behalf. One of those priorities is, of course, returning services to the Alex hospital. New Members, you will hear that again—hint, hint.

I think it fair to say, along with my colleagues who were also elected in 2017, that we have had a pretty miserable time of it. All of us entered the House full of the passion that my wonderful new colleagues sitting near me clearly feel. We were eager to do our best not just for our constituents but for the whole country, but we have not been able to fulfil what we were sent to Parliament to do. I believe that, as a Member with the privilege to sit on these Benches, I am a servant of my constituents. It is not my job to tell them that they were wrong, and that they did not know what they were voting for. I voted remain, but at the end of the day we have to respect democracy. People who are on the wrong side of arguments just need to move on, and, finally, we have a chance to do that.

I must admit that when the Prime Minister set out on his path of first trying to reopen the withdrawal agreement and get rid of the backstop and then going for a general election, I thought to myself, “He has an uphill struggle in front of him.” I really wondered whether he would be able to do it, given the state of the Parliament that we had at the time, but I think that what he has done is take a leaf out of the British Army engineers’ book. They have a saying when faced with a seemingly unsurmountable challenge: “We will get it done, whether it can be done or not.” I think that that is what the Prime Minister has done, and I want to thank him for returning all of us here, and for breaking the deadlock and allowing us to do our job of serving the people. We have a refreshed

Parliament. We have a new intake who are full of passion and energy and ideas to transform our whole country, and we can finally do that.

I can think of no better way in which to finish this brief session of Parliament than to wish everyone a very, very merry Christmas, including you, Mr Speaker, the Clerks and all the Doorkeepers, and all the staff who have worked so hard to make us all feel welcome. It was only two years ago that I was here for the first time, and I remember how confusing it was, but the staff are so patient and so lovely.

Let me end by saying, in case anyone was in any doubt, that I will definitely be voting in the Aye Lobby to honour the democratic wishes of the lovely people of Redditch who have put me here—and by wishing everyone a very merry Brexmas.

11.24 am

Catherine McKinnell (Newcastle upon Tyne North) (Lab): During the election period I spoke to many voters, and I fully appreciated the desire expressed by some—whether they had voted leave or remain—for closure on Brexit. It was very clever electioneering to convey the impression that this was simply a small foreign policy issue that could be wrapped up relatively quickly so that Ministers could get on with bread-and-butter domestic issues. However, we are no longer electioneering. It is time for reality to bite, and the reality is that this Bill is just the start of years of uncertainty about our future. Rather than getting Brexit done, it gets Brexit begun.

There are still so many issues to be resolved, and they are incredibly thorny ones. The most fundamental question is whether securing a United States or a European Union trade deal is more important to the Government. Both will require some sort of regulatory alignment, and the Prime Minister needs to decide what he is prepared to concede—on food, fisheries, labour and environmental provisions, just for starters.

The Government must also decide what kind of say, if any, devolved Governments will have in respect of trade agreements. If the Scottish Government are excluded from negotiations, what will that mean for our Union? We have already seen and heard about the challenges posed to Northern Ireland by the proposals to place a border in the Irish sea, which was something that the Prime Minister promised not to do. Some time ago, immediately after the 2016 referendum, I asked what the Government would do to ensure that regional voices and concerns were heard as part of the Brexit negotiations. The answer that I received from the Prime Minister was nothing, and I have little hope that it will be any more encouraging today.

Those are really big questions, and that is without even mentioning long-term tariffs, access to the labour market, the state aid regime, access to fishing waters, regulations—across the whole economy but particularly on food—the priority given to sectors such as farming, financial services, and automotive, environmental and labour policy, data flows and privacy issues, intellectual property, access to diverse EU regulatory programmes, and much, much more. The Prime Minister has committed himself to doing all that in just 12 months or risking another no-deal cliff edge.

Just as the election does not change the fact that Brexit will continue to dominate our politics for some time to come, it also does not change the economic

reality of Brexit. The Chancellor flatly refused to publish any Treasury analysis of the Prime Minister's deal when I wrote to him before the election in my then capacity as interim Chair of the Treasury Committee. He also refused to appear, or to send any Minister to appear, before the Committee. It is also difficult to see how the kind of Brexit that the Prime Minister wants to pursue is in any way compatible with the wider promises made by the Conservatives during the election campaign. The Government say that they are committed to increasing public spending—spending on the NHS, education and the police, at least—while also keeping tax, national insurance and VAT either flat or falling and reducing debt as a proportion of GDP over the course of this Parliament. What choices the Government make, and what promises they break, remain to be seen.

I am truly sorry that although parties offering a final say on any Brexit deal won 53% of the vote in the general election and although all the public polling indicated that the majority of the British public thought that it had been wrong to vote to leave the EU back in 2016, the voting public will not be able to have their say on the final Brexit deal. Indeed, that was precisely why the Prime Minister wanted a Brexit general election rather than a confirmatory referendum, despite having got a withdrawal Bill through Parliament at the last attempt before Parliament was dissolved.

We are where we are, as they say. The make-up of Parliament has changed dramatically, and we will now be leaving the EU at the end of January. However, the anxieties of the people whom we represent in the north-east about what Brexit means for their jobs and their livelihoods have not changed. The analysis showing that the north-east will be hit hardest of all has not changed, and nor has the threat that Brexit poses to the 63% of north-east exporters who rely on access to EU markets.

Brexit is not going to be done. The challenges of the next stage are infinitely more complex than those of the first. I will continue to represent the views, the anxieties and the interests of the people whom I represent here in Parliament, and to hold the Government to account on this monumental change for the country, which I fear that many will come to regret.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): Order. Before we proceed, I remind the House that Mr Speaker has sought to impose a voluntary six-minute time limit.

11.29 am

Stephen Crabb (Preseli Pembrokeshire) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne North (Catherine McKinnell), and it is also a pleasure to have heard some really excellent speeches already, most notably the maiden speech made by the hon. Member for Belfast South (Claire Hanna). It was a pleasure to hear the speech made by my hon. Friend the Member for Fareham (Suella Braverman), who spoke powerfully about trust.

In a sense, we are ending this year very much as we started it: with a debate and a vote on an EU withdrawal agreement. As I did in January, I will be voting in support of the withdrawal agreement, first and foremost because I am a democrat. I believe in honouring the outcome of the 2016 referendum and I will support

[Stephen Crabb]

measures to take the United Kingdom out of the EU. I also believe that how we leave the EU really matters. I believe in an orderly exit. I have been consistent in my support and preference for leaving with a deal. We have what I think is an eminently supportable deal in front of us.

We are also ending this year in a very different place from where we started. All week, there has been a sense of a fresh start around Westminster and of a page being turned. I appreciate that that might not be felt equally on both sides of the Chamber, but I hope that this will be a fresh start for the whole House of Commons, with a new sense of purpose and direction. I believe that voters last week put us here to bring a fresh sense of purpose and direction. Voting for the Bill today will send a very powerful signal back to the British public—back to our voters—that we have heard their message and that we are bringing that sense of direction and purpose.

Make no mistake about it: for those who were not in this House during the course of this year, 2019 has been a year of sclerosis. We took the British public on a tortuous journey of suffocating delays, endless and repetitious debates, and votes that took us nowhere. There was no substantial outcome from all the hours that we spent in the Chamber on this very subject. The British public turned out at polling stations a week ago to give us their verdict on that. Very quietly and very firmly they said, “Enough now.” It is time for action and decision.

We have a Government who have been put here to legislate to take us out of the EU in an orderly and responsible way. We have tested the patience of the British public quite enough. They send us here to do a job. Yes, they expect us to scrutinise. They expect us to ask difficult and challenging questions of the Government, even when their Ministers sit on our side of the House. They expect us to work hard at that, but they do not expect us to come here and wilfully block a democratic mandate such as the one they gave in the 2016 referendum.

Colum Eastwood: May I just point out—I know it was not said very often in the previous Parliament—that the people of Northern Ireland voted to remain? In every election since, they have reasserted their rejection of Brexit. Government Members talk about one nation and all that, but will they recognise that Northern Ireland and Scotland have once again, and very loudly, rejected this Brexit and every other kind of Brexit you could possibly come up with?

Stephen Crabb: I thank the hon. Gentleman for that intervention. In fact, I was going to come on to make precisely the point that as well as being a democrat, I am also a Unionist. The election results in Northern Ireland and Scotland, which reaffirmed the referendum votes there, present a challenge to those in government about how to take Brexit forward. I am satisfied that we are dealing with Northern Ireland very sensitively and I think we have work to do on how we address the issue for Scotland, but I come back to the point I was making: we have been sent here to do a job. Voters—members of the public—do not expect us to block democracy. They do not expect to see their Members of Parliament trying to use every trick in the book to block Brexit, but that was precisely what happened in 2019.

Members of Parliament went to their constituencies to tell their leave voters on a Saturday that they really wanted to get on with Brexit. They then came back here on a Monday morning to find and use every trick in the book to block Brexit.

I am very clear that the constituents of Preseli Pembrokeshire have put me here to do a job. Passing the Bill today is a really significant, first positive step forward to implement the outcome of the 2016 referendum. I believe that to vote against it would be a vote for continuing all that we saw during 2019: a winter that never ends, and never reaches Christmas. My appeal to colleagues on both sides of the House is to get behind the Bill and show the country that this new House of Commons has a real sense of direction and purpose for the whole United Kingdom.

11.34 am

Wera Hobhouse (Bath) (LD): I am a first-generation European migrant. When I came here in 1990, the passport I was holding was not an issue. I was welcomed and allowed to thrive. Our four children were born and brought up here. I worked as a teacher and paid my taxes. I was, like millions of EU citizens, a part of British society. I became a councillor. My residents first thought me a bit different, but they soon accepted that my background did not matter and that I represented them well. I became a British citizen and stood for Parliament. Then came Brexit. EU citizens became the centre of a cynical political ploy to divert attention from a failure to invest in public services through an attempt to pin blame on EU migration. Suddenly, I was wondering, “Am I not welcome here? Do they mean me? And if they do not mean me, who do they mean?” My wonderful electorate in Bath has always looked beyond my background and has just re-elected me with a huge majority. I feel truly humbled, but Bath is special.

Daniel Kawczynski (Shrewsbury and Atcham) (Con): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Wera Hobhouse: The relentless rhetoric and the hostile environment created around EU free movement has wounded EU citizens to the core. The Government’s newly found but false words about our “European friends” are failing to repair the damage. EU citizens understand that this Tory Government do mean them, and they are leaving.

Daniel Kawczynski: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Wera Hobhouse: No smooth words can easily heal the deep wounds that have been created here and abroad. I feel differently about this country now than I did when I first arrived, and so do millions of true Brits who, like me, are grieving for Britain’s lost soul and its shift towards small-minded nationalism. They are embarrassed by a mean and self-centred political class and its timid retreat behind its own borders.

We have talked a lot about democracy, and not just here. The election produced a result: we will leave the EU at the end of January. My party and I fought hard and we fought well. All through the last Parliament, with only a handful of MPs, we stood up for those who did not want to leave—nearly half of all people in this country. We demanded a people’s vote, which the Tories

obstinately denied us. We brought thousands upon thousands of like-minded citizens on to our streets. That, too, is democracy.

Daniel Kawczynski: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Wera Hobhouse: I have said no—[*Interruption.*] I have said no.

In a democracy, a ruling party needs a functioning Opposition. Indeed, without opposition, democracy is dead. My passionate belief that the UK is better off as a proud member inside the EU, rather than as an irrelevant outsider, has not melted away overnight. I will not cease to voice this opinion here and outside Parliament. That is my democratic right. Whoever is trying to deny me or anybody else that democratic right is the anti-democrat, not me.

I understand that now the battle to stop Brexit is over. For me, we do not only leave the EU; we leave an ideal that I had of this country. I was brought up in post-war Germany, a country that was recovering from the ravages of a brutal dictatorship. Britain was a beacon of democracy, liberal values and respect for every human life. British people then had the guts to fight inhumanity, brutality and illiberalism. The mission to bring functioning democracies, based on human rights, civil liberties and the rule of law, to the rest of the world has been a historic British mission. In its long history, Britain has always been global, internationalist, outward-looking and inclusive. Britain understood that its national interest was tightly woven into the interests of countries around them. By saying goodbye to the EU, we say goodbye to those uniquely British political instincts and values.

I and my Liberal Democrat colleagues will vote against the withdrawal agreement, because we believe that it is damaging to our economy, our security, our international reputation and our ability to tackle the global climate emergency, and that it will put a border in the Irish sea and threaten our family of nations. Most of all, we will lose something profoundly British: being international, and leading in the continuous fight for liberal values, human rights and a rules-based international order. We Liberal Democrats will always fight for that.

11.40 am

Sir William Cash (Stone) (Con): Having listened to what has just been said, I am bound to say that it is a complete inversion of what leaving the European Union is all about. The European Union is utterly undemocratic. As someone who has been Chairman of the European Scrutiny Committee for 10 years, and a member of that Committee for 34 years, I can say that I do know a tiny bit about what has been going on. The reality is that legislation is made in the Council of Ministers behind closed doors by majority voting, in addition to that which is made by consensus and without even a transcript. Fortunately, the people of this country will be able to hear and see what is done in this Chamber today, which they certainly could not do in the Council of Ministers. It is a complete travesty to suggest that, in some shape or another, we are little Englanders or nationalistic; we are nothing of the kind.

This is a watershed moment in our history. This Bill, when it is enacted, will go down in history—in conjunction with the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, which repeals the European Communities Act 1972—as it

stops us being subjugated and shackled by Europe and having rules imposed on us by other member states, allowing us to govern ourselves. It is about law making. That is why, after a free choice by the people of this country, we have been returned to this House. I congratulate the people with every fibre of my being for making their decision so emphatically.

The reality is that this is a historic moment. It compares with the decision that was taken in 1660 when the Cromwellian period ended and we returned to parliamentary government. We re-established parliamentary government in 1688. Then there were the Corn Laws. The working man was given the right to vote in 1867. In May 1940, we decided that we would not be governed by any other country. We defeated Hitler and made it clear that we would be a self-governing nation.

Daniel Kawczynski: I am very grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way. Will he acknowledge that there are hundreds of thousands of EU citizens in this country—people like me who have come from Europe to settle here—who voted for Brexit and believe in Brexit? The hon. Member for Bath (Wera Hobhouse) seeks somehow to represent all of the EU citizens, but there are hundreds of thousands of us who stand by and are proud of the decision that this country has taken to regain her sovereignty.

Sir William Cash: I agree with every word that my hon. Friend has said. For me, this has been a long journey. My first amendment on the question of sovereignty was in June 1986 during the Single European Act. I was not even allowed to debate it. I was cut off at the knees by one of your predecessors, Mr Deputy Speaker, for daring to suggest that the matter should be debated. The fact is that we then moved on to the Maastricht treaty, and I had the honour and privilege to help run and then lead the rebellion that was needed to stop European government, which is what that treaty was all about. Then we moved on to Nice, Amsterdam and Lisbon.

As I survey the landscape of the enormous change that is taking place today, I see exhausted volcanos of former Prime Ministers who have been constantly in the media telling us that we got Brexit wrong. No, we did not. Furthermore, not only did we get it right, but the British people 100% know that this is one of the great moments in British history. We have been shackled by the European Union. Yes, we will continue to trade with it. Yes, we will have global trading. Yes, we will have our democracy and our sovereignty back. This is a great moment in our history. I can only say that, as far as I am concerned, the most important clauses in this Bill are 29 and 38. One gives the right to the European Scrutiny Committee to determine whether matters of national vital interest need to be protected from legislation, which may well be brought in against us by the European Union from behind closed doors during the transition period. For example, the ports regulation, which was imposed on us only a few years ago, was objected to and absolutely resisted not only by Members of the Committee but by all the trade unions and port employers.

Sir John Hayes (South Holland and The Deepings) (Con): And by me.

Sir William Cash: And by the former Minister as well. We were overridden by Europe. This Parliament was treated with contempt. The regulation was imposed despite the fact that we were completely against it.

[Sir William Cash]

The other important clause relates to parliamentary sovereignty. I am glad to note that the wording in that clause is identical in certain respects to that which I put forward in June 1986. Perhaps this long journey has been proved to be worthwhile.

I congratulate the Prime Minister on what he has achieved, and, above all else, I congratulate the voters of this country, particularly those in former Labour seats, for their decision. I was brought up in Sheffield and saw the destruction of the steel industry and the destruction of the coal industry. [Interruption.] No, it was done—[Interruption.] Look, I will not take any lessons from the hon. Member for Sheffield Central (Paul Blomfield). I voted against the closure of the coal pits. I was one of the very few people—[Interruption.] I am just telling you that it was the European coal and steel community that was at the root of the problem. As vice-chair of the coal communities all-party group, I can tell you that I worked with Labour Members of Parliament on these issues.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): Order. The hon. Gentleman is a very experienced parliamentarian. He knows that he should address the Chair, and not individual Members and, while I am on my feet, I say to him that I am looking at the clock as well.

Sir William Cash: I am grateful for that comment, Mr Deputy Speaker, because I agree with it. I will only say, with every fibre of my being, that the European Union has done no good to this country. We run a massive deficit with it and a surplus with the rest of the world. By this Bill, when enacted, we will regain the right to govern ourselves. It is about democracy and trust, which is something so precious that people fought and died for it.

Mr Deputy Speaker: It is now a pleasure to invite the hon. Member for North Down (Stephen Farry) to make his maiden speech.

11.48 am

Stephen Farry (North Down) (Alliance): Go raibh maith agat, a Leas-Cheann Comhairle. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I wanted my first formal comments in this Chamber to be in Irish to reflect the shared heritage of the language across all the traditions in Northern Ireland.

I am very pleased to be here as a representative of the Alliance party of Northern Ireland. I am the second member of my party to be elected, following in the footsteps of my party leader, Naomi Long, who was elected back in 2010, and of Stratton Mills, who sat here for about a year as an Alliance Member back in the early '70s as the Member for Belfast North.

Before commenting on the Bill, I want to pay tribute to my predecessor, Lady Hermon, who was a diligent Member over 18 years and conducted herself with tremendous integrity. In recent years in particular, she was very dogged in standing up for Northern Ireland and particularly in protecting the Good Friday agreement in the context of Brexit.

I come to this House with a very strong mandate for remain—indeed, the remain vote in Northern Ireland grew in the election—and that strong remain vote continues to reflect the dominant majority of the people in that

region. I will therefore be voting against Second Reading of the Bill in order to honour the wishes of the people who sent me here and the people of Northern Ireland.

There is no such thing as a good or sensible Brexit, whether we are talking about the UK or Northern Ireland in particular. Following on from previous comments, it is worth stressing that the House is potentially poised today to consciously vote to make the UK worse off economically. We are aware that that is what we are doing. It is an incredible situation the House finds itself in. The European Union represents perhaps the single greatest example of economic integration anywhere in the world, and we are walking away from that.

We are being presented with a false choice between working in the context of the European Union and pursuing a global Britain. We can best expand our trade and economy by working through the EU, where we have the strength in numbers to stand up and get better deals with the likes of the United States, Australia and China. That is in our self-interest. It is also important to bear in mind that the EU is more than an economic body. It is more than the sum of its parts and it allows effective and collective responses to global challenges, including migration, global poverty and, most critically in terms of the current agenda, tackling climate change.

Society in Northern Ireland only works when based on sharing and inter-dependence. Sadly, we remain a divided society. We are a complex society with lots of ambiguities. The Good Friday agreement balanced all those different challenges through a unique set of relationships. It is about the principle of consent, but it is more than that; it is about the internal dynamics, the north-south relationship and the east-west relationship. In terms of our economy, both supply chains and trade, we depend both on north-south and east-west linkages.

The challenge of Brexit is that if we do not go for a soft Brexit, as defined by the UK staying inside a customs union and the single market, Northern Ireland will be confronted with some form of border boundary interface and a degree of friction, which is very regrettable. Any perception of a border creates the feeling of winners and losers, and in the context of a place like Northern Ireland, where we are inching slowly towards a better and more reconciled and integrated society, that has the potential to be very damaging and destructive.

The deal negotiated by the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) was a better attempt at a soft landing than the deal negotiated by the current Prime Minister. Indeed, the previous deal had the pragmatic support of the Northern Ireland business community and an unprecedented level of commitment from them, given that this is a rather contentious political issue. They understood that it was a genuine attempt to address the issues. The current proposal from the Prime Minister presents Northern Ireland with a much more challenging situation. While it certainly maintains an open border on the island itself, it creates a much more problematic situation down the Irish sea than people had a right to expect and was originally anticipated.

To be clear, some degree of checks down the Irish sea can be managed—indeed, there are already precedents in that regard—and Northern Ireland has always done things differently since the early 1920s. Nor do I see the notion of any special deal for Northern Ireland or an interface as being a constitutional question, but what has been proposed so far will be very challenging for

our economy, in terms of both the east-west interface and the west-east exchange. Some estimates put the compliance costs as high as £300 million per year for our businesses. That simply cannot be sustained. So rather than Northern Ireland having a foot in both camps, Northern Ireland risks becoming peripheral. The Prime Minister, throughout the election campaign, has been very clear that there will be no checks down the Irish sea, but that is clearly at odds with the view of most experts and most people who have analysed the deal so far.

There is some common ground across all the parties from Northern Ireland. Clearly, I am coming from a remain perspective, as are my colleagues from the Social Democratic and Labour party, whereas my counterparts from the Democratic Unionist party are coming from a leave perspective. But together we have a reasonable argument, and we speak with a moral authority, about trying to mitigate the impact of that boundary down the Irish sea. At the very least, we would ask that the Prime Minister and Government meet us halfway in that regard.

Much has been made of the Prime Minister's comment about being a one nation Conservative. Unlike my counterparts in the DUP, I do not interpret that as meaning one nation of the UK; the UK is about four different nations. My appeal to the Prime Minister is: don't be a one nation Prime Minister for England, but be a Prime Minister for all four nations of the UK, and, as we proceed to the more detailed scrutiny of this Bill, pay particular attention to the needs of Northern Ireland and the damaging implications of what is now set to emerge in terms of that interface down the Irish sea.

11.55 am

Mr Nigel Evans (Ribble Valley) (Con): First, let me congratulate the hon. Member for North Down (Stephen Farry) on an excellent and accomplished maiden speech, and the hon. Member for Belfast South (Claire Hanna) on an excellent, distinctive maiden speech, given in her own style. Giving a maiden speech is incredibly stressful. I gave mine more than 27 years ago, and I am sure you remember it, Sir Roger. It took place at 1.10 am and it was on the subject of the Maastricht treaty. Tristan Garel-Jones was sitting where our wonderful Brexit Secretary is sitting now, and it was truly the most awful speech I have given in the Chamber to date. I recall reflecting back on it—I have looked at it—and realising that all it said was how wonderful the Maastricht treaty was because it did not contain X and did not contain Y. When I look back on 1975 and the referendum Harold Wilson set up to get himself out of a pickle, I feel that I probably would have voted to stay in the common market, because I thought that the common market was a good thing. But the first piece of legislation, the Maastricht treaty, was part of the salami-slicing of powers away from this wonderful institution, the mother of all Parliaments at Westminster, and giving them to Brussels.

