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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

OFFICIAL REPORT

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The first time a Member speaks to a new piece of parliamentary business, the following abbreviations are used to show their party affiliation:

Abbreviation	Party/Group
CB	Cross Bench
Con	Conservative
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
GP	Green Party
Ind Lab	Independent Labour
Ind LD	Independent Liberal Democrat
Ind SD	Independent Social Democrat
Ind UU	Independent Ulster Unionist
Lab	Labour
Lab Co-op	Labour and Co-operative Party
LD	Liberal Democrat
LD Ind	Liberal Democrat Independent
Non-afl	Non-affiliated
PC	Plaid Cymru
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

No party affiliation is given for Members serving the House in a formal capacity, the Lords spiritual, Members on leave of absence or Members who are otherwise disqualified from sitting in the House.

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House of Lords

Monday 8 July 2019

2.30 pm

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Chelmsford.

Arrangement of Business

Announcement

2.37 pm

The Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler): My Lords, as noble Lords may remember, the House agreed to a Procedure Committee report on Tuesday 21 May, part of which related to the role of the Lord Speaker and the Deputy Speakers. As a result, we will now call on business currently called on by the clerks and certain items of business not currently called on by anyone at all, such as Private Notice Questions, Statements and Urgent Question repeats. The aim is to make our proceedings more understandable to those outside the Chamber and, I might add, perhaps to some of us inside the Chamber, too. The Deputy Speakers and I would appreciate noble Lords' forbearance as we introduce these new duties. Let us start.

Soil Health

Question

2.38 pm

Asked by **Baroness Boycott**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to enhance and protect soil health in the United Kingdom.

Baroness Boycott (CB): My Lords, I am honoured to be the first person to use the new system. I beg leave to ask the Question standing in my name on the Order Paper.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Lord Gardiner of Kimble) (Con): My Lords, I declare my farming interests as set out in the register. Soil is one of our greatest assets; good soil health is essential for food production, biodiversity, carbon storage and flood protection. In April 2018, Defra introduced the farming rules for water, containing measures to prevent soil erosion and improve its management. Defra is funding a range of research, including the Soil Security Programme, which is looking into soil stability, restoration of arable soil quality and understanding and enhancing soil ecosystem services.

Baroness Boycott: I thank the noble Lord for his reply. It is very encouraging, but I shall press a little further. Industrial agriculture, which has been the norm for 70 years, damages crucial soil structures through deep ploughing. This reduces natural fertility, which necessitates using an increasing amount of

chemicals just to sustain yields. Furthermore, very deep ploughing releases CO₂, which the soil could store naturally. Conservation agriculture, where ploughing is kept to a minimum or stopped altogether, stores carbon while simultaneously limiting or even eliminating the need for chemicals. What steps are the Government taking to support this win-win practice?

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: My Lords, this will clearly be a collaborative matter between industry and government. I am very pleased that regenerative agriculture is very much the buzzword among the farming community. The two-day Groundswell conference run by the Cherry family in Hertfordshire shows the energy for reduced or minimum till, herbal leys and winter cropping. All that is an indication of the future and the Government are right behind it.

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch (Lab): My Lords, given the increased evidence of soil degradation in the UK and its importance to the very basics of human existence, why does the Government's 25-year environment plan not have headline targets for improving soil health with the funding to make it a reality, as recommended by the Natural Capital Committee?

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: My Lords, I am very pleased to say that research was commissioned in November 2018 to develop soil monitoring. It is being undertaken by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, which will work on healthy soil indicators—included in the 25-year environment plan indicator framework—and a framework for soil monitoring. It is very important that this is done.

Baroness Parminter (LD): My Lords, will the Government's forthcoming environment Bill commit to improving soil health and have the targets and metrics to deliver this?

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: My Lords, as I just said, one of the research projects is undertaking to have indicators and a framework. Good soil health provides a public benefit. It obviously provides a private benefit to farmers and food producers, but it also produces a very considerable benefit for public good. That is why it is important for it to be part of the testing and trials of the environmental land management scheme.

Baroness McIntosh of Pickering (Con): My Lords, does my noble friend agree that some of the healthiest soil is that created by a peat bog? Will he pay tribute to those who were alive to the Slowing the Flow at Pickering flood prevention project, part of which was to create a peat bog, which can take up to 200 years to form. Are the Government planning to create more peat bogs as part of the public good, to be announced in due course?

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: My Lords, as part of the England Peat Strategy, and the research we are undertaking feeding into it, we are also establishing a lowland agricultural peat task force. The Adaptation Sub-Committee of the Committee on Climate Change

[LORD GARDINER OF KIMBLE]

has suggested that there is a loss of peat soils, particularly in the East Anglian fens—where there is big production of food—but I also commend Slowing the Flow at Pickering, another example of what we do in restoring the natural ecosystem and managing flooding.

Lord Carrington (CB): My Lords, I declare my interests as a farmer, as set out in the register. As the Minister knows, soil is in private ownership unless the land is publicly owned. Accordingly, the Government need to make protection of the soil a public benefit under the Agriculture Bill for their policies to be successful. That entails management and measurement of the actions introduced to improve the soil and the land concerned. As with the technical solutions on the Northern Irish border, farmers are not aware of any tested measurement tools that would achieve this.

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: My Lords, in a number of earlier replies I suggested that work on this is ongoing. A considerable number of farmers across the land are involved in tests and trials, which will be rolled out. In providing public money for public benefits, we need to ensure that they hit the optimum. Obviously, the farmers want the optimum, but in the investment of public money, we also need an optimum in terms of the restoration and enhancement of the environment.

The Countess of Mar (CB): My Lords, the Minister mentioned minimum till in an earlier answer. This frequently involves the extensive use of roundup. Can he tell the House what research is being done on the effects of roundup on the micro-organisms, which are so important to the development of good soil?

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The noble Countess is right that part of min-till or no-till is that glyphosate is required because of the accumulation of weeds. We in the department will always act on the best independent scientific evidence available, and glyphosate is on the market because it is deemed safe.

Lord Morgan (Lab): My Lords, the Minister has not mentioned devolution in this connection. Can he make some observations about its importance for the Government's plans?

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: My Lords, I did not raise it because soil is a devolved matter and it will therefore be for the other Administrations to work on this. All I can say is that soil is an asset of great value across the country. In Defra's collaborations and discussions with all Ministers from all the Administrations, soil and its health are clearly of national interest—by that, I mean for the United Kingdom.

Baroness Kramer (LD): My Lords, forgive me if this is because of my lack of understanding but when the Minister answered my noble friend Lady Parminter, who questioned whether measures would be included in the Bill, he said a lot of good things about the measures. However, I did not understand whether they were to be in the Bill or not. Can he possibly clarify?

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The environment Bill has yet to be published while the Agriculture Bill is in the public domain; it is in the other place. In the payment of public money for public goods, we intend to set out clearly what would be required for that money to be received by landowners and farmers to achieve that public benefit.

Carbon Budgets Question

2.46 pm

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to adjust carbon budgets in the light of past performance and the Paris Agreement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Lord Henley) (Con): My Lords, our existing carbon budgets are already among the most ambitious in the world. They continue to set the right level of challenge for the years ahead. Our priority is to deliver against these stretching targets through our clean growth strategy.

Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb (GP): One of the ways that we as a nation are cheating on our carbon budget at the moment is by importing some of the most polluting goods from abroad, which means that the countries producing them carry the carbon emission burden. Will the Government now commit to capturing those offshore emissions so that we can understand fully how polluting we are as a nation?

Lord Henley: My Lords, I do not accept the noble Baroness's premise that we are cheating; we are following international rules on this matter. If we wanted to change in the manner that she suggests, which might be a way ahead, it would be worth doing only if we had international agreement from all sides.

Lord Teverson (LD): My Lords, in its report at the beginning of May the Committee on Climate Change made it clear that we had to "ramp up" our efforts in saving and getting carbon out of our economy quite substantially. It particularly criticised the Government's target of ceasing the sales of diesel and petrol vehicles in 2040. Should we not get real here and say that if we are to meet our targets that date has to be brought forward, as many other nations have done, to 2030?

Lord Henley: My Lords, we have ramped up what we are doing; that is why, last week, we brought forward the order that moved us to a legally binding target of net zero by 2050, in line with the advice from the climate change committee. The committee made no suggestion that we should get rid of petrol and diesel cars by 2040, a very substantial change which would cause major problems for the whole automotive industry. I believe that the target we have set is about right.

Lord Faulkner of Worcester (Lab): My Lords, what role will carbon offsetting play in the Government's plans?

Lord Henley: Obviously, that will continue to be available but this goes back to the original supplementary question asked by the noble Baroness, Lady Jones. If we want to make any further changes to how we measure international emissions in relation to what we might import, we would have to deal with that internationally.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (Con): My Lords, can my noble friend explain to me how it makes sense to cut down trees in North America, including Canada, turn them into chips, ship them across the Atlantic to Liverpool and then across the country to a power station so as to burn them instead of coal, while at the same time arguing that people should get rid of their wood-burning stoves?

Lord Henley: My Lords, my noble friend is slightly wide of the Question, but I accept that shipping wood across the Atlantic in dirty burning boats is sometimes not the best way to go about things—although, in the transition to getting rid of burning coal, it is a great improvement.

Lord West of Spithead (Lab): My Lords, one of the best forms of energy for carbon budgets is nuclear. Our civil nuclear programme seems to be in complete disarray. What will we do to get it back on track, so that we can provide a third of the power the country wants from nuclear, which was the Government's position?

Lord Henley: My Lords, I assure the noble Lord that nuclear will continue to play a major part in what we are doing. He is right that it provides useful power with little carbon produced. We will continue to keep nuclear as an option, as I have made clear on a number of occasions.

Lord Stevenson of Balmacara (Lab): My Lords, we welcome the Government's commitment to reduce carbon to zero by 2050, but we lack the detail of how it will be achieved. The answers today fall into the same trap. Is it not correct that the department has already published a report that says that carbon targets will be missed in the period 2023-27, and will be even worse in 2028-32? What proposals will the Government actually bring forward?

Lord Henley: My Lords, we met our first two carbon budgets. We are on track to deliver over 90% of our required performance for the fourth and fifth carbon budgets. We will look at what the Committee on Climate Change recommends for the sixth in due course. I hope it sets meaningful targets that we can meet.

Lord Geddes (Con): In the context of this Question, could my noble friend opine on the future of tidal power?

Lord Henley: My Lords, tidal power has been discussed at some length in several debates in this House. Again, we made it clear that we will look at options for tidal power, but it must be competitive against other forms. I cannot remember the precise figures for the most

recent scheme that we looked at, in Wales, but it was going to produce power at around three times the cost of nuclear.

Baroness Hayman (CB): My Lords, another less expensive form of renewable energy is wind. Are the Government now going to look seriously at changing the regulations that stop us from having onshore wind production, as well as offshore?

Lord Henley: The noble Baroness ought to look at the success of offshore wind. I am trying to remember how many years we have to go back to see how the price of that has come down. The opportunities for the price of offshore wind coming down are surely far greater than for onshore wind, because of the scale of the windmills that one can build at sea, compared to on land. We have no plans to review that policy.

Lord Berkeley (Lab): My Lords, the Minister has already mentioned shipping, but what about air services? Air and shipping together must be the most polluting forms of transport in the world. I know they are international, but is it not about time we included both within these targets?

Lord Henley: My Lords, we do include them in the targets, as I made clear, but emissions from domestic flights and shipping are covered by domestic legislation. The Committee on Climate Change accounts for international flights and shipping in its advice setting out our interim carbon budgets, and this will continue for the more ambitious targets ahead.

Smart Meters Question

2.53 pm

Asked by **Lord Lennie**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the roll-out of smart meters.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Lord Henley) (Con): My Lords, the smart meter rollout in Britain is making good progress, with over 14.3 million smart and advanced meters operating, as of the end of March 2019. The programme remains on track to offer smart meters to every home and small business by the end of 2020.

Lord Lennie (Lab): I thank the Minister for that Answer—just the 50 million or so short of target. Given the promised financial benefits to hard-pressed customers and the obvious global advantages of moving to a low-carbon economy associated with SMETS 2, why do the Government persist in leaving the implementation of this policy to the energy suppliers? Can the Minister state clearly why Ofgem rejected five of the major suppliers' rollout plans for 2019 as being inadequate? Do the smart meters just not do what it says on the tin?

Lord Henley: My Lords, I had better write to the noble Lord with greater detail about Ofgem's comments. It has completed the 2019 review and believes that suppliers are on track to meet our commitment that every household should have had the offer by 2020.

Baroness Wilcox (Con): I should refer to my entry on the system before I admit that I have something to do with consumers. I want to congratulate the Minister on having had the courage even to get suppliers started on the rollout of smart meters. I would be interested to learn whether he has helped them in any way so far and, if so, whether he will do more.

Lord Henley: My noble friend brings great expertise to dealing with the interests of consumers. I can assure her that the programme regularly engages with consumer groups such as Citizens Advice. It has a dedicated consumer issues forum, which they and other consumer groups regularly attend. My honourable friend the Minister for Consumer Affairs has regular meetings with the appropriate bodies.

Baroness Maddock (LD): My Lords, how many people who had first-generation smart meters came up against problems when they tried to change their supplier? It was anticipated that people would make savings when they had smart meters. Have those savings reached the Government's anticipated level?

Lord Henley: My Lords, I cannot help the noble Baroness on the first figure she asked for, but if some figures are available, I shall certainly write to her. Earlier meters will be enrolled in the Data Communications Company infrastructure by the end of 2020, which I hope will help on that front. We are expecting to provide bill savings of some £1.2 billion by 2030, making the programme a very good investment for the country.

Lord Harris of Haringey (Lab): My Lords, I refer to my interests in the register. The network of smart meters will obviously be part of the so-called internet of things. What assessment have the Government made of the cybersecurity of smart meters, of the extent to which they could be turned into a sort of super bot to attack all parts of our infrastructure or commerce, and of the instability in demand for electricity they could create by all of them switching on and off at the same time?

Lord Henley: My Lords, the noble Lord is quite right to point to dangers on that front. The Government will continue to keep the situation under review, but I can assure the noble Lord that we are not aware of any concerns.

Lord Watts (Lab): My Lords, what will happen to the market if all customers switch to the cheapest provider?

Lord Henley: I hope that the market will be able to adapt to that and deal with it as it ought to; that is what markets are about. I know that noble Lords opposite do not like markets, but, in the main, they work rather well and provide opportunities for consumers to move to cheaper prices. That is why the number of energy suppliers has gone up dramatically, with more than 60 now operating in the country.

The Countess of Mar (CB): My Lords, the Minister said that the objective was to get all domestic premises fitted with smart meters. I understand that smart meters work only if there is mobile phone reception. There are quite large number of pockets of the country where there is no such reception. What is the solution?

Lord Henley: My Lords, the Government's commitment was to make sure that all premises were offered smart meters, but the noble Countess points out a problem with mobile reception—it affects me in the north-west of England—and it is certainly something that we will have to look at.

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Lab): My Lords, the noble Lord said in reply to the noble Baroness, Lady Maddock, that savings of £1.8 billion are expected to be generated through the use of smart meters—if I have got that figure wrong, I apologise. Will he translate that into a figure that might mean rather more to people who have smart meters—for instance, the percentage reduction in their bills that they might expect if they have a smart meter installed?

Lord Henley: My Lords, the figure I quoted was bill savings of some £1.2 billion, but I accept that the noble Baroness misheard me. We expect a net benefit of some £5.7 billion from the rollout as a whole. Again, I would prefer to write to the noble Baroness with estimates as to what individuals could save, but obviously, it will depend on how the individual makes use of the smart meter. The point of the smart meter is that it makes it easier for the individual to keep an eye on their electricity or gas use and therefore to make the appropriate savings we would all like, both in the use of energy, which is important, and in money for the individual.

Lord Hamilton of Epsom (Con): My Lords, my noble friend has commented on the value of markets. Will he tell us about the success of capping energy prices? I gather that most customers are now paying the higher tariff and prices have gone up, rather than down.

Lord Henley: My Lords, I think my noble friend is wrong—capping has been a success. We announced that it was only a temporary measure because the markets were not working, but I, like my noble friend, want to make sure that the markets work because that is the best way forward.

Israel Defense Forces *Question*

3.01 pm

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the treatment of Palestinian children by the Israel Defense Forces.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) (Con): My Lords, we continue to have strong concerns about reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention and regularly make representations to the Israeli authorities. Most recently, officials from our embassy in Tel Aviv raised our concerns with the Israeli Ministry of Justice on 6 June, and we continue to seek improvements to Israeli practices. We also regularly press Israel on its use of live fire, particularly against children.

Baroness Tonge (Non-Aff): I thank the Minister for that reply, but Israeli soldiers are still firing directly at unarmed children 200 to 300 metres away from the Gaza fence, using high-velocity bullets aimed at their knees. I get my information from volunteer doctors from this country who go out there from time to time. Unlike ordinary bullets, these cause very severe bone and tissue damage and suck dirt and fabric remnants into the wounds. Reconstruction is impossible because of the lack of supplies, antibiotics and even morphine. It means that more than 200 young people, half of them children below the age of 18, have had limbs amputated in Gaza in the last year. Before he tries to blame Hamas, will he tell us why the IDF has to use such ammunition on children for crowd control?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, I have already made it clear that we have constantly and consistently raised the issue of the use of live ammunition against children with the Israeli authorities. The noble Baroness will also be aware that, during my last visit to Israel, I raised this issue directly when I met the Justice Minister, particularly the issue of children in detention. From the UK Government's perspective, my honourable friend the new Minister for the Middle East recently made Israel and Palestine his first visit, during which he announced additional funding of £1.6 million to the World Health Organization, which will go towards alleviating humanitarian suffering, particularly in Gaza.

Baroness Deech (CB): Will the Minister equally disapprove of the way Hamas uses children? In Gaza recently, children were given the day off school and bussed to the fence. They were bribed and used as human shields. They have been used as suicide bombers, and rockets are deliberately placed in kindergartens. Does the blame not lie equally with Hamas, if not more so?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, anyone anywhere in the world who uses children as human shields or in such a despicable manner is to be condemned. I have consistently said that it is the Government's position that the situation with Hamas cannot continue. Hamas failed to recognise the State of Israel, failed to negotiate and failed to recognise the right of Israel to exist. Let us get that on the table. Let us get the right of recognition of everyone in the region to exist and we will move forward practically and productively: we will save children's lives, if it is done with the right ambition in mind.

Lord Touhig (Lab): My Lords, hundreds of Palestinian youngsters have been encouraged by the terrorist organisation Hamas to commit acts of provocation against Israeli forces but, when arrested, they do not have the benefit of lawyers and are tried in military courts. I am a lifelong supporter of the State of Israel, but is Britain reminding the Government of Israel of the vision of its founders, who would be appalled by this abuse of human rights?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Again, the issue around the children is deplorable and I condemn that unequivocally, along with anyone who uses children for any such means, whether they seek to indoctrinate them or use them for extremist causes and put them in the front line. Such children need to be protected. The United Kingdom Government provide assistance in this regard, not just on this issue of detention but in terms of legal representation, and we continue to lobby the Israeli authorities on the specific conditions of the detention of minors. I believe, according to my most recent figure, that there are currently 205 children from the Palestinian community in detention in Israel.

Baroness Northover (LD): My Lords, does the Minister agree that, in spite of tensions in the Middle East, including the pressure on the Iran nuclear deal, the world must focus on seeking to bring about a resolution to the Israel-Palestine conflict? Does he agree that any resolution such as the Jared Kushner plan, which apparently seeks a settlement without involving the Palestinians in the discussions, cannot be the route to take?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I totally agree with the noble Baroness that any plan for alleviating the plight of the suffering, albeit an economic plan, must include a political settlement. Our position is clear: we need to see a viable two-state solution to resolving the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. We will continue to lobby and campaign for that.

Lord Livingston of Parkhead (Con): My Lords, would my noble friend agree that, while the Israel Defense Forces are not perfect, the obsession with focusing on them—despite their being the most moral and professional army in the Middle East—is very strange? At the same time, one must also focus on, for example, the Palestinian authorities having more than 30 schools named after terrorists who have murdered Israelis. These issues have to be looked at as well.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As we have consistently made clear, Israel has a right to self-defence. We have also repeatedly called for Hamas to stop firing rockets into Israel. Whether a life is lost on the Israeli side or on the Palestinian side, we are equally appalled. We must work towards a resolution of that conflict. It has gone on far too long.

Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab): My Lords, the fact is that the hyperbole of President Trump—the “deal of the century”—will simply not happen if the PLO and the Israeli Government do not sit round the table

[LORD COLLINS OF HIGHBURY]
together. Peace talks need to involve everyone. What are Her Majesty's Government doing to ensure that we work with our allies to get everyone round the table to talk for peace?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, let me assure the noble Lord that we were represented at the recent Bahrain conference. The point the noble Lord makes about ensuring that all parties to the conflict, including the Palestinians and Israelis, get around a table to find a two-state solution, with a secure, viable and progressive state in Israel—recognising its security issues—and at the same time a state for the Palestinians, should also be the primary objective. We continue to work on that.

Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Bill

Second Reading

3.09 pm

Moved by Baroness Evans of Bowes Park

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Lord Privy Seal (Baroness Evans of Bowes Park) (Con): My Lords, I shall wait while noble Lords depart.

I am delighted to open the Second Reading debate on the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Bill. The Bill has been a long time coming and builds on the work of many in this House and the other place. I pay tribute to my predecessor, my noble friend Lady Stowell of Beeston, to the noble Baroness, Lady Smith of Basildon, and to the noble and learned Lord, Lord Wallace of Tankerness, the noble Lord, Lord Laming, my noble friend Lord Deighton and the noble Lord, Lord Carter of Coles, for the work they did on the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, which was vital in paving the way for the Bill. I also thank my noble friends Lady Byford and Lord Brabazon of Tara, the noble Lords, Lord Blunkett and Lord Stunell, and the noble Baronesses, Lady Warwick of Undercliffe and Lady Prashar, for their work on the joint pre-legislative Select Committee that looked at the Bill. All their recommendations were carefully considered and led to a number of changes.

The Bill gives effect to the resolutions passed in Parliament last year putting in place a governance structure that will ensure that the long-term programme of R&R work can be undertaken. It establishes the statutory bodies that will be responsible for addressing the risks and dangers that currently affect this building, as well as its restoration and renewal.

Noble Lords will be well aware of the horrific fire that swept through Notre Dame only a few months ago, which served as a stark reminder of the risks to this historic and iconic building. Here, we have a team of 24 staff employed to carry out fire patrols around the clock, and we have put in place complex fire mitigation measures. Other issues that have affected the Palace in recent months include falling masonry, water leaks, floods, sewage leaks, lighting and power

outages, and toilet closures. Whatever individual position Members may take on particular elements of this programme, I think your Lordships would all agree that significant maintenance work cannot be delayed any longer. We must ensure that the Palace of Westminster is restored and protected, so that it may continue to serve as the home of the UK Parliament for generations to come.

In 2012, both commissions considered the option of relocating Parliament outside the Palace of Westminster in a new purpose-built building, they but decided against such a proposal. The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster also considered temporarily relocating Parliament outside London during the works, but concluded that it carried an unacceptable burden of cost and inconvenience.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Lab Co-op): Will the Lord Privy Seal confirm that no costings were carried out or estimates taken of the proposal to build a new Parliament elsewhere?

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: Obviously, a number of reports have looked into this issue, which have considered a range of issues. Today, we are putting into legislative effect the Motions that were passed by this House and the other place, which affirmed that the guarantee that both Houses would return to their historic Chambers as soon as possible should be incorporated in primary legislation. That is what we are doing as part of the Bill.

This is an important, technical Bill which facilitates the next crucial stage of the R&R programme. It consists of 15 clauses and 4 schedules. It establishes the parliamentary works sponsor body, which will have overall responsibility for the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster and will act as the client on behalf of both Houses. It also provides for the formation of a delivery authority as a company limited by guarantee. The delivery authority will formulate proposals in relation to the restoration works and ensure their operational delivery. The sponsor body already exists in shadow form, and I thank those Peers who sit on its board: my noble friend Lord Deighton, the noble Lords, Lord Carter of Coles and Lord Geidt, and the noble Baroness, Lady Scott of Needham Market.

Drawing on best practice from the successful delivery of the London 2012 Olympics, the bodies will be independent and able to operate effectively in the commercial sphere, bringing the expertise and capability needed for a project of this scale.

Lord Adonis (Lab): What are the latest cost estimates for the restoration and renewal work?

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: The purpose of the Bill is to set up the bodies that will do the detailed costings of the work. I will come to the outline business case, of which obviously that will be a crucial part, towards the end of my remarks.

The Bill also provides for the relationship between Parliament and the sponsor body, including consultation with Members. This is a hugely significant and costly

project, so both the Government and Parliament must ensure that it represents and delivers value for money for the taxpayer.

The Bill establishes a Parliamentary Works Estimates Commission, made up of two Members of this House and two from the other place, which will lay the sponsor body's estimates of expenditure before the House of Commons and play a role in reviewing the sponsor body's expenditure. It is through these annual estimates that the programme will be funded and approved by MPs. Further financial controls will be put in place, including a requirement that the estimates commission consults the Treasury on the annual estimates for the funding of the R&R programme and has regard to any subsequent advice.

The sponsor body is made up of parliamentarians representing both Houses and includes experts in running similar large-scale projects such as the Olympic Games, and, in terms of heritage, includes the former chief executive of Historic England. The delivery authority will be made up of architects, engineers and individuals with programme management, commercial and contracting experience. They will formulate the designs, costs and timings of the works, with proposals brought forward to Parliament for approval in 2021. We are confident that the arrangements being put in place will deliver the necessary restoration works and at the same time provide reassurance that taxpayers' money will be protected.

