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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS

OFFICIAL REPORT

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The following abbreviations are used to show a Member's party affiliation:

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

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House of Lords

Thursday 18 November 2021

11 am

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Ely.

New Hospitals

Question

11.06 am

Asked by **Baroness Walmsley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards their commitment of building 40 new hospitals.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care (Lord Kamall) (Con): The Government committed in October 2020 to build 40 new hospitals by 2030. We have confirmed an initial £3.7 billion to support these schemes for the first four years of the 10-year programme. This, together with eight previously announced schemes, will mean that we will have 48 new hospitals by the end of the decade. Six of the 48 new hospitals are currently in construction, including the first of the 40 new hospital schemes, and one scheme is now complete.

Baroness Walmsley (LD): My Lords, as the Minister said, eight NHS capital schemes already under way when the promise was made were added to the Prime Minister's pledge for 40 new hospitals by 2030, but now their cost overruns will have to be paid for out of the original pot of money. Can the Minister say how many of the originally promised 40 will now have to be postponed and how many are really new?

Lord Kamall (Con): The Government have said that we will deliver 40 new hospitals by 2030 and in October 2020 we published the full list of the 40. This includes eight schemes that were announced by previous Governments but are to be delivered this decade and 32 new hospitals. We have also confirmed that we will identify further new hospital schemes, the process for which is ongoing, with a final decision to be made in spring 2022. This means that 48 hospitals in total are to be delivered over the decade.

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Lab): My Lords, I have here the *New Hospitals Programme Communications Playbook*, which the noble Lord's department has put out and which makes it clear that if you build a new wing of a hospital, that counts as a new hospital. What is worse is that NHS bodies are being instructed to lie and propagandise on behalf of the Government. Will he withdraw this disgraceful communication?

Lord Kamall (Con): I hope that the noble Lord will recognise that whenever a new project is started and there is a decision to build a new hospital in a community, it surely makes sense to look at whether there is space

on existing sites. Otherwise, if we start criticising new hospitals on existing sites, there may be a perverse disincentive for a hospital to say, "Well, let's build elsewhere". when there is a perfectly good site. It is important, whatever you call it, whatever the semantics, to recognise that we are building modern, digital, sustainable hospitals for the future.

Lord Bethell (Con): My Lords, we very much welcome the investment in physical buildings, but the modernisation of the NHS also depends on digital infrastructure and training. Will the Minister please tell us what steps he is taking towards a programme of technological improvements that are needed to modernise the NHS?

Lord Kamall (Con): I thank my noble friend for the question—I have picked up many of the things that he started when he was in post. One of the great things about being the Minister for Technology, Innovation and Life Sciences is having a real ability to drive through digitisation of the health service, making sure that we have a modern health service that is fit for the future, so that if you are a patient in one part of the country and something happens to you, all your information is available elsewhere for the clinicians at the time and you get the best possible care. That is something that we should be celebrating.

Lord Jones of Cheltenham (LD) [V]: My Lords, one of the principles of managing taxpayers' money is to take account of the revenue implications of a capital budget. In view of the projected increases in building costs, is the Minister confident that the new hospitals programme managers understand this? What is being done to recruit the necessary doctors, nurses, technicians and maintenance staff for these new and existing hospitals?

Lord Kamall (Con): One thing that is exciting about the new hospitals is that we are going to transform the way in which we deliver new healthcare infrastructure. First, it will be sustainable, with net-zero carbon across the NHS. Digital transformation is key, making use of the latest technology, so no longer will we have microscope slides couriered between sites, but we can instantly see a digital image and assess it using AI. There will be standardised design and modern methods of construction and new hospitals will be integrated with local health and care systems. This is a project for a health system that is fit for the future.

Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton (Con): Many of these new hospitals will be built in existing centres of population. My concern, though, is for areas of high projected population growth, such as the Oxford-Cambridge arc, where we always seem to be playing catch-up when it comes to medical facilities. Can my noble friend simply reassure me that the principles of "I before E"—infrastructure before expansion—will be applied when choosing where these hospitals will be?

Lord Kamall (Con): I assure my noble friend that, in deciding where to build a hospital, among the things that the NHS and others look at are the needs in the

[LORD KAMALL]
community, existing infrastructure and making sure that we can build hospitals that are fit for the future, that are digital, that are transformative, but are led by clinicians as opposed to construction experts.

Lord Mann (Non-Afl): The Minister said, just a moment ago, “whatever you call it”. When David Cameron was Prime Minister, he gave a pledge on district general hospitals and the definition of hospitals became important. Many of us said that, in order to be defined as a hospital, it had to incorporate 24-hour accident and emergency. What is the Minister’s definition of a hospital and is the pledge from David Cameron on district general hospitals current?

Lord Kamall (Con): Each of the building projects will be a new hospital that will deliver brand-new, state-of-the-art facilities. One thing that we must be careful of is that if we say, “Well, you can’t call that a new hospital, even though it is a new facility, because it’s on an existing site”, we do not create perverse incentives, where the local NHS or the local ICS says, “We mustn’t build it there, because we will be accused of not having a new hospital”. Surely what we should be focusing on is outcomes, not inputs, and the fact that we are delivering modern, digital hospitals for the future.

Baroness Thornton (Lab): My Lords, leaving aside the dubious and overinflated claims of 40 new hospitals, many of which are, in reality, upgrades—as welcome as they are—I and others in the House raised with the Minister’s predecessor but one in 2019 that there was an alarming repairs and infrastructure crisis, which was then in the region of £3 billion. Could the Minister explain to the House which part and how much of the new hospitals programme will address the immediate and urgent matter of crumbling wards, sewer leaks in wards and old and dodgy kit?

Lord Kamall (Con): The noble Baroness will recognise that we need not only to build new hospitals but to upgrade existing infrastructure and this is all part of the capital programme. The decisions on individual hospitals and upgrades will be taken in local communities in consultation with clinicians and local ICSs.

Lord Balfé (Con): My Lords, will the Minister avoid getting caught in a numbers game? We need an adequate number of beds in a good geographical spread to deal with the needs of the whole population. I hope that he will see this as part of an integrated expansion of the health service and that we will not get tied up with the numbers, as we did years ago—how many hospitals, how many this, how many that. We need an improved health service. This is a vital part of it, but it is only a part.

Lord Kamall (Con): I completely agree with the sentiments expressed by my noble friend. Surely what we should focus on is output; surely what we need is the best healthcare system across the country. We need up-to-date healthcare with the best information from patients to make sure that we can diagnose and give them appropriate treatment, working with the very latest technology such as artificial intelligence to spot

patterns, to make sure that we can also build in prevention when we look at tackling health issues in the future. I welcome my noble friend saying that we have to focus on output—modern digital infrastructure and modern digital hospitals fit for the future.

Baroness Brinton (LD) [V]: My Lords, my local hospital, Watford General, is on the list of 40 so-called new hospitals, although the plans have been in place and supported cross-party for close to two decades, and its infrastructure is failing. Despite a clear promise of funds by the Prime Minister during a visit to the hospital in October 2019, the trust is yet to be allocated funding from the Treasury and it remains a pathfinder. I want a clear outcome. When will funding be confirmed and granted?

Lord Kamall (Con): On the point about the noble Baroness’s local hospital, I am afraid that I am not aware of where she is situated geographically, but I can tell her that six of the 48 hospitals are already under construction and one is now completed. I hope that the noble Baroness will write to me on the hospital that she referred to so that I can give her an answer.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Lab Co-op): My Lords, will the Minister stop waffling and put on record an answer to the question asked by the noble Lord, Lord Mann, saying precisely what he means by a “new hospital”? I tell him not to waffle back.

Lord Kamall (Con): I thank the noble Lord for his advice just before I was about to answer. Whatever you call it—and we can debate semantics—the important thing is surely that we build new hospitals and upgrade existing infrastructure. Surely we should celebrate the fact that we are building 48 new state-of-the-art hospitals—

Noble Lords: You are not.

Lord Kamall (Con): We should not celebrate building new hospitals? Well, there we are. We should celebrate the fact that we are building new hospitals to give patients the best possible care, aided by digital technology and making sure that they are sustainable.

Retained EU Law Question

11.16 am

Asked by **Baroness Ludford**

To ask Her Majesty’s Government, further to the Statement by the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office (Lord Frost) on 16 September (HL Deb, col 1533), whether the review of the substantive content of retained European Union law has commenced; and what engagement they are planning to undertake with stakeholders, including those in Northern Ireland.

The Minister of State, Cabinet Office (Lord Frost) (Con): My Lords, I have now launched two reviews: one into the substance of retained EU law and one

into its status in law. As regards the substantive review, departments have been asked to review and map the content of retained EU law that falls within their responsibility in order to be clear where the heaviest concentrations are and what the effect is. Departments are responsible for consulting stakeholders as appropriate in order to complete this task, including, of course, those in Northern Ireland.

Baroness Ludford (LD): My Lords, the freezing of EU law in domestic law at the end of last year delivered legal certainty and stability, including for the position of Northern Ireland in relation to the EU single market. Will the Government take great care in unravelling that? How do they intend to implement any change to retained EU law? Will they commit to doing so through primary legislation only?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, as regards Northern Ireland, we will of course proceed with an eye on stability and with predictability, as we have made clear on many occasions. On retained EU law more broadly, I noted in my Statement on 16 September that many such laws had not been discussed or agreed to in this Parliament in any way during the course of our EU membership and any amendments to those laws in future would need to reflect that reality.

Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick (Lab): My Lords, the Minister visited Northern Ireland yesterday and the day before and I understand that he met various people. Who were those stakeholders? Did he discuss this issue about the review of retained EU law? Did he also discuss the need, in his own words, to provide political stability and sustainability and the need to promote the benefits of the protocol through access to the EU single market and the UK internal market?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, I indeed met a wide range of people in Northern Ireland yesterday, as I always try to. It is fair to say that I heard a lot of concerns about the way the protocol is being implemented. I heard some concerns about the democratic legitimacy of laws being imposed without consent and a great wish to do something about the current situation, which is what we are trying to do.

Baroness Smith of Newnham (LD): My Lords, in answering my noble friend Lady Ludford, I am not sure that the Minister actually dealt with the question of whether any changes to retained law would be dealt with through primary legislation. Could he possibly try again? He suggested that the retained law had not necessarily been scrutinised by Parliament before and that any changes needed to reflect that reality. But surely, if we are taking back control, this House and the other place should be able to decide any changes to retained law. If so, how are the Government Whips going to find parliamentary time to do so?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, the best way I can answer the question is to refer back to what I said on 16 September, when I referred to the democratic deficit issue of such law, and note that

“we will look at developing a tailored mechanism for accelerating the repeal or amendment of this retained EU law in a way which reflects the fact that, as I have made clear, laws agreed elsewhere have intrinsically less democratic legitimacy than laws initiated by the Government of this country.”—[*Official Report*, 16/9/21; col. 1533.] There are various ways of achieving that end, and that is what we are working on.

The Lord Speaker (Lord McFall of Alcluith): The noble Lord, Lord Lilley, is not present, so I call the noble Lord, Lord Dodds of Duncairn.

Lord Dodds of Duncairn (DUP): My Lords, a bonfire of regulation or a selective shredding of EU retained law here in Great Britain will of course not apply to Northern Ireland because we still remain under EU control and EU laws and, as the Minister has said, with no democratic input whatever from anyone elected in Northern Ireland. How is Northern Ireland going to remain competitive or even on a level playing field if Britain diverges from it continuously, not just now but over years and decades to come, unless the protocol is changed?

Lord Frost (Con): The noble Lord raises a very good question. It is indeed one of the difficulties with the protocol, as constructed, that EU law, in areas of the single market for goods, is imposed without any agreement by the institutions in Northern Ireland. That is a situation we are seeking to remedy in the negotiations I am currently conducting.

Baroness Chapman of Darlington (Lab): My Lords, the Minister is being rather slippery in his responses to questions about retained EU law. The reason I say this is that we were promised—in the other place at least and, I am sure, in here too—that changes to retained EU law would be subject to primary legislation, and I can remember vividly Secretaries of State Raab, Barclay and Davis saying in terms at the Dispatch Box that this would be the case. Is the Minister now overriding that commitment?

Lord Frost (Con): A number of things have happened since those commitments were made, including a general election, which we won with a clear set of policies. Our policy on this matter was as I set out on 16 September in my Statement, and we are considering the best way of delivering that policy.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (LD): I recall an earlier review of the balance of competences between the UK and the EU. Does the Minister recall that one of the most prolific submitters of evidence was the Scotch Whisky Association, of which he was then, I believe, director? All of them argued in favour of the advantages of the single market and shared regulation. Can he explain when, why and how he went through a damascene conversion from the evidence that was then submitted to his current extraordinary ideological position?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, actually, I was not CEO of the Scotch Whisky Association at the time; I was an official, working on the very review the noble Lord refers to. The policy of the Government at the time was to remain in the European Union, and therefore it is not surprising that the review reached that conclusion.

Baroness McIntosh of Pickering (Con): Will my noble friend ensure that any such review of retained EU legislation will be based on fact and science? He will recall that when the EU nitrates directive was adopted, the bar was set very high to prevent any recurrence of blue babies. There has been no blue baby for 400 years. Why then are we actually extending the nitrates provisions and making them even more stringent on our farmers, when we should be reducing the restrictions?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, I am not familiar with the detail of the points my noble friend raises. The general point that the EU tends to legislate in a highly risk-averse way, which has economic consequences, is a good one, and we will obviously have it in mind as we take this review forward.

Baroness Fox of Buckley (Non-Afl): My Lords, one of the key tenets of Brexit was the removal of substantive undemocratic layers above sovereign lawmaking to enhance democratic accountability. But does the Minister recognise that this control over laws is not yet a real, live felt experience for voters? If so, does he appreciate that the retained EU law review is an opportunity for a democratic engagement with voters—not stakeholders—about what they believe should be prioritised in the legislation, and that it should not be left to committees?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, the noble Baroness makes an extremely good point, and it is our wish to widen this debate as far as we can. One of the ways of doing it, we hope, will be the standing commission on deregulation, which I referred to in my Statement of 16 September, on which I hope to be able to update the House fairly shortly.

Baroness Hoey (Non-Afl): My Lords, the Minister talks repeatedly about stability in Northern Ireland, which is very important. How can he possibly think there will be stability in the future if Northern Ireland, under all these retained laws, will not get the benefit of them? Will he say now whether he actually contemplates Northern Ireland remaining under the EU's VAT rules, for example?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, we set out our position in the Command Paper of 21 July on VAT and many other points. Having two different systems of lawmaking on important points within the United Kingdom is likely to build up tension and divergence and create difficulties over time. We are trying to design a system in these negotiations that will resolve that. I wish we were making a bit more progress, but we will keep trying.

Leaseholders: Costs *Question*

11.26 am

Tabled by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that leaseholders and others do not bear the costs of repairing building safety defects for which they are not responsible.

Baroness Wilcox of Newport (Lab): My Lords, on behalf of my noble friend Lord Kennedy of Southwark and with his permission, I beg leave to ask the Question standing in his name on the Order Paper.

The Minister of State, Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (Lord Greenhalgh) (Con): The Government are investing £5.1 billion to remediate unsafe cladding and residential buildings over 18 metres. The Building Safety Bill will require building owners to consider other cost recovery routes for remediation before passing them on to leaseholders. A new developer tax and levy will ensure that industry contributes towards making buildings safer. For the small number of 11 to 18-metre buildings with remediation costs for unsafe cladding, we are exploring all options to make sure that leaseholders are protected.

Baroness Wilcox of Newport (Lab): My Lords, does the noble Lord agree with his Secretary of State, the right honourable Michael Gove MP, when he expresses concern at leaseholders having to pay for all the faults and mistakes of others? If he shares that concern, surely the right thing, after all this time, is to make those responsible for this scandal—this crisis—pay up, not the innocent victims.

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): My Lords, unsurprisingly, I completely agree with the Secretary of State on those principles, and I add a third: first, we need to protect leaseholders as far as we can; secondly, we must ensure that the polluter pays, and that goes beyond the developers to every single person who has contributed to this crisis; and thirdly, we need a degree of proportionality, so we do not create an industry that profiteers off the back of the poor leaseholders affected.

The Lord Speaker (Lord McFall of Alcluith): Lord Haselhurst? Is he not present? Then I call the noble Viscount, Lord Stansgate.

Noble Lords: No, wrong list.

The Lord Speaker (Lord McFall of Alcluith): I call the noble Lord, Lord Young. Apologies.

Lord Young of Cookham (Con): My Lords, I am grateful to my noble friend for what I know he was doing behind the scenes to sort this. Can he confirm that when his Secretary of State was given his new job, he was instructed by the Prime Minister to resolve the cladding crisis? This clearly involves measures beyond those that my noble friend has already referred to. If innocent leaseholders are to avoid financial distress, bankruptcy and eviction, either the Treasury or those responsible for building these defective flats will have to dig deeper into their pockets. Does he agree?

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): My noble friend makes it easy for me: yes, I agree. Implicit in the fact that the Treasury would have supported a subsidised financing scheme is that we need more taxpayer subsidy, but it cannot be the only answer. We need to make sure the polluter pays, and the Secretary of State is looking at every avenue to do that.

The Lord Speaker (Lord McFall of Alcluith): I call the noble Lord, Lord Haselhurst. Oh, apologies—I call the noble Baroness, Lady Pinnock.

Baroness Pinnock (LD): My Lords, I remind the House of my relevant interests as in the register. If the Government are to avoid a torrent of bankruptcies by April next year, as has been predicted by *Inside Housing*, action must be swift. In particular, I ask the Minister about shared ownership. Somebody with shared equity of 25% is being asked to pay 100% of the remediation costs. That might be right in law, but it cannot be right in fact. What on earth are the Government going to do to safeguard shared owners?

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): My Lords, I feel the burden, particularly on shared owners, who have a fraction of the equity in their home but face intolerable bills. I am surprised when I hear that social landlords, who should be caring for the people who live in those homes—the nurses and other people who support our NHS—are considering massive remediation schemes, very often for buildings that really require only mitigation at far lower cost instead. An MP raised a case with me yesterday of a nine-metre building where shared owners are facing bills of £20,000. That is because there is no sense of proportion. Let us get a sense of proportion, protect leaseholders and shared owners, and make sure that the polluter pays.

The Lord Speaker (Lord McFall of Alcluith): My apologies to Members. My list was the list for the fourth Question, not the third Question. I think we are on the right track again if I call the noble Baroness, Lady Chakrabarti.

Baroness Chakrabarti (Lab): My Lords, faced with repeated variations on this question from my tenacious noble friend Lord Kennedy of Southwark, I have heard the always affable Minister talk about this injustice in terms of complexity, sometimes referring leaseholders to their contracts. I am delighted that the new Secretary of State takes a more bullish approach, suggesting that leaseholders should pay nothing and acknowledging that we collectively—the department, some in local government and others in the private sector—failed people at Grenfell. That is a wonderful acknowledgement of principle. Why did it take four and a half years, and when will we move from principle to practice?

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): We will move from principle into practice in a matter of months, but this problem has occurred over decades. Sadly, every decade, there has been a significant fire in a high-rise where there was a loss of life: Garnock Court in 1999, Lakanal House in Southwark in 2009 and the tragedy of Grenfell in 2017. Governments knew that cladding was often the cause, as it was in Garnock Court, and the regulations were actually dampened down under a previous Labour Government, who inserted the word “adequately”. It is a mess that took decades; give us months to sort it out.

Baroness Thornhill (LD): Notwithstanding the Minister’s earlier comments, housing associations and councils too face a challenging situation. Both the

LGA and the National Housing Federation have evidenced the double whammy of the financial burden to remedy the fire safety issues for the tenants and, consequently, less money to invest in their existing stock—in particular, to build new social and affordable homes. In the recent rethinking, please will the Minister agree to look specifically at the situation faced by housing associations and councils and consider widening the criteria for support for any money that is available? This is their tenants’ rent money, after all, and they too should not have to pay for 20 years of industry failure.

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): Of course we want to protect leaseholders and ensure that social landlords can build new homes of high quality but, far too often, they as developers were in charge of building homes of poor quality, and they need to fix those homes. The figures are that, as of 31 October, £97.3 million has been approved from the building safety fund, and there is the £200 million to remove cladding of aluminium composite material. We are doing what we can to protect leaseholders, but we recognise the challenges faced by registered providers.

Baroness Warwick of Undercliffe (Lab): My Lords, further to that very point, the Secretary of State, in front of the HCLG Committee, acknowledged the unfair and undue burden on both leaseholders and social housing tenants to shoulder the remediation costs. How do the Government plan to alleviate what the Secretary of State referred to as the Sophie’s choice of the housing associations between safety and investing in stock and quality?

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): All major landlords, including social landlords, will have to do that as a matter of course. We are providing funds that will protect leaseholders where the balance sheet does not enable them to do so, and I have given those figures already. However, we ask for a sense of proportion from registered providers—I have reached out to the noble Baroness’s chief executive—not to inflate the bill just because the taxpayer sums are there, but to keep costs down. We need to ensure that together we remediate, mitigate where that is preferable to remediation, keep tenants safe and use the affordable homes programme to build more homes.

Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb (GP): It is not just the remedial work, it is also the fact that insurance premiums have gone up, leaseholders cannot sell their property and they sometimes have to have a waking watch, which is a 24/7 dedicated project to protect from future fires. The Minister said that the polluter pays, but that is not how I see it. The Government are using taxpayer money to finance this. Why are the Government not insisting that builders pay? Is it more corruption: these builders and developers are government friends, so they should not have to pay?

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): I think that is an unfortunate line. Developers have caused this, and there are the insulation manufacturers and product manufacturers

[LORD GREENHALGH]

in the frame—for instance, for fire doors that do not act as fire doors. We have announced both a tax and a levy, and the new Secretary of State has further plans to ensure that the polluter will pay.

Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick (Lab): My Lords, for the avoidance of doubt, what assessment has been made that the building safety levy will provide the most balanced approach for funding historical remediation of building safety defects? Have the Government carried out an impact assessment?

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): The building safety levy is one in a suite of measures. The Gateway 2 levy which the noble Baroness refers to runs alongside the residential property developer tax. There is a levy and a tax. That will make a contribution but, by and large, we are seeking to fund the running cost of a high-risk regime, so her question is not actually hitting the mark.

Rail Infrastructure: North of England

Question

11.37 am

Asked by **Baroness Randerson**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to improve rail infrastructure in the north of England.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport (Baroness Vere of Norbiton) (Con): My Lords, this Government will be investing more than £35 billion in rail over the spending review period, including rail enhancements and vital renewals to improve passenger journeys and connectivity across the country, focusing on the Midlands and the north to level up the economy. Furthermore, the Government have today published our independent rail plan, a £96 billion programme to transform services in the Midlands and the north.

Baroness Randerson (LD): My Lords, there has not been a major new rail line in the north of England since the Victorians. The Government promised to change that. Northern Powerhouse Rail was announced seven years ago, and the Government have re-announced it 60 times, but today's announcement turns its back on that. Does the Minister accept that haphazard dollops of money—a scattergun approach to rail upgrades—will not create a transformation, and that cancelling the HS2 eastern leg is seen in cities such as Sheffield, York, Leeds and Bradford as nothing else than another broken promise?

Baroness Vere of Norbiton (Con): I advise the noble Baroness to read the documents, which, when I left my office just now, had not actually been published. If she were to look at the integrated rail plan, she would see that it is comprehensive and very well thought through. It sets out exactly how the different pots of money will be used to create the sort of system that delivers for people in the north far sooner than other plans were going to. It also saves the taxpayer billions of pounds.

The Lord Speaker (Lord McFall of Alcluith): I call the noble Lord, Lord Haselhurst.

Noble Lords: Hear, hear.

Lord Haselhurst (Con): My Lords, I think I should say that I am very grateful for this further opportunity to speak. If, as it now appears, the Government are backing away from large-scale rail infrastructure projects in the north in favour of less-costly targeted schemes, does this allow other regions, such as the east of England, to dare to hope that the damage they have suffered from the Beeching cuts will be reversed sooner rather than later?

Baroness Vere of Norbiton (Con): My noble friend is not quite right to say that the Government are backing away from away from large-scale projects, as the IRP—when he is able to read it—will demonstrate to him. However, my noble friend is right that Network Rail has recently completed a study on the west Anglia main line and we are considering its findings. Network Rail is required to conduct similar studies for all parts of the network, and these provide helpful advice to government on potential investments for the future.

Viscount Stansgate (Lab): Has the Minister seen the front-page banner headline in today's *Yorkshire Post*? It says: "PM breaks his own rail pledge." I want to ask a question about Leeds—and I gladly declare to the House what you might call a family connection. To be practical, can the Minister explain what impact today's plans are going to have on a station such as Leeds where, as I understand it, HS2 would have had the effect of freeing up platforms for much-needed extra capacity? Without HS2, the existing platforms are going to have to cope with all existing and future demands.

Baroness Vere of Norbiton (Con): My Lords, it is very difficult to have a sensible discussion on this topic on the basis of front pages of the media. It is impossible that the noble Viscount has been able have a look at the documents which, as we know are being published, possibly as we speak. However, I can assure him that we are well aware that Leeds is an incredibly important station. It is the fourth busiest in the country outside London. Passenger demand has increased by 30% over the last 10 years and the Government are committing to £100 million to look at the options for how to run HS2 services to Leeds, to build capacity and also to finally develop and deliver a mass transit system for Leeds.

Baroness Pinnock (LD): I have a little quiz for the Minister. I am sure she will be able to come up with the right answer, but here goes. Which city has half a million people, considerable deprivation, a train service that takes over 20 minutes at just over 30 miles an hour to go nine miles to take people to jobs and connect them to the rest of the country and where 74% of jobseekers give poor transport links as a major barrier to getting on in life? Having named the city—and I am sure the Minister will be able to—perhaps she will, since she is so excited about the integrated rail plan, be able to confirm that that city is going to have its brand-new railway station which will give it the connectivity it needs and deserves.

Baroness Vere of Norbiton (Con): My Lords, I have failed. I hear from behind me Halifax.

Noble Lords: Bradford!

Baroness Vere of Norbiton (Con): Bradford—ah, when the noble Baroness has been able to read the documents that are about to be published, she will see in there that we will be electrifying the route from Bradford to Leeds. The journey time will be hugely more reliable—it will take 12 minutes.