I did not want that, so when David Cameron announced that we were going to have a referendum on staying in or leaving the EU, I sat down and thought, "Now, which side am I going to go on?" That internal mental debate lasted about a nanosecond, and I thought, "It's time to leave." I am grateful to Opposition Members for informing me since 2016 as to why I voted to leave—as

did my constituents and the country—but I really do not need any help, because I know why I voted to leave. I did not do it to make my country poorer or to increase unemployment. Call me old-fashioned, but I did it in order to ensure that all the legislation that pertains to this country is actually made in this Parliament and that if the people of Great Britain do not like what the Government are doing, they can kick us out. That is democracy.

When I stood on the A59 on 23 June 2016 with some leave banners, inhaling all the lead from the passing lorries, whose drivers tooted madly when they saw the signs, I knew that we were making history on that day. Sadly, when we got back here, with all the excitement of "We're leaving, we're leaving", we found that the sclerosis and paralysis set in. At one stage, I thought that the best we could hope for was Brexit in name only and that we would be in some form of customs union—that is not Brexit. I thought that we would be justiciable by the European courts—that is not Brexit. I thought that we would have to pay in money to access the EU's single market—that is not Brexit. I know why people voted to leave the EU, and it was not to have Brexit in name only. They voted to ensure that when we leave on 31 January, we are then a third country, and that when we have left the implementation period, at the end of 2020, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will be an independent country again.

We can start to look forward to the future with such optimism, which is displayed by the Prime Minister every time he comes to the Dispatch Box. There is a positivity and energy about him and about our country, because, despite the referendum campaign, which told us that unemployment would go up, there would immediately be a recession and it would be a disaster for the United Kingdom if we voted to leave, the plucky British people decided not to listen to the gloom and doom; they decided that they knew better about their country.

I look forward to those trade deals with the European Union, the United States of America and the vast majority of countries that manage, somehow or other, to operate outside of the European Union. I think that our country has an incredibly great future.

On that note, I wish all Members on both sides of the House, because it has only been a week since we were re-elected and it was a gruelling campaign—I still have frostbite—and all the staff who look after us a very merry Christmas and a happy 2020 with an independent United Kingdom.

12 noon

Stephen Timms (East Ham) (Lab): I echo the final sentence of the hon. Member for Ribble Valley (Mr Evans) but not much else of what he said.

The Prime Minister was understandably very anxious to hold the general election before the Bill was scrutinised. As we go through the Bill in detail, the impact of his agreement on the UK will become apparent. The agreement will do a lot of damage to our constitution and to our economy, and Government Members will have a lot of explaining to do to their constituents as those impacts become apparent in the years ahead.

I want to raise two points. First, I want to deal briefly with an important subject that I raised with the Prime Minister in the House on 19 October. I asked him

[Stephen Timms]

whether he understood the worries of manufacturing exporters, as set out by their organisation, Make UK, about new rules of origin checks and other red tape that his deal will impose on them. He answered:

“The reason I am not worried about that is that there are no new rules of origin checks.”—[*Official Report*, 19 October 2019; Vol. 666, c. 594.]

But that is not what his deal says. Paragraph 22 of the political declaration, which he negotiated, refers to “appropriate and modern accompanying rules of origin”

for the proposed free trade agreement, in direct contradiction to what he said in the Chamber. Of course, the reality is that there will have to be rules of origin checks to stop products from countries outside Europe entering the European Union via a UK free trade agreement.

Secondly, I want to talk about a subject—it has been aired already in the debate—where again the Prime Minister’s statements contradict directly the agreement that he has negotiated. The withdrawal agreement’s protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland—in paragraph 4 of article 5—states:

“The provisions of Union law listed in Annex 2 to this Protocol shall also apply...in respect of Northern Ireland.”

Annex 2 comprises 34 pages and lists what I count as 287 separate items of EU law that will continue to apply in Northern Ireland but not in the rest of the UK. The hon. Member for Ribble Valley was celebrating exiting the customs union, but of course Northern Ireland will not exit the customs union.

The first of those 287 items of EU law is the European Union customs code, which will continue to apply in Northern Ireland after the UK has left the EU, and that will have far-reaching consequences for Northern Ireland. I pay tribute to the hon. Members for North Down (Stephen Farry) and for Belfast South (Claire Hanna), who both made fine maiden speeches highlighting some of these issues. In an earlier intervention I quoted from the Government’s own impact assessment. Paragraph 241 states:

“Goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland will be required to complete both import declarations and Entry Summary (ENS) Declarations because the UK will be applying the EU’s UCC—

the Union customs code—in Northern Ireland.”

Ian Paisley (North Antrim) (DUP): On the issues that the right hon. Gentleman has identified, does he agree that for any business in Northern Ireland—remember that 70% of our trade is with the rest of the United Kingdom—the codes that he has read out put a significant burden on doing business from Northern Ireland with the rest of our nation, and that should be changed if this goes ahead?

Stephen Timms: Undoubtedly the measure does that, but it is hardwired into the deal that the Prime Minister has done. What he means in claiming that there will be no checks across the Irish sea is anyone’s guess—just read the Government’s own documents. His statement is quite clearly untrue. The Treasury presentation on the Northern Ireland protocol that we have been reminded of makes the position clear:

“At minimum, this means that export summary declarations will be required when goods are exported from NI to GB, in order to meet the EU’s obligations under the SAFE framework.”

It continues, in a slide in the presentation headed “Economic Impact on NI”:

“Customs declaration and documentation and physical checks on W/E and E/W trade will be highly disruptive to the NI economy.” That is the truth about where we are heading. There will be major damage to the Union between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. One of the ironies of this is that it has been directly facilitated by the party in this House whose *raison d’être* is to maintain the Union.

The agreement that is implemented in the Bill will damage the UK, it will put the continued existence of the UK in its current form at risk, and it will damage the UK economy. I shall oppose it, and those who support it today will have a lot of explaining to do to their constituents as the impacts unfold over the years ahead.

12.6 pm

Simon Hoare (North Dorset) (Con): May I first say that I am hugely grateful to the people of North Dorset for returning me to the House, to allow me to continue to speak and work on their behalf?

It is worth reminding ourselves that this was a national referendum. I hear what colleagues from Northern Ireland and Scotland say, but we did not say that all four constituent parts of the United Kingdom had to vote uniformly. It was a national referendum on a first-past-the-post basis. There is a thin veneer of defence for those seeking to hide behind the argument supporting separatism when those lines are trotted out. For those who question the Government’s commitment to protecting and enhancing workers’ rights, I hope that it will not embarrass or upset the Opposition too much when I point out that my party is now the party of the workers of this country, who voted for us in huge, huge number. [*Interruption.*] No, thank you. I ask what I hope is a rhetorical question—why would any party in government seek to undermine the rights of those people who have turned in such great number to support us, not least to get Brexit done?

This is, of course, a sad day. Colleagues have commented on the paralysis that we have endured for the past 18 months or so. Today’s debate should have taken place to allow exit from the European Union in March, so I hope that a spirit of broader pragmatism and co-operation can break out.

A number of Members have reflected on key messages of the electoral event last Thursday. My take is that it was a civil war, but without the blood. Voters in great number picked up a ballot paper and a stubby pencil, reasserted their rights, and reaffirmed their role as our masters and bosses. We cannot, as democrats, ask the people of this country to give us a decision, and then, when we find it either surprising or inconvenient, find every trick in the book to try to dodge it.

Until May this year, my postbag—I am sure other colleagues found this as well—was inundated with letters from constituents who had ideas about how to break the deadlock and move things forward. However, after May, and certainly after the elections to the European Parliament, people started to write saying that they were so fed up that they were minded to opt out of the democratic life of this country or, worse, were exploring

avenues of civil disobedience to, in some way, ventilate their growing frustration at the arrogance of too many people in this place who thought they knew better than the people.

What greater exposition of that arrogance was there than the campaign from the Liberal Democrats? It was illiberal and undemocratic—worthy of neither part of their party's title. The smug intellectual arrogance they deployed—[HON. MEMBERS: "Where are they?"] My hon. Friend the Member for South Dorset (Richard Drax) and others ask where the Liberal Democrats are. Their terrible righteous smugness, which seems to be a unique part of liberal democracy's DNA—the idea that they know more and better than everybody else—

Stewart Malcolm McDonald (Glasgow South) (SNP): On the point about being smug, I invite the hon. Gentleman to reflect on the result in Scotland. How many colleagues of his were here from Scotland before the election, and how many were returned afterwards?

Simon Hoare: Let us be frank: the SNP had a very successful result, although it was not as good as the hon. Gentleman and I remember from 2015. As others have commented, it will present challenges for those of us who believe fundamentally in the preservation of the Union, who will now need to find arguments that are more compelling than merely the broad, abstract and romantic, and that focus not so much on the pounds, shillings and pence but on making the positive case for the Union. That is an important point.

Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Simon Hoare: No, thank you.

As we face the opportunities and the challenges of our country leaving the European Union, I am absolutely convinced that we stand the best and strongest chance of making a success of this new chapter of our national story if we stand shoulder to shoulder and do these things together.

May I just say a brief word in relation to Northern Ireland? It was clear that, because it is the only part of the kingdom with a land border with a country that will remain part of the European Union, we needed a border. The question was what and where. We tried the north-south proposal, and we found it to be impossible and not to be supported by many. The east-west proposal is clearly not perfect and, of itself, presents challenges. However, I do not believe that the people of this country define themselves by the narrow rules that govern their customs arrangements—it is far deeper and more spiritual than that. It is key that we maintain the unity of our United Kingdom. The challenge, which I am fully convinced that those on the Front Bench are seized of, is to ensure that, whatever the regime of customs arrangements, they are the lightest touch and are, in essence, cost-neutral. We can achieve that through all sorts of VAT reclaim and other mechanisms.

Let me conclude by saying that the people have spoken, and we on the Government side of the House are their champions. We listened to what they said in 2016, and we have heard it again. We on this side are fully armed to ensure that we restore the democratic legitimacy of this place and the national respect for it.

The challenge now will be for Opposition parties to put aside the arguments that they deployed in full sincerity and in good heart but that, put simply, they have lost. It is time to move on. This Bill gives us the opportunity to do so. It has my full support.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): Order. I remind the House that there are still some 20 Members waiting to be called, and we are trying to impose a self-denying ordinance of six minutes. I would be grateful if hon. Members stuck to that. That said, we do allow a degree of leeway for maiden speeches, and it is a pleasure to welcome the new Member for Stirling, Mr Alyn Smith.

12.15 pm

Alyn Smith (Stirling) (SNP): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I rise to make my first speech in this place with, I confess, a mix of emotions. Until Friday last, I was a member of the European Parliament, proudly representing Stirling, along with the rest of Scotland, in our European family of nations. I now find myself here contemplating our removal from it.

I am proud to represent Stirling, my new home, with 51% of the vote. The heart of Scotland voted SNP, along with much of the rest of our nation. Stirling is the ancient capital, a historic city and the scene of many old battles. It has a big heart and a great future. The seat, at 2,187 sq km—I hope Conservative Members will forgive me; I do not know what it is in miles—is comparable in size to Luxembourg, and it is every bit as diverse. We have many vibrant village communities: Drymen, Gargunnoch and Strathblane in the west; Cowie, Fallin and Plean in the east; Killin, Crianlarich and Tyndrum in the north; St Ninians and the Whins of Milton in the south; and Callander, Bridge of Allan and Dunblane. We truly are Scotland in miniature. We have rich farmland, breathtaking scenery, and a world-class university and college. Stirling is held by the SNP at local government level and in the national Parliament of Scotland. The SNP won in Stirling handsomely in the European elections, and we now represent it in this place as well.

I am particularly privileged to represent a number of former mining communities—places where loyalty and community still matter. The Polmaise pit was the first out and the last back in the 1984 miners' strike. I am deeply honoured to have the trust of such proud communities. They are people who believe in deeds, not words, and I ask only to be judged by mine.

It is customary in a first speech in this place to pay tribute to one's predecessor, and I do so gladly. Stephen Kerr and I may not agree on everything, but we do agree on the importance of democracy and public service. I pay tribute to his service, and I wish him, his family and his team all the best for the future, whatever it brings.

Indeed, I wish the same for all of us, because although this is a momentous day for some in this House, it is a day of deep sadness for many of us. I assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that today's vote will live in infamy. It is not the end of Brexit; it is the start of something far worse. It is an arithmetic fact, not a matter of opinion, that Scotland has not consented to this. We are not leaving the European Union; we are being dragged out against our will by a Government that we rejected, and hence my mixed emotions. I stood for this place to try

[Alyn Smith]

to stop Brexit. I won Stirling with 51% of the vote, the SNP won 80% of the seats in Scotland and the pro-EU Lib Dems won four more, and yet despite that, Brexit is happening, as I now accept.

I counsel Government Members to beware of hubris, for in what they call their victory today lie the seeds of a far greater defeat. I understand from previous interventions that there are some scholars in the House. May I suggest some festive reading for them all: the history of Czechoslovakia? Start around January 1991 and see what happens. A Union—the United Kingdom is a Union of nations; do us the courtesy of using the right words—can only be maintained and endure if there is consent and respect. It is an arithmetic fact that in all our recent votes, Scotland has not consented to where we are now, and the actions of this House prove that there is a lack of respect for Scotland's democracy. I have concluded in the years since, along with my party, that Scotland's best future lies as an independent state in the European Union. Many people in Stirling agree with me. Many do not, and that is an ongoing, lively conversation, but there are many more than that who agree that it should be for Scotland to choose our future. What is being done to us today is a grave, deep injustice that will not stand and will have consequences.

We on the SNP Benches have long said that this place does not work for Scotland. In passing this grubby, shabby Bill today, this House will prove us right. Today will not be the end of the matter, however much wishful thinking may be employed by Government Members. Scotland is a European nation and Scotland will be heard.

12.20 pm

Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for calling me to speak in this historic debate. I have the privilege to follow the new hon. Member for Stirling (Alyn Smith), who I must say spoke very well. I have to confess that I did not agree with every word he said, but he delivered his speech admirably, which augurs well for his future in this House.

In 1997, I fought Ken Livingstone in Brent East. Just enough extra votes—16,000 teensy-weensy, little votes—and I would have beaten him, but in a hustings in Willesden Green library, 22 years ago, he taught me a lesson that I have never forgotten. He said that, as a Member of Parliament—which he was and I was not—a general election is an opportunity to commune with one's 68,000 employers. I have 79,000 employers in Rayleigh and Wickford, but the principle is exactly the same. I place on record my gratitude to them for re-employing me to represent them—for renewing my contract of employment to speak on their behalf. We got into a terrible mess in this House because too many people forgot that they worked for their employers and not the other way round.

Henry Smith: (Crawley) (Con): I, too, congratulate my right hon. Friend on his deserved re-election. He has been stalwart on behalf of his constituents and on the cause of British independence from the European Union for many long years in this House. Does he agree that the British people have given us a clear message that it is time to confirm their vote of three and a half years ago, and that it should not have taken that long?

Mr Francois: I absolutely agree with my hon. Friend.

Martin Docherty-Hughes (West Dunbartonshire) (SNP) *rose—*

Mr Francois: I have given way once.

We spent some 40 years in this House arguing over Europe. In the end, the only thing we could agree on was that we could not agree, so we voted overwhelmingly to give the decision to the people in a referendum, and then some in this House spent three years deliberately ignoring the result. They pulled every trick in the book—the Grieve amendment, the Letwin amendment—time after time, to try to overturn a result with which they and the British establishment patently did not agree. We played a ridiculous game whereby some on the Opposition Benches—and, indeed, some on our Benches—stuck to a mantra of: “I will never vote to allow us to crash out with no deal.” What they meant was: “I’ll never, ever vote for us to leave the EU under any circumstances, but because of the referendum, I can’t say so.”

Finally, we had to have this general election to break the logjam. I am afraid that those on our Benches who took that view, and who assured us time and again that they were doing what their constituents wanted, were proved incorrect. Their constituents had the opportunity to renew their contracts of employment and patently, in every single case, declined to do so. Also, Mr Steve Bray, the man in the hat, stood as a Liberal Democrat candidate in a Welsh constituency. He had the courage to put his name on the ballot paper, but he came sixth and lost his deposit. We wish him a happy—and silent—retirement.

The war in this place over Europe—and it has been a war—is finally coming to a close, not because there was a truce, but because the British people imposed their will on us and told us unequivocally in the general election that they wanted to leave. Many here had argued for two years for a people's vote. We have just had one: it is called a general election, and the outcome was unmistakably clear. The people of this country peacefully and democratically voted to get Brexit done.

We will leave the European Union at 11 pm GMT on 31 January. I hope that, in line with early-day motion 2, the House authorities will allow Big Ben to chime at that time to mark the historic occasion, because by God, after all this, we are not doing it again. When we vote on the Bill—when the bells ring this afternoon—we will be doing so to obey the instructions of the British people, who have given us an unmistakable order to leave the European Union. We will vote for the Bill to comply with what our employers have told us they want us to do. It could not be clearer. As my right hon. Friend the Member for North Shropshire (Mr Paterson), with whom I have fought this battle for many years, said so clearly, that is called democracy.

The people have spoken, and we will listen. We will do what they want. When the sun rises on 1 February, it will do so over a free country. All I want for Christmas is not EU.

12.26 pm

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck (South Shields) (Lab): In the 2016 referendum, I promised my constituents that, whatever the result was—whatever mandate they gave—I would

respect it. In 2017, I stood on a manifesto that said I would continue to respect that mandate, and work for a deal and to avoid no deal. That is exactly what I did. In this election, I was clear with my constituents that I still respected that mandate and that I would work for a deal to leave the EU.

People respond to clear and consistent messaging. My party's catch-all Brexit policy failed. Today was, and still is, an opportunity to stop the procrastination and send a message to our lost voters—the voters that our party was created to give a voice to in Parliament—that we do hear them, value them and genuinely want to rebuild their trust.

I am fed up with hearing that we need to listen more to our working class communities—communities that some people here speak about as if they were some kind of homogenous block who all think and feel in exactly the same way. They certainly do not. Many of us here listen to our communities every single day. Some who did that are no longer in this place, because others refused to hear or act on the voices of their constituents, which they so passionately articulated. I am deeply saddened that my right honourable friend the former Member for Don Valley, who has been an utterly fierce champion for democracy, her constituents and those of us who wanted to honour the promises we made to our voters, is no longer on these Benches. She, along with my honourable friends the former Members for Great Grimsby, for Crewe and Nantwich, for Stoke-on-Trent North, for Stoke-on-Trent Central and for Leigh were—and I know that they take absolutely no pleasure in this at all—right on this issue every single step of the way. This debate and this place are poorer without them.

Just over eight weeks ago, those former Members and I voted for the Second Reading of this Bill, which has now changed. In my time in this House, we often voted for Second Readings. We sometimes have not liked the Bills, but Second Reading is not a blank cheque; it is an opportunity to move the debate forward, propose amendments and seek improvements. I will vote for Second Reading again today.

The programme motion is short. Last time, we tried to force the Government to offer more time and we ended up in the worst general election in my memory. Now, much as I am heartbroken by the fact, the Conservative party has an overwhelming mandate that it did not have last time we debated this Bill. I will vote for the programme motion as well and put my energy into making the case for changes in Committee. I do not want to oppose for opposition's sake: we need to build consensus and stop the combative nature of this debate. That serves no one, and the past three years have proven that.

This has been an awful, toxic period in our politics. I have despaired at how this place has descended so many times into the most divisive, base, angry, gallery-pleasing politics. It might make for good headlines, but it does not make for a serious, functioning Parliament that people can have any respect for or any faith in. I will always deliver on the promises that I make to my constituents. Their faith in me always matters. My word to them matters. It is with the heaviest of hearts that I cannot vote with my party today, but I will always put my constituents before everything else, because the day I do not is the day I no longer deserve the honour of being their voice in this place.

12.30 pm

Sir John Hayes (South Holland and The Deepings) (Con): Welcome to the Chair, Mr Deputy Speaker. I have no doubt that it is going to be a delight to serve under your enlightened chairmanship for many years.

Listening to this debate, I drew a contrast between the contribution of my right hon. Friend the Member for Ashford (Damian Green) and that of the right hon. Member for Leeds Central (Hilary Benn), who both campaigned for remain in the 2016 referendum. One has accepted the result but the other remains in denial. The debate in this House before the election was characterised by that contrast between the acceptance of the democratic will of the people and the perpetual denial of those who campaigned for remain but who cannot come to terms with the result.

The election result finally settles the matter. The Prime Minister, at some risk to himself and, indeed, to many of us, put his reputation on the line by saying to the British people, “Do you or don't you trust me to deliver this?” The British people have delivered their verdict. They want us to deliver Brexit, not necessarily because they wanted to leave in the first place, but simply because they want the matter settled. They want to deliver the certainty that is critical for British business and for the integrity of our democracy. To have continued to frustrate the will of the people would have done untold harm to the very spirit that should imbue this place and that gives life and health to democratic legitimacy. That is why, beyond all else, I will vote for the Bill today.

But that is not the only reason. I have opposed the European Union consistently throughout my political career—indeed, stretching back into my boyhood, which was something like 40 years ago. I know it seems surprising and unlikely, but it was 40 years ago that I was a boy. I first advocated withdrawal from the European Union when I was a student at Nottingham University back in the late 1970s.

I did so because the European Union is regulatory. I remember countless occasions when civil servants would come to me and say, “It's bad news from Europe, Minister. We're looking at ways we can get around it, dilute it, avoid it.” I would say, “Well, do all you can,” as I did in respect of the ports directive referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Stone (Sir William Cash). Yet I can never remember them saying, “Great news from Europe, Minister. This is going to be really beneficial for the British people.” The regulatory burden that has emanated from the European Union has been immensely unhelpful to Britain and the British economy, time after time.

I also oppose the European Union because it is costly. The latest House of Commons Library figures suggest that the net cost of our membership of this very expensive club is £8.9 billion. Indeed, we have been net contributors in every year since we joined in 1973 except, interestingly enough, 1975.

Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough) (Con): What happened then?

Sir John Hayes: That was the year of the referendum. In that one single year, we were a net beneficiary to the tune of £395 million. In every other year, we have been paying dear to bear this regulatory burden.

[Sir John Hayes]

In addition to those reasons for my opposition to the European Union and all its excesses, I have a more fundamental reason. It is this: when power is exercised detached from the people it affects, it first becomes careless and ultimately becomes capricious. When people lose the ability to hold to account those who make decisions for them, democracy is undermined. That, in the end, is the reason why I campaigned with such vigour to leave the European Union in the referendum and have consistently argued so from my boyhood into my middle age, which I am now about to enjoy.

The denial that I described earlier is a test of character for Opposition Members. The test of character in victory is humility and the test of character in defeat is wisdom. The test for those who have adopted the position to vote against the Bill today—many of whom I respect, by the way, as individual Members of this House—is whether they will exercise such wisdom, for to vote against this Bill is not merely implausible; it is fundamentally unwise.