The passage of the Bill in the other place was swift, with Second Reading passing without division and Committee completed in a single day. The Bill also passed Third Reading without a Division.

On Report, four amendments were made to the Bill. Two amendments were supported by the Government. The first required the sponsor body, in exercising its functions, to have regard to the need to ensure that educational and other facilities are provided for people visiting the Palace of Westminster. The second provides for the automatic transfer of external members of the shadow sponsor body to the statutory body. This will bring continuity to the sponsor body, while providing an opportunity for it to evaluate its needs for its membership.

Two amendments, resisted by the Government due to deficient drafting and our view that they were not required in primary legislation, passed on Division at Report. One requires the delivery authority to have regard to companies' policies on corporate social responsibility when allocating contracts. We accept the principle of this amendment, but it will require some minor and technical changes to make it workable.

The second places a duty on the sponsor body and the delivery authority to ensure that the economic benefits of the parliamentary building works are delivered across the UK. The Government resisted this amendment as it contravenes public procurement law: specifically, that location is not something that you can have regard to when allocating contracts. Again, we accept the principle behind the amendment, but it will be necessary to revise its wording to ensure that it does not cut across procurement law obligations.

Finally, a couple of matters were raised on Report which the Government agreed to consider further in this House. First, Members in the other place considered

whether the sponsor body should have regard to the need to conserve and sustain the architectural and historical significance of the Palace of Westminster, including the outstanding universal value of the world heritage site. The Government are absolutely committed that the work undertaken will ensure that the architectural, archaeological and historical significance of the Palace of Westminster is preserved for future generations, but we have been of the view that the best way to achieve this is through existing planning processes.

We have also been mindful of including the UNESCO heritage status of the Palace of Westminster in the Bill, given that it also covers Westminster Abbey and St. Margaret's Church. We must be careful that, as the Joint Committee that undertook pre-legislative scrutiny said, explicit provision which aims to protect the heritage of the Palace does not,

“override opportunities to renew and enhance its purpose”.

The Government will therefore bring forward an amendment that strikes a balance between the preservation and protection of the Palace's heritage, while delivering the renovations and accessibility modifications that we all want to improve the functionality of the Palace.

Secondly, there was considerable interest in the other place for the sponsor body to publish an annual audit of companies awarded contracts to establish their size and geographical location. The Government are keen for the benefits of the parliamentary building works to be shared across the UK, particularly among SMEs. Under the provisions of the Bill, the sponsor body already has to prepare and publish a report at least once a year on the parliamentary building works and the progress that has been made towards their completion. We will bring an amendment to place a further requirement on the reporting of contracts on the sponsor body. Throughout the passage of the Bill, the Government have sought to work collaboratively with parliamentarians to ensure both that the right arrangements are in place to deliver the restoration and renewal of the Palace and that these reflect the will of Parliament. I look forward to continuing in that spirit with noble Lords.

Before I conclude, I will turn briefly to the issue of this House's temporary decant during the restoration and renewal of the Palace, which I know is of great interest to noble Lords. As I stated earlier, the Motion passed by this House in early 2018 was clear that, as part of R&R, we would temporarily leave the Palace so that the works could be done more quickly and in a cost-effective way. As noble Lords will know, the Bill is concerned not with the details of your Lordships' accommodation during the period of refurbishment of the Palace but with the governance arrangements required for the successful delivery of the R&R programme. The sponsor body established on a statutory footing by the Bill will be responsible for delivering the decant accommodation for the House of Lords, in line with your Lordships' requirements. It will be for the sponsor body, as part of the outline business case that it expects to present to Parliament in 2021, to set out the detailed, costed arrangements.

I assure noble Lords that the shadow sponsor body is keen to hear from Members about the proposed decant accommodation, and this engagement has already

[BARONESS EVANS OF BOWES PARK]

begun in earnest. Last year's survey was followed by individual interviews with more than 150 Members of your Lordships' House, and a similar number from the other place, to gain more detailed views on Members' ideas, priorities and concerns around decant; that has continued with smaller, focused discussions on particular design themes. The results of this engagement are currently being reviewed and will feed into further work as part of the programme. In addition, the chair of the shadow sponsor body has written to APPG and committee chairs in both Houses to seek their feedback on the sort of facilities that they may require in the future. Plans for the decant of the House of Lords are in their early stages and there will be ample further opportunity for Members to feed into the process—I encourage all noble Lords to do so. I understand that the R&R programme team will carry out further engagement with noble Lords in the autumn.

The Bill is critical to the next stages of development of this important parliamentary project.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (Con): I am grateful for the ongoing consultation with Members about the decant process. Can my noble friend explain how that process will be accountable to this House?

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: As I said, there will be consultation during the process but, ultimately, the sponsor body needs to bring an outline business case—the final proposal with costings, details and decant options—back to both Houses. Both Houses will vote on it, and that will be the final decision. Today, we are doing important work to enable the detailed work that noble Lords are obviously incredibly interested in, but it will return to Parliament for a final vote.

To repeat myself slightly, once the sponsor body and delivery authority have been established in statute, they will design an outline business case that the sponsor body must bring back to Parliament for approval and which will set out the scope, timing, delivery method and cost of the works. Only once the outline business case has been approved will the sponsor body and delivery authority be able to commence the substantial works on the Palace.

I very much hope that noble Lords will support the Bill's timely passage so that we can begin to undertake the vital and increasingly pressing work to ensure that the Palace of Westminster is fit to serve as the home—

Lord Kerr of Kinlochard (CB): This may be a question to which everybody else in the House knows the answer. Can the Minister tell us why neither the delivery authority nor the sponsor body will have a duty to have regard to heritage and preserving the fabric of the building?

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: I hope I made clear earlier that we have agreed that we will bring forward an amendment in this House that will look at putting heritage in the Bill. As I also mentioned, we need to balance that with making sure that any renewal and restoration of the building takes into account modernisation and things that other noble Lords are

kept on—for instance, improving disability access and ensuring that it is open and available to the public who want to come. We will bring forward an amendment in this House during the passage of the Bill to achieve, I hope, that balance. On that note, I beg to move.

3.25 pm

Lord Blunkett (Lab): My Lords, it is my privilege to follow the Leader of the House and to reiterate her appreciation for the enormous work and commitment that have gone into getting to this stage of the programme, including by those who undertake the thankless task of serving on the shadow sponsor body. I was privileged to serve on the Joint Committee scrutinising the draft legislation. I went on it out of a sense of duty rather than enthusiasm, but discovered that this was not a sideline or deeply boring and irrelevant to our work, but absolutely central to the future of our democracy and the well-being of our democratic processes.

I shall just pick up on the point the noble Baroness made at the beginning on the fire at Notre-Dame. Following the fire, Antony Gormley said that it should be the beginning of the future, not the end of the past. We should think about this programme over the next 16 or 20 years as the beginning of a new future, building on the heritage of this building, retaining that heritage and ensuring the restoration of those parts of the building that are literally crumbling under us—but also seeing it as a way of demonstrating to the public during the process that we can engage, gain their consent and ensure that they believe this is part of democratic renewal, not just renewal of the pipework and the wiring, critical though that is.

William Blake talked of the “mind-forg'd manacles” that confine us in how we see things, and I hope we can set those aside. After all, we are at a time when democracy is literally fragile. We have the words of the President of the Russian Federation just a couple of weeks ago about the nature of what he saw as the crumbling of liberal democracy. I believe that what we do in spending billions of pounds of public money on the restoration of this building has to be accompanied by renewal. The stonework, pipework and wiring—the preparation of a building fit for people to work in, whether parliamentarians or staff—goes hand in hand with how people consent to the investment that makes it possible. In other words, the way we carry this out can either alienate people still further or engage them in believing that our institution—the two Houses in the Palace of Westminster—is fundamental to a functioning democracy, and that we wish to save it for the future.

When Barry and Pugin did their work, they immediately found major obstacles in the way of even the most modest renewal and improvement, which then took place over the subsequent 10, 20 and 30 years. I am grateful to one of our clerks, Philippa Tudor, for the work she has done on the history. It is instrumental in understanding how you balance the heritage with the design of democracy for the future. This picks up the last point the noble Baroness made in answering a question: if we do not get this right, we could end up with art deco toilets from the 1920s preserved at the expense of actually allowing people access.

I want to make three crucial points. I hope we can reach rapidly consensus on these because I do not wish to hold the Bill up; it is important that we get on with it and allow the shadow sponsor body to take on its full role effectively. In doing so, however, we have to set aside the notion that while Parliament is responsible, as the controlling mind, to determine what the sponsor body should do and how it should see its work—as we found out on the Joint Committee—we cannot then contradict that by saying that there can be nothing in the Bill to give not only a clear steer to the sponsor body but a signal to the world outside that we know what we are doing and are doing it on their behalf. If I might say so, the intellectual somersaults done by the noble Baroness and the former Leader of the House of the Commons in their letter, particularly in points 2.7 and 2.8, need to be gently, consensually set aside.

Three things are important here. The first, which I hope we can all agree on, is disability access. At the moment, this is phrased as being about access “to” the building and not access “within” the building. I do not often speak publicly about disability; I have tried to do what I have done over the decades quietly behind the scenes. However, those who think they are doing the right thing on behalf of people with disabilities need to consult them more closely.

The second important point is about the participation directorate: the education service, outreach and, separately, the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, all of which do an absolutely excellent job. Let us try to ensure that they do that job with an eye on reaching out, rather than just on people coming in; it is about not just the footfall but the future.

Finally, the renewal element that I have spoken about must understand and engage with the political process of the House, so that it reaches out and engages people in whatever way it can. I must stress that this is not about prescribing anything to the sponsor body. The mantra in the letter sent out was: “Please don’t prescribe”. I do not intend that we should prescribe but rather, to change the word slightly, that we should be in the business of promoting.

There is a real lesson from that great comedy “Yes Minister”. When I was in Cabinet, I showed a wonderful episode to Ministers and senior civil servants at an away weekend. It was about a newly built hospital that was functioning brilliantly; it was on budget, there were no industrial relations problems and everyone was happy. The only problem was that it did not have any patients. Crucially, this Bill should not only ensure that staff and parliamentarians can do their work, that the public can visit and that the heritage is retained; it should also be a symbol of democratic renewal. If we get this right, we can play just a part in ensuring that we lift the mistrust, set aside the alienation and go forward in restoring, renewing and underpinning our democracy for the future.

3.33 pm

Lord Newby (LD): My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness the Leader of the House for introducing the Bill and the noble Lord, Lord Blunkett, for such an eloquent explanation of the broader issues that the Bill relates to. On these Benches, we very much welcome

and support the Bill and hope it will make speedy progress through this House. In particular, I hope it can be concluded during our September sitting, so that it will not be delayed should we find ourselves having an early general election.

The Bill is long overdue. It is ironic that it took a fire at Notre Dame to spur the Government into action. It is undoubtedly the case that, if the Palace of Westminster were not the Parliament, parliamentarians would have been stridently calling for its renewal for decades. It is also worth remembering that this very Palace was itself born out of the destruction by fire of the old palace in 1834—I hope that history will not repeat itself. As the Leader of the House has pointed out, there are, fortunately, 24-hour fire patrols in operation, and I place on record my thanks to the fire officers and other staff who work tirelessly to keep our Parliament safe, often in trying circumstances.

Thousands of people work in this building and more than 1 million people enter the Parliamentary Estate every year as visitors, constituents, tourists, to visit Select Committee meetings and for other purposes. We have a duty to protect them and to ensure that their health and safety is not compromised when they are here.

As the noble Baroness said, this Bill gives effect to the resolutions passed in both Houses last year by establishing the statutory bodies that will be responsible for the works to restore and renew the Parliamentary Estate. The sponsor body will have overall responsibility for the programme and will act as a single client on behalf of both Houses. My noble friend Lady Scott of Needham Market has already been doing sterling work as a member of the shadow sponsor body and will speak further about its future role.

The Bill gives the sponsor body the power to establish a delivery authority, to make proposals in relation to the works and to ensure their operational delivery. As has been explained, this approach was used successfully for the London Olympics. I agree that this is the best structure to deliver the programme in a way that commands the confidence of parliamentarians, staff and the public and, most importantly, is accountable to them.

While the proposed structure is sensible, of itself it does not deal with all the potential scope for meddling in the work of the sponsor board by Members and staff of both Houses. It is vital to minimise this if we are to avoid the situation described so brilliantly by Caroline Shenton in her book *Mr Barry’s War*, where continuing delays were caused to the building of this Palace by an interminable number of Select Committees examining specific parts of the design and construction process.

So I am pleased to see that, under Clause 6, the parliamentary relationship agreement should contain provision about consultation and co-operation between the sponsor body and the corporate officers of both Houses, and that Clause 5 provides for a consultation strategy with members. Transparency and consultation will be the key to the success of this programme going forward smoothly.

I have spoken previously of my hope that the programme will be ambitious. We should not simply confine ourselves to repairing an old building. We

[LORD NEWBY]

should instead, through this project, show the vision that we have for a 21st-century Parliament that is a modern workplace, family-friendly and user-friendly. In doing so, we must ensure, as the noble Lord, Lord Blunkett, said, that huge improvements are made so that those with disabilities not only have proper access to this place but find it a congenial and easy working environment. We are all proud of the fact that Parliament has a long tradition of openness, and I hope that the programme will also develop better facilities for visitors and students who wish to see us in operation, not only from the UK but from across the globe.

If we want to ensure that Westminster is truly a Parliament for the future, then we must also consider the environmental impact of the works. I hope that, working together, Parliament, the sponsor body and the delivery authority can produce a cleaner and greener Palace.

We must also consider the wider legacy of the works, with investment in skills across the country and the importance of SMEs having a chance to work on the programme. My noble and learned friend Lord Wallace of Tankerness, to whom I pay tribute for his work on the first Joint Committee on R&R, will speak further about this. Although I accept the problems the noble Baroness referred to about specifying the need for geographic diversity in contracting, it is important that, as with the Olympics, we give opportunities to companies large and small across the country to take part in the redevelopment of this place.

While referring to spreading the benefits of the restoration and renewal across the country, I hope that during the decant process it will prove possible to loan the works of art which are currently on display in the Palace to institutions across the country. In this way, many people who would not otherwise have any chance to see any of them will have a chance to do so, and it might save on storage costs.

Returning to the content of the Bill, I was pleased that so many of the recommendations of the Joint Committee on the draft Bill were accepted by the Government. I thank my noble friend Lord Stunell for his work on that committee. Of those which were not, I do not think any were of fundamental importance. While we may want to discuss them again in Committee, I do not think that that should delay the passage of the Bill.

We must now get on and do this. The Palace is part of the UNESCO Westminster world heritage site. It is our obligation to maintain it for future generations, and with this Bill we are taking the crucial next step towards achieving that most important goal.

3.40 pm

Lord Hope of Craighead (CB): My Lords, how good it is at last to have before us a really chunky Bill. I am tempted to say that it is something that one might get one's teeth into, but that, so far as I am concerned, would give the wrong impression because this is not a Bill that needs to be torn apart but a Bill which deserves to be supported, because it is a necessary Bill. The decision that we should in principle proceed with this project was taken by both Houses almost 18 months ago, as has been pointed out. What we need to do now

is to set up the machinery to put it into motion. Of course, like all machinery, it needs to be fit for purpose if it is to do its job. The question is whether it meets that standard. That, I suggest, is what we need to consider today.

The key provisions are to be found in Clauses 2 to 7. The use of a sponsor body, to represent the interests of Parliament and assume overall responsibility for the building works, and of a delivery authority to formulate proposals and provide the operational delivery of the works, is a tried and tested structure, as the noble Lord, Lord Newby, pointed out, ideally suited for major projects of this kind. It is clear that nothing can be done, other than in relation to preparatory works, until the delivery authority's proposals have been approved by Parliament. Overall control will remain with Parliament, and it will be for the two new bodies to determine the strategy and formulate the proposals for Parliament's approval. That is as it should be, so we need to look at the details that give effect to this plan.

I pay tribute to the work of the Joint Committee which subjected the draft Bill to pre-legislative scrutiny, which was so well described by the noble Lord, Lord Blunkett, as well as to the work of the Bill team which has put the Bill together. As to the detail, as the noble Baroness said, two of the four amendments which were passed by the other place will need to be looked at again, and there are two other matters that are worth looking at again too.

Before saying a word or two about one of those matters, there is one other point that is of particular interest to me as a lawyer, and that is dispute resolution. The questions I ask myself, as I read through the Bill, are whether there is a risk of a dispute between the various parties that are referred to and, if so, how any such dispute is to be resolved. That disputes will arise is inevitable. It is not that those involved are likely to be just awkward. There will be genuine differences of opinion that will need to be sorted out. We are not, of course, concerned here with disputes between the delivery authority and the contractors engaged to carry out the works. There are well-established mechanisms in the standard forms of contract which are designed to deal with those matters. What we are concerned with is the possibility of disputes between the various bodies referred to in this Bill.

So far as I can find, the word "agreement" is used in six places in the Bill. One use I can leave aside fairly quickly. It is used in Schedule 1 and deals with something that can happen only if there is an agreement. It is its use in the main body of the Bill that requires a little more thought.

Clause 1(1) deal with something that affects the relationship between the House commissions and the two new bodies. It provides that works can only be designated for the purposes of the definition of "the Parliamentary building works" by the House commissions if they have the agreement of the sponsor body and the delivery authority. This is a case where something can only happen unless and until there is agreement, first, between the House commissions themselves and then, if they are agreed, between them and the new bodies. However, the Bill says nothing about what is to happen if they cannot all agree.

Clause 4 addresses the question of what is to happen if the two new bodies cannot agree on a relevant matter when they formulate the programme delivery agreement or when they consider whether it should be varied. The way that any such disagreements are to be resolved is set out in Clauses 4(4) to (6)—the matters are to be referred to the commissions to settle the difference—but the Bill says nothing about how that is to be done or what is to happen if the commissions cannot agree with each other.

I think that I can see the reason why the Bill does not seek to fill those gaps. The only way in which they could be filled would be to refer the dispute to a third party to act in the same way as, for example, an arbitrator, but that would be to take the decision-taking function on these vital matters out of our hands or, to be more accurate, out of the hands of the commissions. Therefore, I think that on balance the Bill is right not to attempt to tell the commissions what they must do to achieve agreement, but it needs to be recognised that they must find a way of working together to ensure that a consensus is achieved and that the project is not stalled or delayed by disagreements between them or the two new bodies. I have to declare that at the moment I am a member of this House's commission, but I regret that I will be leaving that position when I cease to be Convenor, so it will then be for others to look after that vital matter. That is the first point that I would like to make.

The other point is one that I make briefly in relation to one of the two amendments to which the noble Baroness referred—the one in Clause 2(4)(h), which deals with spreading the economic benefit of the works across the United Kingdom. I agree with the noble Baroness that there are problems here because of the effect of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Those who seek to enter into contracts for work of this kind have to be treated equally and without discrimination. That is the basic rule. Competition is not to be artificially limited by designing procurement in such a way as to, “unduly favour or disadvantage certain economic operators”.

However, I hope that a way can be found to address the broad intention behind the provision that was passed in the other place by ensuring that companies up and down the whole of the United Kingdom, across all four nations, are made fully aware of the opportunities that will be available and how to bid for them. The process must be open to all without discrimination. That is not discrimination; it is just saying that spreading the message as widely as possible about what is on offer ought to be encouraged and provided for. Therefore, I look forward very much to the amendment that I have no doubt will be made to that provision to give effect to the broad idea behind the Motion passed in the other place.

With those comments, I very much support the Bill and join the noble Lord, Lord Newby, in wishing it a swift passage through this House.

3.47 pm

Baroness Andrews (Lab): My Lords, I am delighted that this Bill has finally seen the light of day. It is 18 months since we debated R&R in this House. Then,

I urged the full decant of the House, having been traumatised by what I had seen in the basement the previous week—I have not dared to go back.

I can understand why the process has been so protracted thus far. I can also understand more intimately the deep frustration that drove Pugin and Barry apart. I am sure that the relationship between the sponsor body and the intelligent client, Parliament, will be infinitely better—because this is indeed the sequel to that great work. It is the most complex and costly restoration project that we have ever attempted in this country. It will be the most exposed and the most controversial; it will be done in full view and with full expectations. Getting it right, as one witness to the Joint Committee put it, means articulating the “why” and not just the “how”. Revealing the building as well as restoring it so that we can see its full significance for the future and so that it will be better appreciated for what it means requires an explicit statement of exactly what we want to achieve, and I hope that that is restoration as a route to renewal in its boldest form.

As far as I can tell, the “how” is about right. I am happy with the arrangements for the delivery of the project. They are tried and tested ways forward, and the right powers are in the right place with the right people. It is admirable that we have the report of the Joint Committee and that it has been accepted by the Government. The committee listened very closely to its experts and recognised that in the relationship between the intelligent client and the sponsor body—I thought this was incredibly important—there should be no opportunity for politics: what Bagehot, obviously with great feeling, called “the busybodies and crotchets-makers” who would frustrate progress.

I am particularly glad that the temptation to take planning powers into the control of the delivery body was resisted; I think that the Government are absolutely right there. Sidelining the normal planning process is always a draconian decision, reserved for the most complex sites where sets of authorities and consents overlap tortuously. We are dealing here with one planning authority. It is probably faster and better for the process to be seen to be going through the full and contestable democratic process at the heart of Westminster.

I hope there is scope for the entire site to be seen and treated as a whole, ideally by a masterplan approach that would not only take into account the northern estate and the possibilities of the QEII but explicitly recognise what it means for this to be a world heritage site in terms of the purpose and quality of the conservation and its management, and the setting up of the historic buildings that make up the whole site. UNESCO has had its eye on us for many years and has not been pleased with what it has seen. It is not going to go away and it is not going to let us get away with the second-rate or the incomplete. This is what the sponsor body and the delivery authority need to think about.

I said that the Government were right to welcome many of the report's proposals, but I worry that we may have been neither bold nor demanding enough in two important respects. On the fundamental and related characteristics of this place, there were two serious omissions from the list of core principles. One was the significance of the heritage of the building, which has

[BARONESS ANDREWS]

been referred to. The second was the absence of a clear reference to sustaining the work of Parliament. Like the DNA model, these purposes and functions wind around each other. They make up the total statement of significance of this building. I am sure that the Leader of the House will deal with the first matter as she winds up, but I shall focus briefly on the latter.

I thank the Leader for what she has said, both in confirming in her own language the paramount importance of the heritage of this place and for confirming that the Government are bringing forward their own amendment. It is important that we see that amendment because there are, rightly, caveats to do with balance. The important thing is that heritage is in the Bill as a core principle. I was surprised and a little shocked that it was omitted in the first place; I thought that it would be a *sine qua non*, and the Joint Committee and Historic England thought so, too. The Government argued that it was redundant because the process was going through the planning system with all its checks and balances, but something totally fundamental was lost in translation here regarding the fact that so much is at stake, and so much reassurance needs to be communicated about the importance that we attach to the significance of this building.

Everyone knows that the planning process is the end of the conversation. The beginning is where you start with a shared agreement on why something is important, what has to be protected and what can be reasonably adjusted. Spelling that out in the Bill as one of the core purposes is very important when it comes to getting the changes right. That is what we will be talking about when we come to address the perceived, but not real, conflict between conserving the heritage and renovating the building. That goes to the heart of what my noble friend Lord Blunkett was talking about in relation to disability access—I will come on to say a bit more about that. The point is that the sponsor body should have the confidence to make judgments on the balance of necessity and what constitutes “reasonable adjustments” when developing proposals. So I will look hard at the amendment that the Government bring forward, but I certainly would not want to hold up the Bill in any way.

What does it mean to be responsible for the extraordinary, intangible heritage of this building? If we did not do it properly, not only would we signal dereliction of duty—that we did not understand what it meant to be curators and inhabitants of one of the world’s most important buildings—but we would simply fail to take account of and keep pace with all the things that have changed in the way that we manage and bring back to life our historic buildings. This place—and it is a place, not just a building—has been at the heart of our religious and political life for a millennium. In the past two centuries, it has spoken aloud the biography of this nation—and it still contains its original function, when so few historic buildings do. That makes it extremely important. Barry and Pugin agreed, in so far as they could, that this should be the showplace for the best of Parliament, as well as for the best of art, innovation, engineering and architecture. We should do no less.

So let me try to reassure noble Lords who think that conserving a heritage building will mean a whole procession of people saying no to imagination and action, and a failure to do what is required, whether that is adding better or more appropriate disabled access, or using new materials or technologies. Those days are over. The restoration of many of our historic buildings, whether they are cathedrals or coalmines, shows that with the right kind of thought and discussion, a way can be found around almost any barrier. Indeed, it is more than that. Ensuring good-quality access can enhance our understanding of the historic environment and its sustainability. It is called constructive conservation and Historic England has been doing it for many years now. This building is in our care and there will never be another chance to do anything as transformational as this, reviving trust and confidence by opening up the place and its courtyards to a more challenging life. It is about treating people not as visitors but as participants, welcoming them and ensuring that they know their role. Frankly, it means a national conversation that starts now. This Bill is a very good start.