Lord Rosser (Lab): The economy of the West Midlands, and Birmingham in particular, has been boosted by the construction and pending completion of the fast new rail service that is HS2. Despite what the Minister has been seeking to say, it appears that Leeds and the local West Yorkshire economy will now be denied the estimated full £54 billion of economic benefits of their HS2 link. Leeds, for example, will be a less attractive venue than it would have been for new and expanding businesses without its promised high-speed rail links. Northern Powerhouse Rail delivered in full was also set to deliver £22 billion for northern economies, including Bradford, by 2060, according to a report by Mott MacDonald. What is the Government's estimate of the loss of projected economic benefits to Leeds and the West Yorkshire economy of the decision to backtrack on previous promises on the HS2 high-speed rail link to Leeds and on full delivery of Northern Powerhouse Rail? What is the loss of those economic benefits that were projected?

Baroness Vere of Norbiton (Con): As the noble Lord will see when he gets to read the documents that are being published today, a huge number of projects are being brought together, and so many of those are around Leeds. It is the case that the core part of Northern Powerhouse Rail will be constructed, and that will provide those fast links through to Manchester. It is the case that there will be significant upgrades to the east coast main line and, of course, there will be electrification of the Midlands main line. Combining that with the construction of a mass transit system, I think, somehow, that Leeds is going to be all right.

Lord Framlingham (Con): My Lords, I look forward to reading today's document, and I hope it is good news for the north and the Midlands. I appreciate that I am a lone voice on this matter but, given that HS2 has been the disaster that everybody thought it would be, is doing huge damage to the environment, is going to bring little benefit to anybody and is costing now, or is supposed to cost, £150 billion and counting, could the Government not consider—if they cannot scrap it, which I think they should, even though it has cost money already—pruning it back seriously as quickly as possible and using the money saved and the expertise gained to look after railways in the West Midlands and the north of England?

Baroness Vere of Norbiton (Con): I suppose we are doing a small amount of what would make my noble friend happy. We have looked at the different options. I would be the first person to stand there and warmly welcome a brand-new, big, expensive, shiny rail system—

I love them. However, sometimes they take many decades to build, and they can be very expensive, and sometimes they just fly by various communities. What we have done is look at the amount of money that we have, the options that we have and the opportunities that we have to join up many more of the communities that were being missed out by previous plans. I am sure when we come back to discuss the integrated rail plan, we can go into that in more detail.

Lord Grocott (Lab): Can the Minister confirm that upgrading an existing Victorian railway as opposed to building a brand-new railway is not a pain-free option? It will lead inevitably to weekend closures, disruptions to services, replacement bus services and all the paraphernalia of building a railway while you are trying to run one at the same time. How long will this disruption continue? Can the Minister also please tell us why it takes us far longer to build high-speed railways in this country compared with all our competitor countries and longer even than it took the Victorians who built them with picks and shovels?

Baroness Vere of Norbiton (Con): The noble Lord is quite right to highlight the disruption caused by construction. It is the case, whether you are upgrading the east coast main line or, indeed, constructing a brand-new, HS2-type railway that there is disruption. We try to keep the disruption to the minimum. Obviously, when the RNEP is published and all of the programme is set out, we will be able to see how long each element of the plan is going to take and when the disruption will happen. Of course, the Government will try to minimise that as much as possible.

Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland: Impact on UK Internal Market *Question*

11.48 am

Asked by **Lord Dodds of Duncairn**

To ask the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office (Lord Frost) what assessment Her Majesty's Government have made of the impact of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland on (1) Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom internal market, and (2) the flow of trade.

The Minister of State, Cabinet Office (Lord Frost) (Con): My Lords, the protocol recalls the importance of maintaining the integral place of Northern Ireland in the UK's internal market and is clear that Northern Ireland is part of the UK's customs territory. We are concerned that these provisions are not reflected in the way in which the protocol is being implemented. As a result, there is clear evidence of trade diversion. Trade data shows that trade between Northern Ireland and Ireland has increased significantly in both directions this year.

Lord Dodds of Duncairn (DUP): My Lords, the Minister knows that the protocol is having a major adverse impact on trade flows between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom, never mind the

[LORD DODDS OF DUNCAIRN]

massive destabilising effect on the political institutions and the political process in the Northern Ireland. The chairman of Marks & Spencer says the EU proposals threaten to increase the administrative burden on imports to Northern Ireland. They could result in “worsening friction”, he says and, as a result, his firm and others might have to stop sending goods to Northern Ireland.

The head of the Road Haulage Association in Northern Ireland referred to the EU proposals as “window-dressing”. He knows, as we all know, that the EU proposals do not address the fundamental issues of the protocol. Will he now tell the House and tell the people of Northern Ireland when he is going to implement the proposals set out in the Command Paper of July this year to finally restore Northern Ireland’s place in the UK internal market fully, to fully restore Northern Ireland’s place inside the UK customs union, not on paper but in reality, and finally restore full democratic accountability to Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom in the 21st century?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, the noble Lord sets out serious concerns, which we share. I should like to make our position on these negotiations and Article 16 100% clear, as he asks. Whatever the messages to the contrary that the EU may think it has heard or read, our position has not changed from the one I set out on 10 November or, indeed, in July at the time of the Command Paper. We would prefer to reach a negotiated agreement if we can. That is the best way forward for the stability and prosperity of Northern Ireland but I want to be clear that, as the responsible Minister, I would not recommend any outcome from the negotiations that I did not believe safeguarded political, economic or social stability in Northern Ireland. In such circumstances, we obviously would need to provide the necessary safeguards using Article 16. Those safeguards remain very much on the table and they are a legitimate provision in the protocol. No decision has been taken to exclude a priori any specific timing for Article 16. That will be shaped by whether and how quickly negotiations make progress.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Lab Co-op): My Lords, the Minister is once again equivocating on a very important issue, just as he did when he praised the treaty he had negotiated and then rubbished it. When he threatens to trigger Article 16, he then says, “Oh no. There’s no way I am going to do that”. Would he be surprised if increasingly, he is known here and in Northern Ireland as the “Grand Old Duke of York”?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, to be honest, what I have just said cannot be described as equivocating. I have tried to make my position 100% clear on these negotiations and on Article 16, and it has not changed. It is that if we can find a negotiated solution, that is better. If we cannot find one, then the safeguards are legitimate.

Baroness Suttie (LD): My Lords, Belfast Queen’s University’s most recent survey found that 52% of those who responded think that on balance, the Northern Ireland protocol is a good thing. Does the Minister agree that, rather than threatening to invoke Article 16,

52% is a sufficient mandate to get these practical changes done and to make the protocol work for the people and businesses of Northern Ireland?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, I have indeed looked at the polling conducted by Queen’s University, where I had a good meeting yesterday, by the way. There is a lot of other polling around on this subject, and the conclusion I draw from it is that there is significant and stark division of opinion in Northern Ireland. Different polls have slightly different numbers but there is a clear division about the benefits of the protocol or its difficulties. In those circumstances, it is difficult to implement and that is why we are in the situation in which we find ourselves.

Lord Godson (Con): My Lords, some overstated language has been employed regarding the potential implications of Article 16, such as its detonation being a nuclear response. Would my noble friend care to say a little more about what the normal procedures would be, were the article to be invoked, for ensuring that the UK’s rights under Article 16 and national rights are properly safeguarded and protected?

Lord Frost (Con): I thank my noble friend for his question, which is a good one. The safeguards in Article 16 are what they say they are: safeguards. They are not an on/off switch but are significant and potentially capable of being used in a significant way. We as a Government will always proceed on the basis of predictability, certainty and clarity. There is a one-month process of consultation for the use of Article 16 between notification and activation, and we would expect to follow all the necessary procedures to provide the maximum possible legal certainty—if we reach that point.

The Earl of Kinnoull (CB): My Lords, can the Minister say to what extent the protocol situation has affected the operation of the trade and co-operation agreement and the other EU-UK workstreams?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, the trade and co-operation agreement and the withdrawal agreement are obviously separate. I have said that the difficulties we are having on the protocol are at the heart of some of the broader mistrusts that exist in the process at the moment. That said, the implementation of the TCA is going well. The specialised committees have largely met. The trade committee met earlier this week and, despite difficulties on issues such as fisheries, we are nevertheless implementing the TCA well and effectively, and the processes are working well.

Baroness Chapman of Darlington (Lab): My Lords, there is a problem here, because the response the Minister gave to the noble Lord, Lord Dodds, seems to contradict the impression given to the UK and European media—and Simon Coveney, who said that he welcomed the change of tone from the Minister and anticipated that with political will, this issue could be resolved by Christmas. Earlier, I implied that the Minister was not in the mood for answering questions today. Can he prove me wrong by giving us his percentage assessment of the chances of success by Christmas?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, it is somewhere between 0% and 100%, to be honest. It does not help to put specific numbers on these sorts of things. The noble Baroness makes a good point, though, about the comments of the Foreign Minister of Ireland and many others about what they perceive to be going on in the negotiations. Actually, I will talk to Simon Coveney later today. When I do so—and as I do in all those contacts—I will make our position abundantly clear, as I have set it out to this House. That remains our position, whatever else may be read in the media or by figures in the EU who are interpreting it.

Lord Purvis of Tweed (LD): My Lords, it is the Government's policy, not the EU's, to enforce the system whereby any goods entering Northern Ireland will have to be marked as conformity assessed, separate from those sold within Great Britain. That was referred to by the chair of Marks & Spencer, who the noble Lord, Lord Dodds, quoted. It is nothing to do with the European Union; it is British government policy. The British Government have not asked in the negotiations on the protocol for that to be changed. So when will it change? Or is it the Government's policy that it is permanent?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, the processes that goods undergo when they enter Northern Ireland are those that, in our view, are required by the protocol, which, of course, has direct effect in UK law in many respects through the withdrawal Act. People would not want us to proceed in any way other than is consistent with those legal obligations. That is what we are required to do; the difficulty is that it is not consistent with social and economic stability in Northern Ireland.

The Deputy Speaker (Lord Haskel) (Lab): My Lords, the time allowed for this Question has elapsed.

Lord Ashton of Hyde (Con): My Lords, as we have failed to reach the end of the list on the previous two Questions, I implore noble Lords to keep their questions to half a minute, as recommended by the Procedure Committee. That will allow my noble friend to answer even more questions than he is already doing.

Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland: Court of Justice of the European Union *Question*

11.58 am

Asked by Lord Dubs

To ask the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office (Lord Frost) what plans Her Majesty's Government have to involve the Court of Justice of the European Union in dispute cases regarding the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.

The Minister of State, Cabinet Office (Lord Frost) (Con): My Lords, the Government have proposed changes to the governance arrangements in the protocol involving the Court of Justice of the European Union. The court's jurisdiction in settling disputes under the

protocol is currently limited, of course, to those covered by the second sub-paragraph of Article 12(2), Article 5 and Articles 7 to 10 of the protocol. In other withdrawal agreement disputes, including those under Article 16, cases are ultimately resolved by arbitration, with a role for the court only where disputes raise questions of interpretation of EU law.

Lord Dubs (Lab): My Lords, is the Minister aware that he has created an impression that his position is softening on many of these issues? A German journalist asked me bluntly after the noble Lord's 10 November Statement, "Is it true that Lord Frost is moving from his earlier position?" Would the noble Lord care to comment?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, the answer is "no". We are trying to reach an agreement. That has always been our position; it was our position in July and it is now. I suggest that our friends in the EU do not interpret the reasonable tone that I usually use in my discussions with them as implying any softening in the substantive position.

Baroness Foster of Oxtou (Con): My Lords, despite bordering four EU countries and being part of Schengen and the single market, with an excess of 120 bilateral agreements, Switzerland does not permit EU law to override Swiss law. Therefore, the ECJ cannot be the final arbiter of any dispute. As a third country, as the UK now is, can my noble friend reassure the House that there will be no role for the ECJ in Northern Ireland or across the UK and that the provisions of the trade and co-operation agreement will be interpreted in line with international law, including the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, as agreed?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, my noble friend asks a very good question. I assure her that there is no role for the court of justice in the trade and co-operation agreement. There are provisions in that agreement which make it very clear that interpretations by one court cannot bind the courts of the other and that they are to be interpreted in line with the normal provisions of international law. That is 100% unambiguous. Regarding the withdrawal agreement and the protocol, we know that we have a problem. Most people would regard it as unusual for disputes between two parties to be solved in the court of one of the parties.

Lord Kerr of Kinlochard (CB): My Lords, the Minister baffled the House earlier with his answer to the question asked by the noble Baroness, Lady Chapman. He is now baffling the House again. The conceptual core of the protocol is that the EU agrees that Northern Ireland may remain in the single market. The necessary concomitant to that is that the ECJ must have a role. I agree that we should not be shocked by the Minister's line. He told us in his speech in Oxford during October that difficulties with the protocol come not from the way that it is being implemented but from the way that it was constructed. Coming from its constructor, that could seem a curious statement, but that is what he said, and that is what he goes on saying.

If the Minister insists on attempting to remove the court of justice, which is central to the conceptual core of the protocol and the deal struck by him, he cannot

[LORD KERR OF KINLOCHARD]
do it under Article 16, because, as he has just explained, that is simply about trade safeguards. Under what powers would he do it? He has the powers by regulation under the withdrawal Act to act in a way that is consistent with Article 16 to act on trade measures, but he has no power to withdraw the court of justice. Are we back to primary legislation and a specific and limited breach of the treaty and international law? If so, I doubt that the House will agree.

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, I cannot believe that I have really baffled the noble Lord, with his deep knowledge of EU affairs that is much greater than mine. The Government will set out the basis on which we would use Article 16 if and when that eventuality arises. We hope that it will not, but obviously we will be clear when and if we reach that point. Of course, it is well understood that the court has a role as the final arbiter of EU law. We do not seek to change or challenge that. What is not working is the role of the court as the arbiter of disputes between the two parties, which is unusual.

Lord Liddle (Lab): My Lords, I am trying to follow the Minister's answers as well, and with some difficulty. In answer to the question on the Northern Ireland protocol, he spoke about changing the arrangements. Does this mean that he is no longer arguing for removal of the court of justice's jurisdiction over the European single market, which, if we are to keep no border in Ireland, must still apply in Northern Ireland? If we keep the border open, does he agree that he must accept some role for the court of justice?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, I cannot add very much to what I said earlier, which is that the EU defines the court of justice as the final arbiter of what EU law means. We do not challenge that and cannot do anything about it. For as long as EU laws apply in Northern Ireland, no doubt the court will continue to assert that right, but that is not the same as saying that it is reasonable for disputes to be settled in the court or for infraction processes to be launched by the Commission, as they already have been in this context. It is the settlement of disputes that is the difficulty.

Lord Newby (LD): The noble Lord just said that the role of the court is not working; as far as I am aware, the court has not yet been asked to adjudicate on anything in terms of the operation of the protocol. If that is correct, why was the Minister so prepared to sign up to a role for the court in 2019, when he is now implying that it is a constitutional outrage?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, it is true that the dispute has not reached the court yet but, nevertheless, an infraction process was launched in March. The Commission's launch of an infraction process, seemingly on a hair trigger, has created many of the concerns that we now have about the court. That sort of process is appropriate for member states, with all the checks and balances that exist when you are a member state. As we can now see from the way that it is being used, it is not appropriate for this country, of which Northern Ireland is a part and which is not a member state of the EU.

Baroness Chapman of Darlington (Lab): My Lords, I am not the only one scratching my head as a result of these exchanges. Can the Minister help us by outlining what the benefit to the UK position of triggering Article 16 would be? Surely it would only set the clock ticking and increase the pressure, while he would be negotiating on the exact same issues with the exact same people, probably in the exact same rooms. What do we gain by triggering Article 16?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, Article 16 is a safeguard. It changes reality because it enables us to safeguard, within the provisions of the protocol, against certain effects of the way that it is currently being implemented and working out. Of course, it begins a new and slightly different phase if Article 16 is used, but it also creates a new reality and safeguards against some of the difficulties that we currently find. That is why it is such a relevant provision.

Lord Cormack (Con): Naturally I wish my noble friend success in his negotiations, but as he bears some responsibility for the protocol, can I urge him not to rule things in and out from the Dispatch Box, but to negotiate as a trained diplomat, which he is—calmly, gently and with the aim of coming to agreement with our friends and neighbours?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, my noble friend is right, as always. It is good to negotiate calmly and find the best possible agreements between two parties. That applies to both sides. I urge the EU not to overplay the significance of using Article 16, as perhaps it has in the last couple of weeks. It is a legitimate provision within the protocol which we are discussing, and can as such be used if the situation arises.

The Deputy Speaker (Lord Haskel) (Lab): My Lords, the time allowed for this Question has elapsed.

Ireland/Northern Ireland: Solid Fuels *Question*

12.09 pm

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office (Lord Frost) what discussions Her Majesty's Government have had with the government of Ireland about that government's plans to introduce physical checks on solid fuels entering the Republic of Ireland from Northern Ireland.

The Minister of State, Cabinet Office (Lord Frost) (Con): My Lords, we are aware of the Irish Government's plans to introduce new standards for domestic solid fuels under their forthcoming clean air strategy. Of course, the implementation of this policy is for the Irish Government. Our understanding is that they plan to introduce it in 2022. We hope to have technical discussions with the Irish Government later this week to establish some further detail on how and when they plan to bring these measures into force.

Baroness Hoey (Non-Aff): The Minister for the Environment in the Republic of Ireland said that

“inspections of cross-border fuel movements will be required.”

Does the Minister not think that shows huge hypocrisy from the Irish Government? The border sometimes matters—when it affects them—but as far as anything to do with the protocol is concerned, there could not possibly be any kind of border at the frontier. The Minister is being very patient with the European Union. Is he beginning to feel that time is running out and that it is time to simply say, “This is not working; it has to go”?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, the noble Baroness makes a very good point. The UK and the Republic of Ireland are obviously different countries divided by an international border, and most areas of national life—for example, legal systems, currency, taxation and many others—change when you cross that border. Some of those arrangements relate specifically to the movement of goods—VAT and excise, for example. These differences are nevertheless managed in market, without the need for physical infrastructure at the border, so I wait for the discussions with the Irish Government. I do not want to prejudge them, but obviously I do not see why we would have any difficulties if the Irish Government wished to manage one further regulatory difference between our two countries in a sensible and pragmatic way, as goods go on to the Irish market.

Lord Hain (Lab): My Lords, both this Question and the Answer are misleading, as 100,000 tonnes of smoky coal goes from north to south on the island each year, and the stricter regulations being applied in Ireland come under EU directives for cleaner air that have been retained and so also apply across the UK today. In Northern Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs under the DUP’s Edwin Poots said last year that there will soon be no smoky coal in Northern Ireland. Any future inspection on premises in the Republic of Ireland—not on some border that does not exist—to prevent the illegal sale of such dangerous solid fuel, especially from third countries, is nothing to do with Brexit, borders or customs. It is everything to do with the far more urgent and important challenge of tackling climate change and protecting public health.

Lord Frost (Con): The noble Lord makes a very fair point about the objectives of this legislation. That is why we need to establish the detail of what the Irish Government intend to do and how they intend to go about it. What he says rather proves the point that we have always made: it is perfectly possible for two separate jurisdictions to pursue complementary policy ends that do not involve accepting exactly the same legislation in exactly the same way. That is the approach we have tried to take.

Lord Dodds of Duncairn (DUP): My Lords, to come back to what the Irish Government actually said about this matter—not the interpretation that has just been put on it—are we not in an ironic situation? The Irish Government and others said that any checks on the island of Ireland equalled a hard border and that a

hard border would lead to violence. Now the Irish Government are proposing such a thing—that is the reality of it. People can shake their heads all they like, but the fact of the matter is that the Irish Government, when Varadkar came to power, changed what Enda Kenny was doing and said that no checks—even away from the border or digitally—would be acceptable. Will the Minister go back and indicate to his good friend Simon Coveney, whom he is meeting and talking to later today, that no checks means no checks if what they believe is true?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, there has indeed always been some complexity in interpretations of this matter. It is certainly true that in areas such as red diesel, for example, where there is a need to avoid fraud due to different excise rates between Northern Ireland and Ireland, there is very good co-operation between HMRC and the Irish Revenue Commissioners. There is lots of multiagency and cross-border co-operation, intelligence and information sharing and so on, and that works perfectly well. I do not necessarily say that is a model you can generalise to absolutely everything, but it certainly shows that this issue is not quite as black and white as it is sometimes painted.

Lord Howard of Rising (Con): Can the Minister say whether the discussion and fuss over fuel is merely an example of Mr Castex’s call for aggressive action against the United Kingdom?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, my noble friend makes a very good point. We have been concerned about the threats made against us in the last few weeks, which are not really consistent with a reasonable negotiation. I am glad to see that the French Government have, for the moment anyway, withdrawn those threats. I hope they will do so permanently, because they do not make it any easier to conduct a good process and put relations on to a better footing.

Lord Purvis of Tweed (LD): My Lords, I thank the Minister for his measured responses to earlier questions on this subject, because it is very sensitive. I have in front of me the answer in the Dáil, and there is no reference to border checks. There is reference to Irish local authorities having increased powers to check on solid fuels imported from Northern Ireland, which they had already. Indeed, the north-south Joint Agency Task Force has been operating since 2015 in this regard. Can the Minister please reassure the House that this will not be used to inflame some of the tensions that already exist and that the north-south Joint Agency Task Force will operate normally on fuels to ensure that there is proper consensus on this?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, we do not wish to inflame tensions in any way, of course, and I do not think we go about this in a way that would do that. The point that I and other noble Lords have been trying to make is not that this proposal from the Irish Government would require checks at the border—they are not saying that, we are not saying that and nobody wants that—but that it is possible to manage differences without such checks in certain circumstances. This is perhaps a concrete case of that; there are some others.

Lord Moylan (Con): My Lords, far from adding to tensions, is this not actually a rather hopeful sign? As the noble Lord, Lord Purvis of Tweed, said, it is envisaged that local authority officers will check for goods coming into the Republic of Ireland from Northern Ireland that should not be coming in. Is this not a pattern that could be applied, to great benefit and great effect, as a substitute for the ridiculous and unworkable attempts to operate the protocol as it currently works? It might even be called mutual enforcement. It is very hopeful.

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, my noble friend makes a very good point, as always. It is a concrete case that demonstrates that it is possible to manage these matters in other ways. This is one of the reasons why what we put forward in the Command Paper is a compromise. It is not my noble friend's proposal. It is that we would for most purposes police goods going into Ireland and the single market in the Irish Sea, but would wish to see goods flowing freely into Northern Ireland. That is a workable and sensible compromise proposal, and in the negotiations we have not yet heard why it could not work.

Baroness Chapman of Darlington (Lab): My Lords, this situation rather highlights the need for a certain amount of bandwidth on behalf of the Government, in that occasionally they need to negotiate simultaneously with the EU and with individual member states. Does the Minister think that the undeniable damage to the Prime Minister's authority in recent weeks is leading to a bit of a problem with government bandwidth? I ask this because it is really easy to talk tough about Article 16, at least when he is here, but not if the Minister and the Prime Minister do not have the backing of the entire Cabinet to see through the consequences, which would be further damage to international relationships and possibly a trade war. Is he confident that any of his Cabinet colleagues will be with him in the trenches if he leads us into further disputes?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, the Cabinet and the Government stand fully behind the policy that we set out in the Command Paper in July, which is a very good compromise policy that we still hope to negotiate. We have made it clear that a negotiated outcome is the best one, but that policy paper, which we all stand behind, also makes it clear that Article 16 is a legitimate and useful tool if necessary. That remains the Government's position.

Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland: EU Negotiations

Commons Urgent Question

12.20 pm

The Minister of State, Cabinet Office (Lord Frost) (Con): My Lords, it is a pleasure now to repeat an Answer as delivered to an Urgent Question made in the House of Commons by the Paymaster-General earlier today. The Answer is as follows:

“Let me begin by reaffirming the Government's commitment to keeping both Houses of Parliament updated on the UK-EU relationship. We remain committed to doing just that. My right honourable

friend Lord Frost provided an update to the House of Lords on EU relations just last Wednesday, 10 November, in the form of an Oral Statement. Unfortunately, as this honourable House was in recess at the time, that could not immediately be repeated on the same day. The timing of that update was unavoidable, led by external international business. However, I recognise the importance of keeping both Houses duly informed.”

12.21 pm

Baroness Chapman of Darlington (Lab): My Lords, it is shameful that we have come to this today. Last week, the Minister came to this House and committed to ensuring that an equivalent Oral Statement would be made in the other place to reflect his remarks here last Wednesday. That did not take place; instead, the Government attempted to get by with a Written Statement issued on Tuesday, and the words that we have heard today in the other place were only as a consequence of the Minister there being dragged there in response to an Urgent Question. That is not good enough. These issues are of intense interest to Members on all sides of this House and the elected House. It is essential that we do not have this situation again. If the Minister wants to come here and make a Statement then he must ensure, as he promised, that a Statement is made in the equivalent way in the other House at the earliest opportunity.

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, the noble Baroness is of course correct that I said on Wednesday that a Statement would be made in the other place in due course and that it was made in the way that she describes. How the other place runs its business and chooses its Statements is obviously not a matter for this House. Obviously, I respect the right and responsibility of the Opposition to hold the Government to account, which is why I am here today answering five Questions on very similar subjects, and will continue to do so as long as it is necessary.

Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick (Lab): My Lords, the Good Friday agreement requires that there is political balance and respect for both traditions in Northern Ireland. I therefore ask the Minister: in his negotiations with the EU, who is he negotiating for—unionists, nationalists or other? To me, representing the nationalist community in Northern Ireland, it looks very much as if the Minister is negotiating only for unionists.

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, our interest, and the way that I am pursuing these negotiations, is the interest of everyone in Northern Ireland, and of the prosperity and stability of everyone in Northern Ireland and of Northern Ireland. That is how we seek to pursue this. I believe that is a common aim between us and the European Union, but it seems we interpret that in rather different ways. Nevertheless, I hope we can move forward and get to a position that provides a better outcome for everyone in Northern Ireland than the one that we have now.

Lord Cormack (Con): But does my noble friend accept that the noble Baroness opposite had a point? I wish my noble friend absolute good fortune in what he

is seeking to do, and he knows that. But, particularly when we have the good fortune to have the Cabinet Minister in this House, it is particularly important that the other House is informed, if not simultaneously then at the earliest possible moment. I urge him to tell his Cabinet colleagues that there should have been a Statement on Monday in the other place. We really must keep in step on these things. Again, I wish him success. Delicacy is important, but so is parliamentary protocol.

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, I have said what I have said. I must say that I have a degree of sympathy with the point that my noble friend makes. It is obviously extremely important that both Houses are kept up to date in the most timely and appropriate fashion possible—certainly, I try to achieve that.