You will be glad to know, Mr Deputy Speaker, that that brings me to my concluding remarks. [HON. MEMBERS: “No!”] I know that that will disappoint more Members than it pleases. None the less, I must make room for others to contribute. G. K. Chesterton wrote:

“How you think when you lose determines how long it will be until you win.”

I simply say to Opposition Members that how they behave now will determine how they are thought of now and into the future.

Let me finish on this note. I have spoken about my consistent position. There are critics of me—here and more broadly. [HON. MEMBERS: “No!”] Not many, I acknowledge, but there are critics. However, one thing I cannot be criticised for is inconsistency. C. S. Lewis said that consistency is the mark of greatness. I just hope that if I remain consistent, one day I might be great, too.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Gary Streeter): Order. In order for us to get everyone in before the wind-ups at 2 o'clock, the informal time limit on speeches is now five minutes.

12.37 pm

Alison McGovern (Wirral South) (Lab): What a joy it is to follow the right hon. Member for South Holland and The Deepings (Sir John Hayes). My quotes are normally a bit more Jarvis Cocker and Bill Shankly than G. K. Chesterton and C. S. Lewis, but the right hon. Gentleman made a good contribution, and it is his point about undermining democracy that I really want to begin with. But first, I must thank my constituents in Wirral South because not only did they take the decision to re-elect me for the fourth time, but even those who I know for a fact were definitely not voting for me were incredibly kind. That is the quality of the people in the Wirral; I thank them all.

When it comes to undermining democracy, I think we need to step back from some of the language in this debate. It is perfectly legitimate to be triumphalist in victory. I take nothing for granted, but if my team wins the league this season, I will certainly be triumphalist. However, this is not football; this is incredibly important.

Although the Prime Minister has a mandate for his manifesto, we are still a democracy, and in a democracy we take pride in listening to dissenting voices. It is that voice of dissent that we are at risk of crushing in this debate because this Bill has huge problems. Worse, many Members, including Labour colleagues who voted for the Bill, worked hard to place ameliorations against the worst aspects of Brexit in the Bill that we debated before the election, but some of those ameliorations have now been removed.

First, no deal is firmly back on the table. Clause 33 reintroduces the huge jeopardy that we might leave the European Union without a deal, and the consequences of doing so are grim. There is a risk to peace from our having no agreement with the European Union, given where that would leave the relationship for those on the island of Ireland. No deal could create significant problems for medical supplies on cross-channel routes, which would have an immediate impact on the health and lives of people in Britain, and we know what no deal would do to food supplies. Reintroducing that risk through the Bill is a massive mistake. I will not rehearse all the reasons why the idea that it is necessary for our negotiating position is wrong, because we know that it is wrong. The Prime Minister wants to do it, but I am afraid that if he thinks the days of hearing objections to that negotiating stance are over because we have a new Parliament, he is very much mistaken.

Secondly, from discussing a hard border on the island of Ireland, we will now be discussing a hard border for Merseyside. The impact of a border in the Irish sea is significant for my constituents in the Wirral and people who live in Sefton and Liverpool, where the port is, with ferries going between Birkenhead and Belfast. If people in this House think that because Merseyside votes somewhat counter to the national trend, it will be forgotten, I can tell them that they are wrong. The people of Merseyside want to know that Brexit will not do irreparable damage to our relationships—both commercial and of friendship—with people on the other side of the Irish sea, so we will be making our objections clear. I want to know what economic assessment has been carried out on the impact of this policy. The hon. Members for Belfast South (Claire Hanna) and for North Down (Stephen Farry) made these points clearly in their great maiden speeches. To us, Brexit is not just a risk to our economy, but a risk to our identity, and we will not allow that point to go unheard.

Finally, on parliamentary sovereignty, the efforts of the former Member for Stoke-on-Trent Central, Gareth Snell, to give us in this House a say and to get a parliamentary lock on the future relationship have unfortunately failed. The Prime Minister has ripped up commitments that he made to people who were prepared to vote for his deal. That is an unworthy thing to do; he should have kept those parliamentary locks in the Bill.

By any economic measure, the consequences of this Bill are grim, and the democratic consequences are worse. The Conservative party won the general election, but they won some crucial seats by a few hundred votes. They should not use those votes as a mandate to forget all the people who did not vote for them in those areas. The Prime Minister has control of the House now, so he can drum his Brexit through, but the question is how he can do that when there are nations in our Union and cities in our country that do not consent, and for which he has shown little care. If his future is one in which it is

his way or nothing, my party will need to plan an alternative future, and that is the work that we will now get on with.

12.43 pm

Richard Drax (South Dorset) (Con): Before I start, may I thank the voters of South Dorset for returning me? I am humbled to be returned again and look forward to serving them to the best of my ability. The Prime Minister is not here, nor is the Speaker, but I welcome them both to their places. I have backed the Prime Minister and believe he is the man for the job, and I believe the Speaker will bring integrity back into this place, which sadly was beginning to be lost. I also want to welcome new Members. It is a pleasure to see them all here, particularly on our side of the House.

Years ago, before I was elected in 2010, I adopted a battle cry: “We want our country back.” In fact, it was so good that Nigel Farage nicked it, as he freely admits, when he was in charge of UKIP. That was not some sort of xenophobic, Union Jack-waving, isolationist standpoint. It was because, like many of my constituents who voted to leave, we wanted control of our country. We wanted our beloved country to have control of her destiny. It really is as simple as that.

In his speech, the Leader of the Opposition talked about ripping our communities apart and about job losses, and made a raft of other negative comments. A once-respected Labour party has sadly been hijacked by the far left. I have huge respect for many members of the party, but it has been hijacked. Had the Leader of the Opposition won, as he tried to do, this country of ours would have been torn apart; I have absolutely no doubt about that.

Trust the people, trust the people, trust the people. I failed once in the House. I voted for the deal on the third occasion, and I apologised two days later. Since then—just before the election last week—I began to wonder whether the people would return us, and allow us to do what they wanted us to do. They did. When the result of the exit poll was announced, I simply could not believe that we would have a majority of about 80 MPs, but we have, and here we are. Honour and democracy can now be returned to this place, and we can serve the people who send us here.

I accept that there are still many different views in all parts of the House, but, as my hon. Friend the Member for North Dorset (Simon Hoare) said in his excellent speech, it is time to move on. Just imagine what this country of ours could achieve if, together, all sides buried their differences, respected the people of this country—the United Kingdom—and stepped into this brave new world of opportunities. Those opportunities are there; I can see them. There have been a few naysayers today. I will ask them in five years’ time, “Were you wrong to say what you said that day in the House of Commons?”, and I am pretty certain that they will have to reply, “Richard, I was wrong”, because we have a great future.

Let me say this to Ministers. It is important to get this Brexit done, yes, but it is important then to return to a domestic agenda which has sadly been ignored, for all the reasons that we know, for more than three and a half years. Certainly in South Dorset we need better road and rail connectivity, and proper social affordable housing. This is the chance for our party, with all our new MPs from the north, to reach out, right across the country, and to deliver—and we must.

Let me also issue a warning to those in the other place who will deal with the Bill. Do not start playing games now. We have had enough, and the people of this country have had enough. The other place must pass this Bill, and allow us to get on with leaving the EU on 31 January.

On fishing and agriculture, I say this to Ministers: whatever you do, do not sell those parts of our economy short. Let us stick together. Let us do what we said we were going to do, and leave the EU. By December 2020, if indeed no free trade agreement has been made, we must go, but I am confident that that will be achieved by then.

Lastly, like other Members, I wish every Member of the House and the staff, particularly my own staff, a very happy Christmas.

12.48 pm

Helen Hayes (Dulwich and West Norwood) (Lab): I thank voters in my constituency for re-electing me to serve as their Member of Parliament. It is an honour to represent one of the most diverse constituencies in the country. In 2016 it voted overwhelmingly to remain in the European Union, and, in my experience, the strength of my constituents’ pro-EU views has only grown over the past three years.

The vast majority of my constituents did not vote to “get Brexit done”, and my mandate from them is to keep standing up for our values in Dulwich and West Norwood and to champion their interests. Our values are those of outward-facing internationalism, a celebration of diversity and community solidarity. These are the values that underpin our support for membership of the EU and these are the values that lead us to be deeply concerned about Brexit and this Government’s reckless approach to it.

Our values lead us to be concerned about the protections people are afforded in their workplace, the protection of our environment and our response to the climate emergency. They lead us to prioritise human rights and to be concerned about how Governments are held to account for human rights abuses which happen on their watch. And they lead us to be concerned about refugees and to want the UK to play a full role in responding to the global refugee crisis by welcoming people who have lost everything and helping them to rebuild their lives. Indeed, many of my constituents are already playing their part through community sponsorship groups and they want to see the Government doing the same.

We are dismayed to see in the Bill the Government jettison their previous commitment to the Dubs amendment on child refugees and the non-regression clauses, which were designed to ensure that the UK does not move backwards on workers’ rights relative to the EU—or at least that if the Government did so it would be completely transparent and they could be held to account. In relation to human rights, the previous Government removed the UK’s commitment to the charter of fundamental rights. The Bill further waters down the commitment to the European convention on human rights, and the political declaration makes no mention of rights previously protected by the EU charter of fundamental rights. There is a real risk that hard-won rights fought for over hundreds of years could be watered down by this or any other future Government.

[Helen Hayes]

The Prime Minister's reckless approach to the implementation period is nothing short of a disgrace. There is not a shred of evidence that a trade deal with the EU can be secured within a year. The EU says it cannot. All trade deal precedents indicate that it cannot. Yet the Prime Minister seeks to enshrine in law the UK's crashing out of the EU with no trade deal in just a year's time. Brexit will not be done; it will be doing its worst to communities up and down the country. Jobs will be lost and lives left devastated if we crash out in a year's time. I urge newly elected Government Members to reflect very carefully on what exactly this will mean for the communities they represent, and to heed the warnings of UK manufacturers about the dependence of supply chains on our membership of the single market and customs union.

None of this is hypothetical. It is about the ability of thousands of people to go to work in secure, well-paid jobs that keep a roof over their family's head. It is about the rights of working people to holiday pay, maternity and parental leave, sick pay and protection from discrimination and unfair dismissal.

Mr Bob Seely (Isle of Wight) (Con): Does the hon. Lady accept that, actually, in many cases UK standards are higher than those of the European Union? I am very confused as to why Opposition Members keep using the EU as a gold standard when actually it is the UK that is the gold standard.

Helen Hayes: I thank the hon. Member for his intervention, but I do not accept that that is the case. Nor do I accept that the Bill does anything other than leave those rights to the mercy of any future Government. I do not trust this Prime Minister to maintain the standards we have derived from the EU.

It is about the protection of our woodlands, rivers and coastal habitats at a time when the environment could not be more important. It is about the practical expression of our values in the way that we treat the world's most vulnerable children.

I understand that the Prime Minister has a majority that means he will pass the Bill and we will leave the European Union, but my constituents will not be denied a voice in that debate. Make no mistake: the Bill will deliver nothing but damage to the UK on many fronts. I will oppose it, I will stand up for my constituents' values and interests, and I will hold the Government to account for the consequences of their reckless actions.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Gary Streeter): Colleagues, we are not doing terribly well on timing. We have 15 more colleagues to speak and 2 o'clock is when the wind-ups begin. My maths are poor, but I believe that that is four minutes each.

12.53 pm

Vicky Ford (Chelmsford) (Con): It is an honour to be back in this House almost two and a half years to the day I was first elected. I would like to thank the good people of Chelmsford for re-electing me to this place.

There have been two and a half years of endless squabbling and going round in circles. This afternoon, we will be able to put that squabbling to an end, get Brexit done and move on.

For some of us, this has been a very long journey. I first campaigned for a referendum more than a decade ago. Ten years ago, I stood for and was elected to the European Parliament on a platform calling for reform, as Europe needed to modernise. Five years ago, I stood with a gentleman who is now my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Tom Hunt) on a platform for the European Parliament, saying that it needed to reform, that we needed to renegotiate and that we would have a referendum. We then had that referendum.

I must admit that, as a Brit in Brussels chairing a major committee in that Parliament after the referendum, it was not easy. I was a major target for anyone who wanted to throw political abuse at Britain. There were days when I literally felt that the arrows to my front had met the knives in my back, but I also felt that there were friends across Europe who wanted to help us to move on, to avoid an acrimonious divorce and to move on into a new, deep and special partnership. That partnership has been outlined by the Prime Minister again today and it is a partnership that also respects democracy.

It was democracy that came up again and again on the doorsteps in this general election. Our country has a proud reputation of standing up for democracy across the world. How do we stand firm with the people of Hong Kong, with Zimbabwe, with the Rohingya from Burma and with the people in Venezuela if we do not respect democracy in our own country?

In his first speech after the election, the Prime Minister called for healing. It is time to stop putting people into those pigeonholes of leave and remain. It is time to move on. Today, when I vote for the agreement, it will be the first step towards moving on. Yes, we need to get a trade deal. We need to get a trade deal with the EU and it needs to get one with us; the EU is our largest trading partner, and we are the EU's largest trading partner. We can get a trade deal within the year, and we must get a trade deal within the year. It can be done, because so much of the detail has already been agreed not only by us, but by all 27 other countries as well. They have agreed tariff-free, quota-free trade. They have agreed a deal that works for our fishing and our farming and a deal that can work for our financial services. Members should remember that 10p in every pound that we spend as taxpayers comes from the financial services. We have agreed a deal that works for the environment and, crucially, as a supporter of a science, a deal that works for ongoing co-operation in science, security and student exchanges.

Much of this election was about one nation Conservatism—[*Interruption.*] I am winding up. One nation conservatism is not only about holding our United Kingdom together, which is crucial, but about working for all sectors of our economy. It is a conservatism that is committed to well-funded public services, funded by a strong economy; a conservatism that believes that we must protect our environment and put it in a better state for future generations; and a conservatism that is committed to our role in the world and believes that every single person in this country has an equal right to a fair chance in life. That is the conservatism that we will be supporting when we vote for this crucial step this afternoon.

12.58 pm

Daniel Zeichner (Cambridge) (Lab): Sadly, we live in a very divided country. I have listened in vain to those on the Government Benches to hear whether they have any understanding of the 16 million people who voted to remain in the European Union—in my city last week, people voted 44,000 to 9,000 to remain. I have no sense that the Government understand those people, and that is a very dangerous situation, because people are proud to be citizens of the European Union. We do not welcome the erosion of the rights that we currently enjoy, so when there is celebration in a few weeks' time by some, there will be real grief and anger from others. They will have a good reason to be angry, because in the previous Parliament there was a real prospect of securing a confirmatory referendum. The Prime Minister knew that, which is why he was so desperate to get to his election. He was on the ropes, but to everyone's astonishment the Liberal Democrats came to the rescue—of course, they are not here. They took a huge gamble with the future of this country, and of course it failed and they have paid a heavy price, but sadly, so, too, has the whole country. What I will say is that their role in this will not be forgotten. [*Interruption.*] No, I did not vote for the election; I voted against it, which actually got the biggest cheer in the hustings in Cambridge—no elections in December ever again, please.

I am an optimist and I say to remainers: there is hope. We have seen that the Prime Minister, despite the bluster, folds under pressure. He folded when the Irish issue looked to be derailing his progress and, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds Central (Hilary Benn) explained so well, he buckled and did what he and the previous Prime Minister said they would never do: create a border down the Irish sea. Less commented on is how he buckled under pressure from Farage when he threatened to put up candidates in every seat. That was when no deal was brought back: by that promise to not allow an extra extension of the transition period. We know it is all a stunt and negotiating ploy, but it shows that pressure works, so I say: keep the pressure on the Prime Minister.

A so-called skinny trade deal might keep goods flowing, and that is important, but so are the flows of people and research collaboration, and however hard we try, we will no longer be a voice in the room in those important negotiations. Instead, we will have an army of people in Brussels trying to persuade others to make the argument on our behalf—a delicious irony that we will come to see. We will have to follow rules over which we have no influence in making. That is the future. People will come to say, "Wouldn't it be better if had some influence and a say?" That debate will come, but in the meantime we will have to live with what is a Brexit fiction, because in reality there is no Brexit. We always have to have a relationship with our neighbours. The question is how we manage and negotiate that: do we have endless negotiations and arguments, or do we live within a civilised set of institutions and rules that make it so much better?

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Gary Streeter): Thank you. You kept to time beautifully.

1.1 pm

Robert Courts (Witney) (Con): I, too, extend my congratulations to Mr Speaker, on this my first time speaking after the election, although of course he is not

in the Chair at the moment. I also congratulate the hon. Member for Cambridge (Daniel Zeichner) on his speech. As always, I think he argued his case with eloquence and courtesy, even if I did not agree with quite everything he said.

This has been a challenging election for us all—the hon. Member referred to it being a December election—and I give my thanks above all to the people of West Oxfordshire for having returned me again. I am very humbled and grateful for the trust they have put in me. Not only did they have to endure a December election, but it was the third general election in three years for them and me. In every electoral contest since 2015, we have promised to do as we were instructed on the question of Britain's place in the EU, and that is what we have a chance to do today: to show that we will do as were told and what we said we would do.

Now is also an important time for us to put to bed the question of this country's place in Europe. That question has bedevilled and tormented this country for longer than I have been alive. I am clear, from speaking to people in my constituency and around the country, that while the people of this country warmly welcome a relationship of trade, co-operation and culture, they never wanted to be part of a political union, but inexorably that is the direction in which the EU has been heading for many years, certainly since the advent of the euro. We have a chance tonight to bring the country together by putting this question to bed.

The free trade agreement destination, which the Bill leads to, will unify the British people by giving them the chance to step outside ever closer political union while maintaining the strong links of culture, friendship, co-operation and trade that we all warmly welcome. The hon. Member for Cambridge asks how we represent and recognise the concerns of those who voted to remain. That is how I propose we do that—by ensuring close links of trade, friendship, culture and co-operation.

There is something else we can do to show that we are not just a talking shop in this House, arguing and bickering among ourselves and failing to make decisions, but that we can actually move the country forward. If there is one other thing I have heard that people desperately want, it is for us to move on and stop the endless bickering, arguing, changing our mind and failing to show leadership and decision. Ultimately, that leadership is what we are here for; we are sent here to take decisions. We have the chance to do that today.

When I listened to the Leader of the Opposition earlier, it was so dismaying to realise that there is a cold vacuum at the heart of Labour where there should be a policy. He seems to have learned nothing from the preceding six weeks; if you do not keep the promises you make to the electorate at an election, they punish you. He fell back on the same tired scapegoating about how we are going to sell the NHS to Donald Trump—we are not—and how we are going to lead a charge to the bottom on safety standards. We heard the scaremongering about maggot-infested orange juice that the Leader of the Opposition has been using for months and which has already been comprehensively debunked. Again, he fell back on tired old scaremongering, because the Opposition have nothing else to offer.

Instead, we have a return to full democratic self-government, which should be welcomed by everybody, no matter which side of the argument they hail from.

[Robert Courts]

That is something to welcome and cherish, no matter which side of this argument people come from. I urge everybody, when they go through the Lobby this afternoon, to welcome that and to look forward to the future with positivity and hope.

1.6 pm

Anna McMorris (Cardiff North) (Lab): It is with deep sadness and loss that I stand here, knowing that we will now be leaving the EU. I regret that we will not be able to hear the voices of the many people who have changed their mind and would now vote to remain in any final-say referendum and of all those young people who would get a chance to have a real say on their future. For that, I am truly concerned. I am concerned for the country and for those people's futures.

We are here, however, to scrutinise this legislation, which does not even begin to meet the challenges that Brexit poses and which has had taken out all the elements that matter. Importantly, this Prime Minister is stripping Parliament of its voice and therefore denying the people and the country a say on their future. By scrapping powers for MPs to scrutinise future trade deals, we risk being forced to accept lower standards as a price for future trade agreements. Those trade deals will now be conducted behind closed doors and without proper scrutiny. The deals will have an impact on our communities, our businesses and our people, risking workers' rights, environmental regulation and food standards. Denying Parliament a voice means that we are being denied democracy and people are being denied a voice. They cannot call themselves a "people's Government" if the first thing they do is ignore the people's representatives. As MPs, we are here to ensure that our communities, people's livelihoods, businesses, jobs and futures are looked after and safeguarded. This Government are taking away that opportunity. This deal fails to guarantee the future of our environmental standards. The binding part of the agreement contains nothing about environmental standards across the UK, and the non-binding political declaration just notes that the parties should maintain those important environmental standards. With only 11 months in which to negotiate a trade deal with the EU, the risk of no deal has significantly increased, and that is the worst of all scenarios.

What of our EU citizens? They should never become the victims of Brexit. I speak to many of them in Cardiff North, and they are living in fear and anxiety over their future. Some of them have lived here most of their lives, with children born here and lives rooted firmly here. EU citizens must be assured of their rights and they should be immediately granted the full rights that they enjoy today—the EU will reciprocate in respect of UK citizens living in the EU. By taking away Lord Dubs's amendment to safeguard child refugees, the Prime Minister and his party, the one apparently founded to conserve, are eroding the rights and values we hold so dear, selling out the things that make this country great. This has become an exit not only from the EU, but from our responsibilities and from common decency, and I shall be voting against it today.

Finally, let me end by saying that the Bill will not strip me of my European identity. I will always be both European and Welsh in equal measure. My values and my identity have been formed from being part of the

European Union—the values of openness, tolerance, inclusivity, equality and trust in the public good. Those values are now under threat, from this Trumpian, populist Government, from right-wing populism and from bigots everywhere. For me and many of my constituents, leaving the EU will be a profound and deep loss. There is a reason why many millions of us marched on the streets and have gone out of our way to fight for a future within the EU. Being European is an identity that we want to keep. Allow us to keep it.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Gary Streeter): I am afraid that I must now impose a formal time limit of four minutes.

1.11 pm

Mr Bob Seely (Isle of Wight) (Con): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. That means that if I take an intervention, I get an extra minute, does it not?

Steve Double (St Austell and Newquay) (Con): You would lose lots of friends on the Government side.

Mr Seely: We cannot have that.

I would like to thank my constituents on the Isle of Wight for re-electing me. It remains a huge privilege to work on their behalf, and I look forward to continuing to do so. It is a privilege to follow the hon. Member for Cardiff North (Anna McMorris), although I found her arguments about our democracy straight after a very clear general election result to be somewhat tortuous. As someone who is half English and half German, I love Europe, but I am not sure that I want to be part of the European Union—in fact, I know that I do not. They are different things.

Groundhog day is ending, thank God. Democracy has reasserted itself. To quote the guitar piece that I am trying to learn for Christmas—Jeff Buckley's cover—"Hallelujah". The delay has been a disgrace, frankly. MPs in a functioning democracy cannot choose which votes to respect, and they cannot call for new referendums because they did not like the previous results.