3.56 pm

Lord Cope of Berkeley (Con): My Lords, everyone who considers this Bill ought to first read the book the noble Lord, Lord Newby, referred to, *Mr Barry’s War*. It describes vividly the difficulties that Barry and Pugin had over the decades of building this Palace—it turned out to take decades, but it was not supposed to. The basic problem was that too many people had, or thought they had, a right to be in charge or be consulted as the rebuilding went on. This included the two Houses of Parliament that would occupy it; the Government who had to find the money; the monarchy, as it is a royal palace; the wider public; and numerous people from newspapers and so on, who wished to comment on it. At any given time, the individuals in these different elements did not agree among themselves and had different views. Also, these were not static institutions and did not have a single opinion on what should be done over the decades that followed. Members of Parliament changed, Ministers changed, and minds changed. All these factors are with us still and will be with us as this great project goes on. What the sponsor body is rightly designed to do is provide a single client to try to blend these opinions and put in a structured process for decision-making, approval by Parliament and the actual implementation.

Unlike in Barry’s day, we have agreed to decant—at least, I think we have. Clause 1(3) says:

“If either House of Parliament is located somewhere other than the Palace of Westminster”.

The use of the word “if” suggests some doubt. I hope and believe that there is no doubt in the minds of anyone, except perhaps parliamentary counsel, that it is essential to decant. Throughout the whole thing, the rule should be to make firm decisions after due consideration and not go back over them time and again. For example, I have argued before against the Lords going to the QEII centre and in favour of a temporary building in Victoria Tower Gardens, but the sponsor body and delivery authority must be allowed to make decisions on this, get approval from

Parliament once they have done so, and then carry the responsibility. That is the purpose of the provisions of Clause 7 and the agreement provided for in Clause 6, which allow Parliament to have a say at these crucial stages. However, we must not constantly look over their shoulders or jog their elbows, but allow them to get on with it, unlike poor Barry.

Everyone realises that it will be very difficult to control expenditure during this process. I sit on your Lordships' Finance Committee, and we frequently see the problems inherent in controlling expenditure on such projects. Currently, the two most high-profile projects are the Westminster Hall roof and the Elizabeth Tower, both large projects on iconic parts of the Palace. Their scaffolding alone is a work of art, though fortunately not yet regarded as a heritage asset to be preserved for a long time. The Westminster Hall project is running far above the original budget because, as the work proceeds, new factors have emerged which were not anticipated. Unexpected asbestos has been found in the roofs of both Westminster Hall and the Elizabeth Tower. Extra work is needed to restore stonework, woodwork, metalwork and so on. The costs rise all the time, almost inevitably. It seems to me and my colleagues on the Finance Committee that the old military maxim "time spent on reconnaissance is seldom wasted" is important in this context. That has been attributed to military men all the way back to Sun Tzu, two and half millennia ago, and even he was quoting, apparently. It is important that the preliminary work is extremely detailed and thorough, with time being taken before decisions are made.

Having done the research and planning, decisions must be made and approval sought, after which Parliament, the sponsor body and everybody else concerned will need to be resolute and firm. They will be beset throughout by people wanting to spend less, saying that it is a waste of money, and by people wanting expensive variations on whatever has been decided. Archaeologists and historians have been much mentioned already, particularly in the wise speech of the noble Baroness, Lady Andrews, who said some very important things. I am glad that the former chief executive of English Heritage, Simon Thurley, is one of the sponsor board members. I see his role in two halves. He obviously must look out for the heritage aspects of the building and its contents, but also do his best to ensure that heritage pressures from outside are focused and contained, otherwise they will endlessly delay the project and vastly increase the cost.

When I first came to this building, the best part of half a century ago, a lot of Pugin's work was out of fashion, and a lot of ceiling and wall decorations were whitewashed. It was Sir Robert Cooke, the Member of Parliament for Bristol West, who some will remember, plugging away for years during and after his time as a Member of Parliament, who ensured that Pugin's work was put back in the way we now see it. The members of the bodies that this Bill set up, and all the staff involved, have a high responsibility for one of our great national assets. We must allow them to do their work, following the procedures set out in the Bill, but without having to look unduly over their shoulders. I do not expect to be here when we move out of the

building—let alone when we move back—because it will take some time, but I wish them well, and I wish the Bill well.

4.04 pm

Lord Adonis: My Lords, if we are to modernise these Houses of Parliament for the next generation, and if there is to be a major programme of work, then I am sure that setting up a special-purpose vehicle is the way to go. I have no particular objections or embellishments to offer to the proposals in the Bill, which are well thought through and workable. As the noble Baroness the Leader of the House said, they learn from the best practice of the Olympic Delivery Authority and other special-purpose vehicles established for such a purpose. I do not in any way object to the structure set up in the Bill if what we are to do is to modernise these Houses of Parliament, as a working Parliament for the next generation.

There is an issue which merits more consideration as the Bill progresses through your Lordships' House, particularly since it was hurried through the other place so rapidly—as the noble Baroness said, it went through there in two days. To be frank, I was shocked by how cursory the examination of the Bill was in the other place. One issue that we should spend more time considering is whether a wholesale modernisation of this House in these buildings is the right thing to do for our political democracy in the next generation or whether at this juncture, when we have a moment to plan for the century or century and a half to come—just as Pugin and Barry did in their time—we should seek to rebalance our political constitution and move Parliament away from London. I know that will be a revolutionary suggestion to noble Lords, and I do not expect for a moment that it would be agreed to in any rapid timeframe, but it is worth us considering it. The planning work for this complete refurbishment will take many years so it may be that further work on this issue could continue in parallel with the early planning work, not least because so little work has been done on the cost estimates.

To be frank, having now read all the documents to which the Leader and the noble Lord, Lord Newby, referred, at the moment all we have is a few back-of-the-envelope figures. There have been no proper costings and we have been told that one of the purposes of the new delivery authority is to produce and estimate the costings for the future. A figure of £4 billion has been touted but looking at the schedule of works, from my own experience in leading major infrastructure projects, I would say that any figure between £5 billion and £20 billion is credible at the moment for the scale of the works being talked about. Given the likely timescale, I would expect it to come out at the higher and not the lower end. It is also important to understand that the parliamentary estate which is not part of the Palace of Westminster is hugely valuable, not least buildings such as 1 Millbank. If they were to be sold as part of a relocation, that would realise an enormous capital sum which could go a long way towards making it affordable to make a move.

There are lots of issues which merit consideration. I am afraid that I am a natural reformer; I cannot see any institution without wanting to reform it, which is

[LORD ADONIS]

probably why I am on this side of the House rather than the other, so I am not in awe of the Barry and Pugin Houses of Parliament. As Pevsner said, the Palace of Westminster is,

“the most imaginatively planned and the most excellently executed major secular building of the Gothic revival”;

it is also true that it is probably the most recognisable building in the world besides the great Pyramid, the Taj Mahal and the Eiffel Tower. All of that is true but none of it would be affected by a decision to move the actual working of Parliament to another place. No one is talking of pulling these Houses of Parliament down; they would obviously be maintained. It is possible that their world heritage status, which my noble friend Lady Andrews referred to, would be enhanced by the working Parliament moving out because they would be much more accessible to the members of the public who want to study and are interested in Pugin.

My noble friend Lady Andrews, for whom I have the utmost respect, said that the Houses of Parliament are unusual in being one of the few historic buildings which retain their original purpose. If we could have an historical debate on this, I do not think that is the case at all. Most of the public buildings in this country—cathedrals, churches, schools, stations and town halls—are old but sometimes the institutions have moved. In particular, our most dynamic business institutions have tended to move to new sets of buildings. In the City, we have very successfully created a complete new sub-city in Canary Wharf to meet the needs of marrying the old and the new, without pulling down all the historic City of London, which would have been required if we were to ensure that a modern economy could co-exist with our old infrastructure.

It is also worth noting—and I feel this very strongly as a working Member of your Lordships’ House—that the Pugin and Barry design of Parliament is singularly inaccessible to the public. The noble Lord, Lord Newby, referred to *Mr Barry’s War* and I recommend to noble Lords Sir David Cannadine’s excellent essay in the book on the planning and origins of the Houses of Parliament. Pugin himself thought,

“the medieval world better than his own time”.

I had not realised until reading it, but it makes complete sense to me now that I inhabit these buildings every day that, as Sir David Cannadine says, they were intended to be anti-modern, anti-democratic and inaccessible. The Houses of Parliament were designed to be such. It is why the biggest entrance to this building is the Sovereign’s Entrance, which is used once a year. It is why all the most lavishly embellished public rooms are used least. They are essentially a backdrop for the State Opening of Parliament by the King or Queen. All these rooms are designed for that.

It brings to mind my only attempt to change anything in this House. I gave up quickly, I assure you, and I recommend that other new Members of the House do not try to influence in any way the work of the authorities of this House, because you will fail. I predict it. It is easier to try to reroute HS2 or affect Brexit than to change the way anything in this House operates. I made one attempt. I see the noble Lord, Lord McFall, in his place. Under his predecessor and

the previous Black Rod, I made what I thought was a perfectly innocent suggestion. The Royal Gallery is the largest and least-used public room in this building by far. It is massively embellished and barely used at all. Why can it not be used to receive members of the public? Why not have some kind of coffee bar in there, as our mini-version of Portcullis House? I can already hear intakes of breath from the officials of the House as I say that.

On accessibility, it is hard to bring people into this building, but the obvious way is through the Sovereign’s Entrance. Let me immediately add, it could be restored with no change, and we could take the coffee bar out of the Royal Gallery for the State Opening of Parliament. Those of us of a certain age remember that that used to happen about once a year, but it appears to happen about once a century now. It may not be until the 22nd century that Her Majesty again opens Parliament in state. That could be done, but I was given 101 reasons why it could not. I will not bore the House with them, but one was that it would require the Queen’s consent. Black Rod thought that it would involve adjusting some of the tiles. I could go through all the reasons, but I gave up very rapidly.

Reading David Cannadine’s essay was instructive, because all those features of the Houses of Parliament that closed them to the public were designed that way, from the outset. Sir David Cannadine says:

“One of the architect’s prime concerns was to create a palace that would enhance the position and assert the prestige of the monarchy vis-à-vis the Lords, the Commons and the people”.

It is one of the reasons why the focus of the House of Lords is the throne, which is only used once a year. He says:

“Hence the Victoria Tower at the south-east corner, which on its completion in 1858 was the tallest secular building in the world, and beneath which was placed the magnificent Royal Entrance, which was exclusively for the use of the sovereign. Hence the succession of state apartments of unparalleled splendour”.

All reinforced the medieval image of the Palace, which was, as a conception,

“profoundly conservative, anti-democratic, anti-utilitarian and anti-industrial”.

All these issues are worth considering and have not been at all, so far, in how we take this forward.

I would like to speak for a few more minutes, because I do not intend to speak to my Motion later. The issue of moving the Houses of Parliament outside London is very real. Anyone with a long historical sense knows that Parliament’s location exclusively in London is relatively modern. In the medieval period, Parliament used to travel around the United Kingdom—mostly England then, although there was the phrase “towards Scotland”—with the King. In the 14th century, Parliament met 11 times in York, three times each in Lincoln and Northampton, and twice in Nottingham, Coventry and Reading. There were parliaments in Carlisle, Osney, Salisbury, Stamford, Winchester, Leicester and Bury St Edmunds. In the 1,000-year lifetime that we all go on about all the time, it is a relatively recent innovation for Parliament to meet exclusively in Westminster. It was another two centuries before the Houses of Parliament, where we are now, became its main meeting place, when Henry VIII moved to Whitehall Palace.

The question therefore is whether, in rebalancing our constitution, which is overwhelmingly dominated by London, there is a case for simply moving the Houses of Parliament outside London. I want to read out an exchange from the other place. It was the only moment—it lasted about two minutes—when the other place considered the fundamental issue of whether Parliament should move out of London, not just for a decant but for longer.

Baroness Barran (Con): I appreciate that the noble Lord said that he was not going to speak later, but I remind him that the advisory speaking time is eight minutes.

Lord Adonis: It is an advisory time. I shall make one speech rather than two. I would be very happy to bore your Lordships with the second speech, but it might be for the convenience of the House if I finished my remarks and then did not need to make a second speech.

The matter was raised by a Plaid Cymru MP, Jonathan Edwards, who asked the following question of Andrea Leadsom, the then Leader of the House:

“The Leader of the House will be aware that nine of the 10 poorest parts of northern Europe are within Britain. Are the British Government not missing an ideal opportunity to decentralise power and wealth away from London and the south-east by relocating this Parliament somewhere else in the UK?”

That was a very good question to ask about this whole enterprise. The Leader of the House of Commons simply replied:

“Moving away from this Parliament permanently to another location ... would require entirely relocating Government”.

I do not see that the one follows from the other in the modern age. The resources of Whitehall directly related to servicing Parliament are small; they are ministerial offices and those officials who deal immediately with Parliament. It would be perfectly possible to have Parliament in one place and the bulk of the Civil Service in another. My right honourable friend Yvette Cooper then asked a more fundamental question of Andrea Leadsom:

“Has the Leader of the House actually done any assessment of the costs of relocating ... Government Departments out of London?”—[*Official Report, Commons, 21/5/19; cols. 637-41.*]

For those of us who think that this country has overcentralised its political system in London, if moving Parliament out of London also means relocating some government departments out of London, it gets better and better. It might give us the opportunity to rebalance our constitution and political system particularly within England, which is overwhelmingly dominated by London and the south-east, sapping so much vitality from the parts of the country beyond. These issues deserve wider exploration in Committee.

4.17 pm

Lord Haselhurst (Con): My Lords, my noble friend the Leader of the House began by saying that this was a technical Bill, and strictly it is. It narrows down to setting up the mechanism that we need to go forward with restoration and renewal. However, it is a Second Reading debate and I notice that our colleagues in the other place dilated around the Bill’s central proposition—which is also happening here in your Lordships’ House.

I profoundly disagree with the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, who said that we appear to be in a hurry. That is certainly not the impression of someone who has spent time in the House of Commons dealing with some of the arguments the noble Lord has deployed today and which I thought had been well and truly sorted out. The idea that we should start looking backwards when there is every urgent need to look forward I do not find very helpful.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I wonder whether the noble Lord will give way.

Lord Haselhurst: If the noble Lord will forgive me, we have very limited time.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: No, we do not.

Lord Haselhurst: And we do not have add-on time, as in the other place.

It is true that we are, as a clientele, a difficult body of people to satisfy, because there are many lively ideas as to how we should proceed. If there are concerns, it is right that they should be examined. The extraordinary thing is that the public seem more satisfied than the two Houses of Parliament about what is intended and that, given their affection for this place and understanding of it as an icon of parliamentary representative democracy which the world also admires, they recognise that it needs to be repaired and be the continuing Parliament of this country. Their expectation is clearly that we will do the work and return here, and any other expectations are mistaken.

However, the renewal of the building might prove trickier, as the noble Baroness, Lady Andrews, hinted. After all, projecting perhaps 15 years ahead, we do not know how many Members there will be in each House—their number might have been drastically reduced. The methods of working we will undertake as elected Members of Parliament and as Members of this House may alter considerably, so how can we be absolutely certain that we are equipping the building, both in electric power—whatever power we choose—and the form of office space we need? Will our needs be the same as they are now? Of course, many of us believe that we are still seriously behind on the IT front anyway, despite the best efforts of the Parliamentary Digital Service.

Then there is the question of the new space to be created. I have not seen any full account of what might become available, beyond the fact that some space will be released underground. There will also be the possibility of glazing over some of the courtyards, as has been done in other Parliaments, creating a lot of attractive space to assist Members meeting their constituents—using not necessarily the Royal Gallery but rather more tailor-made accommodation. As for what should be the priorities, I fully agree with the noble Lord, Lord Blunkett, about access, but it is not just about access for the disabled, however important that is, but access for all visitors to this place. At the moment, they are kept outside, in spartan conditions. We encourage them, by the sensible use of public money, to come from all parts of the United Kingdom to visit this

[LORD HASELHURST]

Parliament and we put them in a queue, whether it is hot, cold, wet or whatever, with no protection. This is ludicrous.

The other side of that coin is that because we have been spending so much effort on trying to keep unwanted people out of the place, when we actually need to get people out in an emergency, it is very difficult indeed. Anyone who has taken part in the fire drills we have had must scratch their heads in wonderment as to what we are learning from them. It seems to me that any Member in any part of this building has to know, when entertaining visitors in particular, the quickest way to safety. That is by no means clear and our efforts have not helped to make people fully conscious of what they should be doing.

There is a real issue about passage between the two Houses in their new locations. I would like to think that careful research will be done on the possibility of tunnels connecting them. Anyone who knows Capitol Hill in Washington knows that it is possible to move from one building to another in entirely secure circumstances. Two Underground lines go through Parliament Square, so I do not pretend it is easy, but this is a matter of security. I do not believe that the risk of being attacked will lessen in future years; therefore, we should think of this as an opportunity to see whether we can provide totally safe passage. I would also go on to look at Parliament Square. We are unfortunately placed in that respect, but I would like to push the perimeter out. It has been talked about as being too difficult and so on, but what comes first? The safety of this building and the safety of the people who work in it and visit it, quite apart from that of Members themselves. It is a target and we must do everything we can to frustrate any evil directed at it.

I have one or two specific points. It was asked in the other place whether there was any possibility, in the timescale we are contemplating, that the Elizabeth Tower, when the work there is completed, could be reopened to the public. I do not know whether that is practical, but I can see the point of considering it and I would like a definitive answer. Of course, it is very difficult to get people up there in the first place; nevertheless, it will be a further attraction in the future. More important is Westminster Hall. I would like to know, when all the present work has been done in Westminster Hall, whether it can be effectively sealed off for the period of the decant, so that we can have the opportunity to bring people in at St Stephen's Entrance and take them through on a conducted tour, telling the story of Parliament. There would also be the opportunity of the gift shop and the cafeteria, but also, more seriously, of having Westminster Hall as a place of debate, as used by the other place. I just think we should be sure whether that is possible.

I want to say a word about the Archives. I suspect I am one of the few people who has visited the Archives. It was never necessary to consult them in all my years as an elected Member of Parliament, yet we keep them in the most appalling conditions in the Victoria Tower. I would have them out of there to as far away as the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, might want to take them to counterbalance things. They would be

another point of interest about Parliament. That would then release a great deal of space for your Lordships' House.

If there are any doubters left—and I hope that the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, is not really one of them—*Mr Barry's War* has been commended as essential reading. I absolutely agree. Putting a good structure in place to move forward is now imperative.

4.25 pm

Lord Wallace of Tankerness (LD): My Lords, I very much agree with what the noble Lord, Lord Haselhurst, just said about the Archives. There are real risks in maintaining them in their present physical location.

As has been noted by the noble Baroness the Leader of the House and my noble friend Lord Newby, I served on the Joint Committee on the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster, the report of which was published in September 2016, almost three years ago. That paved the way for the Bill before us today, via resolutions that were passed by each House of Parliament in the early weeks of 2018.

I have a vivid memory of the day before that Joint Committee first sat in September 2015 of visiting the internal works in the basement of the Palace of Westminster. I was struck by the state of the mechanical and electrical services and rapidly concluded that doing nothing, kicking the can down the road, was not an option. Indeed, that was very much the conclusion that the Joint Committee came to. It identified an overwhelming need for the works to go ahead, and that they should be undertaken most effectively by a full decant of the Palace of Westminster. The Joint Committee made recommendations about the governance, especially for a sponsor body comprising Members of both Houses as well as external members, and a delivery authority with necessary technical expertise, and about the necessity for clear accountability for Parliament to be responsive to the requirements of the public, staff and Members.

These recommendations are largely reflected in the Bill before us. There has of course been the addition of the estimates commission and an understanding of the inevitable sensitivity about cost and the monitoring of it. I suspect that is probably a worthwhile addition to the Bill.

One of the other things we reflected on was timing, and we tried to convey a sense of urgency in that report. Admittedly, we did not anticipate the 2017 general election, but the noble Baronesses, Lady Stowell and Lady Smith of Basildon, and the noble Lord, Lord Carter of Coles, will recall that we had in mind that all who were elected in what we then thought would be a 2020 general election should have an opportunity to speak in the House of Commons before decant, and that those who were elected in the 2025 general election should have the opportunity to speak in the actual House of Commons after Parliament returned.

I am not quite sure what kind of timeline is anticipated now, but we took the view that, because of the deteriorating condition of the Palace of Westminster, the R&R programme should begin at the earliest

possible date. I note Clause 1(3), which I think is faithful to the terms of the resolutions passed by both Houses. It says,

“the functions under this Act in relation to the works must be exercised with a view to facilitating the return of that House to the Palace of Westminster as soon as is reasonably practicable”.

That is a very welcome sentiment, but we are entitled to ask what it is anticipated that it will mean in practice. When replying to the debate, could the noble Earl the Deputy Leader of the House tell us the current thinking on the timeline?

I was somewhat alarmed by paragraph 160 of the report of the Joint Committee on the draft Bill, which rehearses some of the difficulties and possible delays in the Northern Estate programme, with particular reference to Richmond House and the Ministry of Defence car park. It refers to,

“delay (possibly resulting in decant being postponed for several years, until 2028)”.

In other words, it suggests the possibility of the decant starting just around the time that the Joint Committee on which I served thought we would be coming back into the Palace of Westminster. Given the risks of staying on in this building—the risks of incremental failure and the risk of a significant failure—it would be useful to hear what is being done to try to tackle and reduce some of these possible delays, not least in relation to Richmond House and the Ministry of Defence car park.

Another issue of great importance is parliamentary accountability. Of course, the real clients are the public—the citizens of the United Kingdom—who wish not only to preserve our heritage but to see a Parliament that is fit for purpose in the 21st century. However, we also know that day to day, in practical terms, the Members of both Houses—who, as the noble Lord, Lord Cope, said, have some pretty strong views on things and do not hesitate to make them known—have the potential to be quite demanding as this project proceeds. That is why it is important that we have a sponsor body.

Sir David Natzler, the former Clerk of the House of Commons, in his evidence to the Joint Committee on the draft Bill, indicated that Sir Charles Barry had had to appear before over 100 parliamentary committees because there was not a sponsor body; my noble friend Lord Newby and the noble Lord, Lord Cope, referred to *Mr Barry's War* and the importance of being able to channel and focus the legitimate concerns and interests of Members of each House. It is important that each House balances accountability and oversight on one hand with not wanting to micromanage on the other. We should let the bodies that we are creating with this Bill get on with the job.

Clause 6(2) of the Bill provides for the possibility of a parliamentary relationship agreement; the content of that agreement will be important. Paragraph 103 of the Joint Committee report on the draft Bill recommends that,

“parliamentary members of the Sponsor Body should be responsible for answering parliamentary questions”,

and that that should be dealt with in the parliamentary relationship agreement rather than in the Bill. Again, it would be helpful if we could get some indication as

to the current thinking on this. Is it, for example, as with the Church Commissioners in the other place or the Senior Deputy Speaker here, who often are able to come to the Dispatch Box and answer on behalf of other bodies? It might be useful to have a member of the sponsor body who is a Member of your Lordships' House, who would be identified as the person who perhaps responded to debates or Questions when they were raised by Members.

As regards the duties on the sponsor board, I welcome the duty specified in Clause 2(4)(h); the noble Baroness the Leader of the House indicated that that was brought in by amendment in the other place and that the Government will wish to reflect on it. On the one hand, we do not want to become too specific, but it is important that we try to find ways in which the benefits—the work that will be created for small and medium-sized enterprises—can be shared across the United Kingdom. Also, we should look in particular at the importance of and the opportunity for apprenticeships, particularly in specialist skills in the heritage and conservation sector. That was brought home to us very much on the Joint Committee. To be able to train people up in these specialist skills would be a worthwhile legacy, but not to do it could lead to delays and bottlenecks. Therefore, as paragraph 306 of the Joint Committee report said in September 2016:

“Conducting the works in one phase will make a significant demand on market capacity ... A wide range of specialist trades will be required in a short space of time, and the Delivery Authority will need to be able to be capable of managing a large and complex supply chain”.

Therefore I very much hope that, while it may be going too far to specify apprenticeships in the Bill, nevertheless we will get some acknowledgement of the importance of that and of addressing the need for specialist skills, which has been identified. Perhaps some indication could also be given as to what has already been done to deal with market engagement.

There is a huge challenge here: value for money, and balancing heritage with practicability and legitimate issues such as access. However, as the Public Accounts Committee of the other place said in its 45th report, we should be getting on with it. The most efficient thing is to get on with it. That is what I hope we will do, and why I hope we will give the Bill a good passage through your Lordships' House.

4.34 pm

Earl of Devon (CB): My Lords, this is my first opportunity to consider the restoration and renewal programme. I must thank those who have worked so hard to get this important legislation to its Second Reading.

As with all of us, I have an interest in the impact of R&R on our ability to exercise our legislative duties. As a relatively young Member, I may have more interest than others in the building that the R&R programme delivers. Like many of the working-age population whom Parliament expects soon to be funding this project, I have not closely followed the previous debates, so excuse me if I raise concerns that have been covered elsewhere. I am keen that we use this process to educate both the public and ourselves.

[EARL OF DEVON]

I agree with the decision to renew the infrastructure of this Palace, and I agree wholly with decanting both Houses to do so. If a way could be devised to tour Parliament affordably around the regions, I would embrace it as a means of taking this institution closer to the populations we serve. I note that my family first served in the Lords in the 1280s, when your Lordships sat in Shrewsbury. If we could do it then, I am sure we can do it now. We would bend over backwards to welcome Parliament to Devon, and I will strongly support the more that can be done throughout this programme to benefit the regions and not just London—whether that be a regional decant or, as is more likely, the use of the best regional suppliers and craftsmen, of which so many reside in the south-west of England.