Viscount Waverley (CB): What exactly would be the consequences should Article 16 be triggered? How much weight does the Minister give in his negotiating strategy with the EU to the fact that an overwhelming majority of 55.8% voted to remain and 44.2% voted to leave? What were the reasons for that?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, we have always said that there will need to be a treaty arrangement between this country and the European Union to deal with the special features of Northern Ireland and to protect the Belfast/Good Friday agreement. I think it is common ground that there will need to be some such special arrangements. That is not the same as saying that Northern Ireland should remain some sort of shadow member of the European Union for certain purposes. In some ways, that is the situation that we have in certain aspects of policy, and that is what we need to change. But it is of course important to respect the balance, and that is why we talk about trying to find a new balance—the right balance—between all the different interests in Northern Ireland.

Baroness Suttie (LD): My Lords, can the Minister say whether a possible decision to invoke Article 16 is more likely to be influenced by an analysis of changes to trade flows resulting from the Northern Ireland protocol or by political factors? Will he undertake to inform this House of the criteria used to take any such decision?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, the noble Baroness is right that there are a number of conditions referred to in Article 16 for its use—economic and social disruption, trade diversion and so on—and, although they are conceptually separate, they all sort of feed into each other and create the conditions that might require the use of safeguards. I repeat what I said earlier: obviously we will be transparent and clear and set out our approach to Article 16 and the justification, if and when it comes to that point.

Lord Hannan of Kingsclere (Con): My Lords, I very much welcome my noble friend the Minister's original Statement, and his repetition today that we are prepared to say that the threshold for triggering has been met. It is indisputable that there has been trade diversion and

that there is a political crisis if half the population and every unionist party is against the protocol. Will my noble friend the Minister take this opportunity to confirm that, if we go down the route of Article 16, it will not be simply for the purpose of extending waivers, derogations or exemptions but to take the opportunity to tackle the jurisdictional problem that part of our country is governed from abroad? We exported to the world the sublime idea that laws should not be passed nor taxes raised except by accountable representatives. We should extend that principle to our fellow countrymen in Northern Ireland.

Lord Frost (Con): My noble friend is right that the current situation in Northern Ireland, with various grace periods and other easements in the implementation of the protocol, is nevertheless generating tensions and difficulties, and that the full implementation of the protocol, were that ever to be required, would generate even more difficulties. I think it is correct to think that, if we use Article 16 and safeguards, it will be to improve the situation over the one that we have now.

Lord Kilclooney (CB): My Lords, the Belfast agreement has been mentioned, and I was very much involved in its negotiations. Can the Minister confirm that, in the agreement, all communities were involved and both the Irish Government and our Government were involved? Can he confirm, as Article 1 states, that they unanimously agreed that there could be no change in the status of Northern Ireland without the consent of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland? Can he confirm that the protocol was imposed on Northern Ireland without any consent?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, the noble Lord is obviously much more deeply expert in the Belfast/Good Friday agreement than I am, given his background. He is, of course, absolutely right in what he says about the article to which he referred. As regards the protocol, I point out that it was approved by this Parliament, but nevertheless it has created significant difficulties in its implementation. We seek to find a way forward from that and come to a better balance.

Lord Hain (Lab): Is George Peretz QC's opinion correct when he says that,

"it is not at all clear that the government has a solid legal basis for invoking Article 16, at least in relation to the large majority of concerns set out in the July Command Paper. Therefore, if the UK government chooses to implement measures that are otherwise in breach of the Protocol but which are justified solely on the basis of Article 16, it is at real risk of having those measures struck down in the domestic courts, especially if the measures exceed a limited duration or scope."?

Lord Frost (Con): My Lords, we will, of course, set out our justification for using Article 16 and the legal basis and so on, if we get to that point. As regards to the legal opinion quoted by the noble Lord, to be fair, there is quite a lot of debate among learned lawyers on this subject. I imagine that, if we were to use Article 16, that would be subject to a degree of legal testing. We will see where that gets to, if and when Article 16 is used.

Climate Change: COP 26

Motion to Take Note

12.32 pm

Moved by Baroness Young of Old Scone

That this House takes note of the outcome of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) and the challenges of implementing measures to tackle climate change.

Baroness Young of Old Scone (Lab): My Lords, I am very pleased to be able to kick off this important debate today. I declare my interest as chairman of the Woodland Trust, and president and vice-president of a range of environmental charities. I look forward to a lively debate, and particularly to the contribution of the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Exeter in his maiden speech.

This debate is kind of a post-match analysis of COP 26, which very definitely went into extra time. In the end, China scored in the penalty shoot-out when the wonderful referee, Alok Sharma, temporarily lost control of the game. The small island states, otherwise known for the purposes of this very protracted football analogy as San Marino, lost comprehensively. But before I strain this football metaphor so far that it twangs, let me make a more serious assessment of the COP 26 outcomes.

Overall, much was achieved, but it was not the almost overwhelming success, with just a touch of sadness, that the PM's over-exuberant statement implied. However, my congratulations—and I am sure those of the whole House—go to Alok Sharma and his negotiating team, and the Minister here today for their monumental efforts in the year of the run-up to COP 26 and for their negotiations during the conference.

I will highlight some of the deliverables that I think are key. The first, which got next to no coverage in the media, is the completion of the Paris rulebook, which I am sure noble Lords read every night before they go to bed. Completing the rulebook was an important move forward, since it sets the frame for global carbon markets and will allow countries to move ahead with more ambitious, enhanced and nationally-determined contributions because they know what the rules are more clearly.

Another deliverable was that more countries were involved in the COP process, and more have signed up to net zero—even India, after a fashion. Coal was included in the Glasgow climate pact for the very first time in 26 COPs. It was diluted to “phasing down” unabated coal rather than “phasing out” all coal, but it is a start; 1.5 degrees cannot be achieved while the world still burns coal. The inclusion is an important signal about the trajectory, particularly to those fossil fuel companies that still have not got the message.

Perhaps most notable were the side deals that were outside the formal COP process on methane and on halting deforestation. They were as important as the main business, although we have to note that they lack, as yet, formal monitoring and reporting mechanisms that the COP process applies to those deals that were

within the process. I highlight the huge amount of energy that the noble Lord, Lord Goldsmith, put into landing the support of the 133 countries that signed up to the deforestation deal. It was an amazing effort, and he is looking older by the day. I hope he will, however, set an example back home by not destroying or damaging our remaining fragments of ancient woodland, which is our equivalent of deforestation.

The joint issue of a statement by China and the US was interesting. It is the equivalent of the two Chief Whips conferring behind the Woolsack. We want to watch and see what these unusual—as opposed to usual—channels deliver, but it will be something, I am sure.

There were some parts of the process that were really encouraging. Business took a real part in the COP negotiations for the first time. It did not send the deputy post-boy: it was the chairman and the CEOs who were there in force. The agreement to come back with enhanced commitments within a year signals an annual ratchetting-up process, which is very much to be welcomed. To get back to the football, GFANZ—which stands for the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero—has now doubled the assets globally that are under management for tackling the climate crisis. That is a major step forward.

However, there were things, of course, that did not come through, and some of them are very important. No progress was made on meeting the \$100 billion-per-year funding commitment: it was not reached. The question of compensation for the poorer countries and small island states for the impact of historic emissions emanating from the richer countries—from us—is still unresolved. Though nature-based solutions were endorsed and in the final text, there were fewer mechanisms for their delivery than I would have liked to have seen. It is absolutely axiomatic that 1.5 degrees cannot be delivered without restoring biodiversity globally.

Although the budget for adaptation to the impacts of climate change was doubled at COP, it was a doubling of not very much at all—although I welcome the agreement for a two-year process for a global plan for adaptation, because adaptation to the impacts of climate change is absolutely unavoidable. It is going to become increasingly important, not just in Bangladesh, small island states and the increasingly arid regions, but right here in the UK, with floods, extreme weather events, fires, heatwaves, droughts and, above all, immigration pressure, as the population of the world seek a living when their territory becomes increasingly hostile due to climate-change impacts.

These are big lists associated with the COP 26 and associated commitments. If they are all delivered—and that is a big “if”—they would bring the world closer to the two degrees above historic levels of temperature, and would probably just about keep 1.5 degrees alive—although, as Alok Sharma himself said, probably only on life support.

What next? I would like to offer—kind as I am—a plan for the Government for the next 12 months. First, the presidency is a game of three halves. We have done two of them: the work up to the presidency and the official negotiations of COP 26. The really crucial part, however, is the next year, as we continue to be president of COP for the next year.

I am sure that Alok Sharma is sucking an orange right now and being treated by the team physio, but that is probably all the rest that he will get at half time. He will need to continue to energise the process over the next 12 months to ensure that the enhanced nationally determined contributions are brought forward, particularly by the most polluting states. He needs to encourage the willing to apply pressure, or worse, to the recalcitrant and make sure that there is a real outcome from the China-US pact and from India.

The Government need to set an example back here by not supporting the Cambo oilfield and the Cumbrian coal mine. Mr Sharma needs to ensure processes for implementation for the commitments that have already been made, particularly for the side deals. He needs to make sure that we get over the line on the \$100 billion annual funding and that private sector funding is leveraged alongside that. He needs to soften up the resistance to the compensation discussion, and I am sure the House wishes him great success.

But, back here in the UK, we need to lead by example during that 12-month period. So here are six examples that I believe that we should set for the next 12 months. First, let us introduce zero-carbon and biodiversity tests for all policies. This thing is too important to be driven off stream by inadvertent policies that get in the way.

Secondly, let there be no more trade agreements without climate change parity being a precondition. If our farmers and businesses are to meet climate change standards, we should not sign trade agreements with countries that do not meet equivalent standards—that is bad for our companies, our trade and the planet.

Thirdly—noble Lords have heard me on this before—we need a land-use framework to ensure that we can use our scarce land most effectively to combat climate change and to make sure that trees and peat to sequester carbon can be established in the right places, particularly with the right tree in the right place, at a fast pace. A land-use framework is also needed if we are to make an orderly and just transition to lower emissions, particularly methane, from food production. If we are to see a reduction in meat and dairy, which is absolutely essential to reducing methane, and increases in plant-based food, as outlined in the *National Food Strategy*, while retaining a vibrant farming industry, we need a proper plan for land.

Fourthly, following the Government's *Net Zero Strategy*, we need clear action plans, with timescales, funding and transparent, monitorable pathways, for our highest carbon and greenhouse gas-emitting areas: energy, buildings, transport and agriculture. The *Net Zero Strategy* is a bit of an expression of hope, rather than a blueprint for how we get there. In it, the Government overfocus on the white-hot heat of technology solving our climate change problems and not enough on fiscal and taxation changes to do that very simple thing that has to be delivered: reducing the price of climate-friendly technologies, goods and services and increasing the price of polluting goods and services.

Fifthly, all public procurement should adopt zero-carbon targets. Public procurement is a huge lever for driving the development of climate-friendly goods

and services, not just in things that public authorities buy but for the whole market. No Government have ever successfully used, or even tried, that lever. The climate crisis says that we must.

Sixthly, and possibly most importantly, I do not think the Chancellor quite gets climate change yet. Most of the big changes that we need to make in the UK need upfront funding and, more importantly, fiscal and taxation measures. We do not yet have a climate change commitment from the Treasury, whose analysis accompanying the *Net Zero Strategy* was all about other government departments, not the Treasury's philosophy. Rishi Sunak needs to show that he has a more ambitious and thought-through strategy, beyond modest funding for new technology and implementation, which he has already granted for heat pumps, nuclear and e-cars. He needs a world vision for what our economy will do in climate change terms, and he needs to reinstate now, as an earnest good intent, the overseas aid budget after its cut and stop subsidising Drax in inappropriate biomass extraction, which is adversely impacting on international biodiversity.

I finish with a personal reflection on why all that action over the next 12 months is important. Some years ago, when I was in Madagascar as a birder, I used to pay a young lad from the village a fiver to go out at night and find whatever bird I pointed to in the bird book. He would find where it was roosting and, at dawn, I would call him, we would go out and I would see the bird and tick my life list—birders are a bit mad. They were all short-range endemics, less than 25 kilometres in range, and, in the whole world, they occurred only there. The spiny forest habitat was much threatened by slash-and-burn agriculture, and all of these birds are endangered. I thought that this bloke was about 12 years old because he was little and skinny, but I found out that he was 19 but tiny and malnourished. People and biodiversity were under threat in Madagascar.

Now, it is much worse. Deforestation has played its part and, when you fly over, you see a 12-mile plume of red soil, where the earth, on which people depend, is eroding into the sea. Climate change in south-east Madagascar is even more pronounced. It is now arid, and the country is on the verge of being declared officially in famine. Slash-and-burn agriculture does not work at all because the soil becomes useless after a couple of years of farming, so the rate of deforestation is galloping, as subsistence farmers chop down trees and then move on. The birds are no more. This is a major cause of the internal refugee problem that Madagascar suffers, as the population in the south-east moves to the north. But, there, they have no land and depend on state aid and support.

I am talking about Madagascar and its tragedy for people and biodiversity in the face of climate change because this is not somewhere over there that has no impact on us. Mass movements of refugees will only increase. In a year when double the number of migrants have gone to extraordinary lengths to cross the English Channel in small boats, we need to reflect on what a growing global refugee problem will mean for them and for us here in the UK. This is the next big climate change emergency, and it will increasingly knock on our door.

[BARONESS YOUNG OF OLD SCONE]

We must get behind the noble Lord, Lord Goldsmith, and the efforts of Alok Sharma for the rest of the presidency. I look forward to hearing from the Minister on my six-point plan. I thank him and his colleagues for all that has emerged from the negotiations to date, but there is much more to do, and they need to redouble efforts over the next 12 months to get more goals over the line in this most important game of the century. At this point, I will make no more football allusions. I beg to move.

12.48 pm

Baroness Parminter (LD): My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness, Lady Young of Old Scone, for providing us with the opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of COP 26 and for her superb introduction to this debate.

Incremental progress was made at COP 26, but it was certainly not in line with the urgency required. Like the noble Baroness, I applaud the efforts of Alok Sharma and other government Ministers. It is fair to acknowledge that the outcomes expose the challenges of securing a global deal. But you did not need to be in the blue zone, like me, hearing the delegates from Palau and Tuvalu, or on the climate justice march on the streets of Glasgow, to know what the outcomes of this COP 26 will mean. The resulting frustration, anger and incredulity at the pace of progress are indeed warranted.

Given the length of time that we have, I have two questions for the Minister. First—this follows on from one of the noble Baroness's remarks—what will the Government do for the duration of their presidency of the UNFCCC to get us back on track for 1.5 degrees? Clearly, we have to double down on diplomacy, and I am sure that his department will lead that effort, but building back trust will be critical.

I am sure that other noble Lords will mention how the cutting of the 0.7% aid budget hurt trust in the run-up to COP 26 and whether that will be re-established in the forthcoming year. They may mention, as the noble Lord, Lord Deben, has suggested, a bold move, such as the Government joining the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, launched by Costa Rica and Denmark.

However, I want to raise just one point on what they are going to do in their presidency, which is the imminent opportunity in the next few weeks at the WTO 12th ministerial conference in Geneva. We know that trade rules are one of the strongest mechanisms to create the conditions to push climate laggards and get them to act. Are the Government pushing for a multilateral statement on trade and climate goals or a commitment to a new work programme and dedicated discussions on integrating climate goals and the global trade system at the WTO 12th ministerial conference?

Secondly, I ask the Government: how are we going to meet our own pledges, given that we are not currently on track for our own climate carbon budgets in the 2020s? On the eve of COP 26, our House of Lords Select Committee on Environment and Climate Change wrote to Alok Sharma on the evidence that was provided by Ministers and the departments that not all departments are sufficiently embedding climate change into their policy-making processes and, further, that the mechanisms that the Government have to hold them to account—the

two Cabinet committees—are just failing. Will these committees carry on post COP 26, or are there any further measures to hold the departments to account? There seems to be, from the evidence we were provided, insufficient staff and resources in individual departments to embed climate change, in addition to the net-zero test that noble Baroness, Lady Young, so ably mentioned. If we do not have enough staff and resources then we will keep getting perverse decisions, such as having a heat and buildings strategy that does not have any new policies for insulating homes, or cutting air passenger duty on domestic flights. They not only undermine our own climate pledges but stop our ability to call on other countries to up their pledges.

Finally, we all accept that it is not just state actors who can get us from where we are now to 1.5 degrees; all of us need to play our part. As the Climate Change Committee said, 60% of the change required needs to come from behaviour change—what we eat, how we heat our homes, how we fly. I am therefore delighted to say that this House's Environment and Climate Change Committee has launched this week an inquiry on behaviour change, so that we can use this moment of impetus for climate change to encourage people to make the changes and get the policies that we need to deliver it.

12.52 pm

Baroness Boycott (CB): My Lords, I am delighted to follow the noble Baronesses, Lady Young and Lady Parminter, and I echo all that they have said. I also very much support Alok Sharma and our own Minister; I think that they played a blinder in Glasgow—the successful effort of the noble Lord, Lord Goldsmith, over deforestation was magnificent. However, as others have said, there were lots of pledges and new initiatives, but they do not total enough. The importance of the decision to make the next COP in Sharm el-Sheikh a ratchet event cannot be overestimated. Humanity literally depends on it.

I spent the whole of last week in Glasgow, where I went between events in the official zones and events in the fringe. The blue zone was a very ugly place; it is hard to imagine an entrance that was more unwelcoming. There was so much metal and wire and, while I appreciate the need for security, there are other ways of doing it. Once inside, you found yourself walking through narrow corridors in between the stands. All of them reflected the relevant financial might of each country; hence Saudi Arabia had an enormous stand and young women were standing around that were contracted for the job from the model agencies in Glasgow—we could have been at a car fair. Next door was Qatar, with models of beautiful net-zero buildings; but Qatar's buildings are constructed by slave labour and it shows no signs of weaning itself off fossil fuels. The small countries had almost no space and no flashy rolling films or brochures. Are we meant to assume that their presence mattered less?

Gender-wise, it was appalling: there was one woman for every six men registered for the blue zone. And, for the record, the largest group of delegates was the oil industry, with 503 of them. The meat industry also put in a jolly good showing with 300 delegates. Of course, for the oil industry the investment paid off, as there

was a downgrading on future restrictions on the speed of phasing out fossil fuels. President Biden is still handing out licences. Some two dozen projects—pipelines to new terminals—are under way in the US, which will cause emissions equal to 404 coal-fired power stations. Between 2020 and 2022, Shell will put in 21 new major oil and gas projects. As we have seen in these last two weeks, lobbying pays off.

The first time I approached the chain gates to the blue zone, there was a very small man wearing a long pale green robe with a headdress of orange feathers. The headdress came right over his head and down to the ground, as though he was travelling within his own arch. He did not have a ticket, it was raining and it was freezing. He was from the combined Amazon headwaters collective, and had flown across the world to plead for his culture's right to exist. And he was not alone: on the streets and in the meeting rooms around the city there were groups of activists from all over. Revolutions, it is said, happen slowly to start with, and then they happen quickly. I think this is one that is going to happen quickly.

For all of us, and for the world, the next COP is our last chance. I urge the Government on this and, like others have said, would very much like the Minister to respond to question of whether Alok Sharma will be set up with his own department. If ever there was a time for work, it is now. It is time to double down on all our efforts. Lobbyists must be silenced and humanity must triumph. Will that happen, or will this be tucked away?

The early omens are not good: COP only finished on Saturday and yet, on Tuesday, I watched the entire "BBC News at Ten" and there was not one item about it. As a former newspaper editor, I know that when you are covering a war on a daily basis, there comes a strange moment when you realise that your readers are bored, so you bring your correspondent home. What you are effectively saying in the newspaper is "That war is over; we are not covering it any more—it's okay, we're not covering Sudan and Syria." We must not let this happen now. Alok Sharma needs to be empowered to challenge every Government on earth to raise their game, and we must all have an obligation to be here to support him.

I return to my man in the green robe—I cannot really get him out of my head. We owe him, his family and his tribe their livelihoods. We have taken his, and it has empowered our culture and western society for many centuries now. It is time to change.

12.56 pm

The Duke of Montrose (Con): My Lords, I congratulate the noble Baroness, Lady Young, on securing this debate; it is such a hot topic and noble Lords have already emphasised that.

Like the noble Baroness, Lady Boycott, I was able to attend a couple of days of the conference, as my family has a long association with Glasgow. I declare my interest as a land manager in that area. Glasgow is very proud to have been chosen as the venue for such a prestigious conference. Noble Lords will be aware that it has been on a big transition from an area dominated by heavy industry. Now, it likes to brag that in 2020 it was called a "Global Green City" and rated as the

fourth city in the global destination sustainability index. This accolade could have attracted Boris Johnson but, by coincidence or otherwise, it had considerable advantages for a conference being held in the midst of the Covid epidemic. It was far enough away to reduce the number of voluntary participants and objectors, but not so far as to deter foreign visitors. As it was, there was an unending emphasis on Covid prevention. There appear to have been about 30,000 or 40,000 people attending the venue, so at times there were queues in a massive orderly scrum. All told, my impression was of a copious air of optimism, endless ambition, followed by copious promises—but no great sense that the latter would match the other two demands.

The first day that I attended, there was an event entitled "Making the global transition to clean power a reality". There was a great parade of banks and investment institutions promising a variety of funding streams to expand renewable energy generation. There was also an emphasis that the programme in south-east Asia, let alone the rest of the world, would have to build connections to 150 million homes that are currently without electricity as part of seeing that nobody was left behind. There then was a session based around the 42 countries that are offering to phase out the use of coal in their energy mix. We learned that south-east Asia contributes 50% of world carbon emissions, mainly from coal. As we know, however, in the final agreement, India and China agree only to phase down coal.

On the second day, I attended a session chaired by my noble friend the Minister. In a great innovation for COP, delegates actively addressed forest, agriculture and commodity trade and its effect on nature. This included the promise that 75% of forest supply chains will become sustainable.

There was then a session on acceleration to sustainable agriculture. We were conscious that we will need three times our present level of food production in 40 years' time. In the end, there were two schools of thought. One was that, if all existing promises are kept, we might be able to contain warming to 1.8 degrees. We were more familiar with the other: that we could control it to just 2.6 degrees. Can the Minister tell us how we can fulfil our ambition?

1.01 pm

The Lord Bishop of Ely: My Lords, I congratulate the noble Baroness, Lady Young of Old Scone, on her opening speech. To pick up on her football analogy, we will all be familiar with the football commentary, "They think it's all over". It was not over until the surprise and hoped for goal came. We are looking for that goal with passion, which is why we are encouraged by the passion and commitment that came through so strongly from the Minister and from Mr Sharma throughout COP 26. It has built my confidence that the momentum will not be lost, and our remaining presidency will be no less crucial for the future of this planet than the conference itself. I applaud the Minister for his work on deforestation, and I commend further work on sufficient soil improvement, both in this country and overseas, which will provide the best carbon capture.

The difference between the many pledges made at COP 26 and the world we will actually bequeath to the next generations tilts one way or the other on the

[THE LORD BISHOP OF ELY]

fulcrum of implementation. For all the promises of this and earlier COPs, we are now dangerously close to tipping beyond any ability to recover. As we have already heard, every gap between promise and action, between target and trajectory, will be delivered directly to the front doors of every one of us through flood or drought, failed crops and empty oceans. We already have one rapidly depleting Dead Sea; we dare not risk others.

This country's success as COP president can be counted only in the currency of scientific accounting, physics, chemistry and biology. I look forward to the maiden speech of my right reverend friend the Bishop of Exeter, who has already sought a sustainable rural life in Devon.

Implementation cannot happen without government playing its full role both in regulation and in releasing the market through private finance. For this to happen, it is now vital that the Treasury come fully on board as the vehicle for clear and stable government policy operation. Both the financial costs and benefits of keeping 1.5 alive must move from periphery to becoming the warp and woof of Treasury planning and all governmental activity.

Only government can protect the most vulnerable, whether at home or abroad. Internationally, the Government must decouple export credits and other subsidies currently going to oil and gas projects in developing nations. Decoupling will both increase the cost of extraction and end the crowding out of green developmental investment in the global south. Similarly, the poorest in UK society must be shielded from the immediate financial costs of decarbonisation. I urge the Government to set the costs of short-term support for low-income households against the long-term financial benefits of transition—not least the benefits in health and wealth that will come through better homes insulation and energy use.

Whatever role the Government foresee for Defra regarding climate change, unless they join together strategy with concern for equity across all departments, we will not make enough progress; it will be hard to see the Prime Minister's much-needed green revolution succeeding. Business is ready to invest, as the global transition from coal to renewables has already proved. Consumers increasingly see the problems; they too want to act, as several recent opinion polls have shown. Until government connects and energises these different sinews and muscles of activity, our body politic will move too little, too slowly.

Finally, the Government must walk as they talk. They must align responsibility with obligations to future generations and the opportunities of the COP presidency. We cannot credibly urge others to make sacrifices to keep 1.5 alive while issuing new fossil fuel extraction licences in our own coastal waters. We cannot demand that others consign coal to history while issuing new licences to extract it ourselves.

1.05 pm

Lord Browne of Ladyton (Lab): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the right reverend Prelate. I associate myself fully with the words of congratulation and thanks to my noble friend Lady Young, to Alok Sharma and to the Minister.

I have made no secret of my admiration for the work of UK Fires, a five-year research programme, involving academics from six universities and a growing industrial consortium, focusing on resource efficiency as the key means of reducing emissions. They have done a simple, compelling analysis of the COP 26 agreed solutions for delivering zero emissions by 2050 and have come to the devastating conclusion that they cannot and will not be delivered while the mechanisms required to deliver a safe climate continue to be overlooked. They say that, as a result, the mechanisms of policy and finance have been activated in pursuit of an unrealisable solution. Unless this changes, billions of people living near the equator face the probability that they will starve this century. Their countries cannot provide sufficient food, nor purchase it, while the rich nations will be plunged into an entirely unnecessary energy austerity.

The argument behind this is very simple. I shall attempt to summarise it, but the expanded version is available online for anyone who wishes to read it in detail. If the incumbent companies of today's high-emitting sectors and their political supporters are to deliver climate mitigation as assumed at COP 26, their non-emitting technology substitution can rely on only three fundamental resources: non-emitting electricity, carbon capture and storage, and biomass. The necessary total demand for these resources will vastly exceed future supply. Averaged over the world, we have 4 kilowatt hours per day of clean electricity per person, growing at 0.1 kilowatt hours per day annually. However, the COP 26 plan requires 32 kilowatt hours per day. We have 6 kilograms per year of carbon capture and storage per person, growing at 0.1 kilograms per year. The COP 26 plan requires 3,600 kilograms per year. We eat 100 kilograms of plant-based food per person each year, but producing enough biokerosene to fly at today's levels requires 200 kilograms of additional harvest. "Don't worry—we will just expand the supply faster," say the authors of this technology fiction. It is too late. It takes time to plan and deliver large energy infrastructures. For example, Hinkley Point C will have taken at least 22 years from political commitment to commissioning. Hornsea 2 wind farm will take 16 years.