The Labour party has been defenestrated because it refused to honour the pledge it made in 2017. We hear two different versions of the future: the one from the hon. Member for Cardiff North, which is effectively denial; and the one from the hon. Member for South Shields (Mrs Lewell-Buck), which is to accept the result and try to rebuild. One offers a route out for the Labour party, and the other offers a route to an existential crisis and a chance never to hold power again. It is up to the Labour party which way it goes. Throughout the summer we saw the Labour leadership, led by several of the new leadership candidates, tying itself in tortuous knots, like some sort of incompetent Houdini, and then being forever unable to untie itself.

The hon. Member for Dulwich and West Norwood (Helen Hayes) was absolutely right to say that her folks did not vote for Brexit, and she is right to champion remain. However, of over 100 Labour seats in the previous Parliament, 52 had leave majorities of over 60%, and eight had leave majorities of more than 70%. Many of those former hon. Members are now looking for jobs because they did not listen to their people. There is a lesson there for all of us.

Seventeen million people voted to leave because they felt that the political system no longer represented them. The European Union was not always part of the problem but, as my right hon. Friend the Member for South Holland and The Deepings (Sir John Hayes) said, it was not part of the solution either.

I am delighted that we are leaving the European Union, because there has always been a relentless federalising agenda with which Britons have felt uncomfortable. This is now our chance to chart a different course for a new great project. This great project is partly about leaving the European Union but, as the Prime Minister has said, it is also partly about restoring folks' faith in democracy and trust.

I therefore look forward to voting for this great and important Bill—it is a good Christmas present for many of our constituents. We respect remainers who voted to stay, but we have a withdrawal deal and we can get it through, and we can respect both sides while recognising that we are a leave nation and we need to deliver for those people who voted in the 2016 referendum.

1.14 pm

Ruth Cadbury (Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab): I would like to thank the voters of Brentford and Isleworth, including Chiswick, Osterley and Hounslow, for returning me to Parliament last Thursday. I commit to continue serving them to the best of my ability.

The Prime Minister may have a majority in the House, but he does not have a majority in the country. Every opinion poll bar one this year showed that a majority would vote to remain in a new referendum. In the general election, some 53% voted for parties promising to hold a new referendum. As my hon. Friend the Member for Greenwich and Woolwich (Matthew Pennycook) said, Brexit is a process, not an act that can be done quickly. Leaving a series of complex relationships built up over 40 years in just a year will be complex, so on behalf of voters who voted to remain, like the majority of my constituents, and those who voted to leave we have a duty to scrutinise this Bill, which will have far-reaching effects on our constituents, including those who did not have a vote last Thursday—the citizens of other EU countries living here in the UK.

Never has proper scrutiny of a Bill been more important, and never have we had a PM who spends so much effort avoiding scrutiny. We have noticed that when he cannot avoid the question he responds with a posh-bloke version of Vicky Pollard from "Little Britain": "Nah but, yah but—".

This is the most important legislation in the House for many years, redrawing our relationship with our allies and partners of 40 years, but we have just three days to debate it. Just a week after the election, it seems that promises on workers' rights have been dropped. I heard Government Members suggest that that is okay, because we can have higher standards than EU members, but let me remind them that the EU sets minimum standards for workers' rights. There is only one reason to remove minimum standards, and that is because you want to fall below them.

On child refugees, the Government are now threatening to scrap the right of refugee children to be reunited with their families in the UK—how cruel is that? The Government claim that removal of the clause on refugee children is just for the purpose of negotiation, but my friend Lord Dubs said today:

"Vulnerable children are not bargaining chips. We should not be exploiting their misery for political purposes, but defending them as our own."

On trade, a special adviser to the previous Prime Minister, Raoul Ruparel, warned in a recent paper published by the Institute of Government that the UK is not match-fit for the next phase of negotiations. I hope that the Government address that point.

Finally, I want to address the issue raised in clause 26, which allows Ministers to give binding instructions by regulation to any court of the country and refers to how to interpret, and even to disapply, EU retained case law as well as domestic case law that relates to EU retained law. My constituent, Ricardo Salustio, a partner in an international law firm, contacted me last night with his concerns about clause 26. He said:

"Given the wide application of EU retained law, by allowing for EU retained case law and related domestic case law to be interpreted by the executive, Parliament would breach the fundamental principle that courts should be independent and that parties in civil and criminal matters need to have certainty of interpretation when involved in a dispute."

For these and many other reasons outlined by my colleagues on this side of the House I will vote against this Bill.

1.18 pm

Mike Wood (Dudley South) (Con): I should like to begin by thanking the voters of Dudley South—not just the 68% who voted to return me to the House for the third time but the other 32% who took part in a well-spirited and fair campaign.

Throughout the six weeks of the general election campaign, knocking on doors not only around Dudley South but in Dudley North, West Bromwich East, West Bromwich West and seats around the Black Country, a response kept coming back, time and time again. It did not take slogans from political candidates or election broadcasts to raise the phrase, "Get Brexit done." It was coming from people on the doorstep. There was a determination—an impatience—to get Brexit done. This Bill will take us one step closer to doing what we should have done a long time ago, and ensure that we get Brexit done and do as we were told—as we were instructed—in the 2016 referendum.

In all the seats I have campaigned in over the last two months, and particularly in areas with higher working-class populations—areas that, for many years have voted for Labour candidates and returned Labour Members of Parliament—the overwhelming sense was frustration. People were tired of being ignored by their representatives, and Brexit was an obvious example. More than anything else, on the European Union and European policy, they were tired of being patronised by so many people who would claim to represent them.

We have even heard some of those sentiments today from those on the Opposition Benches. We have heard suggestions that, somehow, whether in the general election or the referendum campaign, those who voted for Brexit and who have now voted overwhelmingly for a Conservative Government, ensuring a strong Conservative majority, either did not understand the question because they were misled by lies or clever slogans, or had prejudices that meant they could not take a fair decision.

[Mike Wood]

Those sentiments, which have, unfortunately, been expressed by a few Opposition Members, and particularly by Labour Members, say rather more about those Members than about voters up and down our country who have voted three times now for Britain to leave the European Union. They voted in that referendum. They voted for two parties in 2017, both of which promised faithfully that they were committed to implementing the referendum result. And then, last week, when it turned out that the main Opposition party did not actually mean what it said about keeping that promise, they voted to return a Conservative Government who will, giving them a good majority.

The Leader of the Opposition has spent most of the last week trying to persuade anybody who will listen that the reason for his party's worst election performance in over 80 years was Brexit, rather than his hopeless leadership. It is therefore extremely disappointing that he intends to march his Members of Parliament through the Division Lobby this afternoon to once again ignore voters, many of whom, until last week, had been lifelong Labour supporters and Labour voters. One person I spoke to had been a Labour supporter going back to when they voted for Clement Attlee in 1951, but they could no longer vote for this Labour party, because it does not speak for them or listen to them. I will therefore be supporting the Bill today.

1.22 pm

Peter Grant (Glenrothes) (SNP): I am pleased to be able to speak in the debate. I will be speaking and voting against the Bill, as I did two months ago. In the intervening period, I have had the endorsement of 51.5% of my electorate, for which I am enormously grateful. More importantly, my constituents voted by a majority of four to one for candidates who were opposed to the Bill. My nation—my one nation—voted by three to one for candidates and parties that are against it. Therefore, to everyone who has told the Scottish National party and Opposition parties of Scotland that there is now some kind of duty on us to tag along with the Prime Minister, I say there is not. The only duty that any MP from Scotland can possibly discharge is to vote against this Bill, vote against this Brexit, and vote against a Government who are determined to show their complete contempt for the sovereign status of the citizens of Scotland—sovereign status that this Parliament unanimously agreed less than two years ago.

I hear people saying that this is a great time and a great victory for the people. The Secretary of State wrote to us all yesterday to say what a great advance the Bill was for the rights of citizens. No, it is not. There is not a single citizen of these islands whose rights will be enhanced by the passage of the Bill. Tens of millions of citizens will see their rights diminished. Three million are now having to call into question yet again whether they will continue to have the right to live, work and love here, as they always have done.

The Prime Minister made promises before the referendum, on 1 June 2016, but he broke those promises. I challenged him about that on 25 July 2019—Members can check *Hansard* if they want—and he promised that EU citizens would continue to have exactly the same rights after Brexit as they have just now, but he then published this Bill, which tears up those promises.

When it comes to citizens' rights, the rights of child refugees, environmental protection and food standards, the Government and Conservative Back Benchers say to us, "That is not in the Bill, but trust the Prime Minister." Last week, Scotland gave the Prime Minister a very clear message: "We do not believe you, we do not trust you and we will not allow you to take our nation out of this union of nations against the expressed will of our people." That will was expressed in 2016 and 2017, and twice in 2019. The Government are reaching out across the House, but when will they listen?

We heard a lot from earlier speakers about how important it is for a Government to abide by their manifesto, and what happens to parties when they do not. I suggest that as part of their Christmas reading, Conservative Members look at the manifesto on which the national Government of Scotland were elected in 2016. I suggest that they look, in particular, at the mandate that was sought, and given, as to what Scotland should do if and when we are taken out of the European Union against our will.

I ask reasonable Conservative Members—I know that there are quite a few—to please speak to their Prime Minister and warn him about what will happen if he attempts to stand in the way of a democratically elected national Government who are doing no more than delivering on the promises that they were trusted to deliver by the people of Scotland. Brexit is essentially about England's inability to sort out its relationship with Europe. Scotland and Northern Ireland voted against Brexit, and Wales voted for it but without a great deal of enthusiasm. I say to Members who represent English constituencies that if they take this step and go past the point of no return in their relationship with their neighbours across the North sea, the channel and the Irish sea, they will also take England past the point of no return in its Union with its neighbour across the Solway firth.

1.26 pm

Steve Double (St Austell and Newquay) (Con): It is an absolute pleasure to deliver this speech with you in the Chair, Mr Deputy Speaker, albeit only briefly. It is a great honour to speak while you are in the Chair and to follow the hon. Member for Glenrothes (Peter Grant). I start by placing on record my great thanks to the people of St Austell and Newquay for returning me to this House for the third time. I do not take any of their votes for granted, and I will continue to serve my constituents to the best of my ability.

I will be supporting the Bill, and I want briefly to give three reasons why I believe that that is the right thing to do. The first and most important reason is that the Bill delivers on the referendum result. It gets Brexit done. Those of us who have been in this place for the last three and a half years have spent far too long going round and round in circles, frustrating the life out of the country while we make no progress at all. At last, after three and a half long years, we get to cross the line and pass this Bill so that we can all move on. We get to do what we told the people we would do in 2016: take back control of our laws, our borders and our money. This Bill paves the way for us to do just that. At last, we have a Parliament that is willing to make that decision, and that reflects what the people voted for in 2016.

The second reason why I believe it is right to support the Bill is that it ends all the uncertainty. When the general election result came through just last week,

I heard loud and clear a huge sigh of relief from people right across my constituency and the country, because we can end the uncertainty at long last. We can end the debate about whether we will leave the EU, and we can get on and move forward. That is what business wants, and it is actually what the EU wants. It was quite clear that the EU welcomed the result of the general election, because it provided a clear pathway forward instead of our continuing to go round and round in circles.

Some Opposition Members have made points—I am sure that, in their view, those points were very valid—about things that are missing from this Bill but were in previous proposals. I say to those Members that they had their chance. They could have voted for the withdrawal agreement in the spring and had the things that they mourn the loss of today. They could have backed this withdrawal agreement just a few weeks ago. The things that they regret are now missing were in the previous Bill, but they decided to play party politics and take a huge gamble. Well, I am sorry, but that gamble was lost. The British people have spoken. We are going to end the uncertainty and we are going to deliver Brexit.

The third reason is that the Bill paves the way for our future outside the European Union and provides the path to secure free trade agreements. I believe that we can secure an agreement by this time next year, because we have seen that, when there is a hard deadline, the European Union can and will move quickly. I therefore welcome the inclusion of a hard deadline, which says that we will not extend or delay any further, but focus on ensuring that we get a trade agreement with the EU.

Also, the Bill opens us up as a country to the rest of the world. I believe that, far from diminishing our place in the world, passing the Bill and leaving the European Union under this withdrawal agreement paves the way for a truly global Britain to engage with the rest of the world. Some of the things said in this Chamber sometimes make it seem that the world is just the European Union—it is not. There is a great big world outside the European Union, and I look forward to our being able to engage with it as an independent nation once again.

1.31 pm

Debbie Abrahams (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab): It is pleasure to see you in the Chair once again, Mr Deputy Speaker. I, too, thank my constituents who voted to return me for the fourth time last week and welcome all new Members to this place. I also extend my heartfelt commiserations to colleagues who have not been returned. They will be sorely missed.

There is so much wrong with this Bill—even more than in October. My real concerns are about its impact on the economy. Although we do not have an economic assessment—an issue in itself that the Government need to look at carefully—we have enough analysis from economists to show that such a free trade agreement will have a dramatic impact, with a 7% loss in growth over 15 years, as has been mentioned. We already know—I am sure that people are aware of this—about the growing impact on poverty from a faltering economy and the growing inequalities that we are experiencing in this country. The impact that this type of deal will have on that, as well as on public services, which are already emaciated, cannot be overestimated. Nor must we forget the regional disparities. There is no doubt that there will be an impact on constituencies such as mine.

As bad as this free trade agreement is, however, no deal would be even more dramatic, as all the evidence also shows—so catastrophic, indeed, that one does not like considering it—with not a 7% impact on economic growth, but a 9% impact over 15 years, affecting not just us but our children and grandchildren. We need to recognise that because, under clause 33, I fear that that is unfortunately a real danger. I beg the Government to do all they can in the forthcoming weeks and months to prevent that from happening.

A lot of us who fought the general election will have views on what it meant. I will hold off taking any firm views until the new year, when I see the survey by the British Election Study, which publishes the most reliable evidence that we can get on elections. However, I cannot ignore what constituents were saying to me. They ignored or did not believe the evidence—or, even worse, did not care. There is a lot that we—politics and politicians—need to take on board regarding what that means about how we conduct ourselves. The emotional response to Brexit—and that is what it has been—is a lesson for all of us.

I reiterate that I categorically reject the Bill, but I want to work with the Government to make sure that we ameliorate its worst effects so that it will not harm my constituents. I implore the Government to listen and to do all they can to build a consensus.

1.35 pm

Lee Rowley (North East Derbyshire) (Con): It is a privilege to be returned to this place to represent my home area of North East Derbyshire, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be here again. As my constituents would expect, I rise to support the Bill and will vote with the Government this afternoon.

It is just over a year since I stood among these Benches during the initial iteration of the Bill and, with great regret, had to say that I would not support my Government. All of us who served in the previous Parliament, particularly on these Benches, regret what happened in the last year or so: wherever we stood and whatever our views, a fog descended on this place, affecting people who were otherwise rational and willing and able to look at the wider picture. It paralysed our politics.

Today marks a really important stage for many of us: we can start to move on. When that fog descended, we became paralysed and the issue stopped being the European Union, what trade deals we might do in the future and what regulation we might adopt; it became a basic question of trust. I do not say that with any triumphalism to the hon. Member for Wirral South (Alison McGovern), who is no longer in her place but who made an excellent speech some minutes ago; I say it with relief that we are now able to deliver on the decision of the British people. However profoundly some people in this place disagree with that, it is a basic principle that we all need to remember. That is why I will be going through the Aye Lobby today.

I also want to address something raised by some who are no longer in their places, particularly the hon. Member for Bath (Wera Hobhouse). There is a weird conflation in this place, which I regret hugely, that liberal values, which I share, cannot be epitomised or espoused by those of us who also believe in leaving the European Union. The European Union is not the panacea

[Lee Rowley]

for everything in this country, but I also say that it has done many good things. I am someone who believes in the values of openness, tolerance, inclusivity, being welcoming, wanting to be internationalist and wanting to work with countries all across the world and in Europe. I am also a Brexiteer. Even if people profoundly disagree with me, I think that an intellectual case can be made for being both. What those who advocate liberalism in this place must consider is that their conflation of those values with remaining will do their cause a great disservice over the long term.

Finally, I appeal, although as one who has been here only two years, to those who have served in the Chamber for a while. The debate today has been good in many senses, but some people have already started to retreat into their comfort zones. We have already started to hear the excuses—"I would support this in principle but am unable to do so", for some confected or real reason. The greatest speech today came from the hon. Member for South Shields (Mrs Lewell-Buck), who is no longer in her place. She stood up and said, "I didn't agree with this, but I am going to vote for it." I happen to agree with it. In time, I may disagree with something else, but if the people say it I hope that I will be enough of a democrat to recognise that.

What I really regret is that if we had spent one iota of the time we spent talking about Brexit in the past two and a half years talking instead about the things that will challenge our areas in the next 20 years—automation, artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data—we would have been preparing our country for those coming challenges. Let us get this done, and let us talk about all the other important things that we need to do.

1.39 pm

Meg Hillier (Hackney South and Shoreditch) (Lab/Co-op): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Deputy Speaker. I thank the hon. Member for North East Derbyshire (Lee Rowley), who spoke characteristically thoughtfully and without triumphalism. He was absolutely right to do so—I speak as someone who represents a constituency that voted 78% for remain—and this debate must continue in that tone.

Let us be clear about why we are here. There has been a total failure of political craft. In 2015 even I voted for the referendum, because it is a convention of this House to support a majority Government in the early days of their administration. The Conservative party won the 2015 general election and I backed that referendum, against many of my instincts. From then on, there was failure: things were slow, cumbersome, secretive and there was a lot of dither. Then, very reluctantly and late in the day, I came to the idea of a second referendum as a way of breaking that impasse, but, even in my very remain constituency, that was not part of the major discourse in the 2017 general election. We have to remember that. The hon. Gentleman mentioned the entrenchment of positions when debating this issue, but I urge Government Members to remember that, too.

The Secretary of State and I—and, indeed, the hon. Member for North East Derbyshire—once served together on the Public Accounts Committee. Over the past two years, the Committee membership has represented every range of views on Brexit. It would not be possible to find a more diverse range of views, yet we were unanimous

in our agreement on the more than 11 reports we produced. We were critical of the Government at times, and rightly so—I hope that the right hon. Gentleman would expect us to be critical of him when he gets things wrong—but we went at it constructively by looking at the facts and the data and by working hard to press the Government to do a better job.

I will list my reasons for not voting to give the Bill its Second Reading, and I hope the Government will listen. We will vote against it not because we are sore losers, but because there are valid reasons to believe that this rushed Bill and rushed debate could result in real problems for the future.

The Bill is weak on workers' rights—that is categorically clear. It is a poor argument to assume that there will be a trickle down of benefits when businesses allegedly—or hopefully, as the Government would say—do well. Very many people in my constituency are working several low-paid jobs on irregular contracts. They are very insecure. I cannot see how they will experience the benefits. I want to see protection in law.

The provision to provide support for unaccompanied asylum seeker children has been removed. I have been dealing with this issue as an elected politician since 1994, when I was a councillor and we found children wandering alone on Holloway Road in Islington. It is important to work in partnership with the EU to deal with that. Let us not forget why they come—trafficking. Let us deal with the cause, not the symptom. It is mean spirited to take out that provision. There are also many issues relating to security, but we do not have time to go into them today. As a Home Office Minister, I negotiated many of these issues on behalf of the British Government when Labour was last in government, which was some time ago.

I say respectfully to the right hon. Gentleman that the decision to remove the possibility of extending the implementation period is a foolish step, because it allows no wiggle room. I know that the Government have a great belief that setting a deadline will give them greater ability to negotiate, but I think there is a real risk that they could end up throwing the baby out with the bathwater. That would not bring the country together.

We are also going to see quangos rising like the phoenix, as many European regulations will have to be replicated in British law. So much for the bonfire of red tape.

On immigration, I tremble. Between us, my right hon. Friend the Member for Hackney North and Stoke Newington (Ms Abbott) and I represent 40,000 EU citizens. It is foolhardy of the Government to believe that they can suddenly change the immigration system and achieve a great, simple new deal. I have been there. I have seen 10 years of it getting worse, and the Government need to heed that warning very carefully. I am also concerned about the time allocated for this debate. It has been too short and it is not democratic.

1.43 pm

Ben Bradley (Mansfield) (Con): I welcome you to your place, Mr Deputy Speaker. I hope you enjoy your time in the Chair.

It is a pleasure to be back in Parliament. Today feels a little like groundhog day again, but I hope this will be the final time and that we move on. All of us have given the same speech on Brexit over and over again for the past two and a half years. The cyclical and repetitive

debate got us nowhere, but the election has provided a decisive breakthrough. We have made promises for so long, so it is fantastic to be able to deliver for the people of this country and to begin to legislate to get Brexit done.

This may be the perfect day in politics, because not only are we able to begin that process, but the Attorney General has gifted us his version of “The Night Before Christmas”, which will make for a very festive time and should meet with universal acclaim. This is a fantastic day for us all.

The people of Mansfield voted 71% to leave in the referendum and they have shared the frustration and anger felt by many in this place over the past two and a half years. They wanted us to be grown-ups and to sort this thing out. They were decisive in this election, too: they returned me to this place with an increased majority for our mandate. I thank them profusely. I intend to serve them with all sincerity and to the best of my ability in this Parliament, and that starts with beginning to deliver this Bill today. I tell them that there is now no reason or excuse why we cannot get this done by 31 January. We will get it delivered and we will do exactly as we have promised. I am sure that the majority of my constituents will celebrate that fact.

I welcome the new commitment in the Bill to the 2020 deadline for a trade deal. We saw the impact of a never-ending, constantly moving deadline in the previous Parliament. It simply did not work and it weakened our hand. Now we have the ability to show the strength and determination that the Prime Minister has shown throughout his time in office. Opposition Members have consistently raised the issues of workers’ rights and regulatory standards, but this is not a Bill about workers’ rights or regulatory standards. It is not true to say that there will be an inevitable decline in those things as a result of our leaving the European Union. The point of all this is that this House and this country will decide our own regulatory standards.

The Opposition continue to miss the point of what Brexit was about. There was a well-known slogan in the referendum about control; hon. Members may remember it. For many people, Brexit was largely about control and the sovereign powers of this Parliament. Aligning ourselves to EU directives would therefore defeat the entire purpose of Brexit. This UK Parliament can go further, faster and better than the European Union in areas such as the environment and workers’ rights, and it will be we in this place who will decide. That is exactly what all of us who have pushed to get this thing over the line over the past few years have been waiting for.

I will back the Bill today. I look forward to planning—with certainty this time—for a celebration in my constituency on 31 January. I have huge optimism for the future of this country under this fantastic, decisive and determined Conservative Government.

1.46 pm

Geraint Davies (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op): It is clear that the Conservatives overwhelmingly won the election for a variety of reasons, but on the Brexit front it is also the case that 16.5 million people voted for remain parties, compared with 14.5 million people who voted for leave parties. In fact, including the parties that do not support a particular deal—namely, the Brexit party—there are 18.1 million people who do not support

this oven-ready deal that we are being served up and asked to consume very quickly today. On that basis, there still should be a public vote on the deal, because this is about the long-term future of Britain. *[Interruption.]* I know that people do not agree with me, but my judgment is that we are going to be poorer, weaker, more divided and isolated.