I must declare a further interest. I am the owner and operator of a heritage enterprise with similarities to this one. Along with AJ, my wife, I own a family-owned heritage SME which, like Westminster, began life as a medieval family home, a centre of hospitality and regional administration. It, too, has been much assaulted, altered and expanded since, but its mediaeval core remains. Like Powderham Castle, Westminster is a listed heritage asset but is still a working institution doing the same job now as it did when it was built. Like Westminster, Powderham also received its last comprehensive modernisation in the mid-1800s, with the addition of a vast quantity of Victorian heraldic decoration, which tells a particularly British history through pseudo-Gothic armorial devices. Also like the Parliamentary Estate, we constantly manage disrepair. Our predecessors did not postpone essential works for as long as your Lordships' predecessors, but we ask restoration and renewal questions daily, while also interpreting for visitors a complex social and architectural history.

I was surprised to learn just how little we know about medieval Westminster and how much there is to find out. If we are decanting and the site becomes available for research, surely we are under a cultural obligation to investigate. This will be the archaeological opportunity of our generation and, as we are all aware, archaeology allows us to retell the stories we have learnt about ourselves. As to medieval English history, it permits us to challenge the dogma of the great Elizabethan propagandist, Shakespeare. For example, in 2015 I attended the reinterment of Richard III. The remarkable discovery of our last Plantagenet king under a car park in Leicester captured the world's imagination and redefined that King who, far from being an evil hunchback, was revealed as a liberal administrator who enshrined the right to jury trial and had but slight scoliosis of the spine.

Similarly, archaeology teaches us that, far from being the heroic, blood-soaked champion of Agincourt, Henry V was a sensitive Renaissance prince who chose to be buried alongside his childhood best friend, a bishop called Richard. During Pride month, archaeological discoveries such as these are crucial to making our nation's history more accessible and much more relevant. Imagine what archaeology could unearth here. I have only scratched the surface—to use an archaeological pun—but the marble King's Table in

Westminster Hall, the cloisters containing tombs of early Plantagenet royalty and Edward III's Garter Chapel of St Stephen are all here to be explored.

The Commons amended the Bill at Clause 2(4)(g) specifically to include that the sponsor body have regard to “educational and other facilities”. What is a more important educational facility than the complete archaeological history of the mother of all parliaments? It would be culturally negligent to pass up this opportunity, particularly as this country's research capacity in medieval archaeology and history is second to none.

MPs also pressed for the inclusion of heritage as a matter to which the sponsor body must have regard, and I understand that Historic England supports the amendment. I agree that the issue should be considered afresh by your Lordships and I look forward to debating the amendment, but what heritage is to be the focus? Is it Barry and Pugin's very Victorian heritage, or that of earlier, equally transformative ages—the Anglo-Saxon origins, the Norman conquest, the Plantagenet empire or the Tudor revolution in government? I note that the Victorians are no longer on the national curriculum, but the Anglo-Saxons are.

I would encourage a more expansive understanding of the heritage we are restoring. It should not be just a like-for-like restoration of, to coin a phrase used in the other place, Pugin and Barry's,

“mock-Gothic Victorian tourist attraction”.—[*Official Report*, Commons, 21/5/19; col. 659.]

We would miss a trick if we returned to this Chamber in 10, 15, 20 or possibly 25 years' time and, having spent billions of pounds, noticed no difference, as has been suggested by some.

We have all been warned how dysfunctional was the process by which the Palace, in its current form, came to be and the 50-plus committees that designed it. Why would we want to preserve so slavishly a building designed by 50-plus committees of misogynistic, Empire-building Victorian gentlemen telling exclusively their interpretation of British history? This is an ancient medieval building that needs to stay alive. No previous generation, presented with the need to overhaul the Palace, would do so with the aim of restoring everything so that you notice no difference, at the lowest possible price, with minimal interference and having it completed as soon as possible.

I am also enthusiastic about making the Palace accessible to all. I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Blunkett, about the need to improve disabled access and speed up access for all. However, in considering accessibility, can we also please consider the accessibility of the stories we tell? Rows upon rows of Christian white men's heraldic devices are not necessarily accessible to the United Kingdom's diverse population. I personally may know and care about what the coats of arms mean—my family arms appear much more than most—but do others really care as much?

I note the pertinent timing of this R&R programme. We are busy asserting Parliament's sovereignty in exiting Europe and celebrating the supremacy of Westminster, yet we appear to be ignoring a prime opportunity to renew this Palace for the 21st century. Indeed, I am surprised that this is not a key issue in the leadership debates between Messrs Johnson and Hunt.

Finally, I need to speak to some details. A full cost benefit analysis is required. Those unfamiliar with R&R will be shocked by the £5 billion to £10 billion figure being bandied about. If we are to spend that much money, we need not only a lasting and contemporary legacy but to justify the cost explicitly. I encourage the sponsor body to work with the local council on planning and not to incorporate planning provision solely in the Bill. The expertise of the excellent local conservation officers is not to be ignored; local authorities can also provide an experienced local presence in the design and consent phase of the works.

I hope that these issues will be considered so that we have not only a complete and consistent programme of restoration and renewal but a full financial and cultural justification for the works being undertaken.

4.42 pm

Lord Carter of Coles (Lab): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Earl, who brings a sense of history to some of the challenges that we face. As the Leader of the House said, I was a member of the Joint Committee; I am also a member of the shadow sponsorship board.

I want to take this opportunity to compliment the noble Baroness, Lady Stowell, on her joint chairing of the committee. Frankly, without her guidance, we would not be here today; she made a significant difference. I also want to take the opportunity to report on the sense of the shadow sponsorship board. I can convey that four emotions are at play. First, it understands accountability and is absolutely clear about it. Secondly, its responsibilities are clear. Thirdly, there is a sense of trepidation. Fourthly, there is a sense of delight about what we can and will be able to achieve.

The fact that we have the Bill in front of us is a matter of great relief and satisfaction. We do not need to go into the history of lost opportunities and mistakes made; a number of noble Lords have made the powerful point that we need to learn the lessons of Parliament and Barry. We do not want to go down the same track; we therefore need the structure outlined in the Bill to present a governance format that we can follow.

As other Members have noted, this is a huge, enormous project. If you incorporate the Northern Estate—which is so vital, because without that we cannot effectively do the decant—we have a very significant work to achieve. Anybody who has ever worked on anything to do with restoration and renewal, whether a small conversion or something larger, knows the certainty of the unexpected. We have only to look at the experience of the Elizabeth Tower, which is probably going to cost twice what was stated in the outline business case. It is perhaps meaningful and informative for us to know why. As work started, we discovered that the stone was friable; you could not fix the scaffolding to it. Until one had made a detailed survey, it was practically impossible to put a cost on it.

Going forward, the critical thing to maintain the confidence of all stakeholders—parliamentarians, the public and everybody out there—is that the whole thing is transparent. We have to get across the message that this is a dynamic project: things will change and need to be re-presented and explained. As we roll

forward—this will be possibly 15 or 20 years in the making—that will determine the success of the project: how we are able to communicate and carry people with us. The good thing about the Bill is that we divide it into two phases. We can pause when we know roughly what this will cost, and we can take account of it and make sure we communicate that properly.

I will make two specific points, which have been made very well by other noble Lords. The first is that we should let the people we appoint and hire to manage this project do so with a necessary degree of inspection, of course, but with as little interference as possible. We cannot have this whole thing run by committee. We saw the contrast between the original building of the Palace and what happened with the Olympics, which had the same structure and was delivered much more effectively, on time and within budget.

Secondly, this need to be a one-nation project. We know there are procurement issues but, working our way around that, we want to make sure we get the work spread across the country as much as we can. Sometimes we need to go back to where we got the original material and use it. Sadly, in the case of the stone, the quarry at Rotherham was worked out some years ago, and I think it is now a lake you can sail on.

We have had a wide discussion. We have heard from many noble Lords about the whole challenge we face. The key is that we are entering this knowing what we are doing. This is not an act of blind faith but something that has been well considered. Everybody is acutely aware that we need to do this well.

One of the things that has cheered me in recent weeks is the groups of children being shown around the Palace of Westminster. I suggest that even their untutored eyes can see the extent of the deterioration in the whole of the fabric. It is for them and for those generations, because they are the ones who will live and benefit from it, that we must be sure we do a good job. That means addressing all the issues. My noble friend Lord Blunkett addressed the whole issue of disability, access and education. All those things need to be melded together so that when those people are in their 70s and 80s, they look back and say, “That was a wise decision”.

This is the moment when we need to commit and make it work. We cannot keep going back and changing specifications and things. It is a dynamic project—I have said that—but we need the commitment of this Bill. I therefore strongly support the Bill and wish it safe passage through your Lordships’ House.

4.48 pm

Baroness Byford (Con): My Lords, I thank my noble friend the Leader of the House for introducing this Second Reading of the Bill, which I welcome and support. As was referred to, I acted as a member of the recent Joint Committee on the Draft Parliamentary Buildings Bill. It was there that one appreciated the enormous challenges this project faces. The overall financial cost, including the decant of Members from this House and another place, the provision for all members of staff—I do not mean just Members’ staff—and the temporary disruption of public access are just

[BARONESS BYFORD]

a few of the immediate practical problems needing to be resolved. The question we faced was whether the Bill is fit for purpose. My answer to that is undoubtedly yes, although I welcome the amendments already agreed and those yet to come.

I am grateful to my right honourable friend Caroline Spelman for her chairmanship of the committee, enabling us to take evidence from a wide range of contributors in a very short time. We agreed that the Palace of Westminster needs to be extensively restored and that a patch-and-mend approach is just not possible. In our summary, we go on to say:

“Above all, we urge that swift progress is made with the Bill so that the shadow Sponsor Body can start its work with all the powers and authority it needs”.

The Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 8 May this year, where the vast majority of Members supported the principle of restoration and renewal of the Palace. As my noble friend said, during the Bill’s passage two amendments were accepted—one on external members of the shadow sponsor body and the other on educational facilities—and the House is to come back with amendments on corporate responsibility. The committee debated for a long while how we can make people feel that this renewal and restoration is part of the whole country, rather than a London or south-based project. The contracts should bring economic benefits to the nations and regions of the UK.

The trouble with speaking so late in the debate is that others have mentioned many things. I agree with what the noble and learned Lord, Lord Wallace of Tankerness, said about apprenticeships. This is a wonderful opportunity to give youngsters, and indeed more mature people, a chance to learn new skills and be part of the rebuild.

It is estimated that the physical restoration of the Palace and its infrastructure will form some 75% to 80% of the total works. I am glad that the Government’s response to the Joint Committee’s report supports some of our recommendations. Clearly, the scrutiny of the work, the need to hold the sponsor body to account and the role of parliamentarians in the development of stages are key to its successes.

Lastly, the committee was concerned that without a definitive completion date, it is possible that the project might lose momentum. We are all very much aware of that and do not wish it to happen.

Others have covered the restoration side so well, so I return, if I might, to questions on the renewal side. The committee had quite a lot of discussions about what we expect from this building in the future, what the general public’s participation will be and how we can make it work better. I have six prime concerns.

My first concern is that the safety of Members, the public and all staff must be achieved. But what about road access and, as my noble friend Lord Haselhurst referred to, the time the public spend outside, getting wet, before they can finally come into the building? We must resolve this problem; in this day and age, it is unacceptable.

Secondly, the new building should encompass easier access throughout for those with disabilities, as the noble Lord, Lord Blunkett, said. This time last year, I

broke my ankle and then realised how difficult it is to get around the building without knowing where the lifts are and, if you are lucky enough to find them, how they connect with each other. It is not just a question of disability access into the building but of access for those who have disabilities to get around it once inside.

Thirdly, new technology should be sought to improve lighting, heating, sound and other such basics. For example, it is ridiculous that if somebody is using a loop in a committee room, the rest of us can hardly hear what is going on; and if those of us without hearing difficulties can hear, the poor person with a loop facility that is not on cannot hear. That must be addressed.

Fourthly, we should review the way Parliament engages with the public, both within the building and via modern media links—there are tremendous opportunities there.

Fifthly, the Palace should continue to be an international tourist attraction. When this building was built all those years ago it was not for education or as a tourist attraction but as a Parliament. However, it is a heritage site and we have an opportunity to look to the future to see how we can use it better. I welcome the Government’s commitment to bring forward an amendment particularly on the heritage side.

The last of my six pleas is for a great improvement in our educational opportunities. I know that we do a great deal of work with our outreach programme and that on any morning you will see 500 or 600 children coming through. However, it is about more than that. It is an opportunity to tell the public about the work of Parliament and what we do here—how it works rather than its physical side, which most people come to see. It is a great opportunity.

I am grateful to all those who gave evidence to our committee, which highlighted the importance of working together and giving time for consultation and feedback. I thank Liz Peace for her willingness to submit the extra information we required. As was recognised in the debates in the other place, the Leaders of both Houses need to work closely together. We recognise the Government’s response to our report and we wish the Bill well. However, speed is essential.

4.56 pm

Baroness Scott of Needham Market (LD): My Lords, I start by reminding the House that I am a member of the shadow sponsor body. I agree with every word that the noble Lord, Lord Carter, said about the clarity and focus of the members of the sponsor body in delivering this project. I can assure the House that, even though we are still in shadow form, we are behaving as much as we can as if we were doing the job and, therefore, a huge amount is already going on. However, there comes a point where we need to be on a statutory footing, and that is why we need the Bill. I pay particular tribute to Liz Peace and the other external members, who are working well over and above their expected time commitment to come up to speed, not only with the project and the labyrinthine way in which we make decisions but on how their special expertise can be used to best effect.

The time has come when we must get on with it and get the project off the ground. It is not to Parliament's credit that this building has been allowed to deteriorate to its current form. I often think that we are so accustomed to that deterioration that we do not see it any more. We do not see the portakabins in the courtyards because there is no space; or the large parts of the building that are covered in scaffolding because the masonry is falling off; or the piles of unwanted material cluttering up the ground floor because there is not anywhere to put it—the fire risk has already been referred to by the noble Baroness in her opening—or the constant and expensive patching up of the mechanical and electrical services. Through all of these we plough on regardless.

What we are doing to the heritage here is tragic. I have been here for almost 20 years and have only just realised that there is a mediaeval cloister in the House of Commons and that this historic gem is in a state of serious disrepair. The one fact that really struck home to me—which, to my shame, I had not realised—is that in this entire Palace there is only one lift that meets modern accessibility criteria. That is disgraceful.

The Joint Committee has done a great job. It has pointed out—the noble Lord, Lord Blunkett, referred to this—that restoration and renewal brings forward a chance for democratic renewal. However, I would add that, in this most conservative of institutions, restoration and renewal can also be a catalyst for operational renewal in areas such as catering, support functions such as IT and security, visitors, education and so on. When I talk about Parliament in the context of this work, I mean the whole of Parliament as an institution and not only the Members.

It is a very complicated project. It has many technical challenges in a confined space in a world heritage site, with the complexities of all the different activities that we need this building to deliver, whether as a home for our democracy, an operational Parliament, a workplace for many, a visitor attraction, an educational resource and so much more. So Parliament made the right decision 18 months ago when it decided to use the model successfully used for the Olympics—I am glad the scrutiny committee supported that. That committee focused attention on the relationship between the sponsor body and the delivery authority that it will establish in statutory form. As the noble and learned Lord, Lord Hope, said in his opening remarks, it is a well-trodden, contractual relationship—or should be.

For me, the key is that for everything to work, the brief set by the sponsor body, acting as the single client, must be clear and not subject to constant change. The most important relationship is that between Parliament itself and the sponsor body. For the sponsor body to act as the single client effectively, it can certainly take the lead, but it is not Parliament. The democratic renewal of which I spoke earlier must be led by Parliament itself. The sponsor body should reflect the wishes of Parliament, certainly by offering up ideas and options, but mostly by looking at how the current Parliament's aspirations can be met and ensuring that future aspirations are not stopped.

The same goes for operational renewal. It is not for the sponsor body to tell Parliament how to run its security, catering or visitor management, but rather to explore with Parliament what opportunities there might be for more efficient, effective and imaginative services.

The sponsor body is ambitious, and Parliament should be too. From much of the work the sponsor body has done so far in talking to many Members and staff, it is quite clear that there is a lot we could do right now. We do not have to wait for restoration and renewal, but we are so conservative that we never change anything. Many of the questions raised by Members and staff about restoration and renewal are about not the building work itself but how the building will be used. That should be in the hands of noble Lords and the Administration, not the shadow sponsor body.

We have heard a lot about Caroline Shenton's book, and she gave us a copy when we started. The previous Clerk of the House of Commons commented that Barry needed a sponsor body. I am sure that may be right, but we must be realistic that the sponsor body itself is not a magic bullet. Parliament has a responsibility to be ambitious and to make this work. Parliamentary oversight of the work after the event is important, but the real value lies in engagement before the decisions are made, really understanding the potential consequences of particular options and aspirations and guiding the sponsor body accordingly.

The approach taken in the Bill envisages key milestones in the project which require parliamentary approval and an estimates committee with financial oversight powers. There will be a serious focus on communications between the sponsor body and Parliament, but we need to give more thought to how that will work the other way round: how Parliament is going to communicate with the sponsor body. There is potentially a very important role for the Deputy Speaker, the Services Committee chaired by the noble Lord, Lord Laming, and the arts and heritage committee. Then there will be the usual mechanism of debates and questions, all of which will play an important part. The sponsor body has established a set of key strategic objectives, which include health and safety, security, accessibility, heritage, effective working and value for money. Very few people would disagree with any of them. The job of the sponsor body is to commission a project that delivers as many of them as possible, but there will be points where Parliament will have choices to make. They may be difficult choices, and Parliament will need to be very clear about where its priorities lie.

5.03 pm

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: My Lords, this has been a very interesting debate so far, with a really fascinating speech from the noble Earl, Lord Devon. We learned a lot from it that we did not know about this building. There was also a gentle introduction from my noble friend Lord Carter of Coles, whom I find it difficult to disagree with but I am going to have to do so on this occasion. However, this debate does not represent a consensus as I understand it. Only my noble friend Lord Adonis has expressed some dissent, as I am about to do.

[LORD FOULKES OF CUMNOCK]

Going around listening to colleagues, I think that more and more people are getting more and more worried about the course we have set out on. Most of the speakers have been involved in some way—on the committees or the boards—in moving this forward, and they know they are moving in this direction, but so did the captain of the “Titanic”. He knew where he was going but he did not see the iceberg ahead. Sometimes we need to step back and think about that.

My really strong objection is that no proper consideration has been given to the alternative of a purpose-built Parliament, preferably in some other part of the United Kingdom. As my noble friend Lord Adonis said, that would provide a great impetus to places such as York, Birmingham or some other part of the United Kingdom. I am surprised at my noble friend Lord Blunkett, the noble Lord, Lord Newby, and others who normally advocate a move in that direction. A purpose-built Parliament would also be better for security, which could be built in from the start, and it would be better for Members. We could have offices for Members so that we could work properly instead of being in little groups packed into this building.

Lord Blunkett: I do not normally do this but I cannot resist just pointing out that, in the early part of his speech, my noble friend Lord Adonis said that he would advise any new Member that it was quite unlikely that anything revolutionary would ever happen here. I just point out to my noble friend that the idea of moving the whole shebang is an exercise in total futility.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: You can say that but you cannot prove it. It is not an exercise in futility. It has happened in other countries and has worked well, so you cannot argue that it is futile. What is being proposed is an exercise in total futility. After all, this House will not have the present composition or the current function for ever—at least, I hope that it does not; I hope that it will change.

Even if we do not move to Birmingham, York or somewhere else, we could still have a purpose-built Parliament in London. It would not help in the redistribution of wealth and power in the countries concerned but at least it would provide a purpose-built building fit for the 21st century. The noble and learned Lord, Lord Wallace, spoke about this building providing a Parliament fit for the 21st century, but it does not matter what you do to this building, it will never do that. It will never provide proper disabled access or have proper security.

What are we going to have? I went to a briefing about this with the lady who chairs the shadow committee. We were given an indication that we are going to be decanted for 10 years, moving out in 2025 and moving back in in 2035, so for 10 years we will try to operate as we do at the moment. What will happen to Joint Committees of the two Houses when we are in the QEII centre and the House of Commons is in Richmond House? What will happen to the CPA, the IPU and the all-party groups? What will happen to the informal contacts, which are increasingly essential to the work of this Parliament? What about security when people go between those two buildings? That will not be very easy. I asked about parking but the committee did not

know. At the moment there is parking for Members of both Houses but there will not be during those 10 years. I come in on the No. 3 bus, so I am not worried about it, but a lot of my noble friends do not. They drive in and need to find somewhere to park, but that will not be possible. What is going to happen to the Library during the decant period? There is no answer to that. This is an outrageous suggestion. We really have ended up with a dog's breakfast.

One argument—it was repeated today by the Leader of the House—is that we should look at what happened to Notre Dame. However, the fires at Notre Dame and Windsor happened during restoration and renewal, and the fires at the Glasgow School of Art also happened during restoration and renewal—twice. When people are working in this place we can detect whether there is a danger of fire and we are protected, but fires seem to happen during restoration and renewal, so do not imagine that this will be a solution to that risk. If we are not going to have any new build, why do we have to have this long and cumbersome decant that will cause so many problems? If we are not going to have a new build immediately, let us at least try to make the best of it. Let us make do and mend in this building. It can be done. We could move back to long Summer Recesses. The work could be done in those periods bit by bit. There is no impossibility.

I missed out something earlier when I was talking about building a new Parliament. I do not suggest that in the long term we abandon this building. It could be used more productively, and the work could be done without panic or rush because we wanted to get back into it: it could become a very good museum, a centre for the study of democracy. As my noble friend Lord Maxton has suggested, we could have reconstructions of famous events in political history in each Chamber for people to come in and see. We could have a whole educational opportunity for young people, who we have been talking about, to come in and look at history. As the noble Earl, Lord Devon, said, there is much more to this place than just the Victorian history that Pugin and Barry left us. There is much more to the whole building. I am not sure that as far as Scots are concerned Westminster Hall is the best place to remember our history, but it would still be a very good centre for people to come to.

I urge the people concerned in all seriousness to look at this again. We are heading towards disaster. I am putting my mark here: I predict that whoever becomes Prime Minister, whether Boris Johnson or Jeremy Corbyn—the latter is possible, although whether it is desirable is another matter—when faced with this proposal for billions of pounds to be spent on Parliament when there are so many other priorities, will not approve it. The whole project from now on is doomed.

5.12 pm

Lord Bethell (Con): My Lords, it is quite formidable to follow such a worrying speech of disaster and doom, but I would like to return to a more optimistic tone because I for one am very hopeful for this project. Having been involved in the infrastructure industry in the past, I have a great belief in the British ability to deliver major projects. I am filled with hope for what can be achieved in this exciting restoration project.

However, there is one aspect of it that I shall dwell on, as referred to by the noble Lord, Lord Blunkett, in his excellent speech: the question of access and education. It is my belief that the determinant of success—how we will be judged by posterity, our children and the public—is not whether we answer security problems, heritage issues or create a comfortable arrangement for ourselves with our offices. We will be judged on whether this restoration and renewal programme helps to rebuild the connection between Parliament and the people.

There are some incredibly valuable opportunities to do so. Bringing more people on to the estate and having a much better approach to access will do a lot to bridge and heal the current disconnect. There is something really special about having people attending Parliament itself—being in the building and participating in education programmes housed in this building and the buildings nearby. We really have to think about how we can take full advantage of that opportunity.

These are precedents that have been maximised in other places. The Reichstag in Berlin, where the magnificent glass roof designed by the noble Lord, Lord Foster, shines light on to democracy, has a basement with a wonderful educational facility that we should emulate. The Capitol Building in Washington DC had a massive educational facility put in the hill underneath the Senate and the House of Representatives. We should think of that as a great precedent.

Clause 2(4)(f) and (g) make it clear that the sponsor body should ensure that Parliament is accessible to members of the public and that there is an education dimension to the project. However, I am concerned that this is not the full focus of the sponsor body. I was concerned that, on 7 May this year, the parliamentary authorities rejected the very sensible recommendations of the joint committee on the Bill that the sponsor body should have regard to the need to promote public engagement with and understanding of Parliament. For me, that was a great shame and a missed opportunity.

The Leader of the House of Commons and the Leader of this House said in explanation:

“We believe it is the role of Parliament to increase public understanding of its work and therefore do not feel this recommendation should be included in the Bill”.

I am not sure I agree with the logic of this, but we will probably have to live with it. It begs the question of who will champion access and education for this project. Public money will have to be spent very wisely and difficult choices made about space, the management of public access, resources and investment. The noble Baroness, Lady Scott, put it very well and asked who will actually fight for this cause. My noble friend Lord Haselhurst put very well the kind of challenges the public face. Who will take responsibility for improving them? Without a clear mandate to put access and education at the heart of the project, I am worried that they will be overlooked.

Secondly, I am concerned about what the objective for parliamentarians will be. If responsibility for access and education is going to lie with Parliament, it is right that we give designers and project managers a very clear signal and something to work towards. I have a specific suggestion that I would like to share

with noble Lords. I suggest that Parliament should make the simple commitment that every school student in the land should visit the Houses of Parliament at some point in their school career. After all, young people are key to the revival of political democracy and addressing disillusionment in this country. They are disillusioned at just the time when climate change, AI, migration and the other macro issues we face are at their doorstep.

At present, around 10% of schools visit Parliament and these tend to be richer schools in the south-east. Fulfilling a commitment of the kind I just described—by ensuring, for example, that all year 10 students visit Parliament—would mean some 5,000 young people visiting Parliament each working day. That is nearly 1 million students a year, a big increase on the current figure. Such a commitment would involve logistical challenges, but it would be achievable simply by doubling the number of visitors to the Parliament estate each day. I recommend the research done by Matthew Oakley and Christina Bovill Rose at WPI Economics, who are working on a scheme that expands Parliament’s existing programmes so that they can deliver practical and affordable access and education.