We already know the maximum possible capacity of non-emitting electricity generation that we will have in the UK by 2030. We are not on course to maintain even the linear growth rate of the past decade. We have no carbon capture and storage operating in the UK. We cannot expand—indeed we should stop—the use of biomass because it harms other peoples and ecosystems. It is a painful truth that the incumbent high-emitting sectors cannot deliver a zero emissions future in the time available. Rather than facing this, COP 26 perpetuated the fiction.

There is a credible, socially acceptable path to a safe zero emissions future, based solely on a realistic continued expansion of our non-emitting electricity generation. This requires electrification of all energy uses, while reducing the total demand for electricity by around 50% and closing anything which unavoidably releases emissions, particularly in land use and specific agricultural and industrial processes. Temporary restraint, lasting for a few decades, is an essential and unavoidable

component of delivering real zero emissions in developed countries. Pretending this is not the case and not talking about it does not take away the reality.

On 20 October, when Boris Johnson launched the net zero strategy, he pledged that Britain would meet its ambitious net zero targets

“without so much as a hair shirt in sight.”

He said that by 2050 we would

“still be driving cars, flying planes and heating our homes, but our cars will be electric ... planes will be zero emission ... and our homes will be heated by cheap, reliable power”.

I ask the Minister to put that behind him, engage with reality, outline the physically achievable pathways to zero emissions, both in the UK and globally, and that our Government begin the essential discussion with the public about the real path to a safe future climate—one that does not come at the cost of the mass starvation of the poorest.

1.10 pm

Lord Bridges of Headley (Con): My Lords, I congratulate the noble Baroness on securing this debate. I attended COP in my capacity as an adviser to Banco Santander, as recorded in the register. Banco Santander is a member of the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero, which the noble Baroness mentioned. GFANZ is a horrible acronym; a 1990s pop band comes to mind.

I left as a slightly worried optimist. I pay tribute, of course, to the extraordinary work that Alok Sharma and my noble friend did. I left optimistic because Glasgow was fizzing with ideas of new ways to harness the power of the market and of the private sector to get to 1.5 degrees. I am optimistic because, as the noble Baroness and others have said, further commitments were made on coal, forests—where my noble friend made a massive contribution—shipping, methane, carbon markets and of course finance. I am optimistic because, although much more needs to be done at pace, there is now, I sense, real momentum to turn words into action. Clearly, the task over the next 12 months, as others have rightly said, is to keep that momentum up.

However, I am worried not just about the lack of commitment from certain countries, but even more, if noble Lords will forgive me for saying it, about the need to keep this debate in context. As we turn our commitment into action, we cannot afford to ignore the other challenges we face, the most immediate of which is growth. We need economic growth to fund the transition. We cannot, as others have mentioned, have a green strategy unveiled one day and a separate growth strategy or budget unveiled the next. We need a clear strategy for green growth. I ask a question—a hypothetical one, as I do not expect my noble friend to answer it. How does allowing the tax burden to hit its highest level for 70 years, its highest level in peacetime, doubling the number of higher rate taxpayers and increasing corporation tax rates encourage investment and enterprise? Is that the path to growth?

Related to that—it is the point that the noble Lord, Lord Browne, has just been talking about—is energy: we need, as he so eloquently put it, reliable, affordable, renewable energy to power growth. All across the world, we see energy prices rising. Meanwhile, however, investment in oil and gas exploration has fallen. That

second point is good news for hitting net zero, but demand is going to rise, especially in developing countries. It is clear that we are walking a tightrope between the fossil fuel past and the renewable, carbon-free future. Real care is needed as we consider new taxes and green regulations. Prolonged higher energy prices could stoke inflation and push up interest rates. I would be grateful for my noble friend's thoughts on how the Government plan to walk this tightrope in their domestic policies and their international approach.

In passing, I want to flag another challenge that we sometimes ignore and forget when we talk about climate change, which is that, as we go green, we are also going to have to pay for an ageing population. The IFS forecasts that by 2030-31 the additional pressures on that alone will total £18.5 billion on top of the level of 2025-26. We will have to pay that bill as well as the cost of going green.

My final point is one that the noble Baroness, Lady Parminter, made: we have made these pledges and we now need real progress to mobilise not just Governments and companies but people, to help them go green and to make it easier and cheaper for them to do so. My final point is on retrofitting homes and clean energy. Planning, skills, finance, energy supply: these separate challenges need a co-ordinated approach across government to provide a clear framework, so companies and people can invest with confidence. I look forward to reading the new road maps that the Prime Minister has said will be published soon, to see how he will join the dots and ensure that government departments, local authorities and business work together.

I am optimistic, yes. The necessity of the green transition offers untold opportunities, but it does not sit in a silo; it touches on everything we do and everything has an impact on it. Without a coherent strategy that tackles all these challenges in a clear way, we may land up without the economic growth that we need to fund the green transition.

1.15 pm

Baroness Sheehan (LD): My Lords, I add my thanks to the noble Baroness, Lady Young of Old Scone, for securing this debate, and to the COP 26 president, Alok Sharma, and the Minister at the Dispatch Box for their good intentions in trying to get a successful outcome. I shall restrict my remarks to the emission of greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels and the regrettable failure to build in the urgency with which action is required.

There is irrefutable evidence that atmospheric CO₂ has increased meteorically since the 1850s. Before the Industrial Revolution, the highest recorded concentration of carbon dioxide over the previous 800,000 years was 300 parts per million. In just 170 years since the Industrial Revolution, it has soared to 417 parts per million. We are already in uncharted territory. There is no question but that levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere cause the earth to warm, and there is plenty of compelling evidence that our climate is changing rapidly. Global temperature rise is already over 1.1 degrees and accelerating at an alarming rate. The years 2016 and 2020 are tied for the warmest year on record. The heat domes over Canada and the US this summer have shaken scientists by their extent and

[BARONESS SHEEHAN]

intensity, which exceed even the worst-case scenarios of climate modelling. Global sea-level rises have been enormous, such that the very existence of Tuvalu is under threat. In Madagascar, the rains have failed for four years running, leaving the population facing famine. To our shame, neither nation received any succour at COP 26, despite the COP 26 president's best efforts.

This lack of regard for science-based evidence by policymakers is causing despair in younger generations, who see a dangerous future in which—I say this advisedly—the planet will not be hospitable to humans. It is shocking that even today, knowing what we know and observing the planet shuddering under the weight of immense imbalances to its natural moderating cycles, we failed at COP 26 to call out the burning of fossil fuels as a major contributor to this emergency. I am sure that the Minister will say in response that, after 26 years, just getting a mention of fossil fuels into the agreed text was a success, but how can we expect a different response from other polluters when our own Government, enriched by historic greenhouse gas emissions, will not say no to a new coalmine in Cumbria or to the planned new Cambo oilfield off the Scottish coast? The leader of the SNP has voiced her opposition to it; will the Minister urge the Government to oppose it also? Or does he take the same line as the noble Lord, Lord Callanan, that it is better to produce oil and gas domestically than import it from overseas?

Cambo's oil has little to do with satisfying domestic demand: 80% of UK oil is exported and sold on global markets. The new investment in oil will only drive demand and take investment and support away from proven, scalable sources of renewable energy. Cambo will not even provide jobs in the UK, because contracts for the construction and installation of rig have gone to overseas firms. This is but the tip of the iceberg. According to Friends of the Earth, there are 40 other new UK fossil fuel projects awaiting government approval, something that the IEA and the IPCC have said cannot happen if we are to stay within 1.5 degrees centigrade. I am reminded of the words of the playground rhyme: "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Words alone are not enough: we need firm, cross-government policy, consistent with our domestic and international climate commitments, in which "no new fossil fuels" is a central plank.

1.19 pm

Viscount Hanworth (Lab): I do not intend to make a detailed assessment of the outcomes of the COP 26 conference; I wish to say only that I share the disappointments and anxieties that others have expressed. Instead, I propose to examine the achievements of the first country in the world to declare net-zero targets for carbon emissions, which, of course, is the United Kingdom.

In agreement with the recent pronouncements of the UK Climate Change Committee, I wish to say that we are liable to miss these targets by a substantial amount. The Government's overall strategy and detailed policies are not adequate to achieve the targets. The lack of meaningful plans for achieving a green industrial revolution threatens to consign this country to poverty and social dislocation.

The essential requirement is for a plentiful supply of electrical power, which should be available to replace the fossil fuels that power our transport and energise our industrial processes. Without this electricity, we would not be able to replace fossil fuels, and if we were to forgo these fuels without replacing them, we should suffer an economic collapse.

Other European nations that have hesitated to declare targets for staunching carbon emissions have been far more active than we have in pursuing industrial strategies that are appropriate to a decarbonised economy. It is undeniable that Britain has greatly reduced its carbon emissions in the course of the last 20 years. From 1990 to 2020, the UK's emissions of carbon dioxide fell from 800 million to 420 million tonnes per annum, which is two-thirds of its former amount.

These reductions have come largely from one source in a way that cannot be expected to continue. It is in the generation of electrical power that the main reductions in emissions have occurred. The remainder of the reductions are illusory. They have arisen from the deindustrialisation of our economy and from the transfer of manufacturing to other countries where there have been little or no reductions in emissions.

The reduction in the UK of the emissions from generating electricity has arisen from the closure of coal-fired power stations and from their replacement by gas-fired power stations and wind farms. Power utilities in the private sector have managed the transition without any intervention from the Government. This has created an illusion that the private sector can be relied on to achieve the necessary investments in industrial infrastructure. However, it has become clear that, on its own, the private sector is incapable of accomplishing the next phase of the transition, which should see the elimination of natural gas as a source of power.

The successive failures of projects to build new nuclear power stations have shown that other means of financing large projects are called for. In the process of providing the necessary assistance, the Government will have to relinquish the free-market philosophy which proposes that capital markets should provide the necessary funds for investment.

The Government should be able to raise the necessary funds without paying the surcharges that normally accompany financial borrowing. They will be able to borrow the funds without paying a risk premium under the supposition that they do not default on their debts. If the funds are not readily forthcoming from the financial markets, the Government may resort to creating money to enable them to pre-empt the resources that will be demanded by the project, thereby avoiding the payment of a scarcity premium. Underlying the commercial rate of interest payable on borrowed funds is a discount factor, whereby future returns are valued at less than present returns.

A Government that propose to be custodians of our futures should not think of applying a discount to the future benefits of projects that are designed to avert or mitigate the damage caused by emissions of greenhouse gasses. By creating the money, the Government can avoid paying any surcharge that might be embodied in the commercial rate of interest on borrowed funds.

A more hopeful recent development has been the announcement by Rolls-Royce that it is prepared to go ahead with its project to build small modular nuclear reactors despite the paucity of government support. This is a technology in which we have a comparative advantage. Through the export of these devices, we should have a chance of contributing greatly to the reduction of carbon emissions throughout the world. It is agonizing to contemplate the loss of this opportunity.

1.24 pm

The Lord Bishop of Exeter (Maiden Speech): My Lords, arriving as Bishop of Exeter eight years ago, I have become a Devonian by adoption and grace. Although proud of my Essex roots, I now know that the only way is Devon.

As I listen to Devonshire farmers grappling with environmental land management schemes or residents in south Devon who are increasingly anxious about coastal erosion, or engage with scientists at the Met Office in Exeter, I am conscious of the urgency and immensity of the task confronting us.

In scripture, we learn that Joseph—of technicolour dreamcoat fame—interpreted Pharaoh's dreams of times of plenty and times of famine and advised Pharaoh to prudence in managing the nation's resources, and we know that Noah heard God's voice warning him of a devastating flood. Today's prophets are the scientists and environmentalists who present us with stark choices that demand action.

The Church of England is responding to their warnings. In 2017, we set up the Transition Pathway Initiative, a joint initiative between us and the Environment Agency Pension Fund. Aimed at investors, it assesses companies' preparedness for the transition to a low-carbon economy. It has already evolved into a global initiative, with over \$39 trillion of combined assets under management and advice.

In the diocese of Exeter, we are taking co-ordinated action towards a target of net zero by 2030, including investing in a net-zero officer. With nearly 600 churches, three-quarters of which are medieval buildings, your Lordships will realise that this is challenging. That said, the majority of our church buildings are the ultimate in sustainability: built centuries ago with local materials, they are still meeting the needs of local communities, with a very low carbon footprint.

Our churches, situated in the heart of the majority of communities across the county, are well placed to spot opportunities such as installing solar panels on underused land, planting trees, better insulating a village hall or improving recycling facilities. I recognise that this is a complex subject, and I feel very much the amateur. I console myself, however, with the knowledge that whereas the Ark was built by amateurs, the "Titanic" was built by professionals.

I have one final thought. My diocese is twinned with the Province of Melanesia. The bonds of friendship were laid over 150 years ago when John Coleridge Patteson left Ottery St Mary to take the Gospel to the Solomon Islands, where he was beaten to death by islanders who mistook him for a slave trader. The very island on which he was martyred is now virtually uninhabitable because of rising sea levels, and within five years it will have disappeared. It is small developing

countries with relatively low carbon footprints, such as Melanesia, which are being asked to pay a heavy price for the rest of the world's wastefulness.

COP 26 may be over but, as the noble Baroness, Lady Young, reminded us, the United Kingdom remains in the chair for a year. Her Majesty's Government must seize the opportunity for international leadership.

1.28 pm

Baroness Bottomley of Nettlestone (Con): My Lords, what an honour and pleasure it is to speak after the right reverend Prelate, who, while he has been a bishop for seven years, has finally joined us in this place. During this time, he has already made a great reputation for himself as particularly dedicated to rural matters and sustainable rural affairs.

Maybe the highlight of his life, from my point of view, was being the chaplain at Trinity College Cambridge when both our children were there—but that might be a slightly elitist comment. He has also been a Benedictine monk for 10 years and much else besides, so we are looking forward greatly to his contributions. I have not heard Noah discussed in this place before, but I really like talking about him. With theology, high policy and practical examples, we look forward to many more of his speeches. In particular, I am looking forward to hearing about his funeral ministry, because that is a growth industry and one that we know a lot about in this House. So, I say to the right reverend Prelate: welcome, and congratulations.

I also congratulate the noble Baroness, Lady Young, a very old friend of mine, on her hugely knowledgeable—as ever—speech. I always want her to say that health is her first love, but I know that she left the health service to go and follow the birds, the Environment Agency and much else. However, she has to be forgiven for this. As ever, her six practical, realistic and achievable points are very much with us.

I also echo the words of the noble Baroness, Lady Parminter. She talked about 60% of the challenge being behaviour change. We have had the easy wins; we now need to persuade people to change, and that is very difficult. People sometimes change out of fear. We should not forget that, but this is where we are.

I want to add my warm congratulations to all those involved in COP 26. I went slightly worried and uncertain. I am very enthusiastic about my colleague's comment about being hopeful but cautious. It was excellent to see the noble Lord there working incredibly hard, along with many other Ministers and leaders from the Government. No one could underestimate the effort that had gone into the preparation.

My purpose for being at COP 26 was not to think about what Governments were doing, important though that is. I am speaking as the chancellor of the University of Hull. Hull and the Humber comprise the most carbon-generating estuary in the country. If you cannot solve Hull and the Humber, you cannot get to net zero. Start off with the most difficult living lab, and if you can tackle it, you have a great recipe and a tool book for the future.

It is extraordinary how this region, with all its former carbon-producing industries—steel, refineries, pharmaceuticals and so on—where the fishing and

[BARONESS BOTTOMLEY OF NETTLESTONE]
shipping industries have declined, has now seized the green revolution in the most extraordinary way. In 2016, Siemens launched its wind farm there, which the Queen, I am delighted to say, visited. It is now the largest offshore wind farm in the country. There was a major government announcement about hydrogen, and a major announcement about carbon capture providing real opportunities, such as a partnership with the city council, which has some of the largest social housing estates in the country, which are very deprived, modelling how homes can become carbon-reduced or net zero.

I want to talk about the university, which has provided a benchmark and real expertise in renewable energy, carbon capture and flood resilience, which is such a critical issue, with the Humber remaining one of the most important parts. The wonderful Professor Dan Parsons is the director of the Energy and Environment Institute, which has led critical research in offshore wind and environment matters. It is now producing PhDs and apprenticeships and is providing the skills for the future that are so essential if we are to seize those opportunities.

The Prince of Wales said that business has to show the lead now, not just Governments. We have seen the way businesses have taken up this opportunity. Today, John Kerry, the US special presidential envoy for climate wrote in the *Financial Times*:

“Companies that quickly embrace green technology will clean up”

both the environment and commercially. The transition to net zero presents the greatest opportunity since the industrial revolution, certainly in the Hull area, led by Reckitt and many others and supported by the CBI. There is great reason for optimism—hard work, but optimism.

1.33 pm

Baroness Hayman (CB): My Lords, I declare my interest as co-chair of Peers for the Planet. After the speech of the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Exeter, I hope we may recruit him to the group. I add my congratulations to the noble Baroness, Lady Young of Old Scone, on her comprehensive introduction and to the whole team, led by Alok Sharma and the Minister here today on what they achieved in Glasgow. Like many others who spent time at the conference, I came back feeling that progress had been made. As the Prime Minister said on Monday:

“COP26 has filled me with optimism.”—[*Official Report*, Commons, 15/11/21; col. 335.]

He also said there can be

“nothing more dangerous than patting ourselves on the back and telling ourselves that the job is done.”—[*Official Report*, Commons, 15/11/21; col. 334.]

Far from feeling that we in the UK have discharged our responsibilities by hosting the meeting in Glasgow, it has never been more important for us, as we continue to hold the presidency throughout the next year, to lead action both domestically and on the international stage.

In my contribution, I want to focus on a rather technocratic, but, I believe, essential, aspect and a key building block for action in any post-COP strategy,

which is the measurements and the metrics by which we judge progress. If we are to keep global warming within liveable limits and reverse biodiversity loss, we need milestones and metrics behind them that are deliverable, consistent, transparent and fair. Reliable metrics will help in many ways. They will enable us to make the personal choices the noble Baroness, Lady Bottomley, was talking about: how we eat, travel and heat our homes, and how we use our financial power in relation to pensions and investments with confidence that we are acting effectively.

Nationally, robust metrics ensure consistency and support every sector to adjust their business models and develop credible plans for the transition to a low-carbon future and help Governments keep on track in delivering net-zero and nature commitments. Internationally, they bring transparency and accountability. They depoliticise decision-making and are structural enablers of co-operation and trust between countries. They will strengthen transparency and create confidence in government decisions, especially when there are difficult choices ahead. Crucially, they can help protect the high levels of consensus we have enjoyed politically in the UK on climate issues, even as we move from commitments on paper to the more challenging and potentially more divisive task of delivering.

COP 26 has provided a launch pad for progress. As the noble Baroness, Lady Young, said, the Paris rulebook was completed. The UN announced a high-level expert group to propose standards for non-state actors’ net zero-commitments, as well as metrics to enable businesses, cities and regions to verify the climate resilience impact of their actions. There is the opportunity for the UK to lead on robust, science-based green and brown taxonomies, learning from the deficiencies in the EU’s process, but the Government need to ensure that they are science-based and avoid undue influence from polluting industries. Perhaps the Minister can provide an update on the progress of the advisory panel convened to develop that taxonomy.

I will end with the words of my noble friend Lord Deben, who said that we have to have optimism in mind, but also the word “apocalypse”.

1.37 pm

Viscount Stansgate (Lab): My Lords, the whole House owes a debt of gratitude to my noble friend Lady Young for enabling us to have one of the timeliest debates on one of the most important subjects you could possibly have in this House, which is the future of our planet earth. I, too, congratulate the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Exeter on his excellent maiden speech. I only recently made mine. I think it was five weeks ago today, so I know what it is like to go through it and how relieved I hope he feels now it is over.

It is hard to judge, yet, in what way we will look back on COP 26, and it is hard to know, yet, what longer term success it will have in tackling the problems that we face, but I would like to pay tribute to Alok Sharma and the Minister for the work that has been done, of which we can be very proud. The emphasis on the phasing down of coal rather than its phasing out may have received the most immediate headlines, but there are other issues just as critical to the future,

and in my short contribution to today's debate, I want to mention the risks of biodiversity loss because, as I am sure the House will know, biodiversity loss and climate change are two sides of the same coin.

Human consumption is increasing the demand for resources, and this is leading to planetary change. There is a risk that human activity could push the earth into a substantially altered state. I do not know if your Lordships are familiar with the concept of "earth overshoot day", but it is the day in any given year when it is thought that human resource demands on the earth exceed what the earth can regenerate. The global population and overall material consumption are both rising, but the earth's capacity to meet human needs is finite.

I choose a few examples. Land use change is a major driver of biodiversity loss, and many current agricultural practices are unsustainable in the long term. The deforestation of the Amazon is an obvious example. That is why many argue that further expansion of agricultural land should be curtailed. Biodiversity supports agriculture through the provision of natural enemies, pollination and healthy soils, yet it is at risk. Take insects; in the last 40 years in the UK, there has been a reduction of one-third in all insect pollinator species, where they have been measured. Take fish; biodiversity loss in marine fisheries is likely to continue, although populations can recover if managed sustainably, which is why the marine protected areas are so important. However, global heating can threaten that recovery completely, as it affects where different species can flourish. As the oceans warm and become increasingly acidified, the risk increases. There are those who predict that, in the coastal and marine ecosystems of the Asia-Pacific region, exploitable fish stocks might disappear before 2050 under current climate change scenarios.

My final example is the damage that climate change could do to the diversity of our food supply. It is a sobering fact that about three-quarters of all global calories eaten by human beings come from only eight crops, and about 90% of all calories we consume come from only 18. There is a real vulnerability here if global heating adversely affects our ability to grow those crops where we currently do. The Royal Society of Biology points out, as my noble friend said, that the UK is not immune to climate change and its consequences, for there is mounting evidence that it has contributed to flood damage, lost crops, lost livelihoods and lost lives.

In closing, I emphasise that when one thinks about COP 26 and its aftermath, the issue of biodiversity loss is as great as that of phasing out fossil fuels. When the Minister replies, I hope he might say a word looking ahead to next year, when our next challenge will be in April and May in China, where part two of COP 15 takes place, focusing on biodiversity. I look forward to hearing what the Minister has to say in reply.

1.42 pm

The Earl of Glasgow (LD): My Lords, my home is about 30 miles from the centre of Glasgow, and for two weeks I have been host to something like 50 delegates from all over the world, attending or taking part in the COP 26 negotiations. I do not think I am alone in

having to admit that, until recently, I had been supremely unconcerned about the imminent perils of global warming. Of course, I knew it was an issue of concern and that some drastic action might have to be taken soon to counteract it, but I never appreciated how imminent it was. It was only after meeting so many indigenous people from all over the world that I have become aware of how urgent this issue has become. Global warming is not something we will have to deal with in four or five years' time; it is happening now and we must deal with it now. Because we have already left it too late, the solutions are likely to be painful.

So far, climate change has had only minimal effects in Britain, restricted mainly to excessive flooding in Yorkshire and the Midlands, but in many other parts of the world global warming is already changing the ways of life of indigenous people and permanently endangering their future. Staying in my home were people from Kenya, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, South Africa, New Zealand and the Marshall Islands, a lady representing Amazon Watch from Brazil and a teacher-diplomat lady from the Caribbean island of Grenada. By talking and listening to them, I got a first-hand worldview of what is really happening to our planet.

Of course, we are all aware of the melting ice cap and the imminent threat to the low-lying islands of the Pacific, the disappearance of the glaciers in the Alps, the ferocious forest fires in north-west America, the drought in South Africa and the floods in Pakistan, but it is the crop failures in so much of the world's farming land that are causing the most concern. We must not get complacent, because so many of the worst effects of global warming have not yet directly affected us. The repercussions, at least, soon will.

I have no idea whether COP 26 will eventually be regarded as a success or a failure, but I believe that at least the publicity surrounding it has made more people, such as me, more aware and more knowledgeable about the imminent threat of global warming. By the time my visitors had left, I had been convinced that, apart from the continuing need to drastically reduce our emissions, the most important single issue is the preservation of the world's rainforests. I therefore ask the Government whether they are putting sufficient pressure on Brazil, which seems to be ambivalent on this matter, to put an end to the present destruction of the Amazon rainforest.

1.46 pm

Lord Tugendhat (Con): My Lords, I begin by congratulating the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Exeter on his notable maiden speech. His eloquence is worthy of the beauty of his cathedral, and his timekeeping is an example to us all.

I will say just a few words about China, India and coal. It is right that coal should be at the heart of the problem, and it was the statement on coal that was a disappointment at the end of the conference, but I think we need to see this matter in context. For a moment, I will turn the clock back 50 years. At that time, in the 1970s, one of the world's great challenges was how to avoid widespread famine. I remind noble Lords of the famous Club of Rome 1972 report, *The Limits to Growth*, the most eloquent and influential

[LORD TUGENDHAT]

exponent of that prospect and one that enjoyed great support among the scientific community. It turned out to be wrong. Not only has the predicted famine not occurred, but the position of the world's poorest has been transformed for the better. World Bank figures show what has been achieved: in 1981, 42.7% of the world's population was living in absolute poverty; now, the figure is 9.3% of a very much larger population.

The two countries that have done most to bring about this change are China and India. One of the most important instruments in enabling them to do so has been coal-fired electricity. Resolving one problem has contributed massively to creating another. The lives of millions of the world's poorest people now depend on the fuel that is polluting the planet. While I recognise that phasing down coal, rather than phasing it out, represents a disappointing end to COP 26, I feel it represents an important step forward by China and India. If great human suffering is to be avoided, they need time to turn their economies away from coal.

The fact that they need time, however, does not mean that nothing should be done. The move must be made and they, like everyone else, must be subject to appropriate internationally verifiable targets and deadlines. At the same time, richer countries must make every effort to assist poorer countries to lessen their dependence on coal, and in that respect, the harnessing of private enterprise to governmental efforts, to which a number of noble Lords have referred, is a very important development.

Finally, the developed industrial countries that pressed for the phasing out of coal must move forward as quickly as possible to fulfil that aim. Achieving it and assisting the developing countries in reducing their dependence on coal, and indeed the efforts of China and India, will demand the most massive expenditure and huge changes in the way of life of people in this country, the developed world and the developing world. It is very important that Governments everywhere, but particularly our Government, be more frank than they have been about what those changes imply and what the costs will be. It is essential to do that if public opinion is to provide the necessary support for the required changes.