People in my constituency who voted leave—many did, of course—voted for more money, more control and more jobs, and they will judge this deal on whether the Government deliver that. I say to Members who have taken Labour seats on the back of “Get Brexit done” that if we do not deliver those things that leave voters asked for, they will be very unhappy. In fact, they will not just be unhappy; they will have lost their jobs, and I assume that they will come back to the Labour party.

We are leaving the single market, one of the primary architects of which was, of course, Margaret Thatcher, who saw it as probably the most perfect free and fair trade market in the world. Today we are saying not just that we will have no alignment—or that we will not have dynamic alignment—but that we will have dynamic misalignment. In other words, as the European Union changes its rules, we will change our rules in a different way. That means the prospects of agreeing a deal within 12 months will become vanishingly small, and the prospects of knowing that we will agree a deal in six months—by June—are even smaller.

China, the United States and other countries will look at us and see that we are increasingly turning our back on our biggest markets, and that gives them more power in negotiations. We stand alone, turning our back on the EU, and when we talk to the United States they will say that they do not want any environmental or climate change considerations in the trade deals, as they already have. They do not really care that much about food standards; they want hormone-impregnated meat and chlorinated chicken. They want our NHS database and to enforce patents so that drugs will be more expensive. They also sell asbestos and all the rest of it. As we move away from the regulatory protection of the EU, we are in their hands.

When we have trade talks with China, we will obviously have to be on bended knee. They will say, “Don’t mention human rights, Hong Kong and all that sort of stuff. Just stick to the point and do what we say.” They are already building HS2 and a lot of other infrastructure here. If this is about democracy, it is important that Parliament has greater scrutiny of these trade deals and that we go into these things with our eyes open.

Finally, on human rights, I am very concerned about the issue of unaccompanied minors. Frankly, it has a strange echo of Donald Trump, who has separated children from their parents who are refugees and put them in detention camps—our great friend, Donald Trump. At the same time, we see in the Queen’s Speech the abolition of the BBC, and the civil service and the judiciary are also under threat. Our fundamental values shared across Europe of democracy, human rights and the rule of law are under threat. All new Members must think carefully about what is in the balance here. I know that they are driving through in great merriment on the back of “Get Brexit done”, in pre-Christmas pantomime mode, but we need to think about what is best for Britain and best for democracy, and that means proper scrutiny of this Bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Gary Streeter): Last but certainly not least, Mr Mark Pawsey.

1.50 pm

Mark Pawsey (Rugby) (Con): Thank you, Sir Gary. It is a great pleasure to be the tail-ender in a debate that has had a very welcome change in tone from that of previous debates on this topic. First, I thank the voters of Rugby and Bulkington for returning me for the fourth time with an increased majority, which I think is the case for almost all Conservative Members and is an endorsement of our party's attitude. I will be supporting the Bill to leave the European Union this afternoon, as I have done on four previous occasions.

I want to reflect on the effect on business. On the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee, we looked at the impact of leaving the EU on the automotive, aerospace, food and drink and pharmaceutical sectors, and in each case, business leaders told us of few benefits of leaving the EU and their concerns that what benefits there were would be outweighed by the harm. Much of the harm has been the uncertainty that business has had to go through over the past two and a half years. Businesses want to see frictionless trade, to be able to continue with just-in-time supply chains and to retain access to a market of 500 million consumers on their doorstep. I know from my business career before arriving here that it is easiest to deal with our closest neighbours, and that will be very important in the comprehensive trade deal that we conduct with the EU once we have left. It will be important not to neglect what is on our doorstep.

The business view about the need to get Brexit done is just as strong as the one that all of us encountered on the doorsteps. As a west midlands MP, I am very concerned about the impact on the automotive sector. Many of my constituents work for Jaguar Land Rover, and many of the companies in my constituency are in the supply chain. It is of concern that the figures released today by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders show UK output down year on year, partly because of shutdowns that were put in place to deal with concerns about the disruption caused by potentially leaving the EU without a deal on 31 October. It is important that we have now got that uncertainty out of the way, and businesses will be able to grow and develop.

We will start to see substantial investment. In fact, over the last couple of years, despite the uncertainty of Brexit, there has been substantial private sector investment in my constituency. Meggitt, which is involved in making components for the aerospace market, is currently building the biggest factory that has been built in the UK for 10 years. Moto is building a new motorway service area at junction 1 of the M6 in Rugby, and local builder and developer Stepnell has just delivered a whole range of medium-sized industrial units ready for existing businesses to expand into. Developments on that scale at a time of great uncertainty lead me to be extremely confident that there is a pipeline of new projects that can now get started, because we are on our way to leaving the European Union, and that will benefit communities and workers across the UK.

In my last minute, I want to refer to the effect on democracy. I noted the remarks of my right hon. Friend the Member for Ashford (Damian Green). I, too, talked to many constituents on the doorsteps during the campaign

who said that they would not be voting; they wanted to opt out. That is not unusual, because many people have a low opinion of politicians, but I sensed that at this election, more people were intending not to vote or to waste their vote because they had voted in the referendum, and the politicians had not delivered on what they voted for. We in this place cannot choose which votes we wish to respect, and we are now able to deliver for all those who voted in the general election and the referendum.

1.54 pm

Keir Starmer (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab): This has been a good debate on an extremely important Bill, but before I turn to the Bill, let me welcome the Secretary of State back to his place. Let me also welcome all new Members throughout the House to their places, and to the part that they will play in this Parliament. I hope they will be given the support and comfort that they need, wherever they sit.

I want to make special mention of those making maiden speeches. We have heard three today, and, in the best traditions across the House, they have been thoughtful and powerful. I always find maiden speeches a relief, because the House goes quiet and actually listens, just for five or 10 minutes, to what the Member is saying. That is quite refreshing, because we do not do it often enough. I think that both the speeches themselves and the way in which the House listened to them have provided a good example of a tradition that we need to continue.

We have heard other very good contributions from Members on both sides of the House. In the main, the tone has been markedly different from that of previous debates. Let us keep it that way. The hon. Member for Fareham (Suella Braverman), whom I used to face across the Dispatch Box, is no longer in the Chamber. I cannot pretend that I agree with very much of what she says, but on this occasion she said that this was her first speech since she had become a mum. I am sure that I speak for the whole House in congratulating her, and all those who have become new parents since Parliament was dissolved.

We have had a general election. There is a clear winner with a clear majority. I say this to Conservative Members: with that majority, be careful. Doing things because the Government have a majority does not mean that those things are right. Clause 37 of the Bill is an example. It concerns unaccompanied child refugees. Lord Dubs—Alf Dubs—launched an incredible campaign to protect child refugees post Brexit. It has been running for several years, and Members on both sides of the House have supported it and spoken powerfully about the issue of unaccompanied child refugees. The commitment that was in the previous Bill has been taken out, and that is a moral disgrace, majority or no majority. I know that Members will go into the Lobby to vote for this Bill, and I understand that, but many of them will feel strongly about unaccompanied child refugees, and I ask them just to reflect for a moment on that.

I turn to those on my own Benches. We may have lost the general election, but we have not lost our values and our beliefs. We must fight for them day in day out in this Parliament, and we will.

Let me address the central issue. As a result of the general election—as a result of the majority that the Government have, and the mandate that they have—we

are leaving the EU. We will have left the EU within the next six months, and whatever side we were on, or even if we were on no side at all, the leave-remain argument will go with us. That does not mean that the deal negotiated by the Prime Minister is a good deal; it is not. It was a bad deal in October when it was signed, it was a bad deal when it was first debated in the House in October, it was a bad deal last Thursday, and it is a bad deal today. In fact, it is worse today.

Clause 30 in the previous Bill gave Parliament a role in what happens next. There is a crucial decision to be taken in six months' time as to whether there should be an extension of any transition. Under the old Bill, that was a decision that we collectively in Parliament would take according to the evidence and circumstances as they are in six months; a chance for Parliament to assess where the negotiations had got to and come to a decision on whether a deal would be negotiated within the period and take whatever measures are necessary to prevent no deal. That has been swept away and taken out of the Bill; all the promises that were made from the Dispatch Box about a new approach and that Parliament would be involved. We were told only a few weeks' ago that the Prime Minister had learned the lessons and that one of the lessons was that to plough on without taking Parliament with you was a mistake. There would be a new approach, because Parliament would be involved. At the first opportunity, that has been taken out.

The new clause 33 exacerbates that. It prevents the extension of any transition period. That is reckless and it is ridiculous. The Government have chosen to give themselves just 11 months to negotiate an entire trade deal and a security deal. That is an unbelievably short period. It can only lead to two outcomes: a bare bones trade deal or no deal. [*Interruption.*] I hear the chuntering. If in November the negotiations have been going well—let us hope they do—but they are not complete, they need more time and two or three months would be enough, clause 33 now says we leave without a deal. This does not just provide for the situation where the negotiations have broken down; it also demands no deal where they are continuing.

One of the other changes is clause 34 and schedule 4 on employment rights and protections. They are now gone. It is said, "Oh well, we'll put that in an employment Bill." Let us trace the history of that to test the proposition. There is a Bill coming. Workplace rights were originally in the internationally legally binding part of the deal agreed by the previous Prime Minister. They were stripped out by this Prime Minister. They were put into the first draft of the Bill before the general election, albeit in weak form. On 22 October, in response to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Batley and Spen (Tracy Brabin), the Prime Minister said:

"People will need reassurance... There can be no regression."— [*Official Report*, 22 October 2019; Vol. 666, c. 828.]

They have now been stripped out and the direction of travel is very clear. Nobody should be taken in by assurances about any forthcoming Bill. The Prime Minister this morning referenced the Factory Acts. It is worth dusting off the Factory Acts, if that is the level of ambition for future workplace rights and the shining example we are heading for.

The Bill started life as a bad Bill. It is now even worse. The changes the Government have made—weakened protections for workplace rights, a side-lined Parliament

and weakened protections for child refugees—tell us everything we need to know about the Prime Minister and this Government, their priorities and their values. They are not Labour values. This is not a deal we can support. We will be voting against it tonight.

2.3 pm

The Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Stephen Barclay): I join the right hon. and learned Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Keir Starmer) in welcoming new Members to the House, and in reflecting on the positive tone of the debate, which is in marked contrast with debates in the previous Parliament. I also join him in congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Fareham (Suella Braverman), a new mum returning to make her valued contribution to this House.

The general election delivered a clear instruction to this House that we should leave the European Union. Parliament must now reflect the will of the country and make good on that democratic decision by backing this Bill. The Bill is not a victory for one side over another. The time has come to discard the old labels, to move from the past divisions and to come together as one United Kingdom.

Our country produced a mandate to leave the EU in 2016, but the previous Parliament rejected it time and again. It has taken a second vote to ensure that the mandate to leave is finally honoured. It is clear that the people did know in 2016 what they were voting for after all. Despite the efforts of those determined not to accept the referendum result, the House now has the opportunity to end the delay and to forge a new relationship, both with our neighbours in Europe and, indeed, within this House. In reflecting that spirit, I very much welcomed the speech of the hon. Member for South Shields (Mrs Lewell-Buck), who said that she would support the Bill in the Lobby today.

Before I turn to the substance of the Bill, may I congratulate the hon. Member for Belfast South (Claire Hanna) on her very impressive maiden speech? She showed that she will contribute greatly to the work of the House, and her point about reconciliation was timely. The hon. Member for North Down (Stephen Farry) also made an excellent maiden speech, as indeed did the hon. Member for Stirling (Alyn Smith), who spoke powerfully of his opposition to Brexit, albeit after leaving an EU institution to come here. He has started his own Brexit as we vote on the Bill.

The Bill delivers certainty for our citizens living in Europe, and EU citizens living here in the UK, by guaranteeing their rights as set out in part 3, including through an independent monitoring authority, which will rightly hold the Government to account. There will be a grace period to ensure that nobody is left behind in registering for the EU settlement scheme. The Bill also protects frontier workers. It recognises professional qualifications and, indeed, provides for fair rights of appeal. That is because we value the contribution of EU citizens who have built their lives in our country, and the Bill will guarantee their right to continue to do so.

Sir John Hayes: My right hon. Friend is right to draw attention to the value that has been given to this country by those who have travelled here, but the point about that, as he said when he spoke of accountability, is that

[Sir John Hayes]

such decisions should be made by this Parliament, which is accountable to the British people. That is why I anticipate our policies on migration, which we will now have a chance to effect as a result of the passage of this Bill.

Stephen Barclay: My right hon. Friend has always been a champion of the sovereignty of the House, and I will come on to how the Bill indeed champions the very sovereignty that I know he cares so passionately about.

The Bill also unlocks confidence for our businesses by ending dither and delay, which in turn will unlock huge new investment in our economy, ensuring more and better jobs. As my right hon. Friend has just reflected, the Bill provides control for our Parliament. Clause 1 reinforces the repeal of the Act, which brought European law into the UK. The Bill ensures parliamentary scrutiny through the European Scrutiny Committee in clause 29 and asserts parliamentary sovereignty through clause 38. The whole House will recognise the work of my hon. Friend the Member for Stone (Sir William Cash) on this and on so many other issues reflected in the Bill. The very essence of Brexit is that we will no longer outsource our decisions to others in Brussels.

Ben Bradley: We have heard much from the Opposition about their fear of bringing such decisions back to the United Kingdom, particularly those around workers' rights. Will my right hon. Friend absolutely confirm that this Government have every intention of protecting and improving the rights of workers in this country, who overwhelmingly backed the Conservatives in this election?

Stephen Barclay: My hon. Friend is a champion for workers' rights and his constituents, and he will know that not only did our manifesto make that clear commitment—on page 5—but did so in parallel with the Bill. The Bill is about implementing in domestic law the international agreement that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has reached with the EU. This House does not need other people to tell us how to protect the rights of workers and others. As my hon. Friend well knows, in many areas this Parliament goes further than the EU in safeguarding rights, not least in areas such as maternity and paternity rights. Following the manifesto commitment to high standards, I look forward to the House continuing that tradition and maintaining good standards.

Mr Seely: One thing that concerns folks on the Isle of Wight and the south coast is seeing super trawlers hoovering up 250 tonnes of fish a day off Shanklin and Eastbourne. Is not one of the great benefits of the Bill, our leaving the EU and our getting a new fisheries Bill that we will be able to stop super trawlers coming into our seas, which we are not allowed to do at the moment because of our membership of the EU?

Stephen Barclay: My hon. Friend is right. One of the key features of taking back control of our waters is this Parliament making those decisions for itself. One of the mysteries about Opposition Members is that those representing Scotland do not seem to have the self-confidence to take back those decision-making powers, but rather want to give them back to Europe.

Sir David Evennett: I am listening with great interest to my right hon. Friend. Can he also confirm that when we leave the EU we will have control over our taxes again and the ability to make decisions on them, including VAT?

Stephen Barclay: My right hon. Friend is right. One has only to look at what our manifesto commits us to do once we have control of our taxes and at what the Government have already done to raise the amount people can earn before they pay tax. We believe in backing those who wish to work and provide for their families, and our tax system will do exactly that.

Along with the terms of our withdrawal, the Bill reflects the political declaration, which sets out the framework for our future relationship. Now we need to get on with negotiating on this basis so we can agree our future relationship by the end of the implementation period on 31 December 2020. The shadow Brexit Secretary referenced clause 33. That clause reinforces the Government's commitment in their manifesto not to extend this period. Part 5 of the political declaration is clear: we are committed to developing in good faith agreements that give effect to our future relationship, the cornerstone of which is a comprehensive free trade agreement by the end of 2020.

The shadow Brexit Secretary said that clause 33 was ridiculous. It is not ridiculous to act on manifesto commitments that we have given to the electorate. It is not ridiculous when the EU itself, in the political declaration, has agreed to the timetable of the end of December 2020. If that is the central concern of Opposition Members, it would have been better reflected in talks on previous deals, when the Labour party raised many other objections that underlined the fact that it simply did not want Brexit delivered at all.

We now have a deal that reflects both the referendum—the single largest democratic exercise in British history—and the defining issue of the general election. It is time to end the delay, to come together and heal our divisions and, above all, to listen to the people we serve. The British public have given their instruction. This Bill delivers Brexit. I commend it to the House.

*Question put, That the Bill be now read a Second time.
The House proceeded to a Division.*

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): I ask the Serjeant at Arms to investigate the delay in the Aye Lobby.

The House having divided: Ayes 358, Noes 234.

Division No. 1]

[2.14 pm

AYES

Adams, Nigel	Bacon, Mr Gareth
Afolami, Bim	Bacon, Mr Richard
Afriyie, Adam	Badenoch, Mrs Kemi (<i>Proxy</i> <i>vote cast by Leo Docherty</i>)
Ahmad-Khan, Imran	Bailey, Shaun
Aiken, Nickie	Baillie, Siobhan
Aldous, Peter	Baker, Duncan
Allan, Lucy	Baker, Mr Steve
Amess, Sir David	Baldwin, Harriett
Anderson, Lee	Barclay, rh Stephen
Anderson, Stuart	Baron, Mr John
Ansell, Caroline	Baynes, Simon
Argar, Edward	Bell, Aaron
Atherton, Sarah	Benton, Scott
Atkins, Victoria	

Beresford, Sir Paul	Drummond, Mrs Flick	Howell, John	Mohindra, Gagan
Berry, rh Jake	Duddridge, James	Howell, Paul	Moore, Damien
Bhatti, Saqib	Duguid, David	Huddleston, Nigel	Moore, Robbie
Blackman, Bob	Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain	Hudson, Dr Neil	Mordaunt, rh Penny
Bone, Mr Peter	Dunne, rh Mr Philip	Hughes, Eddie	Morris, Anne Marie
Bottomley, Sir Peter	Eastwood, Mark	Hunt, Jane	Morris, David
Bowie, Andrew	Edwards, Ruth	Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy	Morris, Grahame
Bradley, Ben	Ellis, rh Michael	Hunt, Tom	Morris, James
Bradley, rh Karen	Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias	Jack, rh Mr Alister	Morrissey, Joy
Brady, Sir Graham	Elphicke, Mrs Natalie	Javid, rh Sajid	Morton, Wendy
Braverman, Suella	Eustice, George	Jayawardena, Mr Ranil	Mullan, Dr Kieran
Brereton, Jack	Evans, Dr Luke	Jenkin, Sir Bernard	Mumby-Croft, Holly
Bridgen, Andrew	Evans, Mr Nigel	Jenkinson, Mark	Mundell, rh David
Brine, Steve	Evennett, rh Sir David	Jenkyns, Mrs Andrea	Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Bristow, Paul	Everitt, Ben	Jenrick, rh Robert	Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
Britcliffe, Sara	Fabricant, Michael	Johnson, rh Boris	Neill, Robert
Brokenshire, rh James	Farris, Laura	Johnson, Gareth	Nici, Lia
Browne, Anthony	Fell, Simon	Johnston, David	Nokes, rh Caroline
Bruce, Fiona	Fletcher, Katherine	Jones, Andrew	Norman, rh Jesse
Buchan, Felicity	Fletcher, Mark	Jones, rh Mr David	O'Brien, Neil
Buckland, rh Robert	Fletcher, Nick	Jones, Fay	Offord, Dr Matthew
Burghart, Alex	Ford, Vicky	Jones, Mr Marcus	Opperman, Guy
Burns, rh Conor	Foster, Kevin	Jupp, Simon	Parish, Neil
Butler, Rob	Fox, rh Dr Liam	Kawczynski, Daniel	Patel, rh Priti
Cairns, rh Alun	Francois, rh Mr Mark	Kearns, Alicia	Paterson, rh Mr Owen
Carter, Andy	Frazer, Lucy	Keegan, Gillian	Pawsey, Mark
Cartlidge, James	Freeman, George	Knight, rh Sir Greg	Penning, rh Sir Mike
Cash, Sir William	Freer, Mike	Knight, Julian	Penrose, John
Cates, Miriam	Fuller, Richard	Kruger, Danny	Percy, Andrew
Caulfield, Maria	Fysh, Mr Marcus	Laing, rh Dame Eleanor	Perkins, Mr Toby
Chalk, Alex	Garnier, Mark	Lamont, John	Philp, Chris
Champion, Sarah	Ghani, Ms Nusrat	Largan, Robert	Pincher, rh Christopher
Chishti, Rehman	Gibb, rh Nick	Latham, Mrs Pauline	Poulter, Dr Dan
Chope, Sir Christopher	Gibson, Peter	Leadsom, rh Andrea	Pow, Rebecca
Churchill, Jo	Gideon, Jo	Leigh, rh Sir Edward	Prentis, Victoria
Clark, rh Greg	Glen, John	Levy, Ian	Pritchard, Mark
Clarke, Mr Simon	Goodwill, rh Mr Robert	Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma	Pursglove, Tom
Clarke, Theo	Gove, rh Michael	Lewer, Andrew	Quin, Jeremy
Clarke-Smith, Brendan	Graham, Richard	Lewis, rh Brandon	Quince, Will
Clarkson, Chris	Grant, Mrs Helen	Lewis, rh Dr Julian	Raab, rh Dominic
Cleverly, rh James	Gray, James	Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian	Randall, Tom
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse	Grayling, rh Chris	Loder, Chris	Redwood, rh John
Colburn, Elliot	Green, Chris	Logan, Mark	Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob
Collins, Damian	Green, rh Damian	Longhi, Marco	Richards, Nicola
Cooper, Rosie	Griffith, Andrew	Lopez, Julia (<i>Proxy vote cast by Lee Rowley</i>)	Richardson, Angela
Costa, Alberto	Griffiths, Kate	Lopresti, Jack	Roberts, Rob
Courts, Robert	Grundy, James	Loughton, Tim	Robertson, Mr Laurence
Coutinho, Claire	Gullis, Jonathan	Mackinlay, Craig	Rosindell, Andrew
Cox, rh Mr Geoffrey	Halfon, rh Robert	Mackrory, Cherilyn	Ross, Douglas
Crabb, rh Stephen	Hall, Luke	Macleary, Rachel	Rowley, Lee
Crosbie, Virginia	Hammond, Stephen	Mak, Alan	Russell, Dean
Crouch, Tracey	Hancock, rh Matt	Malthouse, Kit	Rutley, David
Cruddas, Jon	Hands, rh Greg	Mangnall, Anthony	Sambrook, Gary
Daly, James	Harper, rh Mr Mark	Mann, Scott	Saxby, Selaine
Davies, David T. C.	Harris, Rebecca	Marson, Julie	Scully, Paul
Davies, Gareth	Harrison, Trudy	May, rh Mrs Theresa	Seely, Mr Bob
Davies, Dr James	Hart, Sally-Ann	Mayhew, Jerome	Selous, Andrew
Davies, Mims	Hart, rh Simon	Maynard, Paul	Shapps, rh Grant
Davis, rh Mr David	Hayes, rh Sir John	McCartney, Jason	Sharma, rh Alok
Davison, Dehenna	Heald, rh Sir Oliver	McCartney, Karl	Shelbrooke, rh Alec
Dinenage, Caroline	Heapey, James	McPartland, Stephen	Simmonds, David
Dines, Miss Sarah	Heaton-Harris, Chris	McVey, rh Ms Esther	Skidmore, rh Chris
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan	Henderson, Gordon	Menzies, Mark	Smith, Chloe
Docherty, Leo	Henry, Darren	Mercer, Johnny	Smith, Greg
Donelan, Michelle	Higginbotham, Antony	Merriman, Huw	Smith, Henry
Dorries, Ms Nadine	Hinds, rh Damian	Metcalfe, Stephen	Smith, rh Julian
Double, Steve	Hoare, Simon	Millar, Robin	Smith, Royston
Dowden, rh Oliver	Holden, Mr Richard	Miller, rh Mrs Maria	Solloway, Amanda
Doyle-Price, Jackie	Hollinrake, Kevin	Milling, Amanda	Spencer, Dr Ben
Drax, Richard	Hollobone, Mr Philip	Mills, Nigel	Spencer, rh Mark
	Holloway, Adam	Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew	Stafford, Alexander
	Holmes, Paul		Stephenson, Andrew

Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Bob
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunak, rh Rishi
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tugendhat, Tom
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa

Wakeford, Christian
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben
 Wallis, Dr Jamie
 Warburton, David
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Webb, Suzanne
 Whately, Helen
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wiggin, Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Gavin
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:

**Iain Stewart and
 Stuart Andrew**

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Begum, Apsana
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Betts, Mr Clive
 Black, Mhairi
 Blackford, rh Ian
 Blackman, Kirsty
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bonnar, Steven
 Brabin, Tracy
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brock, Deidre
 Brown, Alan
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Bryant, Chris
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, Ian
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Callaghan, Amy
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Chapman, Douglas
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Cherry, Joanna
 Clark, Feryal

Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Cowan, Ronnie
 Coyle, Neil
 Crawley, Angela
 Creasy, Stella (*Proxy vote
 cast by Peter Kyle*)
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Davey, rh Sir Edward
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Day, Martyn
 De Cordova, Marsha
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Doogan, Dave
 Dorans, Allan
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Eagle, Ms Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Eastwood, Colum
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fellows, Marion
 Ferrier, Margaret
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Flynn, Stephen
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gibson, Patricia

Gill, Preet Kaur
 Girvan, Paul
 Glindon, Mary
 Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter
 Gray, Neil
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Nia
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hanna, Claire
 Hanvey, Neale
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Hayes, Helen
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hendry, Drew
 Hillier, Meg
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hopkins, Rachel
 Hosie, Stewart
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hussain, Imran
 Jardine, Christine
 Johnson, Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Jones, Sarah
 Kane, Mike
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Kyle, Peter
 Lake, Ben
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Law, Chris
 Lewis, Clive
 Linden, David
 Lloyd, Tony
 Lockhart, Carla
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 MacAskill, Kenny
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 Matheson, Christian
 Mc Nally, John
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McLaughlin, Anne
 McMorris, Anna
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Monaghan, Carol
 Moran, Layla

Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Mr Stephen
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Newlands, Gavin
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Olney, Sarah
 Onwurah, Chi
 Osamor, Kate
 Osborne, Kate
 Oswald, Kirsten
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Owen, Sarah
 Paisley, Ian
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pollard, Luke
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rayner, Angela
 Reed, Mr Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie (*Proxy vote cast
 by Bambos Charalambous*)
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Gavin
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shah, Naz
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheppard, Tommy
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smith, Alyn
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Nick
 Smyth, Karin
 Sobel, Alex
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeting, Wes
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thompson, Owen
 Thomson, Richard
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitford, Dr Philippa
 Whitley, Mick
 Whittome, Nadia
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Winter, Beth

Winterton, rh Dame Rosie
Wishart, Pete
Yasin, Mohammad
Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
Jeff Smith and
Thangam Debbonaire

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	
Proceedings	Time for conclusion of proceedings
First day	
Clauses 1 to 6; new Clauses relating to Part 1 or 2; new Schedules relating to Part 1 or 2	Four hours after the commencement of proceedings on the Bill on the first 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	Eight hours after the commencement of proceedings on the Bill on the first day
Second day	
Clauses 18 to 23; Schedule 3; Clauses 24 to 37; new Clauses relating to Part 4; new Schedules relating to Part 4	Two hours after the commencement of proceedings on the Bill on the second day
Clauses 38 to 40; Schedule 4; Clause 41; Schedule 5; Clause 42; new Clauses relating to Part 5; new Schedules relating to Part 5	Five hours after the commencement of proceedings on the Bill on the second day
Remaining new Clauses, remaining new Schedules, remaining proceedings in Committee on the Bill	Eight 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 two hours before the moment of interruption on that day.

(7) Proceedings on Third Reading shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion at the moment of interruption 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) Any 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.—(*Mr Marcus Jones.*)

The House divided: Ayes 353, Noes 243.

Division No. 2]

[2.34 pm

AYES

Adams, Nigel	Cates, Miriam
Afolami, Bim	Caulfield, Maria
Afriyie, Adam	Chalk, Alex
Ahmad-Khan, Imran	Chishti, Rehman
Aiken, Nickie	Chope, Sir Christopher
Aldous, Peter	Churchill, Jo
Allan, Lucy	Clark, rh Greg
Amess, Sir David	Clarke, Mr Simon
Anderson, Lee	Clarke, Theo
Anderson, Stuart	Clarke-Smith, Brendan
Ansell, Caroline	Clarkson, Chris
Argar, Edward	Cleverly, rh James
Atherton, Sarah	Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
Atkins, Victoria	Colburn, Elliot
Bacon, Mr Gareth	Collins, Damian
Bacon, Mr Richard	Costa, Alberto
Badenoch, Mrs Kemi (<i>Proxy vote cast by Leo Docherty</i>)	Courts, Robert
Bailey, Shaun	Coutinho, Claire
Baillie, Siobhan	Cox, rh Mr Geoffrey
Baker, Duncan	Crabb, rh Stephen
Baker, Mr Steve	Crosbie, Virginia
Baldwin, Harriett	Crouch, Tracey
Barclay, rh Stephen	Daly, James
Baron, Mr John	Davies, David T. C.
Baynes, Simon	Davies, Gareth
Bell, Aaron	Davies, Dr James
Benton, Scott	Davies, Mims
Beresford, Sir Paul	Davis, rh Mr David
Berry, rh Jake	Davison, Dehenna
Bhatti, Saqib	Dinenage, Caroline
Blackman, Bob	Dines, Miss Sarah
Bone, Mr Peter	Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Bottomley, Sir Peter	Docherty, Leo
Bowie, Andrew	Donelan, Michelle
Bradley, Ben	Dorries, Ms Nadine
Bradley, rh Karen	Double, Steve
Brady, Sir Graham	Dowden, rh Oliver
Braverman, Suella	Doyle-Price, Jackie
Brereton, Jack	Drax, Richard
Bridgen, Andrew	Drummond, Mrs Flick
Brine, Steve	Duddridge, James
Bristow, Paul	Duguid, David
Britcliffe, Sara	Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
Brokenshire, rh James	Dunne, rh Mr Philip
Browne, Anthony	Eastwood, Mark
Bruce, Fiona	Edwards, Ruth
Buchan, Felicity	Ellis, rh Michael
Buckland, rh Robert	Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
Burghart, Alex	Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
Burns, rh Conor	Eustice, George
Butler, Rob	Evans, Dr Luke
Cairns, rh Alun	Evans, Mr Nigel
Carter, Andy	Evennett, rh Sir David
Cartlidge, James	Everitt, Ben
Cash, Sir William	Fabricant, Michael
	Farris, Laura

Fell, Simon
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Ford, Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Fox, rh Dr Liam
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 Fuller, Richard
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Ghani, Ms Nusrat
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, John
 Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Griffiths, Kate
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Halfon, rh Robert
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hancock, rh Matt
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heappey, James
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hughes, Eddie
 Hunt, Jane
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy
 Hunt, Tom
 Jack, rh Mr Alister
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Mrs Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, rh Boris
 Johnson, Gareth

Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Keegan, Gillian
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Knight, Julian
 Kruger, Danny
 Laing, rh Dame Eleanor
 Lamont, John
 Langan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Levy, Ian
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Brandon
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Lee Rowley*)
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackinlay, Craig
 Mackrory, Cherilyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McPartland, Stephen
 McVey, rh Ms Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milling, Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Morton, Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Mrs Sheryl
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Robert
 Nici, Lia

Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh 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
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, Victoria
 Pritchard, Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Raab, rh Dominic
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Roberts, Rob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Rosindell, Andrew
 Rowley, Lee
 Russell, Dean
 Sambrook, Gary
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Mr Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Sharma, rh Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Simmonds, David
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, rh Julian
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, Dr Ben
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, Andrew

Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Bob
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunak, rh Rishi
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Trevelyan, Anne-Marie
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tugendhat, Tom
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Wakeford, Christian
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben
 Wallis, Dr Jamie
 Warburton, David
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Webb, Suzanne
 Whately, Helen
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wiggin, Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Gavin
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:

**Iain Stewart and
 Stuart Andrew**

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Begum, Apsana
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Betts, Mr Clive
 Black, Mhairi
 Blackford, rh Ian
 Blackman, Kirsty

Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bonnar, Steven
 Brabin, Tracy
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brock, Deidre
 Brown, Alan
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Bryant, Chris
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, Ian
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cadbury, Ruth

Callaghan, Amy
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Chapman, Douglas
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Cherry, Joanna
 Clark, Feryal
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, Rosie
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Cowan, Ronnie
 Coyle, Neil
 Crawley, Angela
 Creasy, Stella (*Proxy vote cast by Peter Kyle*)
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Davey, rh Sir Edward
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Day, Martyn
 De Cordova, Marsha
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Doogan, Dave
 Dorans, Allan
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Eagle, Ms Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Eastwood, Colum
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fellows, Marion
 Ferrier, Margaret
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Flynn, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Girvan, Paul
 Glindon, Mary
 Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter
 Gray, Neil
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Nia
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hanna, Claire
 Hanvey, Neale
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Hayes, Helen
 Healey, rh John
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hopkins, Rachel
 Hosie, Stewart
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hussain, Imran
 Jardine, Christine
 Johnson, Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Jones, Sarah
 Kane, Mike
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Kyle, Peter
 Lake, Ben
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Law, Chris
 Lewis, Clive
 Linden, David
 Lloyd, Tony
 Lockhart, Carla
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 MacAskill, Kenny
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 Matheson, Christian
 Mc Nally, John
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McLaughlin, Anne
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Monaghan, Carol
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Mr Stephen
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Newlands, Gavin
 Nichols, Charlotte
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Olney, Sarah
 Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Osamor, Kate
 Osborne, Kate

Oswald, Kirsten
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Owen, Sarah
 Paisley, Ian
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pollard, Luke
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rayner, Angela
 Reed, Mr Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie (*Proxy vote cast by Bambos Charalambous*)
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Gavin
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shah, Naz
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smith, Alyn
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Nick
 Smyth, Karin
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeting, Wes
 Sultana, Sarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thompson, Owen
 Thomson, Richard
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitford, Dr Philippa
 Whitley, Mick
 Whittome, Nadia
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Winter, Beth
 Winterton, rh Dame Rosie
 Wishart, Pete
 Yasin, Mohammad
 Zeichner, Daniel
Tellers for the Noes:
Jeff Smith and
Thangam Debonnaire

Question accordingly agreed to.

EUROPEAN UNION (WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT) BILL (MONEY)

Queen's recommendation signified.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 52(1)(a)),

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill, it is expedient to authorise:

(1) any sum that is required to be paid to the EU or an EU entity to meet any obligation that the United Kingdom has by virtue of the withdrawal agreement to be charged on and paid out of the Consolidated Fund or, if the Treasury so decides, the National Loans Fund;

(2) the payment out of money provided by Parliament of—

(a) any expenditure which is incurred by a Minister of the Crown, government department or other public authority by virtue of the Act; and

(b) any increase attributable to the Act in the sums payable by virtue of any other Act out of money so provided;

(3) any other charge on the Consolidated Fund or the National Loans Fund, or any other charge on the public revenue, arising by virtue of the Act.—(*Mr Marcus Jones.*)

Question agreed to.

EUROPEAN UNION (WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT) BILL (WAYS AND MEANS)

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 52(1)(a)),

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill, it is expedient to authorise:

(1) any taxation, fees or charges or any other charge on the people arising by virtue of the Act;

(2) the payment of sums into the Consolidated Fund or the National Loans Fund.—(*Mr Marcus Jones.*)

Question agreed to.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): This is probably strictly out of order, but I suspect that hon. Members will be leaving in a few moments. May I, on behalf of Mr Speaker, wish all hon. Members, on both sides of the House, a happy Christmas and a very peaceful new year?

Southend: City Status

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(*Mr Marcus Jones.*)

2.51 pm

Sir David Amess (Southend West) (Con): For a moment, I was tempted to say, “Before the House adjourns for the Christmas recess, there are a number of points that I wish to raise,” but we have a title for this Adjournment debate. The House will not be surprised to hear that I am going to describe how, as the Prime Minister said just six weeks ago, Southend will become a city.

Before that, I want to mention three newly elected colleagues. Little did I think that the daughter of my first constituency chairman, when I was elected the Member for Basildon in 1983, would be sitting here now. I think that the parents of my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire Dales (Miss Dines) are looking down from heaven, so proud that she has been elected.

I have had another big surprise. You will remember, Mr Deputy Speaker, that Ken Hargreaves, who was my best friend here, was the Member for Hyndburn. Peter Britcliffe used to run his office and stood twice for the seat, and his 24-year-old daughter, my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Sara Britcliffe), has been elected. I am sure that Ken Hargreaves is looking down from heaven with great pride.

Then there is probably the most extraordinary election result of all. Just three months ago, I was invited to Durham University. The motion was, “That this House has no confidence in Her Majesty’s Government.” I opposed the motion. We will not dwell on it, but for various reasons two parliamentary colleagues pulled out at the last minute, so a replacement had to be found, and that replacement was my hon. Friend the Member for Bishop Auckland (Dehenna Davison), who has been elected at the age of 26. This is an extraordinary occasion for me. If I had more time, I would mention the 46 and 109 new colleagues, but I need to concentrate on the Minister.

I am not messing around. We have got it from the Prime Minister that Southend is going to become a city—and it will become a city. My hon. Friend the Member for Rochford and Southend East (James Duddridge) is present and we are absolutely united as to why Southend should become a city. It will not cost a thing, but I say to my hon. Friend the Minister that the enhanced status and ability to attract new investment will mean a great deal to the people I represent. That is why we want it.

How does a place acquire city status? Well, there needs to be a contest. We had a contest in 2011, 2002 and 2000. It usually takes place around a royal event. Now, the Duke of Edinburgh is going to be 100 in 18 months’ time and I am working on other royal events to see how we can fine-tune the timing. It would be great if it happened next year because it will be the centenary of the mayoralty of Southend, which runs between 2020 and 2021. Now that we have moved on from the horrible atmosphere we had in this place, we have to be positive. And what could be a more positive way to start than by Southend being declared a city?

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his hard work to ensure that Southend will achieve city status. Southend has many great things:

a strong city centre, churches, a representative council, good education provision and excellent amenities. Like Lisburn in Northern Ireland, it will achieve city status and it is important that it achieves its goal. Well done to the hon. Gentleman for his hard work. I have supported him the whole time I have been in this place, and look forward to Southend getting city status. I might even get an invite to Southend when it gets city status; I hope so.

Sir David Amess: I thank the hon. Gentleman, whom I regard as my friend, for his support.

Let me run through the list of reasons why Southend should become a city. First, there is the Music Man Project, which was the inspiration of David Stanley. He did not leave people with learning difficulties just to be looked after. He has absolutely transformed their lives through the power of music. The House can imagine my pride when these people with learning difficulties first performed at the London Palladium and then at the Royal Albert Hall, where my right hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth North (Penny Mordaunt)—who was the Defence Secretary at the time—watched from the gallery. And it gets better: we have just sent a mission to Broadway and will now be taking our show, performed by people with learning difficulties, to Broadway. That is one reason why Southend should be a city.

Next, Leigh-on-Sea was voted the happiest place in the United Kingdom. Well, I was not so happy knocking on doors in the cold and dark there recently, so I suppose I am the one exception. We scored high for community spirit, opportunities to develop skills, good restaurants and shops. It is also the 150th anniversary of Southend rugby club. How good is that—to keep a rugby club going for 150 years with volunteers?

The marina, which will probably be in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford and Southend East, is going to be fabulous. That is another reason that Southend should be a city. We have the longest pier in the world. You cannot build piers today, but there we are. A number of politicians have felt that they were walking on water. When they come to Southend, they really do walk on water—on the longest pier. We are also reinventing and reinvigorating the trains there.

During the election campaign, one or two issues were raised, but they can all be built into the case for Southend getting city status. All colleagues think that Southend airport is fantastic and very convenient. We are building a business park there, which will be excellent for regeneration. However, I have to say that it does cause nuisance and upset among people, especially when the two Amazon flights take off at 2.30 am and 4.30 am. There is also a difference in noise levels between easyJet and Ryanair, and an issue with air quality. We cannot keep having talks with the airport about section 106, so I want those matters changed.

Donkey's years ago, when I was the MP for Basildon, I had a public row on TV with the chairman of British Rail. I was clapped when I came through the Division Lobby, and they said, "Good on you, David! He needed to be told." Our railway was called the "misery line", so we changed the owner. I wanted Richard Branson to have it, but we ended up with c2c, and I am disappointed. The card reading machines take ages, as I found this morning; it is stupid. The ticket machines are far too low down, and when the sun is glaring on to the glass,

you cannot see the screen. I am sick to death of being redirected every other week from Fenchurch Street to Liverpool Street. We need something done about that.

Although I say to Conservative Members that we should forget renationalising British Rail, I am one of the few who was there when we privatised all these industries, and it was under the Blair Government that power was taken away from this place. We now need to make these organisations accountable, because that is where the problem is. We, the elected politicians, earn a third of the money that umpteen people in these unelected positions earn, and they need to be made much more accountable.

I turn to the national health service. The chief executive of the NHS said at the start of the campaign, "Don't weaponise the NHS," but what happened? It was weaponised, with all this rubbish about selling it to America, and particularly in my area and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford and Southend East. I was at Southend Hospital this morning doing my impersonation of Santa Claus, and I met one of our wonderful consultants, Paul Guyler. The reorganisation of services between Basildon, Broomfield and Southend cannot continue unless they are clinically led. They are clinically led, but we need people to put their heads above the parapet, and we need the ambulance service to reassure us that when they are moving patients around, there will not be delays that could result in disaster.

On the environment and water quality, I think that the Thames estuary is getting cleaner all the time. I was standing on Bell Wharf recently, and a seal popped out of the water and starting clapping me—I thought, "There's someone else who's pleased with my re-election as a Member of Parliament."

I turn to parking. I think, Mr Deputy Speaker, we have reached a stage in our lives where we know what all the problems are; it is the solutions we ask for. Perhaps all my new colleagues will come up with some new solutions. I represent a tiny urban area, and parking is a real issue. I am delighted to see in the Gracious Speech that the Government are going to put money in for potholes.

My hon. Friend the Minister should know that I am inviting ambassadors and anyone who is the head of a foreign embassy in this country to visit Southend. We have already had them from them Taiwan and Qatar. We are having them from India, the Maldives and all over the world. They want to invest in Southend, and that is another good reason why we should be a city.

There was very good news from the hospital that I visited this morning. I am pleased to announce that the hospital has decided to invest in a new surgical robot to undertake prostate cancer surgery. We had a launch here with the new charity Prost8. This will change the lives of so many gentlemen who are diagnosed with a prostate issue. It was so good that our new Speaker decided to go public, just as the former Prime Minister did, about being diagnosed with diabetes. Sometimes it is forgotten that we are human beings, and we suffer all the happiness and tragedies of other people. He will be a role model in that.

I am also pleased to announce to the Minister that we are going to offer patients across mid and south Essex out-of-hours emergency interventional radiology treatment, which is another good thing to happen. My hon. Friend

[*Sir David Amess*]

the Member for Chelmsford (Vicky Ford) is no longer in her place, but the hospital in her constituency is going to have a new MRI scanner, which will help an awful lot of people.

I want to mention a few of the local authority's projects. A successful procurement process has led to a partnership between the Better Queensway scheme and Swan Housing, in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford and Southend East. There is the second phase of The Forum, a partnership with South Essex College, supported by £6 million of funding from the local enterprise partnership. I have already mentioned the pier. A wheeled sports facility opened in the summer, and the SUNRISE project is a great example of co-design and co-production in the creation of ideas for a new London Road entrance to the high street.

The bid is working very well indeed. I have mentioned the airport business park and the 21-hectare site which will include the development of HQ-style office buildings. A planning application for the Seaway development has been submitted, and work is ongoing with Homes England and other partners to support the delivery of a significant pipeline of new housing across the borough. Digital infrastructure investment through CityFibre will ensure that Southend becomes a gigabyte city, and that all its households will have access to full fibre by 2022.

I could go on and on, but I am anxious to ensure that my hon. Friend the Minister has a little time in which to respond.

Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): Inverness, which is not in my constituency but which is in the highlands, became a city some years ago, and it has been a great success. Part of that success has been the establishment of the Inverness tartan. May I point out that Cornwall has its own tartan, and Suffolk has its special gingham plaid? I strongly suggest to the hon. Member, in the spirit of Christmas good wishes—and I salute his excellent speech—that he think about a Southend tartan.

Sir David Amess: What a brilliant idea. I was not expecting that Christmas present. I thank the hon. Member very much indeed for his suggestion.

I know that the House has become tired of hearing me ask for city status for Southend—[*Interruption.*]—a little weary—but I am not going to shut up until it happens, so someone must stand up at that Dispatch Box and tell me when the competition will begin. I shall raise the matter at the next Prime Minister's Question Time. We have achieved a wonderful majority. We may have forgotten how to govern, but we are the Government now. We have five years in which to make the most of the trust that we have been given by the British people, so let us start with Southend being made a city.

3.6 pm

The Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office (Jeremy Quin): Let me start by congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Southend West (Sir David Amess) on securing the debate. It is a pleasure to see that his neighbour and colleague my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford and Southend East (James Duddridge) is also present.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend West has managed to do something amazing by being both first and last. This is one of the first Adjournment debates in the current Parliament, and, as is traditional, he has also managed to get the last word in before the House rises for the recess. In July, as the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) will also recall, it was my privilege to reply to the debate on matters to be raised before the summer Adjournment. In doing so, I remarked that it appeared that the House could not rise for a recess without my hon. Friend's pressing the case for city status for Southend-on-Sea—and here we are again. I attribute that not to any gift of prophecy on my part, but to the assiduity with which my hon. Friend pushes his case. It is no surprise that his perseverance is recognised by his constituents, and I am delighted to welcome him back to the House after he secured an increased majority and more than 59% of the votes cast. No wonder Leigh-on-Sea is the happiest of places in which to live, and no wonder even the seals appear to clap my hon. Friend.