This is not a “nice to have” that we should ponder, and then move on. The dangers of ducking this, of not making such a commitment, are that our renovation plans could appear self-serving, our political alienation will continue and the loss of civic commitment to the British parliamentary system will grow with each generation. My pitch is that the prize is great. If we put the UK’s young people at the heart of renovation plans, we can ensure that this multimillion-pound project comes with a legacy that boosts engagement in politics and democracy and increases diversity across all our country’s political and policy institutions. Doing so would not be cost-free but could have lasting benefits for the country.

5.19 pm

Lord Berkeley (Lab): My Lords, I congratulate all the noble Lords who have got us this far; it has taken a great deal of work over many years. The noble Baroness the Leader of the House mentioned many names and I expect that there are quite a few others. The debate has persuaded me that we need to look separately at the preservation of this building and at what Parliament does and where. As my noble friend Lord Foulkes said, this place could be turned into a very good museum of democracy.

Some noble Lords will have gone to a meeting in Portcullis House several years ago, at which we were first told about the various plans for getting us out of these places—or not, as the case may be. I remember one long-standing Member of the House of Commons, the first to ask a question, said: “Don’t you realise that if we move out of this building, it will be the end of parliamentary democracy?” It is an interesting question, especially now. Maybe we have reached it, maybe we have not, but we need to look at this separately. This is a wonderful building; it could be a museum, as my noble friend said, or we could come back here.

I will talk briefly about two things. The first is the issue of fire, which several noble Lords have spoken about, and the second is access of location. We had a

[LORD BERKELEY]

Starred Question on fire in your Lordships' Chamber about a month ago, after the Notre Dame fire. Subsequently, I had a meeting with some of the officials who do a wonderful job in dealing with fire protection in this building. We have fire detection and sprinklers in the cellar, which is probably the most difficult place, but there are many more problems associated with the roof, not just of Westminster Hall but of these buildings, too. There are three things to look at: detection, extinguishing and evacuation.

It is clear that they are doing pretty well in getting a new system of detection around, even in the roof. Extinguishing fires there is extremely difficult, but the new system, Water Mist, uses much less water and is extremely effective. I suggest that before any construction work starts on this building, a water mist system should be installed for the whole building on a temporary basis, with temporary pipes or whatever. That would be a great protection against a fire during construction. As many noble Lords have said, the biggest risk of fire is during construction. We are a royal palace, and there have already been two royal palaces that have caught fire in the Queen's reign. However careful everybody is, it can happen, as many noble Lords have said.

If this place is going to be reconstructed as a Parliament, we need to look at evacuation. Have many noble Lords wondered: if the Committee Corridor were completely full of people, which sometimes happens, where is the way out? There is a fire door by the main entrance, but if that is shut because of a fire on the other side, can 1,000 or 2,000 people at the Lords end get out in half an hour—which is apparently the fire resistance of the doors—down two very narrow staircases? It is something to think about. It could happen tomorrow, but if we are rebuilding, we ought at least to ensure that we have proper evacuation facilities, including for people in wheelchairs or with mobility problems, as many noble Lords have said. That all needs to be sorted out before we start.

My final point concerns moving us to the QEII centre, and the Commons to Richmond House. As some noble Lords including my noble friend Lord Foulkes asked, how are we going to get from one to the other, through the mass of tourists that we see, particularly in the summer months? It is not easy. We will certainly not get back in seven minutes to vote, and communications between the House of Lords and the House of Commons will be extremely difficult. I cannot see why nobody has looked properly at the Foreign Office. We do not have an empire, as we did when it was built. I know that the Foreign Office will be loath to get out of their lovely building—maybe we can promise that it can return in 10 years when it is all finished—but at least it would be a bit closer to Richmond House. Maybe there are other buildings as well. We need to make sure that we do not completely separate the Commons and the Lords, because that would not be a good thing at all.

I believe that we should look again at my noble friend Lord Adonis's suggestion of moving out completely, because in a new building, wherever it is, we could have the education facilities, the public access and everything else that we do not get here. We are rightly

concerned about that and it would certainly help the north/south divide if we made everything less London-centric.

Finally, my noble friend Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe is very keen that we consider the possibility of selling off the second-hand bits and pieces from this building if they are no longer used. I think that he is talking about the floor tiles that have been replaced over many years; he thinks that he has a market for them as a souvenir of the old House of Commons or House of Lords. He has asked me to say that he will put down an amendment in Committee to support this idea. It will not fund the new building, but I suppose that it might help.

5.25 pm

Lord Inglewood (Non-Aff): My Lords, at the outset of my remarks I ought to explain to the House that I am president of the Ancient Monuments Society, one of the national amenity societies. Like the noble Earl, Lord Devon, I am also the owner of a large grade I listed building; fortunately, it is slightly smaller than his, but I have had first-hand experience of leaking roofs and blocked gutters. I simply say to your Lordships that nobody ought to go there.

It is self-evident from our debate today that restoration and renewal is generally recognised as not simply a matter of refurbishing an office or a corporate headquarters. It seems to me that it has two distinct components. First, there is the proper custodianship of an important listed building; secondly, it is about providing a suitable location for two Chambers of Parliament, including offices for those who work in and for Parliament, and for those visiting it. They are not the same but they can overlap, and I hope they will. When I was questioned during the consultation, I responded in favour of this dual use but I am increasingly conscious of some of the problems inherent in it. One thing I am sure about is that if Parliament were to move out of this building, money could not be made from it unless it was entirely degraded physically or destroyed. I must say that the idea of the House of Lords becoming a museum of democracy slightly appeals to me.

This is more than simply a building project and Parliament must lead by example in respect of listed buildings. After all, there are thousands of listed building owners in this country and, according to their circumstances and the building they are responsible for, they have to spend considerable sums of money. Yet if you look back over the last half century or so, Parliament is an absolute exemplar of what you should not do. If restoration and renewal is not carried out properly here, that will discredit the listing system. Given the reality that enforcement is pretty patchy, a lot of people will say more widely, "Why on earth bother?"

Mention was made earlier about place. When I was on your Lordships' Built Environment Committee, we spent considerable time thinking about the implications of place. The Palace is of course at the centre of our country's administrative and political quarter, which goes well beyond the Parliamentary Estate. While it may not be as grand or spectacular as, say, Unter den

Linden in Berlin, it is nevertheless a very important part of our total history and built environment. Within it, I believe that Richmond House is important and I admire William Whitfield's work. He was a neighbour in the north of England and his grade 2* building should not be sacrificed, which I gather is a risk, because someone has blundered in drawing up the measurements of what is needed for a new House of Commons Chamber. Historically, the dimensions of the Chamber of that House have varied and if they are slightly wrong, either they should be adapted or plenty of other sites are available as possible alternatives, as has been mentioned.

London is also a global city and the Palace within it is part of a world heritage site. It would be completely shameful if we do not keep it in proper order. That would significantly damage the nation's reputation around the globe, in the same way that were Notre-Dame in Paris not to be restored that would be considered shameful, too. Tourism is very different from giving access to British people to see their Parliament and their representatives, and it should be subordinate to the main purpose of this building and our primary purpose in it. But in a 21st-century world, when historic buildings and beautiful and spectacular landscapes have great economic value, it would be silly to set aside the economic benefits that could be derived from looking after this building properly.

As is sometimes intimated, perhaps we cannot afford it. It is interesting that the two candidates to be the next Prime Minister have been lavishly spending taxpayers' money over the past few days, as though it were going out of fashion. The project we are discussing this afternoon would be a good way of investing some of it in the construction industry. As chairman of the Cumbria local enterprise partnership, I like to think that one of the regional hubs could be situated there.

Throughout the years, this building and its predecessors have been tied up with the concept of Britishness. At a time of considerable national uncertainty and angst, it would be ill advised to degrade that by in some way undermining this symbol of what we all share and thereby damaging our collective identity.

Moving on from the project's complex character, we should look at the arrangements for command and control. As several speakers have said, these seem approved, and I shall make only two comments. First, it is important that everybody involved in the project is clear about what they are trying to do. We have heard various nuances of what this is all about expressed this afternoon. Once the project is under way, there needs to be a unanimity of understanding about what is trying to be achieved.

Secondly, I go back to the response of the Leader of the House to the intervention of the noble Lord, Lord Kerr. What is the role of conservation in this project? As an aside, it is a pity there is no specific conservation architect on the sponsor board. I know that Simon Thurley, the well-known and respected former chief executive of English Heritage, is a member, but there is a difference between being an executive and a non-executive in an activity. The chief executive of English Heritage has an overview of projects. A conservation architect is involved, every day, in the

nuts and bolts of the details—sometimes tricky details—of what is entailed. Given that this is a world heritage site and an important listed building, the conservation aspects are paramount to the thing as a whole. That does not mean you cannot adapt and adjust properly as you go, but it is important there is absolute clarity about this, and I look forward to seeing the Government's amendment about it.

It is often forgotten that buildings are wasting assets. I believe it would significantly underpin public confidence in the future of this building and the project we are discussing this afternoon if the Government also drew up a long-term detailed maintenance plan, which would be in the public domain and regularly monitored. The wider public could see what was going on and that we are not going to repeat the mistakes of the past. There is a good case for this to be put in the Bill—or, if not this Bill, another—so that it provides a long-term guarantee of the sustainability of what we are embarking on.

Just as Tony Blair commented that the future of this country was all about “education, education, education”, the long-term future of this building is all about maintenance, maintenance, maintenance. As the old rhyme might have put it, this is the leak that caused the rot that broke the beam that brought down the roof that demolished the walls that destroyed the house that Barry built.

5.34 pm

Lord Lingfield (Con): My Lords, I remind your Lordships of my registered interests, which include a leaking roof, and especially my chairmanship of the Chartered Institution for Further Education, which is concerned with vocational training. I support the Bill in its entirety, and believe it is right that the sponsor and delivery bodies ensure that the “economic benefits” of the restoration and renewal works on this parliamentary building,

“are delivered across the nations and regions of the United Kingdom”.

Your Lordships have made many points and I do not want to repeat them, but I take up a point made by the noble and learned Lord, Lord Wallace of Tankerness, and my noble friend Lady Byford. It concerns apprenticeships. In our earlier debate on decanting the Houses of Parliament, I made the point that the probably eight years of work would provide a unique—indeed a wonderful—opportunity for the creation of high-grade apprenticeship schemes, which would serve this country well in developing not just traditional skills but many of the new ones that would be required. I hope that, at the Second Reading of this technical Bill, it is not inappropriate or too soon to suggest that these young craftsmen and women be called Palace of Westminster apprentices, and receive a special diploma, which I hope would be a recognised, valuable passport to further employment when the scheme comes to an end.

I hope that the sponsor board and its shadow members here consider obliging the delivery authority to write a number of these special apprentices into every contract. They could be working and being trained here or at the off-site location of a commission.

[LORD LINGFIELD]

I am sure that the parameters mentioned by the noble and learned Lord, Lord Hope of Craighead, could work here. A small committee of suitable professionals would be needed to oversee the scheme and to have regard to the quality of training and welfare available to the young people concerned.

The regions of the United Kingdom, as the Bill suggests, must be used as a source of skilled people. For instance, most of the cathedral cities have local, often small, businesses that specialise in wood-carving, joinery, stone-carving and stone masonry, and stained-glass work—all crafts that will be required. However, if such people are to be used, and if they are to make good use of apprenticeships, infrastructure will have to be in place which guarantees accommodation for them during their time here. It would obviously be extremely difficult for craft workers from York, for example, where there is a superb firm of ecclesiastical wood-carvers, to remain any length of time here unless special arrangements were made for temporary housing. Large national companies will not find it difficult to source suitable accommodation, but if Clause 2(4)(h) is to have any real effect in delivering benefits across the country, near-site accommodation and allowances will have to be available.

Of course, the bulk of the work will require architectural and construction skills, trained plumbers, electricians, carpenters, bricklayers, operatives of cranes and trucks, and every kind of supervisory post. There will be jobs in data cabling, air conditioning and heating, water treatment specialists, lift and other engineers, craftsmen in iron, steel and brass, employment in a host of other specialisms such as archaeology—which the noble Earl, Lord Devon, mentioned—and jobs in health, safety and security. All could be important sources of apprenticeship training.

As the noble Lord, Lord Newby, mentioned, the closure of the Palace will also provide an opportunity for the renewed care, possible loan and certain restoration of the many works of art here which are not part of the fabric but complementary to it: paintings, statuary, tapestry, books and manuscripts, and the many items of furniture and clocks which are original to the Victorian Palace. These could be moved to the regions for renovation, protection and exhibition to take advantage of the many superb specialists in these fields outside of London.

I mention in parenthesis the proposals made in 2015 for the cleaning, conservation and lighting of the Royal Gallery's grand paintings of Trafalgar and Waterloo by Daniel Maclise. Nothing has yet happened. It would be good to know that we might see them in a semblance of their early glory before we are all decanted.

The noble Lord, Lord Haselhurst, mentioned that the Archives will move from the Victoria Tower to appropriate premises. It is essential that they be nearby, as it is possible that some of them will provide information concerning the original construction and restoration efforts in the past which could well be of use to those working on the next decade's restoration and renewal scheme.

I hope that this extraordinary, once-in-a-century undertaking will provide a huge impetus for apprenticeship in the many skills that I have mentioned and an

occasion for providers of vocational education to sharpen up their offers to encompass the many employment opportunities that will be available. I hope that it will lead to a renaissance of some of those crafts which have gently wasted away during past decades, and the encouragement of young people to acquire such skills. I hope also that something like a Palace of Westminster apprenticeship scheme will give an opportunity for many young people proudly to take their place in the history of this famous building and the preservation and renewal of its heritage—coats of arms and all.

5.41 pm

Baroness Stowell of Beeston (Non-Affl): My Lords, it has been a real pleasure to listen to so many expert and well-informed contributions to this debate. Coming at the end of the Back-Bench contributions, there is not much that I can add to what has already been said, but I shall try to make mine a meaningful contribution none the less.

It is three years since the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster published its report. It was a privilege to co-chair the committee and serve on it with other Members of your Lordships' House. It made a clear recommendation that Parliament should decant in full to facilitate urgent and necessary mechanical and electrical works to the Palace. We concluded that that approach represented the most cost-effective, quickest and lowest-risk option.

As we have heard, this is a major and complicated project, but it is not predominantly about external or structural repair works to the building; rather, it is about cabling, pipes, wiring, asbestos, heating, plumbing, drainage and sewerage—the elements that are essential for the building to be habitable and usable for any purpose. I have described it previously as vital surgery to major organs, arteries and veins.

It needs to be understood that, even if we decided that the Palace should no longer be the home of Parliament and were to become a museum, as the noble Lord, Lord Foulkes, has argued, these works must go ahead to protect the future of this building. As we have heard, the risk of catastrophic fire is real and doing nothing is not an option. As for moving out of London and our residing in another part of the UK, it is my view that it does not matter where Parliament resides; it will make no difference to how the public feel about Parliament from where they sit if we as parliamentarians do not listen more to them.

The Joint Committee published our report in September 2016, just a few weeks after the referendum result. By then it was even clearer that the project presented an opportunity, or catalyst, for Parliament to respond for people's demands for change. That relies on how we approach our responsibility as custodians of this building, which for some is the home of democracy. Indeed, for many, this building represents a big part of our identity. This project should not just be about restoring the building, but also, I believe, about representing the interests of the people even better. I certainly support and endorse the remarks of the noble Lord, Lord Blunkett. I think the noble Lord, Lord Bethell, also made some interesting arguments as to how we might do that.

It is possible—probable even—that the role of the House of Lords will be different by 2035, the date when it is suggested we return to the Palace. But whatever form the second Chamber of Parliament might take by then, and whatever the needs of its Members, the most pressing need now is for us to make sure that the building's future is safeguarded in such a way that renewal represents better the interests of the public we serve.

I stand by the Joint Committee's conclusions and I support the main purpose of the Bill, which is the creation of a sponsor body and a delivery authority. I am somewhat concerned that, even before works have started, we are already behind the schedule that we as a Joint Committee expected for the project to begin. That is in part because it took some time for the original Motion to come to Parliament when it did, in January 2018. What was important at the time of that debate was, as I said then, that we made some headline decisions, made some progress and continued down this pathway. Having made the decisions we did then, it is important and very pleasing that we have continued to make progress.

Clearly, clarity of responsibility and accountability is always important in big projects of this kind, especially when so much public money is involved. I certainly agree with remarks made by other noble Lords that, once we have appointed the delivery authority, we must allow it to get on with delivering the project. However, we know that this major restoration and renewal project is not the only buildings or works project happening at the Palace of Westminster at this time. There is Big Ben; the roof works; the external masonry; the Northern Estate; and the works going on in Westminster Hall. Can the Minister tell us, when he comes to wind up, which is the body responsible for overseeing all these major projects?

The Bill before us makes provision for the sponsor board to take responsibility for works that go beyond the specific R&R programme. I am sympathetic to this because I am worried about the risk of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing and the confusion that will reign when all these different projects are going on. What discussions have taken place about whether the remit of the sponsor body for restoration and renewal might be extended to take control over all these works? Indeed, has the sponsor body itself expressed a view on whether it would want that wider remit?

During the Bill's passage through the Commons, I understand that an amendment was proposed—it may have been during pre-legislative scrutiny—that the sponsor body be given responsibility for public engagement as part of its remit, but the Government did not consider this to be appropriate, arguing instead that it was the job of Parliament. I am sympathetic to that as well: I think it is for Parliament itself to be concerned about how, when we return here to the Palace of Westminster, we can improve the way we go about representing the public. Again, who within Parliament is responsible for leading the thinking on this and making sure that the public get a proper say in how Parliament will be different in a restored Palace of Westminster? The noble Baroness, Lady Scott of Needham Market, made some important points about making

sure that we, as Parliament, set out very clearly what our priorities are for this major project. I think it is essential that we have a way of channelling those, so that it is not just all of us as individuals.

As I said, I am firmly of the view that now is the time to take another big step forward, while recognising that final decisions on budget and design have still to be made, subject to more detailed work by the sponsor body and the delivery authority. I believe that the Bill rightly establishes those, and it has my full support.

5.50 pm

Lord Stunell (LD): My Lords, I speak as a member of the Joint Committee that looked at the draft Bill and produced the report which is in front of your Lordships as background to this debate. The report had a number of practical recommendations for implementation, and I was very pleased indeed to hear from the Minister in her introduction the way in which many of those recommendations were adopted in the House of Commons, or will be subject to further refinement and, we hope, adoption in the House of Lords at a later stage.

We have had an excellent debate with many fine contributions. I hope the Minister will find the opportunity to respond to many of the points made, if not in this debate, at least subsequently, because many drew out the tensions between different, quite legitimate objectives in delivering restoration and renewal. One thing that will happen when we decant is that the decanted accommodation will be better than the accommodation we are in now, and it is completely unrealistic to expect us, in eight, 10 or 15 years' time, to move back into a building with lower standards than the temporary accommodation. I mention that particularly in relation to deafness. I am sure we will be able to hear in every room in the temporary accommodation, which is certainly not true here—I speak as someone who is a serial complainer about that.

What is really important and valuable from this debate is that there is universal acceptance that doing nothing, or business as usual, is not possible. There is an unacceptably high risk and urgent action is essential. The disastrous Notre Dame fire has certainly spurred everybody into action. It may be that the noble Lord, Lord Foulkes, disagrees, but a 24-hour fire safety team is neither normal nor cheap—nor is it guaranteed to produce 100% success.

The Bill is very welcome: indeed, it is overdue. In fact, the timeline so far has already been dangerously extended, as a number of speakers in this debate have pointed out. It has been characterised by short outbreaks of action and then prolonged periods of frustrating delay. The cause of those delays has not been explained or explored, particularly in this debate, but, bearing in mind that each delay came at a time when the ball was in the Government's court, one might surmise that it was something to do with reluctance at the highest level to commit to a project which, however essential and urgent, has very few friends outside this building and none at all in the print media.

It might be thought that a year's delay at this stage is neither here nor there. It is going to take another 16 years anyway, so what is another few months at the

[LORD STUNELL] beginning? Actually, it has not been without cost—the cost of carrying the risks of catastrophic failure forward for another 12 months while construction costs have also risen by 1% more than either RPI or CPI, depending on which of those indices the noble Lord, Lord Forsyth, would like us to use.

Simply having that delay and looking at enhanced construction costs compared to rising tax revenue and so on has added £40 million to the cost of the £4 billion project. That is not even factoring in extending 24-hour fire cover costs for a further year. That is bad enough, but suppose that government uncertainty and reluctance had come during the actual construction period. For the purposes of illustration, a £4 billion project lasting eight years would need spending at £500 million a year. A year's delay in decision-making would then cost the thick end of £300 million, arising from people standing around waiting for decisions and from paying overtime to catch up, not to mention extra plant hire, cranes and warehouse space.

We should certainly learn from Crossrail. Originally, we all said that this was going to be like the Olympics and Crossrail; we have stopped saying that and now only say it will be like the Olympics. Crossrail, once seen as a glowing example of success, is now an awful warning of costs and delay.

That brings me to one key area where the Joint Committee came to a different view from the Government about how this unique, massive and difficult project should be managed. The Bill is all about governance: not what should be done, how much should be done or even when it should be done, but by whom it should be commissioned and signed off. The Joint Committee considered the draft Bill very carefully in that respect. Our recommendations were framed to build a decision-making structure that would minimise delays and wasted effort. That is why we recommended that the new structure recognise reality and make transparent who exactly will decide if, when and how this project goes ahead.

That brings me to recommendation 11 in our report, which I think nobody else in the debate so far has mentioned:

“Parliament has determined that the Treasury should be subordinate to Parliament ... in accepting or rejecting the costs of the project ... However, we do not consider that this on its own will provide sufficient political buy-in from the Treasury over the course of this long project”.

That seems pretty clear, and it is sad that the Government feel that they do not want to accept that recommendation. Whatever the value of all the different governance procedures—no doubt there will be much discussion of them in Parliament, as well as rows and inquiries—that rather misses the point that, before that can happen and any estimate can be laid by the estimates commission, it must,

“have regard to any advice given by the Treasury”.

In Schedule 4 to the Bill, paragraphs 3(5)(a) and 3(5)(b) deal with phase one; paragraphs 6(5)(a) and 6(5)(b) deal with the transition year; paragraphs 8(5)(a) and 8(5)(b) deal with phase two. In a 15-clause Bill, three of the clauses are instructing everybody to have regard to any advice given by the Treasury.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnoek: Why does the noble Lord think that the Treasury will agree to Parliament making this decision without its approval—I see the Leader of the House is not listening—given that I keep getting told that a much more modest proposal that I have been suggesting for a number of years is subject to approval by the Treasury and must be within a particular envelope? Either this Parliament makes decisions about expenditure or it does not. The noble Lord is saying that it will make decisions about billions of pounds, when it cannot make decisions about millions.

Lord Stunell: The noble Lord exactly anticipates the point I am coming to. If this goes ahead unamended, it is a recipe for the hidden hand to cause delay and wasted effort. Those were the points I was about to make.

The Joint Committee recommended that a Treasury Minister sit on the sponsor body, which will sign off the brief for the delivery authority. That is when the Treasury input is needed, not after a year's work of design and procurement has been done, and perhaps wasted, when the estimates commission consults the Treasury, in accordance with paragraphs 3, 5 and 8, and is obliged to reject what comes to it. I say “obliged”, because if you must “have regard” to something, that leaves very little room to ignore the advice you receive.

There is a weakness in accountability here, but not a weakness of the designers, contractors, delivery authority or sponsor board. Those accountabilities are in the main clear and transparent, and very welcome for that. The weakness is in the accountability of the Government and the lack of any transparency in their input. I describe it as their “input” into the process but it is much more likely to be their extraction from it, because I do not believe that the Treasury would urge anyone to spend the money faster. However, their participation in the process is not transparent, and that weakness will lead to delay, waste and extra costs. How much better and simpler would it be to have the Treasury at the front end rather than the back end of the process?

It may be said that there is no problem because the Government will accept the point that the noble Lord, Lord Foulkes, is so dubious about them accepting. However, we know that transparency influences the progress of the project, and that endless delays and costs involve money. When there was no transparency, we did not know, for instance, why it was taking so long for previous stages of this process to reach the House and for decisions to be taken. When those delays cannot be attributed and chased, they accumulate. I can well understand that the Government have no wish at all to be fingered by this problem; equally, we have to understand its cost. With costs running at over £500 million a year, I can well see that Ministers will be hesitant. That is five schools-worth a year, and the temptation will be to stop, pull back and slow down. That is bad and expensive news at any stage of a big project, but it is absolutely destructive when it is in full flow. Let us get that interference at the front level, and minimise the delay, the wasted design time, the costs and the aborted procurement. I hope we can come back to that key issue in Committee.

I concur with practically every speaker in this debate in saying that this is a good, sound Bill. It needs to go ahead, and quickly, and we need to make sure that any flaws regarding accountability that may be built into it are dealt with before it leaves your Lordships' House.

6.02 pm

Baroness Smith of Basildon (Lab): My Lords, this has been an excellent debate, with contributions from noble Lords who are new to the subject and from others who have been working on it for many years. I can see the noble Lord, Lord Haselhurst, who was part of the committee that reported in 2012; a number of us who have spoken were involved in the 2016 committee, co-chaired by the noble Baroness, Lady Stowell; we had a number of contributions from noble Lords who were on the joint pre-legislative scrutiny committee and from those on the sponsor board; and other noble Lords have experience and expertise. Perhaps there is some good advice we should listen to as we move forward.