1.50 pm

Lord Inglewood (Non-Affl): My Lords, like a number of other Members of your Lordships' House, I went up to Glasgow to COP. I went as chairman of the Cumbria local enterprise partnership. When I was there, there was a lot of discussion about whether it was going to succeed. Having thought about it, I do not think that is really the right question.

COP is not an isolated event but part of a process of responding to the threat to earth and all of us posed by the sun, the wider solar system and the universe behaving rather like classical deities or Old Testament Jehovah because we have messed up the protective atmospheric shield around us. Indeed, it has some similarities to attacks on the earth by aliens so beloved by science fiction writers. Rather to my surprise, when I pulled the *China Daily* out of my pigeonhole I saw the headline "End of Life a Real Risk if Climate Crisis is Unresolved".

Although it is frustrating, success is not attributable to the communiqué issued at the end of the proceedings. I share the frustration of Alok Sharma and the Government about that. In a world where, honestly and realistically, we cannot necessarily rely confidently on people doing what they say and Governments sticking by what they have signed up to, and where political measures are perhaps the strongest sanction against recidivists, we are in a tricky place.

Much of the debate internationally seems to echo the debate I have had about climate change in Cumbria, where various discussions vie with plans, each more ambitious, grandiloquent and dramatic than the last. What matters, though, is the speed and thoroughness of dealing with the real issues, not the superficial grandeur and ambition of the plans.

We all have a part to play. In the case of my local enterprise partnership, we are promoting clean energy generation, particularly through nuclear and offshore wind. We are emphasising decarbonisation, both of business itself and of the transport systems and networks serving it. We are promoting and trying to activate natural carbon capture, which cannot work properly unless there is proper financial recognition for those deploying and managing the assets. Finally—this has not yet been mentioned—we are recognising and pursuing the commercial opportunities that the low-carbon economy presents to business.

We often face criticism: "We'll behave properly but the rest of the world cheats, so what's the point?". The point is that we all have to do this together, because otherwise we will all be doomed. We in this country should show solidarity and leadership and get buy-in from everybody where we can. I believe we should proceed with developing some kind of Marshall aid to help many countries much poorer than us that face real, immediate challenges. It is true that we exported pollution from our country to many of their countries to enrich ourselves.

I come back to the critical question I started with: has it succeeded? I do not know—certainly not completely and absolutely in itself. But if COP 26 is a real move, a staging post to achieving in time the necessary changes to recalibrate how we all behave on earth and towards the earth, it certainly cannot have been a failure.

1.54 pm

Lord Bird (CB): When I look at the climate change argument, I am reminded of a friend of mine who was in a failing business. When the accountant left, he was praised for measuring its decline with great accuracy. I get that feeling because we have put an enormous amount of energy into measuring the decline and looking at things that have gone wrong. We have not spent as much energy finding the answers and solutions, except in the vaguest sort of ways.

Is it not interesting, this really weird situation, in that most of the damage to the world has been done in the last 60 years, since Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring* and published it in 1962? In fact, the first 50% of the damage done to the world took thousands and thousands of years. Then you get to 1960, when the world's population was 3 billion, and going forward you have this world in which everybody seems to be hyperventilating about the wrong we are doing to it.

I find it extraordinary that there is a plethora of organisations, hundreds of thousands around the world, that are totally committed to doing something about the environment, but one thing they will not do is work together. There is no convergence, no concatenation, no coalescence. It is almost like a replica of the marketplace in the City of London or Wall Street. Organisations will have nothing to do with each other but are supposedly going in the same direction. In my opinion, that is the biggest intellectual crisis we face today and the question we have to ask the Government to help us resolve. How can we resolve the fact that we are all so committed to the environment in hundreds of thousands of organisations that will not concatenate, come together and do things?

I went to COP and had a brilliant time. I was very impressed by what the noble Baroness, Lady Boycott, said. I went into the blue zone and thought, “God, I’m in a car show!” It was like the Earl’s Court car showroom I used to go to quite regularly. There were all these people selling products; some of the stuff was pretty good. There are some brilliant answers out there. For instance, there is this kind of bacterium that eats plastic. There are all sorts of things; I met a woman who has developed a bacterium that eats nuclear waste. I met another woman who has invented a way of turning air into water at 68 degrees. There are all these energies and solutions. In this very difficult time, the role of the Government must be to bring those energies together.

I do not want to sound like an old historian—I am a self-appointed historian—but I look at what happened in the Second World War and the marvellous thing that Britain did, which nobody really ever talks about any more: the war effort. There was a convergence of energies. Little bits of aeroplanes could be made here, there and everywhere, and it was all converged. I think it was Herbert Morrison who did it. It was wonderful. We need that again and we need it now, because the talking needs to be over.

1.58 pm

Lord Howell of Guildford (Con): My Lords, Alok Sharma deserves very high praise for the many deals and agreements he achieved in important areas such as trees and methane. It is obvious, particularly from the speech we have just heard, that Glasgow was a fountain of fascinating new ideas, all to be developed.

Nevertheless, we are now in fact entering an extremely dangerous phase in which people, especially the young, are being deluded into believing that climate violence and greatly increased volatility in price and supply over the coming era can all somehow be averted or much ameliorated by net-zero policies that will cost little and cause minimum upheaval. This is 100% wrong and utterly misleading. In practice, the enormous world energy transition now being contemplated will cause huge disruption and bring massive social, industrial and political change—like the Industrial Revolution but on a vastly greater scale and costing trillions, not billions.

For a start, there is the sheer and complete impracticality of re-engineering the entire power and electricity systems of India, China, Africa and other countries, closing down and totally replacing their

countless coal-fired and other fossil-fuel stations—which my noble friend Lord Tugendhat has just referred to—and transforming, in short order, the complex coal, oil and gas fuel mix that has dominated the world for the past two centuries. Not only can this not be done without intense human suffering or within the alleged timescale but just hand-wringing and promising not to finance any new coal-fired power stations does not begin to touch the rising emissions problem that is sitting before us.

The only way of doing so would be to go out to each one of the thousands of coal-fired stations across Asia and around the world and retrofit them with affordable carbon-capture devices—which, incidentally, are yet to be invented—and modern supercritical boilers. This is possible, but the funds required to do it, including not just the equipment but the technology, training and skilled manpower to do the fitting, exceed by a factor of at least 10 anything now being publicly admitted or any of the sums being talked about.

Actually, if aiding the most vulnerable and defenceless in our societies and easing human suffering were the real and genuine purpose, would we be going this way at all? By far the best use of funds and the most genuinely caring and compassionate route would be massive adaptation to protect people better against the inevitable periods ahead—who knows for how long—of climate violence, floods, storms, fires and heat waves, which are, historically, now due anyway.

Although, as we have been reminded, we should care deeply for the small island states, this is a direct threat to our own islands, as the noble Baroness, Lady Young, quite rightly began this debate by reminding us. We should tackle the protection and adaptation task with the intensity that the Dutch showed five centuries ago, only now at 100 times the scale.

The management of this transition, phase by phase, will require the utmost skill and intricate strategic energy planning. Without this and proper back-up, we will run into terrible price spikes, causing intense hardship for the most vulnerable and the defenceless, just as we are doing at this moment, although we do not seem to have touched on it much in this debate. Of course, it will also cause real insecurity and power shortages. We can have as many conferences as we like, but it is time for some honesty, realism and real action to prepare and protect our environment, our energy security and the younger generations’ real interests, prosperity and safety.

2.02 pm

Lord Birt (CB): My Lords, COP 26 can, on balance, be counted a success. There were significant stumbles, most obviously on coal, but the global consensus was shifted, momentum was increased and the pressure on the laggard nations is now too intense to ignore.

But let us be open-eyed: the challenge for every nation to meet the 1.5-degree target is absolutely enormous, including for us. In the UK, around 60% of our emissions come from just two sources: heating buildings and transport. The Government’s White Paper on heating, issued last month, offers a really authoritative and impressive account of the challenge. It identifies that many of the possible solutions—for instance,

[LORD BIRT]
hydrogen heating—are uncertain. Other critical technologies are as yet unproven, or their affordability is not yet at all clear.

Heat pumps are a proven technology, but they are far more expensive than carbon boilers, and they will not do their job without a massive and costly programme of home insulation. For them to work, it is not just roofs that need insulating but windows, walls and floors. Absent greater clarity on how the transition to decarbonised heat is to be incentivised and organised, the Government's target to be able to install 600,000 heat pumps a year within six years appears unreachable at this moment.

The technology solutions for decarbonising transport are far clearer, but their implementation is also fraught with difficulties. A few months ago, I bought my first electric vehicle. The car is a dream, but the charging is an absolute nightmare. I have a charge point installed at home. On a fair number of occasions, our power supply has dipped below the required statutory voltage and automatically disabled our charge point. The following morning, ready for a long journey, I have found the battery close to flat and my journey stymied.

When you venture out on to the public charging networks, the nightmare continues. Many public charge points are simply not working, and you do not know that until you get there. In some areas, any car is able to park in front of a street charger and block it. There is no standardisation of payment systems, and only a minority allow contactless. Charging systems lack transparency on pricing. A multiplicity of apps and proprietary cards is needed if all charge points are to be accessed. There are different and incompatible sockets for fast chargers. Many charging spaces are unsuitable for drivers with disabilities or for vans.

In short, the charge-point system is a complete mess. There are currently 33 million cars in the UK, only 1 million of which are EVs. If we are to achieve our target of 12 million EVs by 2030, the Government rapidly need to bring order to this chaos. Unless and until EV drivers can soon enjoy an equivalent experience to those driving petrol and diesel vehicles, confidence in EVs will simply evaporate.

I do not for one moment underestimate the challenges for government of achieving net zero. But I do say to the Minister that, post Glasgow, the Government need to roll up their sleeves and concentrate not just on proclaiming what our or others' net-zero targets are but on working out in granular detail just how we are going to achieve them.

2.07 pm

Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (GP): My Lords, this rich debate has been bursting with good ideas for the Government, so I will not repeat proposals but add to them. I note that I entirely agree with the six-point list of the noble Baroness, Lady Young of Old Scone, and thank her for securing this debate and introducing it so brilliantly.

I agree with the noble Baroness, Lady Parminter, that the World Trade Organization talks must enter the 21st century and make the climate emergency central to their progress. I agree with the noble Baroness, Lady Boycott, that Alok Sharma, having done a fine

job in Glasgow, should be given his own department, although I add that the real change that we need to see is in the Treasury. It has to take a revolutionary step, following New Zealand in throwing out the nonsensical neoliberal idea that resources are all infinite or substitutable. You cannot have infinite growth on a finite planet. The planet is at or beyond its limits and the climate is only one of them.

I have already asked the Leader of the House if the UK will sign up to the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, which is leading the way on fossil fuels, and if we would counteract one of the great failures of COP 26 and put money into loss and damage. But I took the answer that I got as a firm “no”, so I will not ask the Minister to overrule that. After what we heard from the noble Baroness, Lady Sheehan, we have a pretty good idea of why we are not signing up to BOGA.

So I have two requests to the Minister. As the noble Baroness, Lady Boycott, said, at COP it was entirely evident how dominant fossil-fuel delegates were—so will the Minister commit to demanding that, at COP 27, the fossil-fuel advocates are expelled? They were the largest delegation at COP 26: there were 503 of them. The comparable World Health Organization tobacco-control talks ban big tobacco. Let us get big oil and gas out of COP.

I want to make a second point, which is broader. Along with many Members speaking in this debate, I was in Glasgow for nearly all of the two weeks. I agree with the noble Baroness, Lady Boycott, that the blue zone was often depressing. There were some real high points, such as the cryosphere zone—although perhaps “high point” is the wrong term. What we had was the scientists from the frozen, or should I say currently frozen, parts of this planet and indigenous people from those areas providing powerful testimony on just how much even the COP process is not fully accounting for the dangers that we face. The peatland pavilion and the water and health pavilions were starting to tie together the sustainable development goals with the understanding that we have to have system change, not climate emergency.

However, the real innovation—the energy and hope—was in what I call the shadow COP. You might call it the alternative COP; on the streets were 100,000 people, many of them young, who came out despite Covid-19 and some truly classic Glasgow weather to deliver the voice of urgency, innovation and change. There were so many halls with informal gatherings: “SHE changes climate” was another brilliant gathering there. There were people campaigning on ecocide, about which I have talked to the Minister before. Dr Saleemul Huq, the director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, based in Bangladesh, based in Bangladesh, did not call it the alternative COP. He called it the good COP, as opposed to the bad COP. Will the Minister ensure that Defra's halls are open to the people from the good COP and that the Government are listening to those people's voices?

2.12 pm

Lord Loomba (CB): My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness, Lady Young, for securing this important and timely debate. The Government, and the COP 26 president personally, deserve credit for their efforts in

securing the Glasgow agreement, fragile as the prospects remain for keeping global temperatures within the recommended target range. A key priority of the UK Government at COP 26 was to put us on a path to keeping 1.5 degrees centigrade within reach through ambitious targets. Following the end of the summit, it is now clear that this goal was not fully realised, with the world en route to 2.4 degrees of warming by the end of the century, based on individual countries' current 2030 commitments.

Over a decade ago, developed countries committed to mobilise US \$100 billion a year to support developing countries to adapt to the impacts of climate change and reduce their emissions. However, developed countries have not yet met their pledge to provide this amount of money, despite it being a critical part of the grand bargain that underpins the Paris Agreement. This was a key sticking point in negotiations at COP 26; it is critical that progress on this is made ahead of COP 27 to ensure an ambitious outcome in all areas of the climate agenda.

We know, and it was graphically brought to life by the testimony of some delegates, that some countries are already in grave peril and facing humanitarian crises. These include island nations which are threatened with imminent extinction and coastal communities in many other countries too. The people in these affected parts, who have done nothing to cause this man-made emergency, lack the means to mitigate or even escape the fate that awaits them. We also know that it is true that all nations and people will be required to make changes to ensure sustainability, but it would be most unfair to ask countries in sub-Saharan Africa, south Asia and South America, which already have a very low standard of living, to make further sacrifices without the support of the richer nations which have played a far more significant role in creating the situation.

If we want the effort to keep global warming within the target range to be successful, it is essential that the funding provided to poorer countries makes it possible for them to play their part without increasing existing disparities. Does the Minister agree that we should lead the world and set an example by supporting the climate-vulnerable countries, which are already being affected by climate change, with additional climate finance commitments throughout the UK's COP presidency?

2.16 pm

Baroness McIntosh of Pickering (Con): My Lords, I join those congratulating the noble Baroness, Lady Young of Old Scone, on securing this debate. I add my congratulations to the right reverend prelate the Bishop of Exeter on his excellent maiden speech. We are looking forward to hearing many more contributions and I hope I can work with him on rural areas. I declare my interests: I am a co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Water, a vice-president of the Association of Drainage Authorities, president of National Energy Action and a member of the rural action group of the Church of England synod.

I join those paying tribute to the president, Alok Sharma, who came into his own in securing the agreement that was reached during COP 26. I warmly congratulate our own Minister, the noble Lord, Lord Goldsmith, hot from his triumph and excellent work on the

Environment Act, on being able to build on that at COP 26. Glasgow and Scotland also came into their own by hosting and rising to the occasion.

One of my regrets is that population growth did not really feature at all in the procedures and processes of COP 26, yet it is generally recognised to be one of the greatest challenges that we face. A number of speakers have alluded to this in the debate so far. I hope we can grasp the nettle on that, certainly next year—not just in terms of communities being displaced but the rise and explosion of population growth globally, which contributes hugely to climate change. What will the test of the success of COP 26 be? Will it be the effects being reduced on the remote island communities? Will it about the cost and impact on the competitiveness of rich nations in helping to reduce those incidents of climate change? In recognising the effects of climate change globally and at home, I would like to focus on those four areas that were targeted for progress at COP 26.

My own experience, certainly domestically, is that of flooding in North Yorkshire. On the floodplains of the Vale of York, indeed in the whole of Yorkshire and the Humber, along with parts of Cumbria and many parts of Gloucestershire—and in the rest of the UK—flooding is something that we experience on an annual basis. On mitigation and adaptation, we can learn to work with nature: to plant trees intelligently; to value the role that farmers have to play in putting food on our plates; and by encouraging them to become more self-sufficient and not putting barriers in their way.

I decided to be environmentally friendly and attend COP 26 only remotely. I was very impressed by one of the sessions I attended on reimagining the future of water, by bringing together communities not just from across the EU but from the island nations. The cost of flood resilience, especially at home, and of installation—alluded to by my noble friend Lord Bridges—bears closer examination. We need to ensure that we give them the tools for what they have to produce. Here I praise the work of the report I was associated with, *Bricks & Water*, for its sensible recommendations that seem so simple yet are so hard to implement.

Finally, I echo the thoughts of all those who want to see rich and developed countries working with poorer developing countries to ensure that pollution is reduced so that we can, in the long term, tackle climate change.

2.20 pm

Viscount Waverley (CB): My Lords, the Government's export plan, published yesterday, expressed commitment to safeguarding the environment, fostering high-value jobs in a low-carbon economy and fuelling technological innovations that can be exported around the world. A section entitled "Modernising trade" went on to present a vision of

"an enhanced EDG that will allow for longer-term financing for clean growth sector exporters".

I join in the concerns regarding the Treasury and FCA recognising these lofty ambitions. There is concern that the UK is lagging in the ability to implement such change across the economy. Failure to raise capital for

[VISCOUNT WAVERLEY]

deployment in green projects has now only just begun to be addressed. Even if the Government's green bonds should be raised, how will this money find its way down for projects? What has been done to combine green projects with the important financing agenda?

Growth by SMEs crucially depends on accessing export finance. UK industry can make an impact to the goals by providing world-leading solutions and products, with entrepreneurs filling the gaps left by banks by being allowed to access finance with less scrutiny from regulators.

Free from European rules, the Treasury and the FCA must encourage capital flows with innovative solutions, not constrain markets with wider regulatory powers. The result of doing so is the growth of the non-bank alternative finance industry and is a reflection of the inability of banks to finance SMEs. Financing for high-input projects, accessing the funding needed, will be hampered unless policy changes are introduced. Companies that cannot get funding in the UK will simply leave, with the resulting brain drain of technology further impeding delivery of COP 26 targets. Many UK companies have already gone to the Frankfurt stock exchange to raise capital, putting pressure on the image of the City as a hub of financial services innovation.

The UK has some of the most innovative alternative financing businesses in the world. The rise of alternative finance, which started with consumer lending, has succeeded in bridging the financing gap but these businesses have seemingly come under attack from the FCA. Policymakers must allow for the flow of capital down to the innovative mid-sized private companies by investing heavily in future technologies through grants and subsidies. Employment, innovation and rebalancing trade require capital and the internal market should be allowed to grow without overreliance on bank financing.

2.23 pm

Baroness Worthington (CB): My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness, Lady Young, for raising this subject and allowing us to debate this most important topic in such a timely manner. I want to make some comments about the mitigation aspects of the Conference of the Parties that was held in Glasgow. The conference itself covered many topics, but in four minutes I would not be able to do it justice.

My first comment is that this was a paradoxical COP as in one sense it was a success but in another an absolute failure. How could it be those two things at once? The first thing to say is that our expectations have been so lowered over the last 26 years that we are now facing a situation where the simple inclusion of the word “coal”—one word in the 57 legal documents that were produced—is seen as a success. This has been the effect of a huge amount of lobbying. Other noble Lords have spoken about the fact that delegations can include the very companies that these talks are meant to regulate and control, which distorts the outcome of these meetings.

There is also the fact that the COP process itself is not a healthy one. Alok Sharma and his team deserve a huge amount of praise for bringing this COP to a

successful end, but no-drama Sharma was himself reduced to tears. The secretary-general issued a statement that reads more like a statement from an NGO about how disappointed he is and how people have been let down by the process. It is a very opaque process and hugely complex. Some 57 legal papers were negotiated over three different legal fora in the space of two weeks, full of jargon and technical language. Even the lawyers struggled to keep up. How are poorer nations meant to do the same? How is this inequitable system allowed to continue?

To steal the phrase of the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Exeter—whom I congratulate on his maiden speech—it seems that the experts have built a “Titanic”. Perhaps it is time now for the amateurs, the observers and those people affected by climate change, to take over and demand more of this process.

In the short time I have available, I want to outline a six-point plan—that seems to be the way of things—much of which will overlap with the noble Baroness, Lady Young. On the global front, the first thing the Government must do is maintain the resources going into the departments that have led to the successful outcome of the COP. We cannot see a shrinking-back of our diplomatic effort at this time. We have another year to land a successful outcome in Egypt. We must keep the pressure on. Please let us see the civil servants being kept in their roles and continuing to push for more.

The second point is that it would be timely, ahead of the global stocktake, for us to do a review of this COP-MOP process to see whether it is fit for purpose. How can it be made more relevant, simpler, more accessible and more representative? How can we make sure that we are focusing the debate and the negotiations on the things that matter most? That is about increasing the pace of ambition in cutting emissions. The wider context could not be clearer. The nationally determined contributions that have been put together to date under the Paris Agreement would have emissions higher in 2030 by some 14% than they were in 2010 and we need to see them cut by 25% to 50% over that timescale if we are to have any chance of staying below 2 degrees and seeking to get to 1.5 degrees. Something is broken. We need a review. This COP-MOP process and the subsequent COPs could be made far more effective.

We should be looking at supportive parallel UN negotiations. We have had pledges on methane; let us turn those into an actual treaty on reducing methane globally. Let us look again at the supply of fossil fuels. A non-fossil fuel proliferation treaty may now be needed to cut back on the exploration and the digging out of fossil fuels.

I am out of time. Very quickly and thirdly, let us turn those pledges into action and NDCs. On the domestic front, we must revise our own net-zero targets and look again at whether we move faster. Symbolically, we need to lead so that others can follow. We must look at our supply-side issues—let us stop Cambo. On agriculture, let us get really quickly into reforming agricultural subsidies and then tell the rest of the world how we did it.

I thank noble Lords for their patience and I am sorry to have overrun, but I would just like to say the words of my friend who said:

“At least 1.5 is alive—just like Elvis.”

2.28 pm

Lord Oates (LD): My Lords, I declare my interest as chair of the advisory board of Weber Shandwick UK. I congratulate the noble Baroness, Lady Young of Old Scone, on securing this debate and on her very powerful speech. I also congratulate the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Exeter—where I had the pleasure of spending three years as a university student—on his excellent maiden speech. I also commend my noble friend Lord Glasgow for hosting such a large number, and such a variety, of guests in Glasgow. I get the impression that his house may be a little bigger than mine.

As we have heard in this debate, there are a number of perspectives through which we can view the COP. The first, perhaps, is as a disaster because, as the noble Baroness, Lady Worthington, said, the measures agreed did not come anywhere near meeting the targets needed to avoid catastrophe and the NDCs, as she said, envisage even higher emissions in 2030 than today. Secondly, COP 26 could be seen as a missed opportunity for a much more comprehensive agreement, which was marred by the poor leadership from the Prime Minister and a series of spectacularly damaging decisions in the lead-up to the conference. Finally, perhaps the conference can be seen as a partial success because, while the speed of the journey is still far too slow and must urgently be sped up, we are at least facing in the right direction.

The truth is that all three perspectives have validity. If you represent an island state that faces inundation of its clean water supplies and the prospect that it will sink below the waves altogether, how could you see the failure to take more urgent and comprehensive action on fossil fuels as anything other than a disaster? The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Exeter gave us an example of one of those islands that is now uninhabitable and is soon to be under the sea.

There was the astonishing way in which the Government set out, sometimes seemingly almost intentionally, to sabotage the chances of their own success and COP's success by alienating in turn key players who were needed to secure a more comprehensive agreement. That was done: first, by betraying the global south by slashing our aid budget in a callous betrayal of the Conservative manifesto pledge; then, less than two months before the conference, by announcing a military pact nakedly aimed at containing China and which was hardly likely to encourage its co-operation; and, finally, by generating the maximum bad blood with the EU, which we needed as a highly engaged ally to exert maximum leverage if a more comprehensive agreement was to be achieved.

In light of all that, it certainly looks like a missed opportunity. In fact, from that perspective, it is perhaps remarkable that there was any agreement at all. Nevertheless, while both those perspectives have validity, I cling to the final perspective of COP as a partial success that at least has us facing in the right direction, even if at times it looked like the world would remain paralysed with inaction from setting off down that road. I cling to that perspective because the danger of pessimism is that it leads to defeatism. I do not believe that humanity can countenance that. I also cling to that belief because there were positive developments out of COP on which we need to build and go much

further. Also, a challenging but positive approach to the issues ahead will be vital if we are going to succeed in this, humanity's most vital task.

On the positive side, COP delivered some things. It kept 1.5 degrees within reach, if very distant reach. The agreed annual reviews of the NDCs are a potentially vital ratchet and, as the noble Baroness, Lady Boycott, said, we cannot overstate how important that is and how important Sharm el-Sheikh will be. The forestry agreement was also another positive. We will have to see whether some of the signatories, particularly President Bolsonaro, actually deliver on the agreement but it was a step forward and we should recognise that. I, like others, commend the Minister, the noble Lord, Lord Goldsmith, and Alok Sharma, for the work that they have done.

Also, if it was disappointing that India's net-zero target was set at 2070, it was at least a positive sign that it committed to trebling clean energy in less than a decade. Also significant was the deal with South Africa to work with that country in phasing out coal-generated power. The Prime Minister said that we had succeeded in uniting the world in calling time on coal. That seems a big claim, given what went on around that issue. However, it is not insignificant that coal was mentioned, although, of course, not nearly enough was done. China and India also found themselves a bit exposed on this subject and they may be nervous in the future. There were other agreements on methane and electric cars that offer us some positive hope.

I was in Glasgow for the finance day in particular. One of the encouraging things there was that, although some of the claims about the hundreds of trillions of dollars under management were perhaps overblown, it was key that there was much greater focus and commitment to greening finance. That was important. It was the first time that a US Treasury Secretary had ever attended a COP meeting, which is also important. The announcement ahead of the COP by the Prudential Regulation Authority that it would be reviewing capital requirements to ensure that they adequately factor in climate risk was encouraging, and the ECB also said that it was taking steps in that direction as well. Finance and the role of financial regulation will play an ever-increasingly important role in our battle to address climate change. While much more is to be done, I was encouraged by that.