As a Minister in the Cabinet Office and on behalf of the Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office, my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich North (Chloe Smith)—the Minister for the Constitution—I am delighted to be able to share with my hon. Friend and the House the process by which Southend, and indeed other candidates around the United Kingdom, may seek to achieve city status. As ever, my hon. Friend has also used this opportunity to speak about the many achievements, and also the aspirations, of Southend. He will forgive me if I do not respond in detail to each of the points that lie more appropriately under the remit of other Departments, but he has set out a clear set of priorities which I know will be flagged in the Departments concerned.

Among the many advantages of a decisive Government majority—as a former member of the Whips Office, I shall repeat that! Among the many advantages of a decisive Government majority, and a clear sense of stability and purpose, is the opportunity for constituency MPs to pursue single-mindedly their action plans for their communities. I know my ministerial colleagues and I can look forward to hearing a lot more from my hon. Friend over what I hope will be a long and productive Parliament.

As my hon. Friend is aware, city status is one of the civic honours granted by the Queen under the royal prerogative on the advice of Ministers. It is a rare distinction. Only 14 new cities were created during the 20th century. Indeed, since the 1970s there have been only five competitions, as a result of which a total of 13 towns were awarded city status, with each competition seeing an increase in applications. With the exception of the competition held in 2000 to mark the millennium, all were held to mark significant anniversaries of Her Majesty's accession to the throne. I am sure my hon. Friend will understand the need to preserve the special status of such an honour by ensuring that competitions are held to mark anniversaries of sufficient significance. As my hon. Friend is very aware from his interaction with my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, his determination on this issue is very much recognised. We will continue to consider when it might be appropriate to hold another city status competition. I know my hon. Friend is alert to possible opportunities and is certainly not shy in drawing them to the attention of Government, for which we are grateful.

Today there are currently 69 cities in the United Kingdom: 51 in England, seven in Scotland, six in Wales and five in Northern Ireland. Competitions are fair and open to protect the value of city status. There are no specific criteria against which progress can be measured, but entries are considered on the merits of their contents rather than on the standard of presentation. I appreciate why, with a population of 175,000, some 5,600 businesses and an economy valued at over £2.6 billion, Southend views itself as a suitable candidate, even before one takes into account its role as a transport hub, to which my hon. Friend referred, and as a tourist destination, amid many sources of justifiable civic pride. It is wonderful to hear again about Music Man and what a phenomenal success it is.

I know that Southend-on-Sea entered the 2012 city status contest but was, along with a number of other towns, unfortunately unsuccessful. Granting city status is purely about the honour, with no additional funding or powers attached to it, but I entirely understand my hon. Friend's continuing endeavours to secure city status for Southend. We will never tire of his speaking about it in this Chamber—he is very wrong to suggest that that might be the case. I know he will continue to pursue the cause with great assiduity. However, I do want to take this opportunity to reassure him that, whatever its civic status, the Government are committed to investing in and supporting Southend, and the local area, on issues that matter to his constituents.

A colleague at the Department of Health and Social Care informed me that significant investment is already under way at Southend Hospital. Clearly, my hon. Friend was briefed on that in his role as Father Christmas only this morning. That includes the installation of new radiotherapy machines and—he referred to this—in particular the use of a surgical robot to undertake prostate cancer surgery. That is an important issue, which I recall my hon. Friend raising in the summer recess debate. Those improvements will greatly expand the availability of robotic surgery to patients suffering from cancer and will both reduce waiting times and give patients the option of receiving care in mid and south Essex who may otherwise have to travel outside the area for treatment. This will secure Southend Hospital's position as a centre of excellence in cancer care and treatment for the people of Essex.

We are also investing in the local economy. In 2014, we signed off on the Southend city deal and put in funding of about £1.5 million towards a growth hub to offer support to local businesses. I trust that the ripple effect of that continues to benefit the local economy.

Southend, which, as my hon. Friend mentioned, boasts the longest pleasure pier in the world, received some 367,000 visitors last year. Southend has also received £1.3 million from the coastal communities fund to expand tourism services. I understand that Southend has also benefited from funding from its local enterprise partnership, including £23 million for a new business park, to which my hon. Friend referred, adjacent to London Southend Airport. There will be many opportunities for Southend to seize as we achieve our exit from the European Union, opportunities stemming from our focus on the Thames Estuary 2050 growth board, to which the new chair, Kate Willard, was appointed on 30 October.

My hon. Friend raised concerns about the rail franchise and ticket machines. I know that he has raised those concerns along with the frustration of his constituents on a number of occasions. He will be aware of this Government's commitment to end the complicated franchising model and to create a simpler, more effective rail system. I am sure that we can look forward to progress on that area.

I suggest that my hon. Friend take up with other Ministers the specifics of the section 106 agreement to which he referred. As an MP with a constituency in close proximity to Gatwick, I recognise some of the concerns that he has raised. I trust that he is aware of the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise, which is a relatively new body, providing independent advice to the Government, including on how to improve public confidence and trust in the management of aviation noise. If my hon. Friend has not done so already—he may well have done this—I recommend a discussion with ICCAN, which he might find of interest.

In conclusion, I thank my hon. Friend for raising this important issue. He is indeed a doughty champion for his constituents and his constituency. These last few minutes as one closes a parliamentary period would not be the same without his contribution on the issue.

Finally, may I thank you, Sir Roger, for your comments on behalf of the Speaker, wishing us all a happy Christmas? May I extend that wish on behalf of the House and the Government to you and to all the Clerks and the staff of this place who work hard throughout the year, but particularly over the past few days supporting new and returning Members, and I would like to wish everyone a happy Christmas.

Question put and agreed to.

3.16 pm

House adjourned.

Written Statements

Friday 20 December 2019

CABINET OFFICE

Advance from the Contingencies Fund

The Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General (Oliver Dowden): The Cabinet Office has sought a repayable cash advance from the Contingencies Fund of £107,134,000.

The requirement has arisen because the Cabinet Office receives a relatively high proportion of its voted funding at Supplementary Estimate, and as a consequence may only draw the related cash from the Consolidated Fund after the Supply and Appropriation Act has received Royal Assent in March 2020.

The cash advance will pay for programmes which will generate Government-wide benefits or savings and are urgent in the public interest, including advancing EU exit objectives, public inquiries, security and the efficient management of Government property.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £70,046,000 and capital of £2,088,000 and cash of £35,000,000 will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the Cabinet Office. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £107,134,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

[HCWS15]

Government Transparency and Accountability

The Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office (Chloe Smith): The Government are today publishing a number of documents as part of their ongoing commitment to transparency and accountability:

The List of Ministers' Interests, reflecting the Government as it stood on 5 November 2019, immediately before the dissolution of Parliament. Under the terms of the Ministerial Code, ministers must ensure that no conflict arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise, between their ministerial position and their private interests, financial or otherwise. The list captures those interests relevant to ministers' ministerial responsibilities, and should be read alongside the two parliamentary registers. In line with the commitment in the Ministerial Code, a further list reflecting ministerial appointments made since the general election will be published next year.

The Annual Report of the Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Interests, Sir Alex Allan, which accompanies the list of Ministers' interests.

The Annual Report on Special Advisers 2019, in conformance with section 16(1) of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

Copies of the List of Ministerial Interests, the Annual Report of the Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Interests and the Annual Report on Special Advisers will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and will be published on gov.uk.

Further transparency publications will be published in the new year, in the usual way.

[HCWS16]

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Post-EU Energy Council Update

The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (Kwasi Kwarteng): The UK did not attend the EU Energy Council in Brussels on 4 December 2019.

The UK Government have decided that from 1 September until exit day, UK Ministers and officials will only attend EU meetings where the UK has a significant national interest in the outcome of the discussions.

[HCWS12]

TREASURY

Economic Update

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sajid Javid): I am pleased to announce that I have appointed Mr Andrew Bailey as the next Governor of the Bank of England. Mr Bailey will take up his appointment on 16 March 2020, and will serve an eight-year term, in accordance with the Bank of England Act 1998 (as amended by the Financial Services Act 2012). Dr Mark Carney has kindly agreed to extend his current term as Governor of the Bank of England until 15 March 2020, in order to facilitate a smooth transition to the next Governor.

[HCWS1]

Treasury Update

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman): In September 2019, the Government commissioned Sir Amyas Morse to lead the independent loan charge review. The loan charge is designed to tackle disguised remuneration avoidance schemes where a person's income is paid as a loan which is not repaid. The Government are today publishing the review and the Government's own response to the review. The review, Government response and accompanying documents may be found on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disguised-remuneration-independent-loan-charge-review>

The Government are grateful to Sir Amyas and his team for all their work on the review.

The Government welcome Sir Amyas' recognition that disguised remuneration schemes are a form of tax avoidance. Sir Amyas sets out the action that the Government took to try to tackle disguised remuneration and concludes that the Government were right to take action to ensure the tax was collected.

However, the Government recognise the concerns raised in the review about the impact of some aspects of the loan charge. To address these concerns, they are accepting all but one of the recommendations made in the review.

Loan charge design changes

The Government are today announcing the following design changes to the loan charge:

the loan charge will be limited to loans taken out on or after 9 December 2010—the date on which targeted anti-avoidance legislation was announced which put the tax position of disguised remuneration avoidance schemes beyond doubt, according to Sir Amyas;

loans taken out between 9 December 2010 and 5 April 2016 (inclusive) will remain within the scope of the loan charge unless the user of the scheme can prove they disclosed details of their scheme use as specified by the review on their tax return, and HMRC failed to take action to protect their position, for example, by opening an enquiry;

taxpayers affected by the loan charge will be allowed to report their loan charge balance across three tax years, rather than one tax year.

The changes above will be legislated for in the forthcoming Finance Bill and will be made effective from today using the HMRC Commissioners' powers of collection and management.

For taxpayers who have already settled their disguised remuneration liabilities since the loan charge was announced in March 2016, new legislation will enable HMRC to repay tax paid for years that would be no longer subject to the loan charge because the year was unprotected (for example, HMRC had not opened an enquiry or issued an assessment). The Government will announce further details of this legislation in due course.

The Government will also review future policy on interest rates within the tax system and will report the results to Parliament by 31 July 2020.

While loans made before 9 December 2010 are removed from the scope of the charge, the underlying tax liability for loans made prior to this date remains. HMRC will pursue those liabilities through open enquiries and assessments, and where necessary through litigation. HMRC will publish updated settlement terms for individuals in this position in due course. The Government will also invest in a new HMRC team to carry out this activity and to ensure that people who entered into disguised remuneration avoidance schemes before 9 December 2010 still pay the tax due and make their contribution to funding public services. The Government will announce further details at Budget.

Loans taken out after 5 April 2016 and outstanding as of 5 April 2019 also remain within the scope of the loan charge. Loans taken out after 5 April 2019 are taxable when they are received under legislation introduced in Finance Act 2011.

Additional flexibility for taxpayers affected by the loan charge

The loan charge remains in force and any relevant outstanding loan balance should be included in the self-assessment tax return for 2018-19. However, the Government recognise that taxpayers will need sufficient time to understand their position in light of the changes above. HMRC have published guidance today on the action which affected taxpayers can take and the flexibility they now have in relation to the 31 January 2020 self-assessment deadline.

Taxpayers who have not settled their disguised remuneration tax affairs by 31 January 2020 are required to submit a self-assessment return for the 2018-19 tax year. They can do this by the 31 January statutory 2020 filing date, giving their best estimate of their outstanding

loan balance, or they can defer sending their return until 30 September 2020. In these circumstances HMRC will waive any penalties for late filing or late payment, and not charge any penalties for inaccurate returns (if the inaccuracy relates to the loan charge), as long as the taxpayer has submitted their return, or amends it with accurate figures by 30 September 2020.

For taxpayers within the scope of the loan charge, no interest will be charged on amounts falling due at 31 January 2020 as long as the tax is paid, or an arrangement made with HMRC to do so, by 30 September 2020.

Paying the loan charge

The tax system already has safeguards in place designed to ensure that taxpayers who are not able to pay tax when it falls due are not required to take on unmanageable payment terms. These safeguards include time-to-pay arrangements which ensure that the taxpayer only pays what they can, when they can. HMRC have also announced previously that no taxpayer will be forced to sell their main home to fund a disguised remuneration or loan charge tax bill, and HMRC already signpost specialist debt advisers and charities for those taxpayers struggling with debt.

In addition to these existing arrangements, the Government and HMRC are today announcing that:

the Government will fund an external body to provide independent advice on time-to-pay arrangements, including on the suitability of individual voluntary arrangements for taxpayers;

in line with current practice, time-to-pay arrangements will not require payment of more than 50% of disposable income, aside from where taxpayers have very high disposable incomes; and

where a taxpayer has no disposable assets and earns less than £50,000, then they will be automatically entitled to a minimum of a five-year payment plan, and where they earn less than £30,000, a minimum of seven years.

HMRC will also implement a number of changes to ensure individuals who cannot pay the tax due and who are in need of bespoke arrangements to pay their tax debts understand the options available to them, and can make an informed decision about how to proceed. HMRC today announce that they will:

publish the income and expenditure form that HMRC use with taxpayers to understand assets, income, and expenditure, and work out disposable income, and how HMRC use that to create time-to-pay arrangements; and

refer taxpayers to a debt advice charity where their finances suggest they need time to pay in excess of five years.

HMRC can also confirm that, in line with current practice, they will:

guarantee time-to-pay arrangements wherever an affordability assessment shows an individual cannot pay in full;

accept single financial statements completed by the taxpayer with a debt advice charity as proof of affordability;

stop all recovery action where the taxpayer has no ability to pay, until there is a significant change of circumstance; and

not seek bankruptcy proceedings for individuals who have engaged with HMRC, completed an affordability assessment, and are solely unable to pay the loan charge.

The policy changes to the loan charge and to time-to-pay set out above will have a significant impact on the affordability of the loan charge for many taxpayers affected. Allowing some loan charge liability to be written off in addition to these changes would have the

effect of treating these tax avoiders more favourably than other individuals with HMRC debts (including tax credit claimants), would reduce taxpayers' incentive to pay off the debt, and would have unwelcome wider impacts that change how HMRC and those in debt interact. The Government are therefore not accepting the review's recommendation to introduce a write-off of tax due on the loan charge after 10 years for individuals whose time-to-pay arrangement is longer than 10 years.

Future approach to tackling disguised remuneration avoidance schemes

Disguised remuneration avoidance schemes do not work in law and income paid through these schemes is fully taxable. The Government remain committed to tackling large scale avoidance of this nature. The Government share the review's concern that these schemes continue to be marketed and used; this year alone, around 8,000 people are using a disguised remuneration scheme with around 3,000 of them being new users. Tackling large-scale avoidance of this nature remains challenging and further consideration is required to determine what additional changes are needed. The Government will announce further action at the Budget.

The Government and HMRC strongly encourage people not to use these schemes and to get in touch with HMRC if they think they are being sold a scheme.

The Government and HMRC are determined to continue to tackle promoters of tax avoidance schemes, and can today announce that HMRC will:

- introduce further measures to tackle promoters of avoidance schemes and reduce the scope for promoters to market tax avoidance schemes—details of which will be set out at Budget;

- launch a call for evidence on what steps it can take to raise standards in the market for tax advice to give taxpayers more assurance that the advice they are receiving is reliable; and

- will seek to provide targeted early communication to taxpayers who they suspect may be engaging in tax avoidance to encourage them to stop.

Communications and engagement

The Government and HMRC also accept recommendations in the review that will improve the information provided in Government impact notes of tax changes and ensure that they learn from the experience of the loan charge in communicating policy and communicating with taxpayers.

[HCWS14]

DEFENCE

Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):

Today, I am laying before Parliament the armed forces covenant annual report 2019. Our armed forces protect our nation with unwavering honour, courage and commitment. We owe them a vast debt of gratitude and have a duty to ensure that those who serve, or who have served in our armed forces, and their families, suffer no disadvantage in comparison to other citizens as a result of their service to our country. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most such as the injured or the bereaved. This is what the covenant sets out to do.

It is my honour to present this report to Parliament, describing what the Government together with their delivery partners have done to uphold the principles of the covenant. The report provides progress on the delivery by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and what has been achieved on healthcare, education, accommodation, inquest and judicial engagement, family life, transition and through-life support, and business in the community from October 2018 to September 2019.

Highlights of this year's report include: the creation of the first Office for Veterans' Affairs to pull together all functions of Government in order to ensure this nation's life-long duty to those who have served, building on the strategy for our veterans; putting flexible service into law, allowing regular service personnel to ask to temporarily work part-time and/or restrict their separation from their home base; the launch of the future accommodation model pilot in September for approximately three years; the extension of the forces Help to Buy scheme until December 2022; reaching over 4,000 signatories of the armed forces covenant, with over 1,000 new signings this year; the inclusion of the "service child" "flag indicator" on school censuses in England, Wales and Scotland for the first time; £23.1 million of service pupil premium funding is being distributed to over 10,000 schools across England in 2019-20; the Department for Work and Pensions secured funding to bolster the role of its armed forces champions across the country; the NHS, together with the MOD, launched the integrated personal commissioning for veterans framework for armed forces personnel in transition; and the Northern Ireland legacy inquest team was set up to deal with the extensive Northern Ireland legacy inquest programme.

But while progress has clearly been made, both this year and in the eight years since the covenant came into being, more still needs to be done. The Government, working closely with their delivery partners across all levels of government in the UK, service charities and the private sector, will continue to mitigate disadvantage wherever it is found within the armed forces community, and will be bold in seeking special considerations where appropriate.

As outlined in the Conservative party manifesto and Queen's Speech we will seek to further incorporate the armed forces covenant into law and over the course of this Parliament will continue to remove disadvantage faced by our armed forces personnel and veterans.

This report is a collaborative effort with input from service providers and professionals from a diverse array of backgrounds. I would like to thank colleagues across central Government, the devolved Administrations, stakeholders in Northern Ireland and local authorities, and those at every level and from every sector who are continuing to drive forward the work of the covenant in support of our armed forces community. I am also grateful to the external members of the covenant reference group who were consulted throughout the process and provided their independent observations.

[HCWS7]

Future Nuclear Deterrent Annual Update

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):

On 18 May 2011, the then Secretary of State for Defence, the right hon. Member for North Somerset (Dr Fox), made an oral statement to the House (*Official Report*,

18 May 2011; Vol. 528, c. 351) announcing the approval of the initial gate investment stage for the procurement of the successor to the Vanguard class ballistic missile submarines. He also placed in the Library of the House a report, “The United Kingdom’s Future Nuclear Deterrent: The Submarine Initial Gate Parliamentary Report”.

As confirmed in the 2015 strategic defence and security review, this Government have committed to publishing an annual report on the programme. I am today publishing the eighth report, “The United Kingdom’s Future Nuclear Deterrent: 2019 Update to Parliament”.

A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

[HCWS6]

EDUCATION

Dedicated Schools Grant: 2020-21

The Minister for School Standards (Nick Gibb): Today I am confirming school and early years revenue funding allocations for 2020-21 through the dedicated schools grant (DSG), published yesterday. This follows a statement by the Secretary of State for Education on 3 September, which confirmed to Parliament that the funding for schools and high needs will, compared to 2019-20, rise by £2.6 billion for 2020-21, £4.8 billion for 2021-22, and £7.1 billion for 2022-23. That is on top of £1.5 billion we are providing each year to fund additional pensions costs for teachers, bringing the total schools budget to £52.2 billion in 2022-23.

The distribution of the DSG is set out in four blocks for each local authority: a schools block, a high-needs block, an early years block, and a central school services block. In October 2019 I informed Parliament of the publication of primary and secondary units of funding for the schools block, and provisional allocations for the high-needs block and central school services block. In the DSG, these have now been updated with the latest pupil numbers to show how much each local authority will receive in 2020-21. Today’s publication also provides initial 2020-21 allocations for the early years block, following the early years national funding formula rates for three and four-year-olds I confirmed in October.

Finally, I am confirming the Government’s commitment to level up school funding by ensuring that every secondary school receives at least £5,000 per pupil, and every primary school at least £3,750 per pupil in 2020-21. The DSG allocations provide for this additional funding, and today the Government have published their response to a consultation which finalises the arrangements local authorities must follow in delivering mandatory minimum per pupil levels to the relevant schools in their local area, thus delivering one of the key pledges given by the Prime Minister during the general election.

As well as supporting the lowest-funded schools, this change marks an important first step in our plans to implement a “hard” national funding formula, whereby schools receive what they attract through the national formula, rather than through different local authority funding formulae. We will consult on the further steps needed to deliver those plans in due course, and will work closely with local authorities and other stakeholders in making the transition carefully and smoothly.

[HCWS2]

Kensington and Chelsea College

The Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson):

It is the normal practice when a Government Department propose to make a gift of a value exceeding £300,000, for the Department concerned to present to the House of Commons a minute giving particulars of the gift and explaining the circumstances; and to refrain from making the gift until 14 parliamentary sitting days after the issue of the minute, except in cases of special urgency.

Given wider exceptional circumstances, the Department for Education intends to purchase the Kensington Centre (Wornington Road, London) and provide a 125-year lease to a further education institute formed by merger between Kensington and Chelsea College (KCC) and Morley College (but with the Secretary of State for Housing Communities, and Local Government to be the named freeholder/lessor in each instance). The purchase price of £10,000,000 is below market value and KCC will additionally contribute £6,000,000 towards the cost of the acquisition of the site.

The lease of the site is valued at £1,100,000 per annum and will be subject to a peppercorn lease of only £1 per year. The peppercorn lease will contain a break clause after 25 years. The lease therefore represents a gift to the merged college worth £18,764,000 which is discounted at a rate of 3.5%. The Treasury has approved the proposal in principle.

This investment represents a unique and pivotal opportunity to rebuild trust and contribute towards the education and skills components of the Grenfell recovery strategy. KCC’s only campus in North Kensington is on Wornington Road, close to Grenfell Tower. The college has an important role in providing Londoners, and in particular the North Kensington community, with the skills for the future.

Within this unique context, through strong partnership working, Government, the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and KCC, will achieve good value for money in securing and refurbishing the Wornington Road site. This will help create a sustainable college to maintain and grow a wide-ranging further education offer, benefiting the local community and honouring the Government’s commitment to the Grenfell community.

[HCWS8]

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

General Affairs Council

The Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Stephen Barclay): I want to make the following statement:

General Affairs Council, November 2019

The UK did not attend the General Affairs Council (GAC) in Brussels on 19 November 2019.

The UK Government have decided that from 1 September until exit day, UK Ministers and officials will only attend EU meetings where the UK has a significant national interest in the outcome of the discussions.