I will pick up on something the noble Lord, Lord Stunell, said on the subject of this project not having many friends outside Parliament in the press. One thing that was put to us in the Joint Committee in 2016 was how the press accommodation in Parliament is totally and completely inadequate, consisting largely of Portakabins on the roof. That might be a good start if we want to win some friends for the project.

Restoration and renewal is not an easy issue for any Government. The costs are enormous, the logistics complex, and everybody has opinions—usually different and opposing ones. One only has to read of the frustrations of Charles Barry as he tackled the rebuilding of the Palace after the 1834 fire, or Churchill's efforts after the 1941 bombing, which have not been mentioned today, to understand that these challenges are nothing new. For a Government committed to austerity, it is even harder—although, given the public spending proposed by the Conservative leadership contenders, perhaps that policy is now changing.

A piecemeal approach to repairs, or the make-do-and-mend approach advocated by my noble friend Lord Foulkes, has always been easier than doing something substantial. That is why action now is so critical. The work of the Joint Committee on pre-legislative scrutiny is reflected in the Bill, which is an essential step forward in a long and arduous process.

Previously, we had the substantial report of the 2016 bicameral, cross-party committee, on which a number of us served and which was co-chaired by the noble Baroness, Lady Stowell, and the benefit of guidance from the 2012 report. In 2012, the committee considered reports on the condition of Parliament going back over a decade, including the mechanical and engineering systems, the basement and the areas of greatest risk. Unbelievably, some of the services installed by Barry have never been renewed. Many of us have seen the poor working conditions of staff, with basement corridors and ventilation shafts jammed with decaying wires, cables and corroded pipework. It is to the credit of those staff that we are largely unaware of the M&E systems failures, or the work that goes into keeping the building operational.

It is lazy and inaccurate to portray restoration and renewal, as some do, as benefiting only MPs and Peers. In fact, few of the current cohort—including ourselves—are likely to enjoy the benefits. If we consider the timescale for the preparatory work, the decant, the work itself and then re-entry, it is hard to imagine that being completed before, say, 2032. Many will not return.

I was initially a sceptic about decant and returning but have been convinced by the evidence. The 2016 Joint Committee interrogated the information, not accepting any particular view but taking expert advice, including from disability groups and heritage organisations. I learned a great deal—sometimes in greater detail than I enjoyed. I must admit that I had not previously given much thought to the parliamentary sewerage system. Now I probably know too much about it. The committee concluded that it would be more efficient and effective to move out to allow works to be completed in the shortest possible time as the best value for money and, should Parliament wish it, to be the most creative in the renewal aspect of the project.

I have listened carefully to my noble friends Lord Adonis and Lord Foulkes, who would prefer us to move permanently to a new site, possibly out of London. That is not new; it has been considered before. A 1960s proposal was for a national administrative capital on the Yorkshire moors, to be known as Elizabetha. A new location was considered by the committee that reported in 2012. As tempting as it sounds to have different locations, moving around as in the 12th century, we have only to look at the example of the European Parliament moving between Strasbourg and Brussels to understand the disruption and the costs that causes.

I have thought a lot about whether it is possible or desirable to move on to a different site, whether in or out of London. But Parliament is part of a wider system that interacts with government departments, civil servants, charities, campaigners and businesses who engage with policymakers daily. It is therefore hard to see how Parliament alone could move. I agree that the world should not revolve around London, but just moving Parliament would not address regional disparities.

A more effective approach could well include the Labour proposal announced at the weekend to devolve power and funding from the Treasury, with a new £250 million transformation fund for the north. That would be tasked with improving infrastructure and would undoubtedly create new jobs. The cost of relocating Parliament would have to be added to the costs of the restoration and renewal of this building, a point made by the noble Baroness, Lady Stowell, as it is part of a wider UNESCO world heritage site with Westminster Abbey and St Margaret's, as we know.

I certainly endorse the argument that although this building respects our traditions and history, time moves on and we must provide for modern ways of working. In 1834, it was not even considered that MPs could have landline telephones in their offices—and certainly not mobile telephones. It could never have been imagined that one day, people would listen to parliamentary debates on the radio, let alone watch them on TV or live streaming. Even in 1997, when I first became a

[BARONESS SMITH OF BASILDON]

Member of the other place, I did not have internet in my office. There lie the greatest challenges: to respect our heritage and make this a workplace fit for the 21st or 22nd century in a way that allows the UK public fully to engage.

In February 2018, both Houses of Parliament voted for the resolution that required “immediate steps be taken” to establish a shadow sponsor body and a delivery authority and that their “statutory successors” be established by legislation in due course. The sponsor body would have overall responsibility for the building work on behalf of both Houses to underscore that this is a parliamentary project, not a government one. The subsequent delivery authority would create proposals and carry out the building works in a manner similar to the independent delivery authority for the London 2012 Olympics. The pre-legislative scrutiny Joint Committee supported that government structure in its comprehensive report and called for swift progress so that the sponsor body can start its work with the powers and authority it needs. I support that objective.

One has only to read the excellent book mentioned several times today, *Mr Barry’s War* by Caroline Shenton, to understand why such a structure is necessary. Charles Barry and Augustus Pugin’s plan faced enormous practical challenges. Barry answered to myriad bodies and appeared before more than 100 Select Committee inquiries. Construction lasted for nearly 30 years, with costs overrunning and delays resulting from difficulties with the ground, the design, the river, the officials, engineering and, dare I say it, the parliamentarians, who remained on site throughout.

All this led to changing demands and pressures that took their toll on them both. Pugin said that he had never worked so hard in his life. He died aged just 40, shortly after being released from the Bedlam asylum and soon after completing the design of what is now known as the Elizabeth Tower. Charles Barry, having originally estimated that it would take six years at a cost just under £725,000, became at times worn down and anxious. The first time the union flag was hoisted on completion of the new Palace, it was at half-mast for his funeral.

In the Bill, as recommended by the 2016 report, the new governance structure emphasises good planning and a sharp focus on delivery. We welcome the Bill and support its objectives, but that does not mean that we do not support improvements. The changes made in the other place are welcome, including ensuring educational facilities and that the delivery authority must have regard to corporate social responsibility when awarding contracts. However, as we have heard today, there are other ways in which we seek further reassurance.

Something that I regret has not been mentioned—except by the noble Earl, Lord Devon—is that the Bill fails to recognise the primary purpose of Parliament. Clause 2 lists areas to which the sponsor body must have regard—the key issues that must be addressed—but the work of Parliament, legislation, the representative democratic function, is not referred to anywhere in the Bill. That is a serious omission. At no point should the sponsor body or delivery authority lose sight of that.

We will seek assurances on how the public and staff, as well as parliamentarians, will be engaged. The Joint Committee’s recommendation was that the sponsor body should,

“promote public engagement with and public understanding of Parliament”.

This building can sometimes feel very remote to vast swathes of people. Sometimes, it even seems otherworldly. A young friend of mine, an avid Harry Potter fan, Sam Parker, walking around the building exclaimed with absolute delight and wonder, “Oh, it’s Hogwarts!”—great fun, but reflecting the 19th not the 21st century. Why is there no requirement for the sponsor body to engage with the public as it develops the strategy? Surely that body should also have a duty to consult the thousands of staff who work here and their trade union representatives.

On accessibility, the Government’s response to the Joint Committee’s states that,

“the works to the infrastructure of the Palace of Westminster will ensure that the Palace is more accessible for those with disabilities”, but “more accessible” is not defined. I understand that the shadow sponsor body views accessibility on a “sliding scale”. I hope that the Minister can confirm exactly what that means. Those with disabilities must have accessibility to Parliament with dignity and respect. I use the term “accessibility” deliberately because, as has been said, it is about not just access to the building but accessibility to all of Parliament at any point.

The Minister in the other place said that he expected the sponsor body’s annual report,

“to cover matters such as how it is taking forward questions of disability”,—[*Official Report*, Commons, Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Bill Committee, 4/6/19; col. 57.]

and that it should establish a sub-committee. However, the delivery authority will have no remit or requirement to improve accessibility for those with disabilities unless instructed by the sponsor body, and the sponsor body cannot do so unless instructed by Parliament. Is there a gap in the Bill here? Can the Minister be clear about the role of the disability sub-committee?

On Report, the Commons Minister stated that the sponsor body’s annual report could consider the size and geographical location of contracted companies to ensure that small companies and those from across the UK have opportunities to benefit from contracts. I heard what the Leader said in her speech but I hope that the noble Earl, Lord Howe, can say a little more and perhaps confirm that the Government will do all they can to give effect to that and ensure that this principle is adhered to.

On costs, restoration and renewal are undoubtedly expensive, with current estimates somewhere between £3.5 billion and £3.8 billion. We welcome the Government’s focus on value for money but there has to be an acknowledgement that protecting UNESCO world heritage sites comes at a price. I want to add a personal view about heritage. Some of our most interesting and valued buildings have survived because they adapted. We must do the same. If, following the works, this building looks and works exactly the same as it does now, the programme will have failed. That does not permit the programme to force changes on how Parliament works, but it should enable not prevent them.

The programme should recognise that technology has revolutionised the way that we all work and will continue to work in future.

The Bill would establish a parliamentary works estimates commission, which will lay the sponsor body's estimates before Parliament and review expenditure; it can also require a new estimate. Crucially, Parliament will have the final say on the project when the business case is laid in 2021. To pick up on the point made by my noble friend Lord Berkeley on behalf of my noble friend Lord Brooke about meeting some of the costs through selling the tiles for restoration, I suggest that my noble friend visits the Westminster Hall shop where, currently, half a tile is on sale for £95, a full tile is on sale for £150 and a high-standard tile is on sale for £200. They look very nice on display. Of course, the sale of some artefacts could contribute to the costs but the scale of what we are talking about, especially of the historical interest in what has been in the Palace, goes far and wide.

Noble Lords were right to mention decant, which the Bill does not cover but is essential. We will continue to seek more detail to ensure that the facilities for Peers are fit for purpose. We also need clarification on what will happen to parliamentary staff, such as our cleaners and caterers, and we seek assurances on their employment status. Will they be given first choice for new jobs arising at the QEII Centre or wherever we decant to? I hope that the noble Earl can confirm that there is, and will continue to be, engagement with the GMB and other unions on this issue.

This is a working building for more than 8,000 people. Importantly, the restoration must provide a better and safer working environment and a better visitor experience. More than a million people visit here each year, enhancing their understanding of how politics and major events play out. History happens here. Alongside that restoration must be renewal that looks to the Parliament of the future. In the 19th century, Barry and Pugin had a vision for a new Parliament rising from the ashes of the old one. In the 20th century, Churchill had a vision for restoration following the destruction of the war. Today, in the 21st century, we need a vision for an engaged, outward-looking Parliament for this century and beyond. After years of kicking the can down the road, we can, and must, get this right. With an emphasis on how we work and a focus on engagement and accessibility, this can be the people's Parliament for generations to come.

6.18 pm

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Earl Howe) (Con): My Lords, I thank all noble Lords who contributed to this high-quality and thoughtful debate. As my noble friend the Leader remarked, the Bill has been a long time coming—too long, as I suspect we all agree. Although the Bill is with us at last, many uncertainties remain: how the restoration and renewal works will be undertaken in practice; how they will balance and reconcile the different imperatives that we all care about; and what the works will mean for Members of both Houses and the continued functioning of Parliament. These questions admit different opinions depending on your perspective. Although I will shortly respond to the issues of this kind raised by noble Lords, they are essentially debates for another day.

Meanwhile, we should be in no doubt as to the importance of what the Bill is here to do. It puts in place a governance structure to ensure that a professional programme of work can be undertaken. The urgency of this task cannot be underestimated. I respectfully but firmly disagree with the noble Lord, Lord Foulkes, that this is a case of “make do and mend”. Earlier, we heard about the state of disrepair that this place now finds itself in, with falling masonry, mechanical and electrical faults, asbestos and other issues seriously affecting the day-to-day operation and safety of the building. Anyone who has toured the basement can see that we face a major restoration programme.

As has been said many times, this is a parliamentary project. The powerful contributions to the debate testify to our strong feelings on the issues before us; they certainly underscore how incredibly important it is that we get on with the job. The bottom line is that very significant work must be done to the fabric of this place. We must take the opportunity that the Bill provides to ensure that, pace the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, the Palace of Westminster can remain the seat of the United Kingdom's Parliament for generations to come.

Let me address some specific points. First, on the amendments passed in the Commons and the others to be tabled in Committee, we heard earlier today from my noble friend the Leader about the Bill's smooth passage in the other place as a result of the collaborative working between government and parliamentarians. The Bill reflects that, as cannot be said too often, this is a parliamentary project. The Government have listened to, and taken on board, the views and concerns of Members. That is why the amendments on the need for educational facilities, and on the transfer of external members of the shadow sponsor body to the sponsor body, were assisted and supported by the Government, and passed on Report in the Commons.

As it was the clear will of the House of the Commons, the Government also agreed at Commons Report stage to assist the tabling of two amendments in the House of Lords, one relating to heritage and the other to reporting. As a grade 1 listed building and part of a UNESCO world heritage site, the outstanding architectural heritage of the Palace would always have been a consideration for the sponsor body. We therefore did not deem a reference to heritage in the Bill necessary. However, we have heard from a number of noble Lords—notably, the noble Lord, Lord Carter, the noble Earl, Lord Devon, and my noble friends Lord Inglewood and Lord Lingfield—that the Palace's heritage and its high-quality conservation are of central concern. As the noble Baroness, Lady Andrews, rightly emphasised, parliamentarians and heritage bodies have made their views on the matter clear, and we have recognised the importance of those concerns. An amendment will therefore be tabled in Committee that I hope will command support.

The Government also agreed to assist a robust amendment on the reporting of contracts and the size and locations of the companies concerned. There is already a requirement for the sponsor body to report on the carrying out and progress of the parliamentary buildings work. However, we will also require reporting on the size and location of the companies contracted to.

[EARL HOWE]

Report stage in the House of Commons also resulted in a call for amendments on the corporate social responsibility of contracted companies and for the economic benefits of the works to be spread across the UK. The Government opposed these amendments, but since they were passed in the House of Commons we recognise that their spirit should be reflected in the Bill. We will therefore work with parliamentary counsel and Members to ensure the amendments are worded appropriately.

An amendment to spread the economic benefits of the works across the nations and regions of the UK was passed in the Commons, as I mentioned. The noble and learned Lord, Lord Hope, referred to this. The Government fully support the principle that the benefits should be shared across the UK, but we identified some concerns with the wording of this amendment in relation to procurement law. We will therefore work with parliamentary counsel to ensure the amendment is appropriately worded, as we will with the amendment on corporate social responsibility. As with all the amendments I have spoken about, we will ensure that the spirit of the amendment approved by the other place is retained. The role of government is to assist Parliament in the passage of this Bill through both Houses. The project itself is for Parliament.

I turn next to specific questions asked about the provisions of the Bill. My noble friend Lady Stowell asked about responsibility for other estates projects on the Parliamentary Estate. At present, the R&R programme is responsible only for refurbishing the Palace and for the QEII Centre as a decent location for the Lords. It is expected that in due course, following designation by both House commissions, the R&R programme will also include the Northern Estate programme. Provision to allow for this is made in Clause 1 of the Bill. At the moment, no other current parliamentary estates programmes are expected to come under R&R. Again, however, Clause 1 of the Bill allows this to happen if both commissions, the sponsor body and the delivery authority agree.

The noble and learned Lord, Lord Hope, asked about the mechanisms for dispute resolution between any of the proposed bodies. It will be up to the commissions of both Houses to agree workable arrangements for the resolution of otherwise intractable disagreements. Work on this will be taken forward soon, and its importance is clear. I add only that the programme delivery agreement will cover how disputes between the sponsor body and delivery authority during the works are to be resolved.

The noble Lord, Lord Blunkett, my noble friend Lady Byford, the noble Baroness, Lady Smith, and others emphasised the need for proper disabled access to and within the building. Clause 2(4) states:

“In exercising its functions, the Sponsor Body must have regard to ... the need to ensure that ... any place in which either House of Parliament is located while the Parliamentary building works are carried out, and ... the Palace of Westminster (after completion of those works), are accessible to people with disabilities”.

I agree that it is important that the sponsor body and delivery authority appreciate that we expect disabled access to go beyond visitors, staff, Peers and MPs entering the Parliamentary Estate. It is worth mentioning

that the sponsor body and delivery authority will need to comply with any legal obligation, such as the Equality Act 2010, when considering the provision of disabled access. I am pleased that the shadow sponsor body, to whose assiduous work I pay tribute, has specified that improving access forms part of its vision and strategic themes for the works. In fact, it has specified that the restored Palace will provide exemplary standards of access for everyone.

The noble Lord, Lord Blunkett, my noble friends Lady Byford and Lord Bethell and others stressed the importance of educational outreach facilities. We all recognise the will of the other place in amending Clause 2(4)(g) in the Bill so that the provision of educational and other facilities in the Palace after completion of the works was a “need” rather than a desirability. We have the opportunity through R&R to create a legacy in educational facilities. As the noble Lord, Lord Newby, pointed out, better educational facilities will allow schoolchildren who visit the Palace to have a more interactive engagement with Parliament and democracy. This could be achieved by using the new Chamber in Richmond House as an educational facility. I was taken with the proposal made by my noble friend Lord Bethell that we should have ambitious targets for increasing the number of visitors to the Palace. Of course, it is for Parliament—not the sponsor body—to promote Parliament through outreach. Parliament has a number of initiatives in this area, including visits to schools, and there is an opportunity to think about those activities also.

This leads into the whole question raised by the noble Lord, Lord Blunkett, about renewal and how we define it. I am sure we each have different views on what renewal means. That is why it is so important that parliamentarians have the opportunity to engage with R&R and the scope of the work. I completely agree with noble Lords who have argued that the programme provides a number of opportunities; for example, improvements to the Palace should enable an increase in the number of visitors and an even better experience for visitors. I am sure we also all want to see improvements to the accessibility of the Palace as part of the work. That includes not just lifts and ramps but acoustics, the increased use of technology and, as I have just mentioned, better educational facilities. I would also like to see proper consideration be given to how space is used and whether the sponsor body can come up with innovative solutions to increase the available space, without impacting on the heritage of the Palace.

The noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, referred to the importance of fire safety. I agree that this is of paramount importance, and indeed it is one of the strongest arguments for getting on with R&R. As he will know, until the Palace is handed over to the sponsor body, the House authorities are responsible for fire safety. I am aware that the noble Lord raised his concerns in the Chamber on 25 April in the aftermath of the Notre Dame fire. At that time, the chair of the Services Committee, the noble Lord, Lord Laming, went into some detail to explain what precautions the House authorities have put in place to protect the roofs. The noble Lord will no doubt remember what the noble Lord, Lord Laming, said on that occasion.

My noble friend Lord Haselhurst advocated for better access to Westminster Hall and the Elizabeth Tower during the works. Analysis in 2017 found that any continued use of Westminster Hall or its surrounding areas by Members and/or the public would be highly disruptive and costly for no additional quantifiable benefit. The costs would be connected to maintaining a secure perimeter in close proximity to construction works and the additional cost to construction from managing a complex, partially occupied site. However, the feasibility study conducted by the R&R programme in 2017 found that the additional cost of maintaining access to the Elizabeth Tower during the R&R programme for Members' pre-booked tour groups would be minimal, since the site boundary could be established to the south of the tower, allowing access through Portcullis House. However, that remains a matter for the sponsor body and Parliament.

The noble Lord, Lord Newby, advocated for the opportunity for SMEs to be part of the restoration and renewal works. Smaller businesses will have the opportunity to bid to be part of the works. As the noble Lord will know, that is already happening with the encaustic tile conservation project and work on the Elizabeth Tower. Again, it is ultimately a matter for the sponsor body to determine how best to engage SMEs in the forthcoming work, and we have encouraged the programme to give thought to that.

The noble and learned Lord, Lord Wallace of Tankerness, spoke about the opportunity to promote apprenticeships, an issue also cogently argued by my noble friend Lord Lingfield. Our response to the pre-legislative Joint Committee noted that we very much encourage the sponsor body to consider how it can share the employment and apprenticeship benefits of R&R across the UK. The R&R programme has taken steps to learn from other programmes about how to plan for successful apprenticeship and skills development programmes, and the shadow sponsor body has committed for the programme to provide for the development of national construction and craft skills.

Let me turn briefly, if I may, to the decant, which I completely understand is of huge importance to many noble Lords. The noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, asked about the choice of the QEII conference centre as the location for the temporary decant of the House of Lords. The QEII Centre is the preferred location for the Lords decant, in line with the recommendation by the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster in 2016. That recommendation was agreed by the House of Lords Commission in September 2018, subject to further feasibility work being undertaken.

Underlying that decision was a lot of preparatory effort. The restoration and renewal programme team carried out work with the government property unit to assess the suitability of sites on the government estate. One option involved use of the courtyard of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in King Charles Street. However, it was considered to be a suboptimal solution that would require further decant accommodation to be delivered over multiple locations and had space constraints around the Chamber.

The QEII Centre has a number of advantages as a decant option for the House of Lords. It would provide the best accommodation solution because it would

reduce the need for accommodation across multiple sites. It is not a listed building and can be adapted to meet security requirements. As a government-owned space, it has fewer risks when compared to a commercially owned property. Last but not least, it presents opportunities for greater accessibility than we enjoy currently.

I acknowledge that the noble Lords, Lord Adonis and Lord Foulkes, and some other noble Lords, strongly believe that Parliament should be permanently relocated from Westminster and that we should, in consequence, turn the Palace into a museum. The first thing to do is remind noble Lords that the Motion passed by this House early last year was clear that both Houses will return to their historic Chambers as soon as possible after the restoration and renewal of the Palace. In accordance with the will of both Houses, that guarantee is incorporated into the Bill. By way of background, in 2012, Parliament commissioned a pre-feasibility study into the preliminary business case for R&R. The study considered that whole question and concluded that because,

“the geographical proximity of Parliament to Government is of significance ... substantial additional costs would be incurred”.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: The noble Earl has been very helpful but he moved over the issue of the decant before I was able to ask him a question. I asked earlier about the position of the Library and of car parking during those 10 years, and he has not answered either question.

Earl Howe: All I can say is that those issues will be considered as part of the plan. I do not have a ready-made answer for the noble Lord on either question, but I would be the first to concede that they are of importance.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: When I went to the briefing meeting, the lady in charge of the shadow sponsor body did not have an answer either, and nor did she have an answer on security. There are a lot of unanswered questions.

Perhaps the noble Earl can help me with another question about relocation elsewhere. Earlier, the Leader of the House admitted that there was no costing of that alternative. Why was there no costing, at an early stage, of what is an obvious alternative proposal?

Earl Howe: The matters raised by the noble Lord will be part of the outline business case, so it is impossible to be specific. However, on costing, in October 2012, the House of Commons Commission, and at that time the House Committee in the Lords, considered the pre-feasibility study and decided:

“The report is a useful first analysis of the issues. However, the Commission has ruled out the option of constructing a brand new building away from Westminster and no further analysis will be undertaken of this option”.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Why did it rule it out? I should have asked earlier. My noble friend Lady Smith chastised me earlier for being late to the issue. Why was it not considered? Why was it ruled out at such an early stage, without any costing, as the alternative?

Baroness Smith of Basildon: I did not chastise my noble friend—I am surprised that he should think such a thing.

Earl Howe: It will be best if I write to the noble Lord on that point and copy in all noble Lords who have spoken so that everyone is clear about the extent to which this issue has been trawled over.

I suggest to the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, that the debate on this issue has effectively already happened. On his further point, even if a decision were taken to relocate Parliament outside London, it would still be necessary to restore and renew the Palace to ensure that its future is safeguarded. This would be required as part of our commitment to the Palace as part of the UNESCO world heritage site. Without accounting for inflation, the independent options appraisal suggests that the minimum that would need to be spent to maintain the Palace's status as a world heritage site, and to replace or repair systems like for like, would be £3 billion. I will write to the noble Lord further on this issue as I have just been reminded that my time is up.

However, before concluding, perhaps I may emphasise my agreement with the points raised by the noble and learned Lord, Lord Wallace of Tankerness, the noble Lord, Lord Stunell, and others on the need for timely progress on these works. I will be happy to put further thoughts in writing on that point. Equally, I will be happy to write on the costs, concerns about which have rightly been raised, particularly by my noble friend Lord Cope and the noble Earl, Lord Devon. The governance arrangements that the Bill sets out can deliver the necessary restoration works and ensure value for money for the taxpayer. I shall be happy to explain why.

I will also write to the noble Lord, Lord Stunell, about why we disagreed with the recommendation of the Joint Committee to appoint a Treasury Minister to the sponsor body. I am also happy to write on the point raised by the noble Lord, Lord Newby, on the need to engage parliamentarians in the R&R proposals.

Other noble Lords, including the noble Lord, Lord Blunkett, my noble friend Lady Byford and the noble Baroness, Lady Smith, spoke about the importance of engaging the public. I agree that the public need a voice in this historic project. Indeed, the project provides an unparalleled opportunity to get the public engaged with Parliament and democracy throughout and by providing a lasting legacy. It is the role of Parliament to increase public understanding of its work. Nevertheless, the sponsor body should consider public understanding of Parliament when it engages the public on the R&R programme.

Turning finally and briefly to the Bill, it will ensure that a fit-for-purpose governance structure is in place that will deliver the restoration and renewal of the Palace. I look forward to the Bill's future stages and to working with Peers across the House, as does my noble friend the Leader, first and foremost to make sure that we get the Bill right but also to maintain a sense of impetus in the parliamentary process. It is important that we progress the Bill in a timely fashion to establish the sponsor body and delivery authority so that the works for the restoration and renewal of the Palace can begin in earnest. I have no doubt that your Lordships, as always, will work to ensure that the

Bill fulfils its objective, laying the groundwork for the building works that lie before us and thereby ensuring that we deliver to the nation a Palace fit for purpose and ready to be the home of Parliament for future generations. On that basis, I commend the Bill to the House.