However, we have heard a lot about the disappointments in other respects—the failure to meet the financial commitments to assist the global south in transitioning their economies. At some point, we are going to have to address the issue of loss and damage, particularly for the island states. COP failed, as we have heard from my noble friend Lady Sheehan, to agree an end to the burning of fossil fuels. That will be vital if we are going to achieve what we need in terms of net zero.

The noble Baroness, Lady Hayman, highlighted the importance of transparency and fairness over metrics and measurements. As we go down the road towards net zero, how we measure and know that accurate measurements are taken will be critical. We still are painfully behind the timescales needed in terms of global agreements on financial regulation to ensure that, across the world, climate change is properly priced into risk.

[LORD OATES]

There are lots of challenges, but we must not play into the hands of the deniers, delayers and defeatists by running a despairing narrative. We have heard a raft of positive proposals today—not least the six-point plans from the noble Baronesses, Lady Young and Lady Worthington. We have heard highlighted the importance of not thinking that we can just keep on acting as we are now. We have to restrain energy; we heard that from the noble Lord, Lord Browne of Ladyton, and, as my noble friend Lady Parminter said, it is so disappointing that we have not moved on that in the building and heat strategy.

In summary, we had an outcome from COP that at least pointed in the right direction. It was more success than failure, but it still leaves us perilously far from what we need to achieve. We have to ensure that we do not, as the noble Baroness, Lady Boycott, warned us, allow this issue to slip down the agenda. All of us have to redouble our efforts—including the Government, business and NGOs—to ensure that we can ultimately deliver that 1.5 degree target.

2.39 pm

Lord Grantchester (Lab): I join noble Lords in thanking my noble friend Lady Young for introducing this debate on the outcome of Britain's hosting of COP 26 in Glasgow. I declare my interest as having a stake in the outcome.

It is important to consider where this leaves the global challenges to halt and deal with continuing emissions. The reality check is that, while emissions fell 5.4% in 2020 due to the pandemic lockdowns, this year the rise in emissions has been one of the highest ever, likely to be around 8%, far eclipsing the temporary 2020 fall, according to the *Global Carbon Budget* report. Glasgow COP 26 was an important moment, but one of the many along the pathway towards sustainability, where we are all participants, not spectators.

My noble friend Lady Young has picked a very important day for this debate, as today is precisely the first anniversary of the Prime Minister's scattergun 10-point plan—his first foray into the issue, without any plan or coherence. Many strategic holes have slowly been filled since. Naturally, one year on, progress against the Government's targets has been patchy. At the last minute—highly favoured by the Prime Minister—before COP 26, the Government managed to complete their strategy plans with the publication of the *Net Zero Strategy*, with far more encompassing coherence about how the UK will meet its carbon targets.

Still, small steps are encouraging, even ticking off some of the nature milestones of 2020-21—for example, the £80 million through the Green Recovery Challenge Fund and the £5.2 billion into flood and coastal defences. However, it is clear that progress has fallen well shy of the scale of action required. As the country and the world are exhorted to return in one year's time with enhanced nationally determined contributions, do the Government plan to come forward with fresh and enhanced plans to be achieved by the end of the UK's presidency in Egypt?

I thank all those who have contributed to the debate today. I congratulate the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Exeter on his thoughtful remarks, especially

recognising the importance of scientists. We wish him well with his diocese's net-zero plans, to follow the design of the Ark rather than the "Titanic".

Speakers reveal that the threat today now comes more from climate delayers. The world is making slow progress against quickening climate reaction. This is indeed the decisive decade. Far more importance needs to be placed on 2030 targets, rather than portraying them merely as an interim towards 2050, thereby putting off achievement to further along the line. As many have said, 1.5 degrees is on life support, and we need to roughly halve emissions by 2030. We need to cut emissions by then to 25 billion tonnes from the 58 billion tonnes today, yet the UNEP *Emissions Gap Report* confirms that total emissions cuts at Glasgow amount to just 4.8 billion tonnes, less than one-fifth of what is required. Shifting the goalposts to 2050 and net-zero dates from then puts the focus further away.

While the one new but major announcement by India to meet net zero by 2070—even further away—can be welcomed, success cannot be claimed on the basis of vague and often vacuous net-zero targets three or more decades hence. The most dangerous mistake that the Prime Minister likes to make is to dress up modest progress as transformational. This only lets off the hook the big emitters who want to go along with the crowd and pretend that more progress has been made than reality suggests. The *Climate Action Tracker* report calculates that, rather than 1.5 degrees, the pledges for 2030 put the world on track for a devastating 2.4-degree warming, where millions more people and their communities will face extreme weather events and the natural wonders of the world will be devastated.

The test of Glasgow is the commitments for 2030. Yes, Glasgow was a start for this recognition, but serious work needs to follow through with urgency, consistency and determination. On coal, yes, there was an announcement for the first time, but only 46 of the 190 countries and organisations are indeed countries, and the big emitters of China and India watered down the deadlines, putting the commitment well into the future by replacing "phase out" with "phase down". No wonder this sounds to so many like "blah blah blah".

The Government need to set the example and show their determination by ending all fossil fuel developments. One of the encouraging developments at Glasgow was the launch of BOGA, the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance of 11 national and subnational Governments such as that of California to deliver a managed and just transition away from oil and gas production. What consideration are the UK Government giving to joining that alliance?

On trees, yes, there is a plan to end deforestation by 2030, but with no enforcement mechanisms. A similar announcement was made in 2014, but deforestation has merely increased. On cash and climate finance, the promise of \$100 billion each year for developing countries has not been reached. The total had previously stood at \$78 billion. I thanked the Leader of the House on Tuesday for pointing to the paper on the 2021 to 2025 climate finance commitments, but from this it is extremely hard to calculate what total has now been reached. Does the Minister have that global figure?

A further new development at Glasgow was the recognition of loss and damage payments, to build on the Santiago network of data on repairing the damage

already occurring. Do the Government recognise their inconsistency towards developing countries when they cut the overseas aid budget? Plans to restore this many years into the future, while making caveats, do not help build the trust that is so needed if concerted responses across the globe are going to take place. What plans do the Government now have to increase funding further and spend more on adaptation than on emissions cuts?

The Government must be consistent right across all departments. Does the Minister recognise the contradiction from his colleague the Chancellor with the announcement in the Budget of the reduction in air passenger duty? Government retorts are beside the point. The impression is that the Government do not take climate change seriously. Does the Minister suffer any despondency about his job looking harder when he sees the Department for International Trade deleting chapters on climate change in the UK's agreement in principle with Australia, to enable the Prime Minister to boast of the announcement of a trade deal at the G7 conference in Cornwall?

Recently the Australian Government reaffirmed their 2030 target, but this is only consistent with 4-degree warming. If the Government are to be serious in continuing with the presidency for a further year, they need to finalise all trade deals—especially with Australia, as a country committed to coal—putting chapters on climate change consistent with 1.5 degrees in the negotiating mandate and in final texts. Can the Government act tough on climate change?

Many organisations are now bringing forward their own plans for net zero emissions by 2030. I thank the National Trust for its briefings, and many noble Lords mentioned biodiversity action plans today and at Tuesday's Statement. Through the Agriculture Act 2020 the Government have many opportunities, through ELMS and the sustainable farming incentive, to build detail on the local nature recovery scheme, to link with the six specified goals of the 25-year environment plan. Does the Minister's department need to work better and hand in hand with the business department?

The recent *Net Zero Strategy* committed to restoring 280,000 hectares of peatlands by 2050. However, that represents only just over one-third of the UK's peatlands and does not match the recommendation of the Climate Change Committee to restore all upland peatlands by 2045. Will the Government now raise the ambition and increase the commitments for next year by meeting this recommendation?

I recognise that the Government have made important strides at COP 26 and that there are many aspects that I have not mentioned—not least, the announcements on methane. I thank Alok Sharma, his officials and the Government for their commitment at COP 26 and their dedication. The challenge is to maintain momentum, stop facing both ways and implement the net-zero test for all government departments and procurements so that the handover of the presidency in Egypt is at a far more advanced and substantial place.

Labour has pledged £28 billion extra each year until 2030 to create a greener, fairer country for all communities. That must include insulation for homes, greater energy efficiency in the built environment, creating modern, well-paid jobs in new industries such

as renewables and hydrogen, and helping existing industries such as steel to make the transition to a modern economy. Affordable transport is still far away. Will the Government agree today to bring forward deeper plans with the new national determined contribution for 2022? What next steps do the Government plan?

We are still in the game. As Keir Starmer, the Labour leader, recently said:

“We must use the final year of the UK's presidency to rescue what COP26 hasn't achieved.”

2.50 pm

The Minister of State, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park) (Con): My Lords, I thank all noble Lords for contributing to this debate on the outcome of COP 26, particularly the noble Baroness, Lady Young, who gave an excellent opening speech providing valuable context. I also thank her for her kind words.

COP 26 brought together 120 world leaders and more than 38,000 representatives from Governments, civil society, business and youth. It was the biggest summit that we have ever hosted in this country. In many respects, it was also the most important. The backdrop could not have been clearer. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said in its report this year, it is code red for the climate. The final COP 26 text follows two years of intense diplomacy and campaigning by the UK presidency. Climate negotiators ended two weeks of intense talks on Saturday with a consensus on urgently accelerating climate action.

As COP 26 president, our overarching goal was to keep alive the possibility of keeping global temperatures within 1.5 degrees to ensure much greater support for countries to adapt to what we know will be inevitable changes, even if we stay within 1.5 degrees, and to ramp up the availability of finance, in particular for small island developing states but for climate vulnerable nations generally, and to put nature at the heart of our global response to climate change. That was particularly important given how marginal nature has always been to this issue, a point made well by the noble Viscount, Lord Stansgate.

Although a gap remains between where we are and where we need to be, as many speakers today have pointed out, there can be no doubt that we narrowed that gap considerably further than anyone had predicted and that we have indeed kept alive the possibility of keeping global warming within 1.5 degrees. Therefore, I share that cautious optimism that was expressed by a number of speakers, including the noble Baroness, Lady Hayman, and my noble friends Lady Bottomley and Lord Bridges.

We have seen significant and meaningful progress with net-zero commitments in the final negotiated text, which was agreed by all 197 parties, and on protecting and restoring the natural world. We have also, critically, seen action from countries and the private sector, particularly around coal, cars, cash and trees, to drive down emissions this decade. However, none of this will count for anything unless we continue to ramp up ambition and until and unless promises are kept in full, which will be our priority in this year, while we continue to hold the presidency.

[LORD GOLDSMITH OF RICHMOND PARK]

To limit temperature rises to 1.5 degrees, we know we must secure global net zero by the middle of the century and halve global emissions by 2030. With all the additional country commitments that we secured in the run up to and at COP, 90% of the global economy is now covered by net-zero commitments, which is up from 30% when the UK took on the presidency in 2019. While long-term strategies are obviously key, we know we need urgent ambition this decade. That is why we have consistently called for all countries to submit ambitious 2030 commitments that put us on a path to global net zero.

It is sometimes said by commentators that our efforts in the UK are pointless if China and other similar countries continue to ramp up their coal use. That misses the point that we have now seen significant commitments from countries, including new 2030 commitments from Brazil, China and India. China has already committed to peak its carbon emissions before 2030, achieve climate neutrality before 2060 and end overseas coal financing this year. We will always be asking for more, but it would be wrong to pretend that this is not very serious progress. India, too, has committed to net zero for the first time and announced ambitious plans for half its electricity capacity to come from renewables by 2030. A total of 154 parties have now submitted nationally determined contributions to date, representing around 80% of global emissions. This is real progress, but we must see more from the remaining parties and improved NDCs when countries come back for COP 27, to be hosted next year in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

The UK has led by example. We were the first major economy to commit to net zero in law and to reducing carbon emissions by 78% in 2035. We will completely phase out coal power in 2024, and we are also ending the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans from 2030. We have also set out our commitment to increase our international climate finance by a further £1 billion on top of the £11.6 billion that we had already committed to in climate and nature finance, at least £3 billion of which will be invested in nature-based solutions to climate change. The UK and the science have been clear that phasing out unabated coal power is the single most important step to keeping 1.5 degrees within reach. At COP, we saw 65 countries commit to coal phase out, including four of the world's top 20 coal-power generating countries.

All major coal-financing countries have now committed to ending international coal finance by the end of 2021, with \$20 billion in funding to support the coal-to-clean-power transition announced at COP 26. I note the comment of the noble Lord, Lord Oates, who feels that the Prime Minister may have exaggerated the success in relation to coal, so rather than quote him, I will quote the Executive Director of Greenpeace:

“a signal has been sent that the era of coal is ending. And that matters.”

We have also taken a big bite out of international public financing for oil and gas, with almost 40 countries, including all of western Europe, the USA and Canada, following the UK's lead earlier this year in ending overseas public financing for all unabated fossil fuels. This will free more than \$24 billion a year that could now flow towards clean energy.

The new global green grids initiative—One Sun One World One Grid—launched by the UK and India, and backed by more than 80 countries, will also further accelerate the development of interconnected electricity grids across continents, countries and communities. We saw a partnership of the UK, US, France, Germany and the EU to launch a just energy transition partnership with South Africa, backed by an initial \$8.5 billion to enable decarbonisation and the just energy transition in South Africa. These sorts of partnerships will be critical as countries kick-start their transitions away from fossil fuels. With support from the UK presidency, more than 100 countries which are responsible for just under half of all methane emissions have joined the global methane pledge to cut methane emissions by 30% by 2030. This includes six of the top 10 methane emitters.

I note the comments by my noble friend Lord Howell about the energy transition currently being proposed. However, it is not a transition that is being proposed; it is a transition that is already well under way, irrespective of the politics. That is illustrated by the fact that coal use fell faster under President Trump, who lavished public money trying to keep it alive, than it did under President Obama before him. More money now flows into new renewable capacity year on year than flows into fossil fuels, so this transition is happening.

On cars, we worked to build consensus on the pace of the transition to zero-emission vehicles. At COP 26, the UK co-ordinated a joint statement in which signatories committed to work towards all new car sales being zero emission by 2040 globally and by 2035 in leading markets. That was backed by more than 30 countries, together with six major manufacturers—GM, Ford, Mercedes, Volvo, JLR and BYD—28 fleet owners, 13 investors and 41 cities, states, and regions from all over the world. Around one-third of the global car market is now covered by manufacturer commitments to phase out polluting vehicles, up from close to zero at the start of this year. Domestically, the UK has also committed to ending the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans from 2030. From 2035, all new cars and vans must be zero emission at the tailpipe. Phasing out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030 will put the UK on course to be the G7 country that will decarbonise cars and vans the fastest.

I note the comments by the noble Lord, Lord Birt, regarding the difficulties with charging. When I first bought an electric car, I found myself stranded in the first week, which was at the time a very significant put-off. However, on the back of the commitments that have been made and the signals being sent to buyers and car manufacturers and between government and the private sector, that infrastructure will continue to be rolled out, and faster.

More public and private finance has been committed to support climate action in developing countries than ever before, and the global financial system is finally aligning behind a net-zero, resilient world, as a number of speakers mentioned. In fact, under the UK's presidency, 95% of the largest developed-country climate finance providers made new, forward-looking commitments.

The \$100 billion finance goal, referenced by a number of noble Lords, not least the noble Baroness, Lady Young, will be met by developed countries. It is late;

we know that. We have not got there fast enough. We have tried, but we have made progress and we will continue to push countries to go faster. Climate finance is now expected to increase to between \$113 billion and \$117 billion in 2025, compared with around \$80 billion in 2019. It is now likely that \$500 billion will be mobilised over the period 2021-25. This means more money for developing countries, which is critical as they decarbonise and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

We saw new commitments by the public and private sector to provide scaled-up finance to support developing countries to take climate action and to align trillions of dollars of finance with a net-zero, resilient future. Over 450 private financial institutions, responsible for over \$130 trillion in assets, have committed to net zero by 2050 through the GFANZ alliance, which was also mentioned by the noble Baroness, Lady Young. That is within the UN's Race to Zero.

On trees, or more accurately on nature, the UK has turned the tide. We delivered at the world leaders' summit a package of commitments, each one of which is unprecedented and meaningful. Combined, the whole is undoubtedly bigger than the sum of its parts. As Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, the WWF global lead on climate and energy, said:

"Nature truly arrived at COP26."

Justin Adams from the Tropical Forest Alliance said that the commitments signify

"the biggest moment we've had in forests and nature, probably ever."

He also said:

"What is happening is historic. I think we'll look back and realise that this was the day when we finally turned the tide on deforestation."

Forbes described the commitments as a "'Paris moment' for forests". I will explain why I think that is broadly right.

More than 140 countries, including Indonesia, Brazil, and Russia, accounting for over 90% of the world's forests, committed to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 in the Glasgow leaders' declaration on forests and land use. Donor countries, combined with philanthropy, committed \$20 billion of climate finance. In addition, \$1.5 billion was secured to protect the forests of the Congo basin, an area of incalculable beauty and importance. Nearly \$2 billion was secured for indigenous people; I will come to that shortly.

However, we know that pledges and finance alone will not be enough. That is why, alongside those finance commitments, we focused on the necessary systemic change. We secured extremely hard-won commitments from all the main multilateral development banks, including the World Bank, which committed to aligning their portfolios not only with Paris but with nature. That alone will have a big impact on the market.

As importantly, we secured a commitment from the world's biggest buyers of agricultural commodities, including the Chinese-owned COFCO, that their buying policies will be aligned with 1.5 degrees and our overall deforestation goals. It is hard to exaggerate the potency of that signal to some of the more reluctant forest countries, which we simply were not going to get over the line but succeeded in doing so because of that commitment from the commodity buyers. In addition to all that, we secured commitments from financial

institutions with nearly \$9 trillion in assets that they too will align their portfolios with the same deforestation goals. While I commend the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Exeter on his excellent maiden speech, I also thank the Church of England through him for its leadership on this issue, because on many of the commitments I just described we were helped significantly through working with, among others, its representatives. I heap praise on that institution.

I mentioned support for indigenous communities, and that is key. They have protected the world's forests for generations, often in the face of serious threats to their lives, but their status in their lands is uncertain. In addition to the well-understood and very obvious issues of justice, there can be no better—and probably no cheaper—way to protect large areas of intact forest than by supporting those who have been looking after them for so long. The new finance that has been committed will be focused largely on issues of land tenure and will have a major impact. As one indigenous leader at COP said, "We have protected 80% of the world's forest biodiversity without any support at all; can you imagine what we will do with that support?" Tuntiak Katan, the co-ordinator of the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities, said:

"After attending these climate events for years, this one is different. The UK has put tremendous effort into raising our visibility at this COP."

The noble Viscount, Lord Stansgate, rightly pointed to next year's CBD COP 15. It is the next big opportunity and the next big step. We will do everything we can to build on what was secured on nature in this COP to maximise the chance of an even more ambitious COP 15. We are not the hosts, but I can absolutely commit that the UK is bracing and ratcheting up every tool we have to make the biggest possible impact on that.

One area that has long been contentious, which has been raised by a number of people, including the noble Lord, Lord Loomba, and the noble Baroness, Lady McIntosh, is the issue of loss and damage. We know that even if we keep warming to 1.5 degrees, the world will change and the most vulnerable countries, particular small island states, will be very badly affected. Indeed, they are already being affected. This is an existential issue for them. What makes it worse in a sense is that, in addition to being those hit hardest, they tend on the whole to have the most progressive climate policies and are very forward-leading. That means that, when they speak, they have huge moral authority.

It is welcome then that, within the Glasgow climate pact, countries agreed to double their climate finance for efforts to cope and adapt to climate change impacts. Although we did not secure what was rightly demanded on loss and damage, the Glasgow countries agreed to establish the Santiago Network for loss and damage and initiate a dialogue around the financing of these activities. It is our job now as COP president for the next year to ensure that that dialogue leads to something. We have also worked hard to improve access to finance for the most vulnerable, including the small island developing states, by launching some months ago the access to finance taskforce with Fiji, which has already yielded results, not least in the manner in which some of the multilateral development banks make finance available to those vulnerable countries.

[LORD GOLDSMITH OF RICHMOND PARK]

COP 26 delivered in multiple other ways. We saw major commitments from countries to put climate change at the centre of national curriculums. We secured commitments from Governments to put women at the heart of their climate policies and actions. We saw bold commitments from city mayors around the world. Some of the greatest climate leaders are city administrations.

The point about accreditation made by the noble Baronesses, Lady Boycott and Lady Bennett, is a very good one. There were a lot of oil company representatives at COP, but that is not the fault of the UK Government. We have no control over accreditation at all. I suspect that if we had had that role, we would have had a far better gender balance and we certainly would not have had as many oil procurers and sellers dominating the halls of the conference. Throughout our presidency, we have been extremely resistant to the kind of lobbying that might result in us wanting to water down our ambitions for COP or what we do domestically.

I turn finally to the text agreed at COP, where negotiators from 197 parties reached agreement on a range of key issues. In a historic first, COP 26 agreed the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation and the Glasgow dialogue on loss and damage to better co-ordinate financial support. Crucially, they delivered on leaders' calls to accelerate climate action this decade, a point also made well by the noble Baroness, Lady Boycott. That means that we have an incredibly powerful ratchet mechanism. We can push and push to get countries to ramp up their ambition over this coming year—not in 50 years, but now. We will absolutely need our COP unit, led by the brilliant Alok Sharma and his brilliant team, to be fully resourced to do that.

The Paris rulebook—the guidelines for how the Paris Agreement is implemented—was finally agreed. That includes agreement on transparency processes that will hold countries to account.

We have seen real progress on the agreements reached around Article 6, but I will not have time to go into that now, other than to say that this creates an opportunity where we can have high-integrity carbon markets at supply and demand. That should unleash very large sums of money to protect the world's forests, if done properly.

COP 26 is a historic moment. I have no doubt about that. The gap in ambition has narrowed. We now have net-zero commitments for over 90% of the world's economy—up from 30% two years ago—and 1.5 degrees is alive. There is a huge and clear recognition now—indeed, we have won the argument—that we cannot achieve a solution to climate change, or indeed many other issues, without massive support for nature. All this relies on commitments being honoured in full by all countries. As we hold the presidency for the year, we will do absolutely everything we can to make sure that those commitments are indeed honoured in full.

I will use the remaining seconds I have to echo the remarks of many noble Lords and heap thanks on Alok Sharma. He did a magnificent job. I think he worked almost more hours than there are in a day and his team supported him extremely well. In anyone else's hands, COP would not have delivered the kind of

results it did. No one is going to pretend that we delivered enough, but we certainly delivered more than was anticipated in these difficult times and much of that is down to his hard work. He was supported all the way through by our Prime Minister, Boris Johnson.

3.10 pm

Baroness Young of Old Scone (Lab): My Lords, I thank all noble Lords who contributed to this debate. I particularly thank the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Exeter, who talked about Noah. I wondered whether I should press my football analogy one step further and ask him for his views on whether we need Maradona and the hand of God, but I decided not to.

This debate has been full of lists; some were absolutely splendid. Many noble Lords were listing the things they had seen, experienced and clocked at COP that were exceptionally good ideas and examples of local people, businesses and Governments working together to deliver on the COP objectives and address the threat of climate change and biodiversity decline. The noble Lord, Lord Goldsmith, also gave a comprehensive list of the initiatives achieved by the process.

However, I still come away from the debate a bit gloomier than when I started. That is the process I have been going through pretty well every day since the end of COP, depending on how I got out of bed in the morning and how I felt about the outcomes. We are standing at a crossroads where we can use the energy generated by this process and achieve, or not capitalise on it and let it subside and dribble away.

Some really strong ideas came forward in the debate, including that of a green growth strategy that integrates growth and greenness. Noble Lords also raised the importance of behavioural change and how that needs to be set in a framework in which people are not being lectured but enabled to achieve green behaviours, in a way that represents a just transition that does not penalise the poor and includes easy access to technology.

The noble Lord, Lord Birt, talked about granular planning and implementation, a theme that came out throughout noble Lords' comments. We really need to take the big ideas and make sure that, in a rather boring way, both nationally and locally, we are planning these out in detail to make sure that the steps we take each year will deliver by the deadlines that we know exist. It was good to hear a focus on land use, agriculture, biodiversity, a fair and just transition and the role that the UK can play in the next year through both leadership and example to keep the international effort moving forward.

Apart from the complexity of the whole wretched thing, my slight dissatisfaction is that none of the Government's recent announcements have been wrong. They are all in the right direction, but they are not the granular roadmap that we need, and they are not enough. There is a lot more to do. I hope the Minister will write to me on the points in my six-point plan. He might want to sidle up and talk in my ear on the one on the Treasury, which in my view is the most important.

I thank the Minister and everyone associated with COP 26 for everything that has been achieved and give great wishes for that effort to be continued over the next year; I will personally slice the oranges—I said I

would not have another football analogy. I finish by referring to something that the noble Baroness, Lady Hayman, said, quoting the noble Lord, Lord Deben: we are at the crossroads of optimism and apocalypse. I know which way I want us to go.

Motion agreed.

House of Lords: Appointments Process

Question for Short Debate

3.16 pm

Asked by Lord Balfé

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to establish a committee to review the process for appointing members of the House of Lords.

Lord Balfé (Con): My Lords, I will make a couple of points right at the beginning. I have had an email from my noble friend Lord Hayward, who was going to speak, but has decided not to because there is not much time. He asks for his support to be recorded. I have also heard from the noble and learned Lord, Lord Morris, who came up with an ingenious way of dealing with peerages, which we will come to.

To put this debate into context, I should say that this is not about attacking anyone. It is about us hopefully getting a better House of Lords. The main reason I am here moving it is that I was lucky in the raffle; we essentially have a raffle for this kind of debate.

It might help the House if I begin by reading out the question I tried to get debated, which read: "Noting the extent to which all major parties represented in the House have, on occasion, nominated persons for Membership whose virtues are not immediately evident to the general public, the House resolves to establish a committee to look into how the system could be improved and to pass its findings to all political parties to consider when making future recommendations for Membership of the House." I thought that was a fairly straightforward and easy resolution to put forward, but I was told by the Table Office that a topical QSD needs to be in the form of a question and cannot ask the House to make a decision. That is how we got to today's wording. That underlines the question of being a self-governing House, when we cannot even set up a committee to look at something. That in itself is a very good starting point for this debate.

To me, the debate is born out of frustration with, in particular, the present Prime Minister. Whether through contempt or disdain, he does not appear to take any notice of this House whatever. He has not taken any notice of the Burns committee or the need for us to engage in some form of reform. I see no sign of him understanding or wanting to understand. To even up the score, I was also disappointed that the Leader of the Opposition, who put her name down to speak in this debate, subsequently removed it.