General Affairs Council, December 2019

Sir Tim Barrow, the UK’s permanent representative to the EU, attended the General Affairs Council in Brussels on 10 December 2019 to represent the UK. A

provisional report of the meeting and the conclusions adopted can be found on the Council of the European Union's website at:

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/gac/2019/12/10/#>

Values of the Union in Hungary | Article 7 (1) TEU Reasoned Proposal

As part of the article 7(1) TEU procedure, the Council held a second hearing on Hungary, following the first hearing on 16 September. This hearing focused largely on the independence of the judiciary, freedom of expression and academic freedom in Hungary.

Rule of Law in Poland | Article 7(1) TEU Reasoned Proposal

The Council discussed the rule of law in Poland. The Commission provided an update to Ministers on the latest developments, including the recent judgments of the European Court of Justice concerning Polish rules on the retirement age of judges and public prosecutor, and the new Disciplinary Chamber of the Polish Supreme Court.

Preparation of the European Council on 12-13 December 2019 and European Council follow-up

Ministers continued preparations for the European Council on 12-13 December, and discussed draft conclusions. Sir Tim Barrow intervened to express the UK's long-standing support for the EU's ambition of climate neutrality by 2050. We welcomed the balanced conclusions that demonstrated the importance of EU climate leadership in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting green growth, and in ensuring a just transition to a low-emission economy. Sir Tim Barrow also reiterated the UK's continual support in finding an agreed solution to the current paralysis of the WTO's mechanism for settling disputes, stressing the importance of language in respect to the WTO, and reinforcing that it was central to trade policy.

Multiannual Financial Framework

The Council held a policy debate on the next multiannual financial framework (MFF). Ministers discussed the Finnish presidency's negotiating box, ahead of the 12-13 December European Council. The presidency agreed to a 25% target of the EU budget to support climate change initiatives.

European Semester 2020—Roadmap

As part of the preparation for the next European semester, the Croatian presidency presented the 2020 European semester roadmap. The roadmap's objective is to ensure that all relevant Councils work in a co-ordinated manner, with the General Affairs Council designated as the forum for overseeing the process.

Legislative programming – Commission's Work Programme for 2020 and multiannual programming

Ministers exchanged views on priorities for upcoming legislative work under the new Commission. The aim of the discussion was to provide comments to the Commission for the preparation of its 2020 work programme.

Conclusions on complementary efforts to enhance resilience and counter hybrid threats

The Council adopted, without discussion, European Council conclusions which set priorities and guidelines for EU co-operation of countering hybrid threats and enhancing resilience. The conclusions outline the need for a comprehensive approach to these threats, working across all relevant policy sectors to ensure alignment.

AOB: Enlargement

Under any other business, the Commission confirmed to member states that it would present its proposals on enlargement in January, under the new presidency.

[HCWS13]

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

London Croughton Annex

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and First Secretary of State (Dominic Raab): I told the House on 21 October (*Official Report*, 21 October 2019; Vol. 666, c. 760) that, following the tragic case of Harry Dunn, I had commissioned a review of the immunity arrangements at the Croughton annex for US personnel and their families who hold privileges and immunities under the Vienna convention on diplomatic relations, following the 27 August road collision in which Harry Dunn was killed, I committed to completing the review by the end of the year.

The Croughton review has now concluded. It considered the anomaly that family members of US officers serving at the annex at RAF Croughton have, under current arrangements between the UK and the US, greater protection from UK criminal jurisdiction than the officers themselves. On the basis of the review, I have instructed my officials to begin discussions with the US on the most effective way to address this anomaly.

[HCWS5]

NATO Leaders Meeting

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and First Secretary of State (Dominic Raab): On 3-4 December, NATO leaders met in London to mark 70 successful years of the alliance, in a valuable opportunity to reaffirm British leadership. These events demonstrated a strong sense of NATO's unity and purpose, progressed the largest reinforcement of collective defence since the end of the cold war and agreed ways to ensure NATO will continue to meet future threats. I have placed a copy of the NATO London declaration, capturing these commitments, in the Libraries of both Houses.

In order to maintain our alliance, defend our interests, and fulfil our commitments, NATO allies must all pay their fair share. So I was pleased that the meeting highlighted significant progress on burden sharing, with the NATO Secretary-General announcing an increase in non-US defence investment of \$130 billion from 2016-2020, expected to rise to \$400 billion by 2024. The UK remains one of nine allies meeting its 2% defence spending commitment, including a 20% investment in new capabilities. I will continue to urge other NATO allies to make progress in implementing our 2024 defence investment commitment.

In a session of the North Atlantic Council chaired by the Secretary-General, leaders reaffirmed NATO's purpose and noted decisions taken to prevent conflict and preserve peace. These included addressing both state and non-state threats, a collective response to Russia's deployment of

treaty-violating intermediate-range missiles, a refreshed counter-terrorism action plan, stronger policies to counter hybrid threats, and work to increase the resilience of allies' critical national infrastructure.

Allies also committed forces to NATO's readiness initiative—ensuring that the alliance can deploy 30 ships, 30 battalions and 30 air squadrons at 30 days' notice. The UK has provided the single largest commitment, offering three battlegroups, two air squadrons, and six warships, including an aircraft carrier, to ensure that NATO retains its ability to deploy quickly and at strength.

Allies also discussed plans to enable this great alliance to adapt to future challenges, and ensure that it continues to deliver peace and security for 1 billion people.

Allies agreed a roadmap for NATO's response to emerging and disruptive technologies (including artificial intelligence and quantum computing), initiated work to address the opportunities and challenges of China's growing influence and declared space an operational domain. NATO is also stepping up its role in human security, including through a new (anti) sexual exploitation and abuse policy.

Alongside the formal meetings, Her Majesty The Queen hosted the NATO Secretary-General and 29 other Heads of State and Government from NATO countries and North Macedonia on 3 December. The Prime Minister undertook a range of bilateral meetings, including with the leaders of France, Germany and Turkey where they discussed the situation in Syria and agreed on the importance of humanitarian access and protection of civilians. I hosted Foreign Ministers from NATO allies—and NATO partners Ukraine and Georgia—on 3 December. NATO also held a major outreach event under the banner of "NATO Engages", with a diverse, predominately young audience of more than 1,000 attendees. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office also hosted 100 university students for a "Model NATO" exercise, and visited more than 1,000 students in 15 universities across the UK in the weeks leading up to the leaders' meeting.

I look forward to working with all NATO allies and partners in implementing the outcomes from the leaders' meeting and in welcoming North Macedonia as the 30th member of our alliance in the coming months. When we stand together, decide together, act together—we are stronger and safer. These steps will further strengthen the purpose and unity of an alliance that continues to be the cornerstone of our security, and post Brexit we will continue to reinforce its importance.

[HCWS4]

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local Government Finance

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick): Today I have published the provisional local government finance settlement for 2020-21. The proposals set out in this consultation will give local authorities a 4.4% real-terms increase in their core spending power, which will rise from £46.2 billion

in 2019-20 to £49.1 billion in 2020-21. It is a strong and well-balanced package that delivers significant extra resources to the priority areas of adult and children's social care, while offering protection to other key service areas.

In October this year we launched a technical consultation, within which we invited views on the proposed package for 2020-21. I would like to thank all colleagues in local government for their responses to the October consultation and thank them in advance for comments on this next consultation. I have now taken the responses to the technical consultation into account and, following this, I am now publishing our proposals for the provisional local government finance settlement for 2020-21:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-england-2020-to-2021>.

Extra social care resources

We recognise the importance of addressing the challenges in our social care system. This is why we want to build the same level of cross-party consensus on social care as we have with the NHS, to make far-reaching changes to the way these services are financed and delivered.

In the meantime, we will do all we can to support local authorities. The proposals I have published today will allow local authorities to access an additional £1.5 billion for social care. This comprises £1 billion of additional grant—for both adult and children's social care—and a proposed 2% council tax precept for adult social care, which will enable councils to access a further £500 million. Some £150 million of the additional grant will be used to equalise the distributional impact of the council tax adult social care precept.

These additional resources sit on top of the existing social care package, which will continue at 2019-20 levels, and mean that local authorities will have access to over £5.5 billion of dedicated funding across adult and children's social care in 2020-21.

Core settlement resources

The provisional settlement also provides protection for vital services by increasing core settlement resources, which includes revenue support grant and business rates baseline funding levels, in line with inflation, and by continuing other key grants from 2019-20.

Council tax

The proposed referendum principles strike a balance between giving local authorities the flexibility to address service pressures, without overburdening council tax payers with excessive increases. Local authorities will therefore be able to increase council tax in 2020-21 by a core principle of up to 2%, without holding a local referendum, with a bespoke council tax referendum principle of 2% or £5, whichever is higher, for shire district councils. In addition, councils with adult social care responsibilities will be able to increase their council tax by a further 2%, on top of the core principle, to be spent exclusively on adult social care. If confirmed, this package will mean that the expected average council tax increase for 2020-21 will be the lowest since 2016-17.

New Homes Bonus

To reward local authorities for house building in their area, I can confirm that we will make a new round of allocations of the new homes bonus for 2020-21 amounting to £907 million. As part of this, I am committing an

additional £7 million to maintain the growth baseline for payments at 0.4%. We will make no legacy payments on these new allocations, but the Government will make legacy payments on allocations made in earlier years which are due to be paid in 2020-21.

It is not clear that the new homes bonus in its current form is focused on incentivising homes where they are needed most. I am therefore announcing that the Government will consult on the future of the housing incentive in the spring. This will include moving to a new, more targeted approach that rewards local authorities where they are ambitious in delivering the homes we need and which is aligned with other measures around planning performance.

Rural Services Delivery Grant

We will continue to recognise the extra costs of delivering services in rural areas and propose to maintain last year's rural services delivery grant of £81 million, which is the joint-highest paid to date. It will be distributed using the same methodology as in 2019-20, which allocated funding to the top quartile of local authorities on the "super-sparsity" indicator.

Independent Living Fund and Schools

Following the closure of the independent living fund (ILF) in June 2015, the Government agreed to continue funding pre-existing ILF arrangements until the end of 2019-20, through the former ILF recipient grant.

We can confirm that the former ILF recipient grant will continue to be paid to local authorities in 2020-21. The total value of the grant in 2020-21 will be maintained at the 2019-20 value of £160.6 million, with the same approach to individual local authority allocations. Details will be published shortly.

We recognise that the settlement is just one source of funding that local authorities need to know about. Government have now also confirmed dedicated schools grant allocations for 2020-21:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2019-12-20/HCWS2/>

Conclusion

Local government has asked us for certainty and stability from the settlement for 2020-21. This provisional settlement delivers on this, building on spending round 2019 and our recent technical consultation. It provides certainty for 2020-21 for those planning vital frontline services and provides significant extra resources where they are needed most.

[HCWS17]

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Government's Legislative Programme

The Leader of the House of Commons (Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg): Following Thursday's state opening of Parliament, and for the convenience of the House, I am listing the bills which were announced:

Agriculture Bill

Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill

Armed Forces (Legal Protections) Bill

Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill

Building Safety Bill

Counter Terrorism (Sentencing and Release) Bill
 Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill
 Domestic Abuse Bill
 Employment Bill
 Environment Bill
 European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill
 Extradition (Provisional Arrest) Bill
 Fire Safety Bill
 Fisheries Bill
 Financial Services Bill
 Health Service Safety Investigations Bill
 High Speed Rail 2 (West Midlands - Crewe) Bill
 Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (European Union Withdrawal) Bill
 Medicines and Medical Devices Bill
 National Security and Investment Bill
 NHS Funding Bill
 NHS Long Term Plan Bill
 Online Harms Bill
 Pension Schemes Bill
 Police Powers and Protections Bill
 Prisoners (Disclosure of Information About Victims) Bill
 Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Bill
 Renters' Reform Bill
 Sentencing (Pre-consolidation Amendments) Bill
 Sentencing Bill
 Serious Violence Bill
 Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill
 Telecommunications (Connectivity) Bill
 Thomas Cook Compensation Bill
 Trade Bill
 Windrush (Compensation Scheme) Bill

The programme will also include Finance Bills to implement budget policy decisions.

Detailed information about each of these bills can be accessed from the Gov.uk website at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/853886/Queen_s_Speech_December_2019_-_background_briefing_notes.pdf.

[HCWS11]

NORTHERN IRELAND

Government's Legislative Programme (Northern Ireland)

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Julian Smith): The Government's legislative programme for the first Session was outlined by Her Majesty on Thursday 19 December. This statement provides a summary of

the programme and its application to Northern Ireland. It does not include draft Bills, Law Commission Bills or Finance Bills.

The Government are committed to delivering for all its citizens, wherever they live—the nations of the United Kingdom are safer, stronger and more prosperous when working together. The legislative programme therefore contains important reforms to domestic issues that will benefit people across the Union, as well as legislation that will allow the United Kingdom to seize the opportunities afforded by the exit from the European Union.

The Government's priority in Northern Ireland is the restoration of the Executive at the earliest opportunity. Northern Ireland has now been without devolved government since January 2017. In that time, we have seen hospital waiting lists get longer, public services deteriorate, and frustration in Northern Ireland grow at the lack of an Executive. Talks to restore the institutions of the Belfast (Good Friday) agreement resumed on Monday 16 December. The talks are being held in accordance with the well-established three-stranded principle. This is the overriding priority for both the UK Government and the Irish Government. So the UK Government, working closely with the Irish Government in the normal way, will continue to intensify our efforts to put forward compromise solutions to the parties.

In the absence of an Executive, the Government are committed to taking action to ensure good governance in Northern Ireland, including, where necessary, through legislative measures.

The following Bills contained in the programme are likely to extend to Northern Ireland:

Agriculture Bill
 Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill
 Armed Forces (Legal Protections) Bill
 Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill
 Building Safety Bill
 Counter Terrorism (Sentencing and Release) Bill
 Domestic Abuse Bill
 Employment Bill
 Environment Bill
 European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill
 Extradition (Provisional Arrest) Bill
 Fisheries Bill
 Financial Services Bill
 Health Service Safety Investigations Bill
 Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (European Union Withdrawal) Bill
 Online Harms Bill
 Medicines and Medical Devices Bill
 National Security and Investment Bill
 Pension Schemes Bill
 Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Bill
 Sentencing (Pre-consolidation Amendments) Bill
 Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill
 Telecommunications (Connectivity) Bill

Thomas Cook Compensation Bill

Trade Bill

Windrush (Compensation Scheme) Bill

In the absence of a devolved Assembly and Executive, we will continue to work constructively with Northern Ireland Departments to deliver legislation which has effect in Northern Ireland. Should the devolved institutions be restored then, in line with the Sewel convention and associated practices, the Government will work constructively with the Northern Ireland Executive to secure the legislative consent of the Northern Ireland Assembly where appropriate.

[HCWS10]

PRIME MINISTER

Oversight of Investigatory Powers

The Prime Minister (Boris Johnson): On 18 July 2019, the Government published new guidance titled “The Principles relating to the detention and interviewing of detainees overseas and the passing and receipt of intelligence relating to detainees”. This will replace the existing “consolidated guidance” with effect from 1 January 2020. The new guidance is being extended to include the National Crime Agency and SO15 Metropolitan Police Service and will provide clear direction for UK personnel on their interaction with detainees held by others overseas and the handling of intelligence derived from them.

The Investigatory Powers Commissioner will continue to oversee and report on the application of the principles, and to enable this I have today issued a direction to the commissioner to keep under review compliance with the guidance by UK personnel so far as they are engaged in intelligence activities. In accordance with my obligation to publish such directions under section 230 of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016, I am now depositing a copy of the direction in the Libraries of both Houses.

[HCWS3]

SCOTLAND

Government's Legislative Programme (Scotland)

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr Alister Jack): The legislative programme for the first Session was outlined by Her Majesty on Thursday 19 December. This statement provides a summary of the programme and its application to Scotland. It does not include draft Bills, Law Commission Bills or Finance Bills.

This Government will finally get Brexit done. We have introduced the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill to implement the fantastic deal agreed by the Prime Minister and ensure our exit from the EU on 31 January. We will end the uncertainty and leave as one United Kingdom, allowing us to move on and unleash the potential of all four nations. Together, Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland are safer, stronger and more prosperous, and as such the Government remain committed to strengthening the Union.

The legislative programme for this Session will deliver on the opportunities Brexit brings for the whole of the United Kingdom. For example, the Fisheries Bill will create powers to build a sustainable, profitable UK

fishing industry as we leave the common fisheries policy and become an independent coastal state. The Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill will provide the legal framework for our future immigration system, so that we can decide who comes to this country on the basis of skills they have and the contribution they can make—not where they come from.

Getting Brexit done will allow us to focus on delivering important reforms to domestic issues through our legislative programme. The Government are at the forefront of tackling climate change, as the first major economy to legislate to end our contribution to global warming by setting a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Next year we will introduce the Environment Bill to guarantee the protection and restoration of our natural environment, putting these issues at the centre of policy making. On top of this, we are bringing world leaders to Glasgow for the United Nations 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) climate conference next year.

The following bills would apply to Scotland (either in full or in part).

Agriculture Bill
 Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill
 Armed Forces (Legal Protections) Bill
 Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill
 Building Safety Bill
 Counter Terrorism (Sentencing and Release) Bill
 Domestic Abuse Bill
 Employment Bill
 Environment Bill
 European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill
 Extradition (Provisional Arrest) Bill
 Fisheries Bill
 Financial Services Bill
 Health Service Safety Investigations Bill
 High Speed Rail 2 (West Midlands - Crewe) Bill
 Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (European Union Withdrawal) Bill
 Online Harms Bill
 Medicines and Medical Devices Bill
 National Security and Investment Bill
 Pension Schemes Bill
 Police Powers and Protections Bill
 Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Bill
 Sentencing (Pre-consolidation Amendments) Bill
 Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill
 Telecommunications (Connectivity) Bill
 Thomas Cook Compensation Bill
 Trade Bill
 Windrush (Compensation Scheme) Bill

In line with the Sewel convention and associated practices, the Government will continue to work constructively with the Scottish Government to secure the legislative consent of the Scottish Parliament where appropriate.

[HCWS9]

WALES

Government's Legislative Programme (Wales)

The Secretary of State for Wales (Simon Hart): The legislative programme for the first Session was outlined by Her Majesty on Thursday 19 December. This statement provides a summary of the programme and its application to Wales. It does not include draft Bills, Law Commission Bills or Finance Bills.

This Government will get Brexit done. We have introduced the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill to implement the deal agreed by the Prime Minister, which will ensure our exit from the EU on 31 January. We will end the uncertainty and leave as one United Kingdom, allowing us to move on and unleash the potential of all four nations. Together, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are safer, stronger and more prosperous, and as such the Government remain committed to strengthening the Union.

The legislative programme for this Session will deliver on the opportunities Brexit brings for the whole of the United Kingdom. The Government expect that the return of powers from the EU will lead to a significant increase in the decision-making powers of the devolved Administrations. It will mean that decisions and powers sit in the right place and closer to people than ever before.

Getting Brexit done will allow us to focus on delivering important domestic reform delivering benefits in Wales and across the United Kingdom. The programme includes an ambitious set of measures to support citizens across all nations of the UK.

The following bills would apply to Wales (either in full or in part).

Agriculture Bill
 Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill
 Armed Forces (Legal Protections) Bill
 Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill
 Building Safety Bill
 Counter Terrorism (Sentencing and Release) Bill
 Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill
 Domestic Abuse Bill
 Employment Bill
 Environment Bill
 European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill
 Extradition (Provisional Arrest) Bill
 Fisheries Bill
 Financial Services Bill
 Health Service Safety Investigations Bill
 High Speed Rail 2 (West Midlands - Crewe) Bill
 Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (European Union Withdrawal) Bill
 Online Harms Bill
 Medicines and Medical Devices Bill
 National Security and Investment Bill
 Pension Schemes Bill
 Police Powers and Protections Bill

Prisoners (Disclosure of Information About Victims) Bill

Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Bill

Sentencing (Pre-consolidation Amendments) Bill

Sentencing Bill

Serious Violence Bill

Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill

Telecommunications (Connectivity) Bill

Thomas Cook Compensation Bill

Trade Bill

Windrush (Compensation Scheme) Bill

The Government will continue to work constructively with the Welsh Government to secure the legislative consent of the National Assembly for Wales where appropriate.

[HCWS18]

Petitions

Friday 20 December 2019

OBSERVATIONS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE Tamworth George Bryan Centre

The petition of Kath Jones and Gwen Kingsley,

Declares that we, the undersigned, are opposed to any proposal to close the George Bryan Centre, following the fire at the George Bryan Centre on 10 February 2019; further that the centre provides vital mental health services, and is used by the local community of Tamworth and its environs.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to help rebuild and reopen the George Bryan Centre and to continue to provide vital mental health services to the community as supported by 5179 Tamworth residents.

And the petitioners remain, etc.—[*Official Report*, 5 November 2019; Vol. 667, c. 15p .]

[P002547]

Observations from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Nadine Dorries):

The Government are aware that the Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has carried out an engagement exercise to gain people's views on establishing permanent solutions for the services previously provided at the George Bryan Centre before the fire. A report on the outcomes from this exercise is expected to go to the trust's board in January.

The Together We're Better Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) is developing new models of care for mental health services in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Sustainability and transformation partnerships bring local health and care leaders together to plan around the long-term needs of local communities. The Together We're Better STP will, in 2020, carry out a formal consultation on transforming services in its area.

The Government believe that local health and care organisations are best placed to make decisions on commissioning services for their communities, working with local authorities, stakeholders and local populations to meet people's needs.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

Friday 20 December 2019

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	2WS	HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	11WS
Post-EU Energy Council Update	2WS	Local Government Finance	11WS
CABINET OFFICE	1WS	LEADER OF THE HOUSE	13WS
Advance from the Contingencies Fund	1WS	Government's Legislative Programme	13WS
Government Transparency and Accountability.....	1WS	NORTHERN IRELAND	14WS
DEFENCE	5WS	Government's Legislative Programme (Northern Ireland).....	14WS
Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report	5WS	PRIME MINISTER	16WS
Future Nuclear Deterrent Annual Update	6WS	Oversight of Investigatory Powers.....	16WS
EDUCATION	7WS	SCOTLAND	16WS
Dedicated Schools Grant: 2020-21	7WS	Government's Legislative Programme (Scotland)...	16WS
Kensington and Chelsea College.....	8WS	TREASURY	2WS
EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION	8WS	Economic Update	2WS
General Affairs Council.....	8WS	Treasury Update	2WS
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	10WS	WALES	18WS
London Croughton Annex.....	10WS	Government's Legislative Programme (Wales)	18WS
NATO Leaders Meeting.....	10WS		

PETITION

Friday 20 December 2019

	<i>Col. No.</i>
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	1P
Tamworth George Bryan Centre	1P

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
Friday 27 December 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

Friday 20 December 2019

Members Sworn [Col. 145]

European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill [Col. 146]

Motion for Second Reading—(Prime Minister)—on a Division, agreed to
Programme motion—(Mr Marcus Jones)—on a Division, agreed to

Southend: City Status [Col. 228]

Debate on motion for Adjournment

Written Statements [Col. 1WS]

Petition [Col. 1P]

Observations

Written Answers to Questions [The written answers can now be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers>]