Bill read a second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Bill

Motion to Resolve

6.43 pm

Tabled by Lord Adonis

That this House regrets that the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Bill fails to include the option of relocating Parliament to a city outside London as a means of rebalancing the constitution of the United Kingdom, which is over-centralised on London.

Motion not moved.

UK's Ambassador to the USA

Statement

6.43 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) (Con): My Lords, with the leave of the House, I shall now repeat in the form of a Statement the Answer given by my right honourable friend the Minister of State for Europe and the Americas to an Urgent Question in another place on what steps he is taking to ensure that the apparent unauthorised disclosure of communications from the UK's Ambassador to the USA is fully investigated by all relevant agencies. The Statement is as follows:

“Her Majesty's Government utterly deplore the serious breach of classified information; it is totally unacceptable. As the Prime Minister has already said, we retain full confidence in the British Ambassador to Washington, Sir Kim Darroch, for whom we have enormous respect as a distinguished and long-serving diplomat.

The Prime Minister and the British public expect our ambassadors to provide Ministers with an honest and unvarnished assessment of the politics in their country. We pay our ambassadors to be candid, just as the US Ambassador here will send back his candid reading of Westminster politics and personalities. That does not mean that it is the same as what the British Government think.

We have announced a leak inquiry, which I can reassure the whole House will be thorough and wide-ranging and will ultimately report to the Cabinet Secretary. A cross-government investigation led by the Cabinet Office has been launched, which I can reassure the whole House will be thorough and wide-ranging”.

My Lords, that concludes the Statement.

6.45 pm

Lord Tunncliffe (Lab): My Lords, the leak of the diptel cable will do extraordinary damage to the UK's interests abroad, and the confidence of civil servants will now be marred by knowing that they cannot freely feed back their insights. The Government are right to launch an inquiry. On an issue of such significance, speed is of the essence. Can the Minister outline the timetable for the inquiry? In the immediate term, will the Minister detail what steps the Government will take to ensure that diplomats feel safe to pass on information to the FCO?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, as I have said, we rely on our diplomats to provide insights into the lay of the land. As a Minister I have visited a number of countries over the past two years in post, and in my other responsibilities as a Minister I have benefited greatly from the insights and candid nature of such diplomatic telegrams. On the specific questions the noble Lord has raised, I can say that we will seek to complete this inquiry at the earliest possible time. As the noble Lord may be aware, the cross-government investigation is being led by the Cabinet Office and will include the Foreign Office. That inquiry will report to the Cabinet Secretary. We have some incredible diplomats and the best Diplomatic Service in the world. Based on this experience there will, of course, be concern, but we have reassured our diplomats that they should continue to report in the excellent, candid manner they have done over many years.

Baroness Northover (LD): My Lords, I, too, thank the Minister for repeating the Statement. It is deeply shocking that someone decided that it was acceptable to reveal our ambassador's confidential diptels, thereby undermining our whole Diplomatic Service. Nigel Farage stated this morning that Sir Kim Darroch was an unsuitable ambassador to the US because he was not a Trump supporter. I assume that he would send a mini Putin to Russia and a mini Assad to Syria. Will the Minister clarify what Jeremy Hunt is reported as saying: namely, that diptels are simply the personal view of the ambassador and not the position of the Government? Surely he recognises that we require from members of our Diplomatic Service absolute honesty in their professional assessments and complete confidentiality, and that we must defend them when they cannot speak out. We need a full investigation to discover who did this and to bring them to book.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, I totally agree with the noble Baroness's assessment. I put on record that the Government, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, Ministers at the Foreign Office and all of us have full confidence in the work of Sir Kim Darroch. I will put on record my personal reflections. I have known Sir Kim for a long time. I have worked with him on various issues of a very sensitive nature. He reflects the best of our diplomatic capabilities, the best of diplomacy, and we stand by him.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (CB): My Lords, will the Minister accept from someone who spent 10 years at the head of two of Britain's largest missions that this

sort of leak would have made my work completely impossible? Does he also agree that whoever was responsible for the leak—let us hope that they are found and, if necessary, prosecuted—has done grievous damage to one of our most important overseas relationships, and that that is unpardonable? Does he also agree that President Trump's reaction shows just why confidentiality between the ambassador and the Government here is necessary?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I pay tribute to the work of the noble Lord in his various diplomatic responsibilities, which he discharged with great aplomb during his tenure as a Foreign Office diplomat, including of course at the United Nations. I agree with him. Whoever is responsible should be brought to account for these actions. As Ministers and as a Government, we rely on the insight that our ambassadors and diplomats provide.

Our relationship with the United States is strong and is based on mutual recognition and respect. I played a part in receiving the President of the United States at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Where we have disagreements, as we have had recently on climate change and the JCPOA, we respect each other's differences and recognise that there are times when we may have a different perspective or view from that of our closest ally.

My personal reflection is that our work with the United States will withstand this. We work on a number of important issues. Today, the report of an independent review of Christian persecution has been launched. I am looking forward to being in Washington next week to meet my counterpart, Ambassador Brownback. We have been working on the issue of Christian persecution around the world and on standing up for the rights of the persecuted, and we are seeing results. The relationship between the US and the UK is special, deep and strong. It has spread over many years and will continue to withstand any challenges, including the latest one.

Baroness Liddell of Coatdyke (Lab): My Lords, like a number of noble Lords, I have walked on both sides of the street as a Minister and as a member of the Diplomatic Service. I can testify to the significance to both sides of having frank and unblemished advice from our ambassadors. However, when I became a member of the Diplomatic Service, I was subjected to detailed, developed vetting, to the extent that a bank account my mother had opened when I was eight was uncovered. I am not aware of any equivalent vetting when I became a Minister. Will the Minister give the House a guarantee that, should it transpire that a politician was responsible for these leaks, action will be taken against that politician with the full force of the law in such a way as to ensure that we are not bandying around terms such as "honourable" and "right honourable" without any honour being present?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, I am sure that the noble Baroness will recognise that when you take up responsibility as a Minister of the Crown, you are bound by the duties and responsibilities of that office, including by the Official Secrets Act, and that you should seek to discharge your duties in that manner.

[LORD AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON]

The noble Baroness is quite right to raise the issue of who is responsible. I am not going to speculate on that. The inquiry will be thorough and, if there is evidence of criminality, at that stage the police will be involved. We need to ensure that we get to the bottom of this to restore the confidence that Ministers have in the diplomatic telegrams that we receive, and so that our diplomats can continue to report in the exemplary and candid manner they do.

Viscount Waverley (CB): My Lords, this event is of course to be deplored. Is it recognised that blockchain might have a role to play in moving forward, utilising users' parameters? What assessment has been made of the whole question of secure communications generally, and what processes have been considered to ensure that our embassies and consulates are secure, following events at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, events such as this mean that we look again at the essence and confidentiality of our communications. Beyond that, it would be inappropriate for me to comment.

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (LD): My Lords, I very much welcome the noble Lord's unequivocal support for our ambassador. I am slightly surprised that President Trump should take it quite so seriously, because it is pretty well what CNN says about him seven days a week. I, like others, deeply abhor the notion that an ambassador should be chosen on the basis of his or her acceptability to the head of the state to which he or she might be given credentials. That surely must not happen, and the covert ambition of, for example, Mr Farage should undoubtedly be treated in the same way.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I assure the noble Lord that the question of who is appointed as a diplomat to any country is a matter for Her Majesty's Government and no one else.

Lord Davies of Stamford (Lab): My Lords, I think that everybody will be very pleased to hear the robust statement of confidence in our ambassador in Washington that the noble Lord has just delivered. Does he agree that there would be no point at all in having ambassadors or a Diplomatic Service abroad if they were not allowed to communicate back to the Government frankly and fully the reality of countries as they see it? Will he perhaps go a little further and give an assurance to everybody in the Diplomatic Service that no one's career will be damaged by virtue of a leak that is no doubt made with personal or political motives, such as occurred in the last few days in relation to our embassy in Washington?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I can certainly give the noble Lord an assurance on his first question. As to his second question regarding motives, I have said that we should await the full inquiry, where I am sure that that will be addressed in full.

G20 Summit

Question for Short Debate

6.55 pm

Asked by **Lord Howell of Guildford**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the recent G20 Summit in Osaka, Japan, and the letter relating to the summit from the International Relations Committee to the Prime Minister, dated 13 June, which outcomes they judge to be of most importance for the safeguarding and furtherance of Britain's national interests.

Lord Howell of Guildford (Con): My Lords, I declare my interests as listed in the register and in particular that I advise two major Japanese companies.

This debate arises from a short inquiry by your Lordships' International Relations Committee, of which I was then chairman, and a subsequent memorandum to the Prime Minister before she set off for the G20 meeting in Osaka, Japan, 10 days or so ago. The G20 meeting is supposed to co-ordinate responses to the tensions in world affairs and to take an overview of all the disruptive forces of change sweeping the globe—and, as I think is generally agreed nowadays, to do so with rather more relevance than the old G7 in modern conditions. Frankly, it does not look as though much co-ordination or overviewing went on this time in Osaka.

When she returned, the Prime Minister was subjected to two full hours of questioning on the G20 in the other place—incidentally, a longer time than was allocated for the whole of our debate this evening—and that of course came after her 11-hour flight back from Tokyo. I do not think that that kind of battering treatment of a nation's chief executive would be allowed or considered even faintly sensible in any other legislature in the world. Anyway, let us hope that the next Prime Minister, not to mention the ranks of Theresa May's persistent critics, have even half her remarkable stamina.

The questions to her in the other place covered a huge range of topics, from the Chagos Islands to Scotch whisky. Even so, some key issues were completely missed in the exchanges. Therefore, perhaps it would be useful for me to comment first on those key issues—in other words, what should have been there but was not.

I begin with Japan itself, where it all took place. In her Commons Statement, Mrs May mentioned the growing strength of the relationship between the UK and Japan, but in all her questioning no one repeated it or referred to it. That is rather odd because Japan is by far our best friend in north-east Asia, the world's fastest-growing area. We may not like some aspects of Japan, such as its judiciary or the persistence in whale killing, but it remains the third biggest industrial power in the world, with immense creative momentum, especially as the "globotics" revolution takes hold. We will need it very much in the future.

I have argued for 30 years that our foreign policy experts should take the Japan connection much more seriously and creatively. Osaka should have been—and I hope that in the sidelines, it was—a golden opportunity to carry forward our defence and security links, as well

as our trading ties with Japan and all Asia, with the new networks of trade and investment that are rapidly developing there.

Then there is our China policy. The G20 coverage was dominated by the US-China trade wrangles, but it is our interests that badly need developing and clarifying. America is not going to do that for us. Unlike America, we do not see China as the enemy. Of course, we have to treat our China connections with great caution, but this nation will stand or fall by its agility in balancing its connections with both China and America and not by being trodden flat between the two in the totally new pattern of world power that has now emerged, nor simply by clinging to the coat-tails of Trump's America all the time, as some of the shallower columnists in the media keep urging. I hope that is not what we were doing last week in taking over the Iranian oil tanker in Gibraltar that was bound for Syria, and that it is not what the new Prime Minister will do; that would not be the right pattern to follow.

There are aspects of China in the human rights area that we rightly dislike—some nasty stories circulate about its treatment of minorities, especially the Uighurs and their culture—but there should be no illusions: China is now a major global player as a supplier, a market, an influence and an investor across the world and right up to our own front door. It is the world's largest trading nation. Its R&D expenditure soared to \$298 billion last year, the second highest in the world. I believe that we can box much cleverer with China than the hot and cold, unpredictable views that come from Washington, using track-two and three diplomacy to the full on issues such as Huawei, 5G and the East/West technology split that some Americans apparently want to see and which at all costs we should avoid.

Hong Kong was not actually mentioned in the communiqué or the report back to the other place but it is certainly right for us to insist on Hong Kong freedoms under the law, including the freedom to protest, the principles of the 1984 Sino-British declaration and so on. However, the violent physical trashing of the Hong Kong legislature is something else. It is wrong, and in my view we should have been much more forthright in saying so than we have been.

As for the Russians at the G20, Vladimir Putin may not be the nicest of characters, as the Prime Minister's handshake photo made crystal clear, but undoubtedly he has a super-sharp mind and a mastery of prodding us at our weakest points. Liberalism may not be dead or obsolete in the West, as he claimed, but it is undoubtedly under severe assault from narrower varieties of populist nationalism, coming from both left and right, vastly amplified and empowered by digital communications and pushing Governments all the time inward, towards more protection and reluctance to co-operate internationally in line with the rules-based order.

As for climate concerns, the Prime Minister spoke proudly at Osaka of our Government's new commitment to zero emissions by 2050. By itself, as everyone knows, this would hardly move the needle in fighting climate change. Indeed, if we manufacture less and import more carbon from overseas, it might actually have the reverse effect. So the key aim has to be, and can

only be, through example impact, especially on the really big global emitters: China, India, Russia and the United States. China is going to be decisive in this situation, with 28% of global emissions and rising fast. We need to hear much more about how the example process is actually going to work. Assurances that the big emitters are listening is not enough, and neither is costly virtue-signalling.

The nature of international trade has changed dramatically in the last decade, especially now that trade relations between China and the rest of the world are entering a whole new phase. Much of our thinking about China is badly out of date, as my noble friend Lord O'Neill reminded us as a witness to our committee. I hope we shall hear from him a little later. It is cultural and professional exchange, the creative industries, the newest technologies and soft power networks that are reshaping world commerce, with Asia taking the lead.

In the forums of the world, we are going to have to defend our core ideas much more effectively. We will have to fight for liberal values with new techniques, methods and expressions. We will have to defend international rules and build as fast as we can new types of social and fair capitalism, as they do in Asia, to counter the inchoate pressures of populist extremism that are growing everywhere and are definitely here to stay.

The G20 was—or should have been—a forum in which to make these tasks a lot clearer and to focus on them more vividly, but this time I am not sure that that is what happened. That may be because technology is moving ahead too fast for Governments to keep up, but that is a debate for another day.

7.04 pm

Lord Grocott (Lab): My Lords, on the face of it, meetings of the G20 represent quite an unlikely and unusual event. When you strip them to their bare bones, it is a meeting of 20 Presidents and Prime Ministers, in this case, although the rank of the people attending varies. They have two days talking among themselves about a huge range of issues ranging from healthcare to migration to international trade. I should say that this is two days for 20 Presidents; even if it were the other way around—two Presidents over 20 days—they would still be hard-pressed to come to any useful conclusions on such a range of issues. When we held our short inquiry into the upcoming G20, as it then was, we had three excellent witnesses, Alan Wheatley of Chatham House, Dr Linda Yueh of the University of Oxford and the noble Lord, Lord O'Neill, of this House, who is in his place and will be speaking later.

I shall address not this specific G20 especially but the structure, scope and effectiveness of these meetings. First, what are the comments worthy of note under the heading of “structure”? One is the negative endorsement of the noble Lord, Lord O'Neill, who said that at least it was an improvement on the G7, which he described as,

“serving little other purpose than to keep its member states' civil servants busy”,

and,

“an artefact of a bygone era”.

[LORD GROCOTT]

Twenty is better than seven and I suppose the G20 has the credential of representing 80% of the world's GDP but, maybe negatively, it also represents 80% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Its membership consists of five from Europe, four from western Europe, four from Asia, five from the Americas and one from Africa. On any reasonable observation of that membership, that is pretty unbalanced. I wonder whether there would be a more sensible observation on the world's economy if one or two more countries were included, perhaps developing countries or countries facing the sort of challenges that one finds particularly in parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

So much for the structure, what about the scope of the G20? Our letter, drafted by our chairman, said that, "while the initial focus of the G20 was international economics and finance",

the scope,

"has broadened in recent years, with the forthcoming Summit including issues from healthcare to environmental sustainability, protectionist tendencies, migration movements, energy vulnerabilities and other factors affecting the health of world commerce".

They had to do that in two days. I know there were Sherpas, but that is still pushing it, I would have thought.

The communiqué published after the summit—I feel sorry for the people who have to write these—again sums up the absurd breadth of scope of these summits. It said that,

"we will strive to create a virtuous cycle of growth by addressing inequalities and realize a society where all individuals can make use of their full potential. We are resolved to build a society capable of seizing opportunities, and tackling economic, social and environmental challenges".

Who is not? That does not advance human knowledge and understanding very much. These observations about scope perhaps explain the most important difficulty for the G20, which is implementation and how it delivers on the decisions it makes. One of our witnesses—I forget who—said that the summit is,

"like going to a Cabinet meeting with no Prime Minister".

I will not comment on current circumstances, but that does not seem a very promising start to an international meeting. To quote the noble Lord, Lord O'Neill, with whom I agree entirely, again:

"They put something on the agenda, and as long as there are a couple of nice statements about what is on the agenda, they think they have delivered".

I shall give an example, taken from the leaders' declaration published at the conclusion of the last summit. There were two or three paragraphs in the communiqué on displacement and migration, which I would have thought was quite a big subject, the main one saying:

"Large movements of refugees are a global concern with humanitarian, political, social and economic consequences. We emphasize the importance of shared actions to address the root causes of displacement and to respond to growing humanitarian needs".

Presumably they then say to the Sherpas, "Get on with that, mate". How on earth you deliver on anything as general as that is beyond me.

In our letter, we say that,

"there is no effective mechanism to follow up the implementation of agreements reached at G20 summits",

which take place in a different location every year with a different chair. Alan Wheatley, another of our expert witnesses, said:

"The G20 has no permanent secretariat. Seen through that prism, there is no permanent officialdom to act as a counterweight to any whims or fancies that the current chairman of the G20 may have".

We need some objective assessment of these gatherings, which I am sure are hugely expensive and which I suggest have limited value. The noble Lord, Lord O'Neill, may give us a hint in this quote, which I very much agree with—perhaps more than he intended. He said, "I think the UK, if handled correctly post-Brexit ... should want to be more on the front foot about suggesting better ways of having a more effective global system. I think that it is really important that we do it".

I certainly agree with that and I hope the Minister does too.

7.11 pm

Lord Purvis of Tweed (LD): My Lords, it is always a pleasure to follow the noble Lord, who brings not only his experience but his refreshing objectivity and common sense to both the committee and many of these debates. I want to agree with him on a couple of points and will address them from my perspective in a short while.

On the structure of the G20, while it is welcome that South Africa is a member, I also wonder why Thailand, Nigeria, Taiwan, Iran or Colombia, which have bigger economies, are not participating. Ultimately, however the G20 is constituted, it is clearly better for leaders of nations to talk than not to. It is better to attend and participate actively, rather than following the approach of the leader of Mexico, for example, who chose not to attend, or President Bolsonaro, who cancelled a meeting with President Xi because the Chinese were late. It is clearly also better to seek consensus on the global challenges facing the biggest economies and the largest proportion of the world population.

While I greatly admire the diplomatic dexterity in the drafting of the communiqué on some of the key issues, it is becoming harder and harder to secure consensus in many respects, because of the symptoms the committee had already identified in its report on shifting global patterns. The USA, Russia and, in many ways, China look much more towards a transactional diplomacy than a multilateral one. We could see that in the Prime Minister's reference to maintaining support for the JCPOA—the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, or others may address that in this debate. Just this weekend, in referencing his regret about the coming apart of that, a former diplomat who worked for former Secretary Kerry in the United States said in very clear American terms that the US, all the P5 countries and all the EU agreed on this and it was the last time they agreed on anything. We can see this starting to unravel.

It is harder and harder to bring about consensus. That was seen on perhaps the biggest issue facing the planet. There was a distinct section on climate in the communiqué because the USA was distinct from the other 19 countries represented there. While other elements of the communiqué could well be warm, fine words, looking at those on cybersecurity or "Data Free Flow with Trust", surely those in Putin's circle would say that they are merely that—fine words. That said,

the statement from the Prime Minister on the UK's position is admirable, and the communiqué, and those from the Finance Ministers and others, covering women's empowerment, tourism, innovation, digitisation, artificial intelligence, agriculture and development, are commendable. This is where I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Grocott. The question asked of the Prime Minister by the noble Lord, Lord Howell, was: how will we ensure follow-up? There was an even more specific example in the communiqué on anti-corruption. It said:

"We will intensify our efforts to combat foreign bribery and to ensure that each G20 country has a national law in force for criminalising foreign bribery".

How does the G20 ensure that? I would be grateful if the Government could respond to the question asked by the noble Lord, Lord Howell.

During our hearing in the committee, I pursued a question to the noble Lord, Lord O'Neill, one of our excellent witnesses, on whether a grouping such as the G20 is as effective as coalitions of the willing, given the current global political climate and the likelihood that it will be with us for the next decade, or perhaps for the remainder of the period covered by sustainable development goals? We saw one example on the Global Fund. There are many other examples of countries large and small, developed and developing, that come together for specific objectives being more effective than a slightly more arbitrary group of large economies parcelling out, south to south, countries or developing countries to themselves. The UK will need to be a driving force in establishing many of these coalitions of the willing. It is going to be one of our major opportunities and a challenge for the world.

Finally, something that really concerned me about the communiqué's otherwise commendable language was the between-the-lines interpretation I took from it that Africa is still seen purely within the development framework. Africa, the most dynamic continent, with a young and fast-growing population, was still seen almost entirely through the prism of development. It was jarring to see no reference to the world's largest free trade area, which is currently being formed. It has taken 20 years to negotiate, but the African continental free trade area has enormous global potential, not just for the UK but for all its partners in the developed world. If we continue to see Africa only through the prism of development and not as an opportunity, the other warm elements of the G20 communiqué will not be implemented. That is the opportunity for the UK to take the lead going forward.

7.17 pm

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (CB): My Lords, this debate could and perhaps should have taken place a little earlier—ahead of the G20 meeting—but at least we now have the benefit of knowing the outcome of the meeting, and can make some assessment of it. It has been most excellently introduced by the noble Lord, Lord Howell, whose rotation off the chairmanship of the International Relations Committee is deeply regretted by all its members, myself included.

Our letter to the Prime Minister noted that the G20 was falling short of its earlier promise when it helped to handle the aftermath of the world financial crisis in

2007-09. Has the Osaka meeting changed that judgment? I do not think it has. It is still falling short of its ability to deal with a whole range of issues which are crying out for effective collective action—including, most prominently, trade policy and climate change—but that does not mean that we could do without the G20. To coin a phrase, if it did not exist, we would need to invent it, bringing together as it does the countries with 80% of the global economy, and bridging the divide between fully industrialised countries and those that are still developing. The G7, which has only industrialised countries, is not a substitute for that.

We should have no illusions about how alarming the situation on trade policy currently is. A whole range of unilateral, illegal protectionist measures initiated by the Trump Administration are shaking to its foundations our open-trading system, which has brought such benefits over the past 70 years. This is the most immediate and most fundamental challenge to what we frequently refer to as the rules-based international system, which it is in our national interest to support and strengthen. The Trump/Xi meeting dealt with some trade issues, but let us not kid ourselves. It was not a ceasefire, as it has been described by rather gullible journalists. It merely avoided making a bad situation a lot worse. What action are the Government taking to reverse that trend towards protectionism? What will be done to ensure that the World Trade Organization's dispute settlement procedure does not collapse in a few months' time as a result of the US refusal to appoint new adjudicators or panel members?

On climate change too, the result was certainly sub-optimal, but the commitment of 19 of the 20 participants to the Paris accords was, in my view, better than accepting the weasel words that the US would have preferred. The great challenge that lies ahead is in implementing and strengthening those Paris accords, inadequate as they certainly are, and that lies ahead, but I would like to know what strategy the Government have for doing better when the UN Secretary-General calls together a summit meeting on climate change this autumn.

I have two final points. Others have made the point that it is necessary to find some way of monitoring progress in fulfilling commitments in the periods between these annual meetings. I would like to hear what the Government think can be done about that. Suggestions have been made about the IMF or the OECD doing it; there are perfectly good ways in which participants could be brought up to the fact that they are not actually doing very much to fulfil the warm words they agreed at the last meeting. Secondly, I give three cheers for the successful conclusion of the EU-Mercosur agreement, which was announced during the summit, even though that achievement looks set to become yet another piece of Brexit-related collateral damage if the two aspirants to the Prime Minister's post get their way and take us out of the European Union by 31 October.

7.23 pm

Baroness Anelay of St Johns (Con): My Lords, I thank my noble friend Lord Howell for introducing this short debate with his customary careful analysis,

[BARONESS ANELAY OF ST JOHNS]

and pay tribute to his three years as the first ever chairman of the International Relations Select Committee. His expertise established it as a respected committee of this House and it is a privilege to follow him as its chair.

The G20's convening power brings together the leaders of some of the world's largest economies but, as the noble Lord, Lord Purvis, pointed out it is not perfect in its list of 20. That still makes it an important place for the UK to use an opportunity to promote a values and rules-based agenda. Like the UN, the G20 can be a deeply frustrating forum. The pursuit of multilateral co-operation within a grouping of Heads of Government who might justifiably give priority to their national interests means that it will always be tough to make real progress on crucial issues. The exception was of course about 10 years ago, when it came together over the sub-prime crisis. What is my noble friend the Minister's assessment of the impact of the pursuit of national interests at Osaka on the progress that can henceforth be made on two of today's issues, which I hope he agrees are crucial to the UK: global warming and, as the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, said, the reform of the WTO? How will the UK be affected by the progress, or lack of it, on both matters at the summit?