We should look at the facts. We always talk about the number of people in the Lords. That is indeed a problem. But there is another problem—the number of Members of this Chamber of whom we see very little. There are 39 people on leave of absence; one

whom I shall not name has been resident in California for at least the last four years. Apparently, there is nothing to stop people being on perpetual leave of absence. All they have to do is to write an annual letter to the clerk saying that, at some point, they will take up their seat again. They do not even have to give any indication as to when. With 39 Peers on leave of absence, that gives us 783. Of those 783, there are roughly 200 whom we hardly ever see.

This is as much part of the problem as the number that we do see. The number of people taking part in the work of the House is not terribly large. On Wednesday this week, we had 411 voting, and that went down to 356 for the second vote. My good friend, the noble Lord, Lord Foulkes, got some figures for attendance in September and October. The average attendance at the September Sittings was 376. In October, it was 402. So we do have a problem with numbers, but part of it is that some Members are seldom seen and do not contribute to the work of this House. This is why we need some sort of thorough look at how the House works and what can be done.

Since October 2019, the present Prime Minister has appointed 64 new life Peers. Had he not done that, we would have been on course to achieve the Burns committee's recommendations. Had he restrained himself in the way that Theresa May did, we would be, according to the Library, more or less on course to fulfil the Burns recommendations.

So I hope we will come to a point where we can look not only at the numbers on the payroll, so to speak, but also at the numbers who are actually doing something, in order to find a way to reduce the numbers in the House and also provide a place for people to take part in what is happening. Looking at the green list, as I call it, for today, there are 23 Select Committee reports awaiting debate. Five have been waiting for more than a year. What sort of a House is it that has high-quality committees producing high-quality reports that never get debated? This is, frankly, disorganisation. The oldest report—which goes back to 27 April 2020—is now 16 months old. This is not an acceptable way of running the House.

I realise that the Minister is in a rather difficult position, because I am not really asking for anything that he can give us. All I could ask him is to go back to the people who listen to him and say, "Look, it's about time we set up some sort of body to look at how to make this House fulfil its constitutional duty better". May I remind the Minister that the Conservative manifesto contained a pledge to look at how to do things better? I will not say how they could be done better, but some of the comments we see—particularly in the *Sunday Times*, which should, frankly, know better—are not in the least helpful.

Let us start by accepting that we are all lucky to be in this House. When I look at my noble friend Lord Farmer and the work that he has put in on families and prisoners, I think he is more than worth his place in this Chamber. The fact that he is a former Treasurer of the Conservative Party is no more relevant than my work as trade union adviser to David Cameron. We both did jobs for our party, and at a point our party decided—God help them—that we would be okay to

[LORD BALFE]

put in the House of Lords and that we might manage to contribute. By definition, all the Members in the Chamber are here to listen to this debate because we care about the Chamber and want to make it work.

In closing, I ask the Minister to try to convince those who have the authority to look carefully at how we can make this House work better. That cannot be done by fiat. It will need a lot of study—the sort to which this House and its membership can substantially contribute. So I hope this debate can be a useful way of starting to look at how we can have a better, more efficient and, inevitably, smaller House.

3.26 pm

Lord Campbell-Savours (Lab) [V]: My Lords—[*Inaudible*]*—*particularly in the original form proposed by the noble Lord, Lord Balfe. He is to be congratulated on taking this initiative. He has truly captured the spirit of public concern about the granting of honours. A review is desperately needed. The reputation of the House is being grossly undermined and gravely damaged by a slow drip of adverse comment in the media on Lords appointments.

Why do we still grant peerages to donors? Why do we not object on their introduction? They bring the House into constant disrepute. Some treat the House like a sort of London gentlemen's club, thereby totally undermining our credibility. To be frank, I am heartily sick of it.

We are not being helped by a Prime Minister whose lack of probity in public office has opened Parliament up to ridicule. A year ago, I predicted that he would be gone by mid-2022 and I think we are on course. His conduct has exposed Parliament as a whole to a new period of intense scrutiny. Questions are now being asked about appointment arrangements to the Lords; our disciplinary processes; the role of individuals in Parliament in the handling of legislation; the question of access to and the relationship between parliamentarians and civil servants; and, in particular, the now questionable relationships between some Ministers and commercial lobbyists. We cannot go on like this. The proposed committee could begin a process of restoring our credibility and some public trust.

3.29 pm

Baroness Smith of Newnham (LD): My Lords, I think I heard the noble Lord, Lord Cormack, from a sedentary position, say, "Follow that". I shall do my best.

We have already heard from the noble Lord, Lord Balfe, that he won the raffle for a debate which Her Majesty's Government may choose to ignore. As he pointed out, if we are a self-governing House, we ought to be able to set up a committee for ourselves. We also ought to be able to have debates on Questions worded as we choose. I decided that the wording today debate probably allowed us to be a bit flexible.

The Question is about the process for appointing Members of the House of Lords, but the size of this House is a prior question—and one where we did have a committee. When the noble Lord, Lord Fowler, was Lord Speaker, he commissioned a committee, run by the noble Lord, Lord Burns, and there was a commitment to a cap of 600. Now it may be that, if we take away

the 200 Peers who, according to the noble Lord, Lord Balfe, do not really do very much, and we take away those on permanent leave of absence, we are below 600.

But there is a real difference between the former Prime Minister, Theresa May, and the current one—she responded to your Lordships' committee and said that she would exercise restraint. The Conservative Government under her did so, but the current Government have not. In recent months and the last two years, we have had many new appointments. Will the Minister take back to the Prime Minister this House's objection to the way that patronage is being used? The role of the House of Lords in the 21st century is not and should not be about patronage; it should be about a working legislature.

3.30 pm

Lord Farmer (Con): My Lords, I first thank my noble friend Lord Balfe for his kind words and for initiating this debate. Recent *Sunday Times* stories about former party treasurers imply that large donors given peerages are inherently unsuited to serve in the House and that this is confirmed when they do not subsequently speak or attend. Wealthy people putting their mouths where their money is bring insight and expertise to this House's debates and committees.

On the criticism of the quality of service and work done in this House by the *Sunday Times*, the judgment of a senior EU lawyer whom I met during the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo was that the work received in Brussels from the House of Lords was second in quality to no other secondary Chamber in the world. Our gracious monarch strictly enjoins us to attend her Parliament in Westminster to treat and give our counsel upon the arduous, urgent dangers impending upon her realm. This Writ of Summons lays sobering responsibilities upon those who receive it.

Without making excuses, here are some thoughts on why former treasurers may not contribute: the difficulties of investing much time mastering the House's procedures, of understanding the timetabling and of risking disapprobation when speaking out in relative inexperience. These can be powerful disincentives. My advice to former treasurers is this: you have the money and a great honour has been bestowed on you—you can speak in Parliament—so pay for high-quality help. Do not stint; an experienced advisory team can help you master procedure and time.

Frankly, disapprobation can come to wealthy Members not for what they say but for who they are. Fear of humiliation discourages and silences. Such prejudgment is discourteous, and courtesy is the currency of this House. If we in this House treated all appointees cordially, we would see and hear the best of people and counsel given would be richer and more wide-ranging.

3.32 pm

Lord Fowler (CB): My Lords, I would love to follow up the noble Lord's points, but time does not really permit. There is something entirely typical about this debate: here we have one of the most important issues facing this House, but it is relegated to a one-hour debate on a Thursday afternoon, with speeches of no more than two minutes. Nevertheless, I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Balfe, not only on his very good

speech but on having the courage, which the Government lack, to raise the issue. The debate has perhaps one advantage: at this time on a Thursday afternoon, no one is paying much attention outside, so we can have an entirely frank discussion without being overheard.

The reputation of this House—we should face this, if nothing else—stands very low in the public esteem at the moment. Attacks and criticism come from all sides. Not all are justified—that is undoubtedly the case—and we should be able to respond to them and argue the case for the House. When I say “we”, I do not just mean we on the Back Benches but Ministers, particularly of this House, who can take the opportunities that the modern media present to them. At the same time, we should also recognise that some of the criticism directed at us is entirely justified. The House is too big. I will not go into this again because I set up a committee, and noble Lords know its result.

Financial donations to political parties should not, by themselves, have any part in entry to the House of Lords. That is my view; we may not always agree on that. We should, self-evidently, rid ourselves of the continuing absurdity of hereditary Peer by-elections. The noble Lord, Lord Balfe, is exactly right in the newly reformed wording of his Question. What we need is an independent committee to review the position. We also need a proper debate in this House to consider the options.

3.35 pm

Lord Dubs (Lab): My Lords, I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Balfe, on bringing this forward, although I much prefer the original wording he described over the wording that he was allowed to put down. My noble friend Lord Campbell-Savours got something pretty right in what he said, and I very much agree with him. Of course we want a smaller House, but we also want a House that has integrity in the method by which people get here. It is this lack of integrity that surely underlies a lot of the approach we are debating today.

Any appointments system runs the risk of being flawed or being seen to be flawed, if not being corrupt and being seen to be corrupt. That is why I think we need to look again, not at how to have a better appointments system but at how we should get here through a democratic system of elections. Yes, of course we have to maintain the primacy of the House of Commons, but I believe that can be done. We need some form of accountability, which can be achieved by being democratically elected. The key to democracy is accountability to people who would put us here, and we need a system that is neither flawed nor corrupt.

One thing that has puzzled me—I wonder if it is still government policy—is government opposition to any piecemeal reform. I would love to have a longer debate on the merits of piecemeal reform as opposed to revolutionary reform, which is what the Government seem to be saying at the moment—everything in one go. I know that the Lib Dems for a long time under Nick Clegg were very keen that nothing should be done unless everything was reformed, but I believe that the way in which we achieve reforms in this country is by a piecemeal method. We do it bit by bit; we have done it through history, and we should do it again.

Finally, I want to say a word about my noble friend Lord Grocott. There is one reason why I do not want us to change anything: it is because I so enjoy his speeches on his Bill. They are absolutely the wittiest moments of the week or year, and I want them to go on, but that does not mean that I oppose any reform.

3.37 pm

Baroness D’Souza (CB): My Lords, the Government cannot be unaware of the public disquiet about the current mechanisms for appointments to this House and their impact on its reputation. The power of patronage and the freedom to swell the Government Benches in this House is, of course, tightly guarded, but it has to be balanced against the undermining of what authority this House has as an improver of legislation.

Many MPs acknowledge that the Lords can be relied on to scrutinise contentious aspects of legislation. A large majority in the Commons matched by a majority in the Lords is not a basis for effective scrutiny. Scrutiny requires those appointed to be so on the basis of public service, expertise, experience and commitment to attendance and the work of Parliament, and not of financial support for a particular political party. At the very least, it is our responsibility to keep the public informed of our purpose, which is to preserve this House as a proper and at times resolute opposition to legislation that might adversely affect the least advantaged in our society and/or weaken any of the institutions of democracy, including the media, the judiciary and civil society and its freedom to protest. This is our work and our duty.

Finally, I consider the House of Lords—despite its non-elected Members—to be a key instrument of the democratic process because it constantly asks the Government to think again and to reconsider the effects of their decisions. This is best done on the basis of knowledge, willingness to delve into the detail of draft legislation and the merits of the case, often debated at length. Significant donations should not be a criterion for working in this House.

3.39 pm

Lord Hannan of Kingsclere (Con): My Lords, I am afraid that what I am about to say is going to be very unpopular on all sides. I console myself with the thought that I am used to this; I was in the European Parliament as a Eurosceptic. I console myself also with the thought that your Lordships are much more decorous, polite, kind and generous than my former colleagues.

None the less, here goes: I do not believe that it is sustainable for us to have a Chamber of the legislature appointed by the Executive. If this were happening in North Korea or South Sudan we would regard it as absolutely intolerable. The primary function of Parliament—if the other place traces its ancestry back to 1265, I think we can trace ours back to the Great Charter itself in 1215—is to hold the Government to account. That task must be enfeebled if the Executive of the day can nominate one of the two Chambers.

I would like there to be not a revolutionary change, as the noble Lord, Lord Dubs, says, but a considered and serious overhaul. I am afraid that I do not believe

[LORD HANNAN OF KINGSCLERE]

that nibbling at the edges makes any difference. I do not think that the view of this Chamber outside is affected by the number of people here; in fact, it was not the point he was trying to make but when my noble friend Lord Balfe quoted the numbers in the Division Lobbies he showed that it was about the right size in practice, if not in theory. Nor do I really think it is about the kinds of people coming in. We all have our own ideas about what kinds of people should not be here. Some might say that there are too many donors, quango-crats, white people or ex-MPs, but no two people will agree on those criteria and, unless we are prepared to go all the way and have some kind of more directly representative or elected Chamber, we are never going to get an answer.

I would like us to look at this properly in the form of a royal commission: a trusty if somewhat staid instrument that can take into account a number of other considerations to do with the balance between devolved and central institutions, the voting system and all the rest of it, and then come to a considered and measured conclusion.

3.41 pm

Lord Griffiths of Burry Port (Lab): My Lords, I suspect that some of us have more agreement with the noble Lord than perhaps he suggested at the beginning. However, I am worried about all the scurrilous references about the dragging through the dirt of this Chamber. I believe that the work we do is of critical importance and I find myself growing increasingly despondent with our situation.

We have heard that the Burns report has been rubbished in recent times, and we can all regret that. For reasons we know only too well—names have been named—the Chamber is rapidly becoming bloated by carelessness and cronyism. No wonder—we cannot doubt it—we attract such negative media attention and will go on doing so.

The overwhelming majority of us were appointed because people had faith in us, thinking that we would give more, impart wisdom and better our laws. The Appointments Commission, if it were on a statutory basis, in the words of the proposal, would I am sure engender trust and achieve improvement. I do not profess to know the intricate workings of our constitution, nor do I see myself as someone with special wisdom on the future of this Chamber, but I believe—in good faith towards each other and towards the British public—that we must not fail with the measures available to us to improve the work of this House.

It matters to me a great deal that I belong to an institution in whose integrity I have total trust. If we fail to keep our own promises that we have made to ourselves then it is only a matter of time before this becomes an irreparable House of corruption. The House of Commons, as we all know, is beset by questions of sleaze. We certainly do not want that to be the case with us as well.

3.44 pm

Viscount Waverley (CB): My Lords, ensuring the reputation of the House of Lords as a component part of the constitution is essential. However, it is

right that our contribution should be reviewed periodically to ensure that we continue being a force for good and a resource central to our democracy.

When addressing the Cross Benches as Prime Minister once upon a time, Sir John Major was clear that it should be reform from within and not have reform imposed. He had the integrity of your Lordships' House in mind. The appointments process, our numbers and how to address that, and the question of hereditary by-elections are the three elements that require the most immediate attention to rescue it from any suggestion of disrepute or irrelevance.

The appointments process should become a creature of the House on a statutory basis, reporting to the House, with all suggestion of patronage removed. A committee made up of no more than six to eight Members, drawn from the main political parties and the Cross Benches, should report to the House with the recommendations of the Prime Minister of the day that reflect party election results, with the monarch's final approval. Applicants could come through the process as now.

Whatever emerges on this, nothing other than fully fledged support and a fair wind for the re-re-rerun of the Private Member's Bill of the noble Lord, Lord Grocott, will do, and that is before we reduce our numbers—if necessary in a draconian cull—or the House will have to be redrawn from scratch. I add in conclusion only that there is a key role for the communications unit in better explaining the positive elements of our contribution in this place.

3.45 pm

Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb (GP): There is so much wrong with this House that sometimes it is hard to know where to start, so I am very grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Balfe, for giving us a starting point, which is membership. Of course, the current system is not just not democratic but anti-democratic, and I am afraid we have to sweep away the hereditaries and, forgive me, the Bishops. It is totally inappropriate in the 21st century that we have positions held for those groups.

Personally, I want a peaceful revolution. This House should be elected, but not under first past the post, and it should be completely representative of society in Britain. That would include, of course, having a selection of Cross-Benchers: there would be a section of the vote that allowed Cross-Benchers to come in, with all their expertise in all the areas they currently fulfil. It would probably be a good idea to put in a maximum amount of time for Members—say, 10 years—and then we would have an election of half the Members every five years. In that way we would get fresh blood, but also the expertise and the continuity. I was voted into this House by the Green Party by one member, one vote. I take a bit of pride in that, because our party thinks about democracy and practices what it preaches.

One other problem I have—there are so many problems—is that so many Members of your Lordships' House are actually trying to push us back into the 18th century with these late starts and late nights. It is no way to run a country and we should be fighting it all the time.

I close by saying that this House, strangely, does work. We are the opposition to the Government and, however much it infuriates me, I am also proud to be a Member here. Finally, I would just like to say that the words of the noble Lords, Lord Hannan and Lord Balfe, show that you cannot trust the Conservatives to be complete bastards all the time.

3.48 pm

Lord Grocott (Lab): My Lords, I will not even try to follow that. In two minutes, there is virtually nothing one can say; no great points can be made and I am certainly not going to enter a discussion of wholesale reform of the Lords, although we should by all means have a proper debate on that.

I want to restrict myself to just three conditions that would be required for any new statutory appointments commission to function in an acceptable way. The first has already been mentioned several times, and is the size of the House. An appointments commission must have a structure in terms of how many appointments it can make, and 600 should be the maximum.

The second condition addresses itself to the question of this being a working Chamber. For people appointed to the House, we still have not resolved the issue of whether getting a peerage is an honour or a job. To me, it has always been a job. It is, of course, an honour as well, but the prime function is to come here and work.

We talk about ourselves being a working House. We are a very effective working House in the scrutiny of legislation, which is detailed and hard work, but a working House needs workers. It is difficult to find an easy solution, but any Appointments Commission would need at the very least to have a written public undertaking from anyone appointed that they would give the time and energy required to being a proper Member of a working second Chamber. There also needs to be a mechanism whereby, for those not fulfilling that responsibility, the commission would have the power to state that that was the case, and some action could be taken.

Finally, I want to thank the three Peers, the noble Lords, Lord Fowler and Lord Dubs, and the noble Viscount, Lord Waverley, who have mentioned the absurdity of the hereditary by-election. Hereditary Peers are not vetted by the House; they are not vetted for propriety and at the very least that should happen. Of course, the best thing would be to get rid of it completely. Sooner or later, the noble Lord, Lord True, despite the long history of his position on this, must realise that he is playing King Canute by refusing to move on the absurd system of hereditary by-elections.

3.50 pm

Baroness Hayman (CB): My Lords, the noble Lord, Lord Farmer, was absolutely right when he said that the work of this House creates great respect both internationally and nationally. But that respect for the work of the House is undermined by the lack of respect for the three areas that I think the noble Lord, Lord Grocott, spoke about: the size of the House; the method by which people are appointed and the lack of scrutiny by the Appointments Commission on political appointments; and the nonsense of the hereditary Peers by-elections.

I know the noble Lord, Lord Hannan, does not agree with any of that, but I suspect that if I looked to my two successors as Speakers of this House—we spent time speaking to the public, hearing, monitoring, and having surveys done on how the House is respected—they would agree with me that those undermine respect for this House. That matters, because respect for this House is part of respect for Parliament. That respect for Parliament is a cornerstone of our democracy and one that we should not take for granted today, or at any other time.

That is why I put my suggestions to the notional committee of the noble Lord, Lord Balfe, which, echoing others, are: divorce the honour of a peerage from working in Parliament, reduce the size of the House, get rid of the by-elections; and give us an effective statutory Appointments Commission.

3.52 pm

Lord Cormack (Con): My Lords, having given notice, I rise to speak briefly in the gap. I declare my interest as the founder and chairman of the Campaign for an Effective Second Chamber, which believes strongly in an appointed House but believes it should be appointed in a different way. It believes entirely in a statutory Appointments Commission.

I believe that numbers could and should be cut down immediately; anyone who has failed to attend 20% of the time within the previous year should be asked to hang up his gloves. Anyone who has taken leave of absence, other than for serious health reasons, for more than 18 months should forfeit membership. That would be a good way of starting; incremental reform is the best way of doing it. We do not want another list from the Prime Minister of 20, 30 or 40 names, which I believe is being threatened at the moment. It is absolutely essential, because we are part of Parliament, that we have a ceiling on our numbers, a rationing of our numbers and a supervision of the way in which people come here. If the statutory Appointments Commission says no, then that should be it.

This is Parliament, as the noble Baroness, Lady Hayman, has just said, and we are an integral part of it. We do not challenge the supremacy of the other House because we are not elected, and we have virtually 25% of our Members Cross-Benchers because we are not elected. There is much we can do to improve, but there is much we can treasure and be proud of.

3.54 pm

Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe (Lab): My Lords, I am grateful to the House for the opportunity to intervene in the gap, and I apologise for not putting my name down. I have two points.

First, we have great power, and we are not exercising all the power that we have. If the Government choose to ignore the recommendations made by the Appointments Commission, all of us of like mind should come together and take it into our hands to have a petition against what the Government are doing. If that fails to move them, we should petition the Queen that she should not issue Writs to people who are appointed against the wishes of the Appointments Commission. I would value the Minister's comments on that before we move to such a position.

[LORD BROOKE OF ALVERTHORPE]

Secondly, I take a different line from the noble Lord, Lord Cormack, on the House and how we come to be here. I have been here nearly 25 years. I was a union official and was appointed in the first instance as a union official. Mrs Thatcher changed the rules and I then became an elected official. I had to stand in front of my membership, and I was better for being accountable in that way. The great weakness of this House is that it is not accountable. While-ever it continues like that, particularly in modern society where people are able to communicate in a quite different way, we will come under more and more criticism. We need to look afresh. We need Cross-Benchers; we need people appointed too, but we need an element of accountability, which presently is missing. I appeal to the House, now that we are coming back together again, to take the powers that we have and take control of our future for the work we should be doing for the constitution of the country.

3.56 pm

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (LD): My Lords, we are of course dealing with another aspect of the royal prerogative, to which we will return when the Dissolution and recall Bill finally hits this House. The prerogative after all is there on the basis of the assumption and the conventions of our constitution that Prime Ministers will always act with restraint. We now have a Prime Minister who does not understand what restraint is, so we are in some difficulty.

I agreed strongly with the noble Lord, Lord Hannan; I hope it does not upset him too much. I remind him that his party's manifesto in 2019 proposed a constitutional commission as one of the many promises that the Prime Minister has broken. No doubt, the noble Lord, Lord True, if asked, would say, "Well, it was a good idea not to follow that bit", but I think it was a huge mistake.

We are a valuable second Chamber. One of our newest Members said to me the other day, "I had not realised till I got here that most of the scrutiny of government legislation goes on in the House of Lords." That is the valuable job we do; it is why we need a second Chamber. Piecemeal reform may be the only way forward, so let us consider what piecemeal reform the Government might accept.

I hope that the Minister will say that the Government are considering seriously the CSPL's proposal that the Appointments Commission should be on a statutory basis. That is the least the Minister might give. The Government should consider separation of appointments and honours—perhaps we should all be called senators, or whatever, instead. Term limits and age limits are due to come in. I recognise that that would mean that I would be going almost immediately—I have been here 25 years and have just passed my 80th birthday, which is what I believe our learned Lords call the statutory age of senility, so that is it.

I am in favour of much more radical reform. I would like us at the very least to be indirectly elected, and a second Chamber in our multinational state should reflect its nations and regions. That is where I want to get to, but let us at least push a little further in that direction by piecemeal means.

3.58 pm

Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab): My Lords, I want to pick up a point raised by the noble Baroness, Lady Smith. I think there is a prior question to this debate. For me, it is about the purpose and value of a second Chamber. Most past efforts of major Lords reform have failed because they did not properly address the supremacy of the elected House of Commons or the impact on the Government's mandate from the electorate.

The key role of your Lordships' House is to scrutinise and revise legislation, as is so ably evidenced by our work on recent Bills, particularly the Environment Bill. I agree with the noble Baroness, Lady Hayman, that such work is undermined by concerns about the size of the House and the way people get here. We need restraint and effective scrutiny on political appointments and an end to hereditary Peer by-elections.

I do not have much time, but let me say that I agree with my noble friend Lord Grocott's suggestions on the terms and remit of an appointments commission. We need a more effective commission, especially after recent events. I do not accept that we cannot make any reforms unless we have big bang reform. After all, our democracy in this country was established by such means. As my noble friend Lord Dubs said, a step-by-step approach enables us to address the urgent concerns expressed in this debate. They are positive steps toward greater reform, hopefully through a constitutional convention that represents all parties.

4 pm

The Minister of State, Cabinet Office (Lord True) (Con): My Lords, I am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Balfe, for securing this short debate. It has been a very interesting debate, as it always is when your Lordships apply their wisdom to anything. As far as the form of the Question is concerned, there are other modes of putting Motions before the House, but that is outwith the Government's responsibility. I will address the Question that has been put before the House.

In opening, I confess to being a Tory. I was glad to learn that I cannot be a complete bastard all the time. I am not sure whether that meant that I am a complete bastard some of the time or a partial bastard all the time, but I will be a little bit of what the noble Baroness, Lady Jones, might not like by reminding her that, although I disagreed with her vehemently, I appreciated her humour. However, she said that we are a House of opposition. That is not what this House is; it is a House of revision and challenge, as the noble Lord on the Front Bench opposite rightly said—but this is not a House of systemic opposition.

The reasons for that were alluded to by several noble Lords who spoke, ignoring the wording of the Motion, on reviewing the process for appointing Members. The noble Lords, Lord Dubs, Lord Brooke, Lord Wallace and Lord Collins, my noble friend Lord Hannan and the noble Baroness, Lady Jones, alluded to the point that there are people out there who do not think that every fault in this House lies in appointment. Some people outside believe that this House might be constituted in a different way, as has been the aspiration of the Liberal Democrat Party for a long time—since 1911, in fact. An attempt was made to secure that in 2012; we know the history there.

The fundamental thing I want to say is that so many who have spoken have expressed their concern and love for this House. I believe that we as a House should be more confident, collectively. Let us not be a browbeaten by an article here or something that is said there. Those of us who are here and do the workaday work of this House know the value of that work and the immense contribution made by Members of your Lordships' House. I believe that we should have more confidence in ourselves, rather than always listening to the criticisms that come. Actually, some of those criticisms are not as well-founded, as some noble Lords have said today.

This House has a key role in scrutinising the Executive and acting as a revising Chamber. I think that it does that well. When colleagues ask what it is like to speak in Parliament, apart from saying that having the honour of addressing this Parliament is one of the greatest privileges anybody could ever conceive, I say that no one who comes to this Parliament—and this House specifically—should ever come here and stand at this Dispatch Box without a sense of trepidation because of the challenge, intelligence and wisdom that they must face. Let us be confident in what we do.