Before travelling to Osaka, the Prime Minister pledged that she would introduce a legally binding target forcing the UK to end its contribution to global warming by 2050. At Osaka, she urged other G20 countries to set similarly ambitious net zero targets but the summit declaration falls far short of that. It does clarify that those countries which still stick by the Paris agreement will continue to work towards implementing their pledges—it does not say how. But then paragraph 36 sets apart the position of the United States in refusing to change its mind over its withdrawal from the Paris agreement,

“because it disadvantages American workers and taxpayers”.

Did the Prime Minister discuss climate change with President Trump while in Osaka? If so, was that in a bilateral meeting or in general discussions, and what was his response? Indeed, had the Prime Minister discussed such matters during the President's successful state visit here earlier this summer? As my noble friend Lord Ahmad said on the matter that was discussed in this Chamber just before our short debate, we have a deep, special and enduring relationship with the United States. We can disagree but still be firm friends; we can strongly disagree and still be firm friends, so let us hope that continues.

Was global warming discussed at the Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth on 15 and 16 June at Karuizawa? Which UK Minister attended that meeting, and what is the Government's assessment of the progress made and its importance for the UK? Does the Minister agree that the eight ministerial meetings which take place separately from the summit itself play a part in the effective functioning of the G20, and can give the UK an important opportunity to ensure that issues vital to the safeguarding and furtherance of UK interests are discussed in some detail?

I note that in the DIT Oral Questions on 6 June, the Secretary of State for International Trade gave a commitment to support WTO reform at the G20 Trade Ministers' meeting that was scheduled to take place later that week in the city of Tsukuba. The trade ministerial statement is referenced in the summit declaration, but it merely restates what the two problems are without demonstrating any agreement about how to solve them. As the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, said, the two problems are: paralysis within the dispute resolution mechanism, caused by the US blocking the appointment of new judges; and the need for a further round of market liberalisation which is WTO-consistent. Does the Minister see any realistic chance of resolving those problems at the 12th WTO ministerial conference, which is scheduled for June next year? After all, when we leave the EU, with or without a deal, the effective functioning of the WTO will be even more vital to us then than it is now.

We inhabit a global society and a global economy. Clearly, the G20's role and functioning are not perfect and could be strengthened. But forms of global governance are needed now more than ever and it remains the case that an imperfect G20 is still better than none at all. As the Prime Minister said in her statement at the summit:

“Genuine collaboration and dialogue are particularly critical now as we confront serious threats to global stability ... we are stronger when we work together”.

7.28 pm

Baroness Greengross (CB): My Lords, one important aspect of the G20 meeting was the leaders' commitment to promote preventive action across the life course, which is vital in our ageing societies.

We know that, in better-off countries, at least 16% of years lived with disabilities are largely preventable—according to research by the International Longevity Centre UK, which I am privileged to head up—so interventions that aim to achieve this are of the utmost importance. As demographic trends continue, research by the International Longevity Centre this year predicts that nearly 27 million years will be lived with a disability, leading to tremendous losses to well-being and productivity.

There is a clear need for health systems to include adults in middle and later life in health promotion programmes—regrettably, they are often excluded. Such programmes include: targeted screening; preventive medications; supporting people to adopt healthier lifestyles; vaccinations against communicable diseases, which sometimes, unfortunately, still have upper age limits; and supporting people more to manage long-term conditions.

We need to further promote the inclusion of preventive interventions across all ages in national health systems. I hope the Minister ensures that the Government make this a reality in this country. Evidence has shown that preventing disease, and limiting long-term impairment and the compounding impact of multiple diseases, are both good for our health and will play an important role in supporting the economic sustainability of health systems. The long-awaited UK prevention strategy will need to deliver on this commitment, and I hope the Minister assures the House that it will.

7.31 pm

Lord Judd (Lab): My Lords, first I applaud the work of the noble Lord, Lord Howell. I have the good fortune to know him quite well, since our days as young politicians on different sides of the House in the other place. We worked quite closely together in a group that dealt with world issues and particularly Anglo-American relations, the Middle East and Africa. Those were good days, and I have always respected his wisdom and judgment. They were again evident in the debate today, and we all want to thank him for the contribution he has made.

I found the attendance by the Prime Minister both at the Council and the G20 a sad picture to witness. It was hollow, as everybody looked over her shoulder to see what was going to come next in Britain. The noises coming from the debate between the two principal candidates for the premiership are far from reassuring. The challenge to Britain is to rejoin the world, be part of the world and play a constructive part in world affairs. What have we heard about this in the debate between the two candidates? Instead, we have heard hollow and rather disturbing populist statements playing to the gallery in the short term, but with no vision, sense of statesmanship or sense of how great the challenge is. This is not a good time for Britain.

Coming to the occasions themselves, I was also saddened by the declaration by participants at the G20 in the paper they issued after the meeting. We have been having debates in this House and Parliament as a whole about the overwhelming importance of climate change and the challenge it poses to humanity. We are all doubly conscious of our responsibilities to future generations. We all fear lest we betray those future generations if we do not give the right priority to tackling climate change—and of course, climate change is central to the management of the world economy. However, what do we find? We find in the G20 leaders' declaration that climate change appears in paragraph 35. That seems to be an indication that the issue clearly lacks the priority that it should have.

Similarly, migration is a symptom of a world in turmoil and full of challenges, but it is also an issue of how we ensure global stability and security, because large migrant populations and large numbers of displaced people are hardly a way to build a secure and fulfilling world. However, what do we find? We find this mentioned in paragraphs 41 and 42 of 43 paragraphs in the document. Where is the sense of priority? The clear message I want us to send to our leaders from this debate is that we want real priority established in international relations for the issues which concern us, such as migration and climate change. We therefore want leadership which is determined to be second to none in saying that Britain belongs to the world and wants to share the burden of responsibility for managing world affairs. An inescapable issue for us all is that the countries of the world are entirely interdependent. We shall be judged in history by the success we make of meeting that challenge. As the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, has just said, it is by working together that we can make a responsible contribution to the future.

7.37 pm

Lord O'Neill of Gatley (CB): My Lords, it is a pleasure as well as an honour briefly to speak in this debate. I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Howell, on securing it and join others in commending the tremendous work that he has conducted in his committee. I can only hope that his example is taken up in the commitment of others and that, in the spirit of some comments already made and a couple that I shall now reflect on, it pushes our country on to be more thoughtful and bold on the global stage.

I want to make six brief points. First, the G20 meeting in Osaka took place against a background of many high-frequency indicators suggesting an ongoing slowdown in the world economy. Four out of five indicators that have a particularly good cyclical track record are all softening: Germany's Ifo leading indicator, as it is known; the US ISM survey of manufacturing; the sub-components of that same index for new orders and inventories; and Korean exports—South Korea is the first country to report its export data every month and does so on the first day of the month referring to the month before. The data for June, published a week ago, show a sharp weakening in exports—a bellwether of what is going on in world trade. The fifth, US weekly jobless claims, is the only indicator that continues to be strong, but if the others carry on in the same way, that will soon no longer be the case.

Secondly, fortunately the G20 statement did acknowledge downside risks to the world economy, which was a relief, not least given that that was its original expertise. Of course, as we have heard, the Trump announcement of a truce—for now—in the trade war with China was also a relief. However, as others have commented, it is not clear that there was anything at the G20 meeting, with the possible exception of increased expectations, yet again, of policy burdens falling on major central banks, to do more to help economic growth. That in itself, in my opinion, is a growing concern, as it is now becoming almost an addiction.

Thirdly, as said quite correctly by others, the G20 itself is the most representative body to deal with the many complex social challenges of the world, as well as the macroeconomic ones we have heard some reference to. Indeed, I applauded its emergence way back in 2008, seven years after I first wrote about the so-called BRIC concept, in an article that actually tried to show that we needed a much better form of global economic governance, even if it would be more complicated. With the G20, in principle, we have it. It is much more sensible, as I believe others have mentioned, than the very outdated G7, but it needs to start doing something.

Fourthly, as we see in many of the paragraphs in the leaders' statement, it is not clear that the G20 is doing anything any longer beyond publishing statements of recognition and showing awareness of what much of the world is talking about. Beyond accounting for itself more regularly, perhaps a separate problem is its sheer size. A couple of noble Lords commented on the exclusion of certain obvious countries, but another part of the problem, which the noble Lord, Lord Grocott, talked amusingly about, may be that there are too many. I have long believed that within the current G20 perhaps we need, separately, a new G7, which would,

[LORD O'NEILL OF GATLEY]

in my opinion, definitely include China, probably India, and perhaps Brazil and Russia, and then, of course, the US and Japan and, instead of many individual European countries, the EU.

Fifthly, noble Lords will notice that I did not mention the UK. The UK would understandably want to be part of such a narrow group, if such circumstances ever came around. Given our history and what we have still in principle in terms of values, we could be an eighth; but we need to demonstrate that we have something powerful that would help the world move forward and become a better place. That in itself partly relies on the Government having a clear and powerful vision for post-Brexit Britain and the world.

Sixthly and lastly, I want to end specifically on the topic of antimicrobial resistance, or AMR, which luckily no one else has yet mentioned. I was relieved that paragraph 33 referred to this huge challenge and I remain proud that the review I chaired under David Cameron played its part in getting the topic on the agenda in 2015, with increased focus in 2016. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the dedication of a number of civil servants who I know worked tirelessly to ensure that this statement appeared. I am irritated, and to some extent alarmed, by what I have picked up about the attempts by some G20 countries to downplay the focus on this issue, including some that claim to share the UK's championing of this issue in recent years. This in itself highlights, as could many other examples, the weakness of the current G20 operational style: G20 leaders need to urgently change this game-playing approach. In this instance, the so-called market failure in the market for antibiotics is getting dramatically worse. The solutions my review highlighted have been broadly supported by many of those few who analyse these things, but as of yet, we just have words: no incentives or moneys are coming from the G20 or the pharma industry. As we showed getting on for three years ago, if we do not address this, along with the other challenges that need to be met, we will have 10 million people a year dying by 2050. The G20 needs action and not just pleasant words.

It is also important that our next Prime Minister, whoever it is, the Chancellor, Foreign Secretary and the rest of the Cabinet get back to talking about these things powerfully and regularly, as they have done in the past—not least, as one of the many symbols they could give of what global Britain actually is.

I will finish, and I apologise for going over by 30 seconds—

Baroness Stedman-Scott (Con): Perhaps the noble Lord could bring his remarks to a conclusion.

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: To echo the words and spirit of the noble Lords, Lord Howell and Lord Grocott, it is exceptionally important that the UK be on the front foot at the G20, with thought and serious attention. As a final thought in the spirit of the interesting comments of the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, perhaps the UK can itself outline ways in which the G20 can start monitoring and measuring what it says at meetings.

7.45 pm

Baroness Northover (LD): My Lords, I thank the noble Lord, Lord Howell, for securing this debate. I think he may have hinted at a case against the G20, although he then concluded in the other direction, so perhaps we did not need a debate at all. The noble Lord, Lord Grocott, certainly seemed to hold this position.

This was Theresa May's last summit as PM, and it also reflected Britain's position as half in and half out of the EU. The Minister will know that we on these Benches deeply regret the intention to leave the EU. Besides the economic damage we would do ourselves, the noble Lord will also be acutely aware, I am sure, of our consequent decline in global influence, which the noble Lord, Lord O'Neill, referred to. He will have registered exactly what our global partners think about our current path.

On leadership, the noble Lord, Lord Grocott, referred to the notion that the G20 was like a Cabinet without a Prime Minister. This perhaps reflects a changing balance in the world. Whatever criticisms were thrown at the US in the post-war years, until now it did seem to speak for democracy, liberal attitudes and human rights—something that the current President has no interest in doing. Its leadership may have grated on some, but maybe we will miss it when it has gone.

As China displaces the US, we have a US President who promotes "America First". Others follow, as we see with Bolsonaro in Brazil. Nationalism and populism endanger multilateral engagement. Of course countries look after their self-interest, but the terrible bloodshed of the 20th century reinforces the fact that there needs also to be a recognition that some problems require global partnership—a point made by the noble Lord, Lord Judd.

Two issues that need to be tackled globally were on the agenda of the G20, climate change and trade—whatever else may have been listed there. I commend President Macron for his lead in ensuring that 19 out of the 20 reiterated their commitment to the Paris Agreement. That still matters. The separate paragraph on the supposedly "negative economic impact" of the Paris Agreement on "American workers and taxpayers" makes it crystal clear who is out of line here.

Then there is trade. The global effect of the trade war between the US and China shows how interlinked we are. The noble Lord, Lord O'Neill, has just warned us of the signs of a global slowdown. China and the US reached a tentative truce. President Trump also decided to allow US companies to sell to Huawei. Christine Lagarde, however, emphasised that resuming trade talks is not enough and that the tariffs already implemented were damaging the global economy.

The G20 also agreed that the WTO needed further reform, particularly in dispute resolution. Brexiteers might wish to look closely at what we may have to rely on if their wishes come true. They might also wish to note that Mercosur and the EU finally reached a trade agreement 20 years after trade talks began. My noble friend Lord Purvis rightly notes the absence of consideration of the free trade area in Africa. I might ask the Minister whether the UK is encouraging the

inclusion of countries from Africa in the G20—but I think that the UK has little influence, so perhaps it is not relevant even to press that.

Other important issues came up, as the noble Baroness, Lady Greengross, and the noble Lord, Lord O'Neill, mentioned. Mrs May held her first meeting with President Putin since the Salisbury attacks, after he had given a most helpful interview to the *Financial Times* about how liberalism was now obsolete. I am sure that his citizens agree. Then, of course, we look to the next G20 summit, which is due to be hosted in Saudi Arabia—despite the recent conclusion of the UN special rapporteur on the Khashoggi case. She wants to ensure that the G20 does not “become complicit” in this international crime. Can the Minister comment?

Noble Lords point to how the G20 is falling short, as the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, put it. But surely he, my noble friend Lord Purvis, the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, and others are right that the G20 meeting shows the continuing importance of multilateral engagement in a polarising world—even if the family photos had some strange and difficult family members among them. I look forward to the Minister's response to this interesting commentary on an imperfect body.

7.50 pm

Lord McNicol of West Kilbride (Lab): My Lords, every speaker in tonight's debate has touched on the chairmanship of the noble Lord, Lord Howell, and the letter that he sent to the Prime Minister in June. In preparing for tonight's debate I was going through the letter, highlighting the bits which were of interest, and I highlighted virtually all of it. It would be of interest to know whether there was a response from the Prime Minister to the noble Lord's letter of 13 June and, as has been touched on by many of the speakers tonight, to the important issues that were raised in it.

Also in preparation for tonight, I looked at the declaration. Its language, which many noble Lords have touched on this evening, reminds me of a number of manifestos that I have seen over the years. The question that arises from it, which has been raised by the noble Lord, Lord Purvis, my noble friend Lord Grocott and other noble Lords, is: how is the delivery monitored and kept an eye on as we progress? Perhaps the Minister could touch on that.

The UK was once a great champion of values and principles on the global stage, and the difference between the G20 only a decade ago and our position in the world now could not be starker. The Osaka summit showed how the UK's role has, sadly, become greatly diminished.

On the issue of climate change, in the coming decades this must be a priority for each of us; we owe it to our children. Since recently adopting Labour's policy of net zero emissions by 2050, surely the Government realise that the UK must now persuade other states to do the same. The UK alone cannot avoid the greatest threat that our planet has ever faced. With France also now working towards net zero, I hope that the international community can build momentum and quickly make net zero the norm. While it is encouraging that 19 of the 20 representatives reiterated their support for effective and speedy action

on climate change, the omission of the US is increasingly worrying. As the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, and the noble Baronesses, Lady Anelay and Lady Northover, touched on, the UK must be the voice which puts climate change at the top of the agenda.

I worry that trade may have been an awkward topic for the Prime Minister. After all, in the background to the summit her likely successor as Prime Minister continued to insist on the benefits of a no-deal Brexit and the consequential ripping up of every trade agreement which the UK is currently party to. I cannot imagine that the Prime Minister was in the best position to lay the foundations for future trade arrangements at the G20. However, looking towards a future whereby the next Government may be in a position to do so, most certainly, it should not be used to fund brutal conflicts—and on that, I come to our relations with Saudi Arabia. It is of deep regret that the UK has continued to arm the Saudi forces. Last week, the Court of Appeal ruled that UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen are unlawful. Can the Minister confirm whether the judgment was raised during the bilateral meetings between the Prime Minister and the Crown Prince?

It was 10 years ago, back in 2009, that the UK last hosted the G20. As was my noble friend Lord Judd, I am reminded of the financial aid deal that Gordon Brown delivered at that summit and how, under the Labour Government, the UK led the G20 in a coming together of the world to face the great challenges of the day. It is in that exact spirit that the UK should and could lead the world in overcoming the great challenges we face now: climate change, the global migration crisis, rising concern about nationalism, populism and protectionist Governments, and the enormous inequality across the globe.

I regret that, when looking at Britain in the world today, many will see a country shying away from the global stage and failing to build the relationships we will need if we are to solve the problems of the future.

7.56 pm

Lord Young of Cookham (Con): My Lords, I begin by thanking my noble friend Lord Howell for securing this debate on an issue most critical to our national interest, and for his speech introducing it. I join others in paying tribute to his chairmanship over many years of the International Affairs Committee, which has produced a number of influential and at times challenging reports for the Government. He managed to hold his committee together to produce them and has always introduced them with the eloquence and perception we have grown accustomed to. We thank him for his work on that committee and wish his successor, my noble friend Lady Anelay, all the best.

My noble friend raised a number of issues that were not raised at the summit, and I propose to stick strictly to the Question that he asked, which focuses on the, “outcomes they judge to be of most importance for the safeguarding and furtherance of Britain's national interests”. Perhaps I could write to him about the opportunity to raise issues about China and Japan, which he mentioned in his opening remarks.

[LORD YOUNG OF COOKHAM]

Several noble Lords were critical of the language used in the communiqué and about the whole structure of the G20, and I understand that, but one needs to put this in perspective, as did my noble friend Lady Anelay and the noble Lord, Lord Judd. The UK has always understood that our security can be upheld only by collective endeavour, our prosperity can only be advanced by co-operation across borders, and our success as a nation depends not just on a stronger economy at home but our role in the world and the partnerships we build. That is why we are members of a number of multilateral organisations, including the UN, the G7, the G20, NATO, the Commonwealth—in which my noble friend has played such a prominent part—and the international financial institutions. They are all crucial to our ability to maintain and extend our reach and influence in the world.

I think it was the noble Lord, Lord Purvis, who referred to the fine words in the communiqué: fine words, yes, but very worthwhile objectives. We can reach such objectives only if we work with colleagues in other parts of the world through the sorts of institutions we have been talking about this evening. Of course, they need to be improved, targeted and focused and I hope to say something in a moment about monitoring, a theme that has emerged from our debate this evening.

In Osaka, the Prime Minister worked hard to bridge the differences between the G20 countries on some of the biggest challenges facing our nation: international trade, climate change, global health and preventing terrorist use of the internet. Discussions in Osaka were not always easy, but the UK made progress on each of these issues, which are important for safeguarding and furthering our national interest. I shall touch on some of them in a moment.

The Prime Minister welcomed the committee's letter, which provided important perspectives ahead of the G20. She is in the process of responding to the questions it posed, building on her reflections from Osaka and previous summits; I have been assured that a reply is imminent.

As the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, said, the G20 leaders summit was formed to respond to the 2008 financial crisis. The rejection of protectionism and a commitment to an open global economy were key elements of the G20's response. Yet, as noble Lords explained, trade tensions have escalated and trade restrictions and distortions are now in place, affecting hundreds of billions of dollars of trade. The WTO has forecast that the effects of a trade war could exceed even those of the financial crisis. So, my noble friend Lord Howell was right to raise in his letter these critical issues as areas of concern, especially at a time when we are negotiating our exit from the EU trading bloc, as the noble Baroness, Lady Northover, said.

We believe in open, free and rules-based international trade, as the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, mentioned. All nations must be encouraged to uphold these rules and open their markets if we are to build economies that truly work for everyone. That is why the Prime Minister made it clear that there are no winners in a trade war. We all stand to lose, and those on the lowest incomes stand to lose the most. We believe that any

solution to the current tensions must have the multilateral system at its core. The system is not perfect and is in urgent need of reform; a number of G20 members, including the EU and Japan, have put forward credible proposals.

My noble friend's letter mentioned concerns about the US Administration's approach to the WTO. Working with like-minded partners, the UK will continue to encourage WTO members to engage constructively in the reform debate. In that regard, we welcome the United States' submission of various proposals to strengthen the system and make sure that it is equipped with the tools needed to tackle present challenges, as well as its involvement in initiatives such as the EU-US-Japan trilateral group.

The G20 also expressed support for action to improve the functioning of the WTO's dispute settlement system, which the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, mentioned, while the crucial issue of industrial subsidies is now firmly on the G20 agenda. On the dispute settlement system, we strongly support the informal process launched by the General Council at the WTO to seek a resolution to the appellate body issues. The proposals put forward so far by WTO members bring the right ingredients to many of the concerns raised. We urge all WTO members to engage constructively in the ongoing discussions.

Looking beyond the WTO, the G20 reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening further the global financial safety net with the IMF at its centre.

The noble Lord, Lord O'Neill, referred to the progress made on global health, particularly on AMR. I welcome the pioneering work of the noble Lord and Dame Sally Davies, as well as their continued efforts to keep this on the agenda for the G20. As the noble Lord mentioned, the latest estimates are that AMR currently accounts for 700,000 deaths annually; if we do not increase action, this figure is predicted to rise to 10 million by 2050—more people than currently die from cancer. There is a significant economic cost. AMR impacts on the economy through not just mortality and knock-on effects but increased healthcare expenditures and decreased livestock production. I will write to the noble Lord with more about what we are doing about AMR and why we are dealing with the market failure, which does not produce the antibiotic drug developments, vaccines and diagnostic technologies that we need. We are looking at a new model that identifies the right market incentives for research and development.

The noble Baroness, Lady Greengross, mentioned some of the wider imperatives on healthcare. The Prime Minister announced the UK's new three-year funding pledge, averaging £467 million a year for the Global Fund. This will provide medication for more than 3 million people living with HIV, treatment and care for more than 2 million people suffering from TB and 90 million mosquito nets to protect children and families from malaria.

On climate change—which the noble Lord, Lord McNicol, mentioned—G20 countries have seen heat waves, floods and hurricanes hit with unprecedented frequency and intensity, contributing to conflict, state failure and illegal migration. Some 100 million more people will be pushed into poverty by 2030. Meanwhile, global efforts are not on course to meet the Paris

commitments. If we take no further action, we are headed for a three-degree, and possibly well over a four-degree, rise in global temperatures and the dangerous impacts that would bring.

The message from the public is clear. Our citizens—particularly our youth, whose lives will be shaped immeasurably by climate change—demand action. Following the example of Greta Thunberg, hundreds of thousands of young people around the world have come together to demand greater action. As we heard in our debate, the G20 accounts for 80% of global emissions; its leaders have a critical role to play in reversing the trend.

As my noble friend Lady Anelay mentioned, we legislated earlier this month to reduce our net emissions to zero by 2050. My noble friend asked what we had said to President Trump. The Prime Minister was one of the first to speak to President Trump after his announcement in 2017, and she has had a number of conversations with him about it since. She has encouraged him not to leave the Paris agreement and continues to hope that the United States will honour it. Of course, it remains a disappointment that the US continues to opt out in an area of such critical global importance.

I shall try to deal with some of the issues raised in the debate. We take seriously and routinely monitor implementation of the commitments the UK makes in the G20. There are various mechanisms for monitoring implementation, including the G20 working groups, international organisations and independent organisations such as the University of Toronto, which compiles an annual compliance report. I am not sure it is desirable for a single international organisation to take overall responsibility for monitoring G20 agreements—it is probably best if the members do it themselves—but I take seriously the point raised about monitoring and will share that with the Ministers concerned.

I was asked how the G20 enforces the foreign bribery rules. Representatives from G20 countries meet routinely to track implementation of commitments made, and the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group is responsible for the implementation of foreign bribery rules.

My noble friend Lady Anelay asked whether climate change was discussed on 15 and 16 June and which Minister attended. My honourable friend Thérèse Coffey represented the UK at the first joint meeting of the G20 energy and environment Ministers.

There was a discussion about non-G20 member states, and it is worth making the point that there are permanently invited guests such as the African Union, APEC and ASEAN. It is not the case that only G20 members have an impact on the discussions.

The noble Lord, Lord McNicol, asked about Crown Prince Mohammed. The killing of Jamal Khashoggi was raised and the Prime Minister made clear the need to have an open judicial system. She also raised the need for a political solution in Yemen, supporting the work of the United Nations and the special envoy.

I am conscious that my time is up—the screen is flashing—and I have not dealt with all the issues raised. I will write to noble Lords.

I conclude by saying that we have always understood that our success as a nation is tied to our collaboration with other countries and the relationships we build. As we leave the EU, the United Kingdom will continue to strengthen and draw upon our world-class diplomatic network and retain the same strong spirit of international co-operation and compromise that has long characterised our engagement with the rest of the world. This is the only way we can protect and promote our interests and ensure the prosperity and security of our citizens for years to come.

Today, the global system is under real stress. We must be honest in identifying problems and do more to work together to fix them. The UK has never been afraid to stand up for the global rules that underpin our values and our way of life—rules that govern our collective security, as well as the global economy. We must work flexibly to ensure that multilateral forums such as the G7 and G20 continue to function in a way that promotes genuine collaboration and dialogue, in order to confront the serious threats to global stability that we have heard about this evening.

House adjourned at 8.09 pm.

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