With the system that is the settled system in this House, new Members are essential to keep the expertise and outlook of the House of Lords fresh. That has been the case for a long time. Constitutionally and legally, it is for the Prime Minister to make recommendations to the sovereign on new peerages. This remains the case. Again, I heard the point made by the noble Baroness, Lady Hayman, on the nature of appointments; I have heard it on other occasions. However, I am afraid that I can say nothing or offer any consolation on that point at this moment.

It would be helpful to remind ourselves of the current arrangements for appointing Peers. The Prime Minister has the sole power of recommending nominations to Her Majesty the Queen for those to be appointed life peerages. The House of Lords Appointments Commission offers the Prime Minister probity advice and can and does make recommendations to the Prime Minister concerning Cross-Bench appointments. The commission has two core functions, which I believe it performs well. The first is to make those recommendations for the appointment of non-party political Members. Since its creation, the commission has recommended a total of 72 individuals for appointments to this House, and I believe that the House has been greatly improved by their presence. I agree with those who referred today to the importance of the Cross-Bench presence here. Secondly, of course, the commission vets nominations to this House on propriety and advises the Prime Minister. This includes nominations put forward by the Prime Minister and the political parties.

“Propriety” in this context is defined as meaning, first, that the individual should be in good standing in the community in general and with the public regulatory authorities in particular, and, secondly, that the past conduct of the nominee would not reasonably be regarded as bringing the House of Lords into disrepute. A check on a nominee's propriety will include checking with relevant government departments and agencies and other organisations, including the Electoral Commission. The Appointments Commission also

conducts media searches. Once all the evidence has been considered, the commission will either advise the Prime Minister that it has no concerns about the appointment or will draw concerns to the Prime Minister's attention. But it does not have the power to veto the appointment of Members to the House of Lords for the constitutional reason—which we have often discussed—that it is ultimately the responsibility of the sovereign's principal adviser to make recommendations and be accountable for them.

I recognise that noble Lords have been interested in these arrangements in the context of recent appointments to the House. Again, here I think one should not be stampeded by comment in the media, nor do I think that we win collectively by throwing stones at each other. We all have houses which have windows in them.

Various proposals have been suggested to reform the present system, including placing the commission on a statutory footing. My noble friend Lord Norton of Louth has presented a Private Member's Bill, which I believe will give us the opportunity to discuss that issue, if and when it comes forward. I note the contributions of those noble Lords—including the noble Baroness, Lady Hayman—who clearly and consistently make the case for the commission to be on a statutory basis. The commission is there to nominate and recommend non-party political appointments and advise on propriety. We believe that it carries out this role effectively as it is currently constituted. The fact that Members of this House are appointed from a wide range of backgrounds is testament to this, and it will continue to advise on appointments in the same way as it does now.

While the commission's role is advisory, the Prime Minister continues to place great weight on its careful and considered advice. However, as in many areas, elected Ministers may from time to time take a different view to official advice on balancing the competing issues. More widely, as the Government set out in our manifesto, we are committed to looking at the role of the Lords, but I regret to upset some by repeating our position that any reform needs careful consideration and should not be brought forward piecemeal.

The noble Lord, Lord Campbell-Savours, and others were critical of the role of people in this House who have given money to political parties. Let us not beat about the bush: it is not only the Conservative Party that raises money from private individuals. Peerages reflect long-standing contributions to civic life and a willingness further to contribute to public life as a legislator in the second Chamber. I agree with those who say that participation is desirable but not that those who are not here every day do not make a contribution. Great contributions are often made by those who come occasionally.

I disagree with my noble friend Lord Fowler's implication. The criticism that individuals are ennobled just because they have also chosen to support or donate to a political party is not right. I will read carefully in *Hansard* what he said, but I hope he was not saying that no one who supports a political party financially should sit in your Lordships' House. Donations should be transparent, but that is not an excuse to knock people for broader philanthropy, enterprise and public service, as my noble friend Lord Farmer pointed out.

Lord Fowler (CB): The Minister mentioned me. I said it should not be the formative reason why someone is appointed to this House. Making a political donation should not be an automatic passport into the House of Lords. That is the—I think for most people unexceptionable—proposal that I made.

Lord True (Con): I am surprised by my noble friend's phrase, "an automatic passport". If one looks at the record of people who have come in under the rubric he cited, including a noble Lord who is often mentioned here, one will find that they have made extraordinary and large-scale philanthropic contributions to society. One needs to see an individual in the whole and a House in the round.

Volunteering and supporting a political party are part of our civic democracy. Political parties are part of public service. In Britain, taxpayers do not have to bankroll political parties' campaigning. Political parties have to raise money themselves and follow transparency and compliance rules that are laid out in law. Those who oppose fundraising need to explain how much they want taxpayers to pay for state funding instead.

I must conclude. In time, we will have an opportunity to discuss the favourite topic of my noble friend, as I like to call him, the noble Lord, Lord Grocott. On 3 December there is a debate on the issue that he and others have put before the House in relation to hereditary Peers.

In conclusion, I repeat that the constitutional position in this country is that the Prime Minister is responsible for advising Her Majesty on appointments to the House. The Government do not see the case for changing this. The Prime Minister is ultimately responsible to Parliament and the people for nominations he makes to the House and how he conducts that work. The Government do not plan to establish a committee—

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Lab): We have maybe a couple of minutes in hand before the hour is up, and the Minister is apparently about to sit down. Will he please explain his reference to piecemeal reform as being not desirable? This House has been reformed—or adjusted, anyway—many times in its history, sometimes substantially but always in a piecemeal way. That is how it has progressed. Can he explain to the House what it is about this moment in the history of the House of Lords, and our politics more generally, that makes it not desirable for piecemeal reform to be engaged in?

Lord True (Con): My Lords, the House of Lords has sometimes had relatively small changes and sometimes relatively substantial changes. In the 16th century, King Henry VIII slung out most of the great abbots who used to sit on those Benches over there. I guess the Bishops may go soon, if the noble Baroness opposite has her way and the Green Party comes into office, as it has in Scotland; I do not hope too much for that. In 1999 there was a massive change. Since then we have had a few changes, but I go back to my original position: the House is presently operating well and effectively. I believe we should stop criticising and lacerating ourselves and concentrate on the good work we do.

There will come a time when the great question will be asked: how, in the long term, should this House be constituted? That was implicit in the remarks made from the Front Benches opposite, but for now, the Government do not support or propose further piecemeal change, so we do not plan to establish a committee to explore further the process for appointing Peers. I must disappoint my noble friend, but I am grateful to him and all who spoke in a most interesting debate on the Question today.

Initial Teacher Training

Motion to Take Note

4.16 pm

Moved by Baroness Donaghy

That this House takes note of Her Majesty's Government's policy on Initial Teacher Training, including (1) the recruitment of new teachers, and (2) the role of universities and other bodies, in ensuring the supply and education of new teachers.

Baroness Donaghy (Lab): My Lords, it is a pleasure to move the debate on such an important subject, which attracts too little attention but which affects our children in so many ways: the quality of teaching, the well-being of teachers and the future supply of the right teachers in the right places.

This subject has so many aspects that I do not have time to cover some important areas: what should be added to or subtracted from a teacher's workload; the pay and working conditions of teachers; the financial discrimination against state schools; and the squeezing out of creative subjects. Noting the vast experience of noble Lords who are taking part in the debate, I feel sure that these matters will be covered.

I have three reasons for maintaining an interest in initial teacher training. First, I was a teaching assistant in a primary school before going to university. It was a good experience for me; I am not so sure about the pupils. It helped me to decide that teaching was not for me. Secondly, I worked at the National Union of Teachers for a year immediately after university, supporting the great Fred Jarvis, who was publicity officer at the time and subsequently became general secretary of the NUT, so I am a fan of teachers. Thirdly, I worked at the University of London Institute of Education for 33 years as an administrator, and I have a university pension. It made me feel passionate about the university connection with teacher education and training—as passionately as some in No. 10 appear to be against.

The past 10 years have seen sweeping changes to initial teacher education and training, and I believe the system is confusing, wasteful and bureaucratic. It is trying to delineate teaching as a tightly drawn craft, rather than a profession, increasing the pressure on teachers without recognition or rewards, and risking teacher supply to the extent that I accuse the Government of irresponsibility.

I accept that successive Governments have often got it wrong. The policy objectives of short-term-thinking Governments often directly clash with the longer term requirements of ensuring teacher supply. I saw at first hand the closure and merger of scores of teacher

training institutions, not necessarily because of quality but because a Government leaving office failed to bite the bullet; or because the department got its numbers wrong, or was correct but failed to convince the Government. One institution was told that it was closing on the day of its opening ceremony.

I acknowledge that this is a jargon-bound field of expertise with a nightmarish mountain of acronyms. Its obscurity means it receives little public attention and inadequate scrutiny in Parliament. I hope the Minister will not think that I am claiming solutions that are simple. I do say that it does no credit to any Government to set up the so-called market review in secret, only revealed in answer to a Parliamentary Question, or to have a consultation period over the summer vacation, or to take such irresponsible risks with teacher supply that 35 universities, accounting for 10,000 teacher training places, have threatened to withdraw from teacher training if some compromise to current thinking cannot be found.

DfE is making reassuring noises but we do not know who is actually going to win the ideological battle involving a highly centralised curriculum, where academic content is tightly controlled and every institution is forced to reapply for accreditation, or whether some compromise can be reached and a more realistic timetable agreed. Teachers are more than executive technicians, and the Government should acknowledge this in practice.

On Tuesday this week, the Minister, in answer to a question about freedom of speech in universities, said:

“The Government are clear that any restriction of lawful speech and academic freedom goes against the fundamental principles of English higher education.”—[*Official Report*, 16/11/21; col. 154.]

Let us hope that the “fundamental principles” also apply to university teacher education institutions.

One university provider told me that the Government “want control of our work, the curriculum, partnership and mentoring.”

The proposals

“would fundamentally change the nature of partnership. It would be more hierarchical and would limit the role of school-led policy which is the opposite of what the Government said it wanted.”

Many said that the early career framework had caused huge disruption, and while it was now settling down, schools have no further resources for mentoring and had to face the Covid pandemic at the same time. Schools did not have to be involved in teacher education, and it was increasingly difficult to find school placements.

On the subject of the early career framework, in answer to a question on 3 November from my noble friend Lord Hanworth, on teacher retention, the Minister said that the framework had

“been warmly welcomed by teachers, head teachers, unions.”—[*Official Report*, 3/11/21; col. 1209.]

When extra funds are being doled out and they are the only game in town, one has to be cautious about the phrase “warmly welcomed”, in my view.

Until recently, student teachers responded well to their training experience. Ofsted figures showed a between 81% and 96% positive experience. Since the new Ofsted framework in May 2021, inspections have been much less positive, with 50% “requiring improvement” or

“inadequate”. Former inspectors have expressed concern about the way these inspections have been carried out, with a belligerent or antagonistic approach by inspectors being reported, along with a failure to take account of the pressures experienced by providers in schools due to Covid, and a lack of understanding of the regulatory requirements that initial teacher training is subject to. Ofsted has admitted to being unable to substantiate the negative claims about ITE.

The proposed reaccreditation process is a bureaucratic, costly and unnecessary exercise which will lead to no improvement in teacher education and training. It is seen as a back-door method of weeding out the smaller SCITTs—school-centred initial teacher training—and pushing through a prescriptive curriculum on to ITE providers. Oxford University said it was “deeply concerned about the academic integrity”

of the proposal. The UCL Institute of Education said that the Government’s review

“presents teaching as general, easily replicated sequences of activities, based in a limited and set evidence base.”

Cambridge University has said it would pull out of the PGCE if the reforms were implemented because it would find delivering high-quality education “deeply compromised.”

The irony is that these institutions could decide not to be reaccredited. Thanks to Mr Gove and his able assistant Mr Cummings, 10 years ago qualified teacher status was separated to allow untrained and unqualified people to teach minority subjects in schools. A prestigious university could continue to offer the PGCE without qualified teacher status and still be certain of buoyant applications, particularly from the overseas market, and people could still teach in academies, free schools and the private sector. It is a naive question, I know, but why do these prescriptive proposals not apply to academies, free schools and private schools if they are so brilliant?

It is claimed that reforms to the ITE market structures will be needed to deliver the programme content and structure proposals, yet there is no evidence for this. New requirements on content and structures could be delivered by amending the Secretary of State’s requirement for ITE. This would avoid the costly and complicated proposed reaccreditation process, increased costs to the provider and the risk to teacher supply.

Any significant reduction in the number of accredited ITE providers would damage teacher supply. Many prospective teachers choose for family and financial reasons to attend an institution closer to home. Some wish to train at the university from which they graduated in their first degree. Some will choose an institution because of its reputation for research and pedagogical expertise. Other might prefer a SCITT provider focused on providing teachers for a particular local community.

Effective markets depend on choice and the market review acknowledges that it is already difficult for providers to secure sufficient placements, particularly in some key subjects such as physics and modern foreign languages. If schools are so stretched that they cannot accept placements, this in turn affects recruitment and is an artificial cap on numbers. It might be unintended, but that is the practical effect.

[BARONESS DONAGHY]

In 2016-17, the Government introduced recruitment controls to force the pace of change. They put a separate cap on universities' share of places in order to favour the SCITTs and school-based programmes—ironically, the very areas that now feel most under the cosh. Universities had to stop recruiting before national targets were reached. The result of this half-baked experiment was disastrous. University recruitment was buoyant and SCITTs and school-based programmes could not deliver. There was a teacher recruitment crisis and the Government had to do a complete U-turn and ask universities to increase their numbers.

Partnership between schools and initial teaching training institutions works because relationships have been built up and developed over a number of years. Schools will be reluctant to build new relationships if this means having less ownership and control of the content and delivery of ITE. References to “school-led provision” are being overtaken now by the new “school-based” descriptor. Schools would have to enter into a more formalised, quasi-contractual relationship, which sits oddly with the Ofsted inspection framework about partnership being co-constructed and based on shared leadership.

I am grateful to the higher education institutions which have shared their thoughts with me, and particularly grateful to the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers—UCET—for its briefing.

In conclusion, I am looking for more than warm words from the Minister. Higher education institutions want a transparent and honest system that avoids duplication and extra cost, and a realistic assessment of what schools can offer in placements and mentoring, given their current resources. They are looking for compromise and genuine partnership with schools, not some quasi-judicial centralist system that threatens academic freedom and crushes innovation. I hope the Minister is able to agree to these aspirations and I very much look forward to the contributions to the debate.

4.30 pm

Lord Addington (LD): My Lords, when talking about teacher training, I am always struck by the fact that schools and the teachers in them are often seen as the answer to all of the world's problems. I cannot think of a single issue in society for which it has not been suggested, “Oh, put it in the curriculum. Teach it at schools”. This includes everything from household management, various forms of sexual health, sporting activity and manners—bits of society say, “Dump it on the teachers. They'll take care of it”. We ask a lot of our teaching establishment. However, we ask them for one primary thing: the ability to learn, starting at school but carrying on throughout life, so that people can be trained and educated to give society the raw materials that it needs. This is a big ask.

The noble Baroness has brought forward a very timely debate for the simple reason that, at the moment, we seem to be in a very odd place. We have the idea that you should be trained within a school or classrooms primarily, but you should have some back-up at universities. But both will deliver this—and some can and some cannot, some work and some do not and we do not like what is going on. In the end, I am basically

somewhat confused. I am not quite sure exactly what the Government want out of this—possibly changes and different suppliers.

My specifics on this—this will surprise absolutely no one in this debate—will be special educational needs. I must declare my interests: I am dyslexic and I am president of the British Dyslexia Association and chairman of an assistive tech company with origins in educational support. When I look through the problems that the teaching profession faces, I see that one of the biggest is that about 20% to 25% of the pupils whom they are teaching do not learn in a conventional manner. Dyslexia is the biggest group and the one that I belong to, but it ain't the only show in town, and we have a nasty habit of having our troubles come not once but in numbers, or co-occurring—I think that “comorbidity” is the correct term, but it sounds like you are dying twice.

If someone with attention deficit disorder and dyslexia is placed in a conventional classroom, they are more difficult to teach. The teacher who has to deal with this has a different set of problems from those that they would confront in other pupils, and that is not the only combination that is available: there is the entire neuro-diverse community, autism, dyspraxia and dyscalculia, although we do not officially recognise that one—dyslexia with numbers is the way that it is always described to me by people—all of which will present problems to the teacher.

If the teacher gets it wrong, the pupil usually reacts in one of two ways. First—this is the easiest one to deal with—they try to disappear into the middle of the classroom. I heard a wonderful description of how a girl with attention deficit disorder usually hides, develops tics—playing with hair et cetera—and disappears in the background. But boys with dyslexia or attention deficit disorder tend to be the ones who disrupt the classroom because, if you are doing so, no one will teach you anything and you are not exposed as failing. Telling that child who has to get through the next two hours that their future, in 10 years' time, will be blighted if they do not work properly does not work. Would it work for any of us?

How do we train people to get through? How do we make sure that the teacher's day and the pupil's day are bearable? We give them about two days or a day in the course of their training to deal with these massive, diverse problems, where the academics in the field—certainly in the last meeting I went to—use words that I have never heard, having dealt with this subject for over 30 years.

This is a difficult field. Unless one trains people properly, they cannot reach those groups. They have problems in the classroom that can result in failure. Remember what failure means in the current academic system: if one does not get the right number of people getting the right number of GCSEs, one will lose one's status, and so on. That pressure is constantly being piled up.

Also, there is a case for taking the budget out of the mainstream to deal with this issue. It is about £6,000. Why do we not invest at least some of that money in making sure that people have better training? That will mean that school staff are trained within the

system to be able to deal with issues next time, too. The training is not for the individual pupil but for the staff, and it should make sure that a normal teacher undergoes good awareness programmes whereby they can at least recognise most of the problems. There should be a day's or two days' training on four or five of the most commonly occurring conditions. That would take an enormous load off.

Then there should be investment in people who can back up and help those staff—two or three experts higher up in the school. That is not a big ask in a school of, say, 1,000 people. If that is done within the profession, the skills will be kept for the duration of the working lives of those staff. The skills will follow them around and can be redeployed and built on.

My noble friend Lord Storey has pulled me up—it is always annoying when an expert is on hand to correct you—saying that the issue is not that simple because, although courses do not cost that much, one has to take time out to train the staff. However, such training can be done and would still be cheaper and easier than what we are doing now. We have a huge problem of people fighting to get through the education and healthcare plans. They are expensive and usually kick in only once someone has failed. If we intervene correctly, we will be able to do more.

Lastly, let us have a look at the teaching of English. It has now been announced that systematic synthetic phonics is the right way in which to teach someone. It is reckoned that 25% of the school population does not learn well from that method. We are telling someone that this is the right way in which to teach when we know that it does not reach some groups. Should we provide more of the same if we do not have the expertise? Anywhere else would regard using the same method over and over again as the definition of madness, but that is apparently not the case in education.

4.37 pm

Baroness Morris of Yardley (Lab): My Lords, first, I thank and congratulate my noble friend Lady Donaghy on bringing forward this debate. It is a big issue and the changes that the Government are proposing are worthy of more debate and consideration than they have given us the opportunity of in this House and the other place. This is an important debate.

Nothing in education is as important as teacher training and retention. If one does not have good-quality teachers teaching effectively, none of one's other aims, ambitions and aspirations gets anywhere. This issue is crucial. The Government are right to look at how we can improve teacher training. It is not perfect and I would not stand here and argue that everything that has happened in the past should be maintained. I also agree with the point that they put forward that we ought to move to evidence-based practice. I am a great admirer of the Education Endowment Foundation; I count myself as one of its biggest supporters.

I am therefore with the Government on looking at the issue. However, I have significant concerns and criticisms of how they have handled it and where we are now. Essentially, this is a fragile system. I cannot think of any other of the great professions—teaching is a great profession—that has to train its practitioners

in 38 weeks, 28 of which must be in a school. In any other profession that one cares to look at, training takes more than a year—perhaps four, five or six years. Teaching has to do it in 38 weeks and that makes the system fragile. At the core of this issue is the partnership between higher education institutions and schools. Both are essential.

My biggest concern is that the Government have managed, throughout this set of reforms and their previous announcements over the last few years, to give the impression that higher education does not have a significant contribution to make to the training of teachers. Both are important. Schools are crucial—students must be in schools to learn from best practice, to practise and hone their skills and to be familiar with working with children—but they also need experience of higher education. Teaching is not a technical job; it is a craft, in a way, but it is also more than that. Like any other profession, it has a history and an intellectual and academic background. Where we have got to now and how we got here due to the changes that happened in the past are crucial questions if you are going to be an effective teacher and take us forward.

The biggest problem with the plans put forward by the Government is that they give the impression that we need to train student teachers in what the evidence says is effective pedagogy at this moment in time. There is one promise you can make: that evidence will not be the same in 10 years', five years' or even one year's time. Students should know what is best practice now and should be trained and educated in what pedagogical practice is proven to work, but they also have to have the background, skills and attitudes so that they can critique it and know where those ideas have come from, because they are the people who will develop the next best practice in pedagogy. Their research, their ability to evaluate their own practice and their understanding of how we got here and how we need to move forward require a set of skills that go beyond craft training. I do not object to students learning what evidence shows is good pedagogy at the moment—I am a great believer that pedagogy is all-important—but to bring through a generation of teachers who do not have that wider intellectual and economic academic underpinning to take us forward to the next stage of development is very remiss.

If we have learned one thing from the pandemic, it is that the context in which children live and learn has an impact on how well they do. Everyone knows now that the children's social and home background affects the way that they learn, their emotional well-being determines how well they will do at school, and their psychological state of being has an influence on how effective teachers can be with them. All that learning about those academic disciplines must be part of teacher training.

Something else that universities can offer are links with other university departments. How good would it be if departments of universities that look at health, sociology or psychology could input into teacher training? I am not saying that that is more important than learning in the classroom, nor that it should be instead of learning about how to keep order in a classroom, but I am saying that for any teacher to be a full professional they must do both. When I look at the

[BARONESS MORRIS OF YARDLEY]

Government's proposals, I cannot see that there is any valuing of those things that I think universities can do more effectively than schools.

We have to remember that these two key partners in educating students to be teachers could both drop out and we could not do anything about it. Schools do not have to train teachers; it is not part of their core business, in a way, and they could decide that they have other priorities. Universities do not have to offer PGCE programmes and could choose to make more money by offering courses of a different nature. The most worrying aspect is that these reforms have brought about a risk regarding the future involvement of both parties. First, for schools, capacity, recovering from the pandemic, helping children to catch up and all that they have to do in terms of providing mentors and getting the early-years framework off the ground could lead to too many of them saying, "We've got enough on our plate. We're not going to do the teacher training bit."

Secondly, universities and higher education are feeling undervalued. Some of this nation's greatest universities are about to drop out of teacher training because they do not feel that their interests are valued or that the way they want to do things is acknowledged by the Government. They are not going to offer a course that has so little flexibility for them that they feel they are betraying the way that they approach education—and none of those people actually make much money out of teacher training.

I share the Minister's and the Government's ambition to get this right and to do better, but this approach is not perfect and there are real risks. I invite a more open approach with the partners—before we have gone too far and lost too much.

4.45 pm

The Earl of Clancarty (CB): My Lords, I am grateful to the noble Baroness, Lady Donaghy, for securing this important and timely debate. I agree with the concerns she expressed regarding the current proposals.

I will make a few general observations, followed by comments on how these proposals might practically affect the teaching of creative subjects. I declare an interest as a vice-chair of the All-Party Groups for Art, Craft and Design in Education and for Music Education. I am grateful to the National Society for Education in Art and Design and the Incorporated Society of Musicians for their briefings for this debate.

The first, and perhaps central, point I want to make is that any changes to teacher recruitment and education ought to be viewed through the lens of the individual subjects that make up the curriculum; in other words, such changes should be subject-led. This is important because the objective of such change, if change is necessary, should be to maximise the best way or ways possible to teach each one of these subjects, so that the result is higher-quality teaching of and greater access to each subject for pupils. Crucially, this also means having a sufficient number of specialist teachers where required, and specialist knowledge and practice, which is ever-changing and ever-developing.

An educational ecosystem that allows a deepening of a subject's understanding for teaching will necessarily accommodate influence from outside school; good

influence always comes from the outside. Ultimately, schools cannot feed on themselves to nurture and nourish good teaching. The end result would inevitably be the stultifying of school education.

The current ecosystem in which university involvement is an integral part of teacher recruitment and education is therefore both beneficial and necessary, not least because such teaching will bring with it a critical vision which will be communicated to students and replenish the school. Indeed, what the Government refer to as "consistently high quality training" should be directly geared to these goals. This is clearly not the case with the current government proposals. As the Incorporated Society of Musicians put it:

"The substance of the proposals are largely generic, rather than subject specific, focusing too much on the mechanics of ITT, rather than on the substance of the learning that should take place. We are concerned that this threatens to undermine the level of subject specialism trainees will develop".

It is clear there are concerns that these proposals threaten the quality of teaching and access to a wide range of subjects, from the sciences to humanities—my noble friend Lady Coussins will talk about languages—as well as the arts. Schools and arts teachers play a crucial role in supplying the pipeline of creative talent to a creative industries sector worth over £116 billion to the UK economy. The withdrawal of 30 or more providers would mean a loss of around 10,000 teacher training places, as the noble Baroness, Lady Donaghy, pointed out, which the new institute of teaching, with its 1,000 new places, would not make up.

The inevitable shortage would impact heavily on arts subjects in schools, which are already disadvantaged through the EBacc. On top of that, there is the effect of the pandemic, which has further deprioritised arts subjects in favour of EBacc subjects. This comes at a time when the effect of the pandemic on the creative industries has made the protection and development of the pipeline even more crucial. The Government must ensure that providers and teaching places are not lost.

A particular concern is that, under these proposals, trainees may not have sufficient time to focus on the teaching of arts subjects. Intensive practice placements could mean that teachers do not experience any arts teaching during their placements, since some arts subjects, such as music, are often taught on a rota basis. How would this system ensure that primary teacher training courses and placements include adequate timetabling of music and other arts subjects?

A related concern is the funding and capacity implications of the proposals, which do not seem to be taken into account by the review. How would there be sufficient capacity for small and overstretched art and music departments to deliver intensive placements for groups of teachers, a particular challenge where there are a small number of teachers employed in a department? Schools with small departments would need further support and funding to provide appropriate mentorships.

Bursaries are important in recruiting and retaining trainees. They can make a critical difference—even more so if centres are cut and teachers need to move home or travel long distances. Yet bursaries for the 2021-22 cohort are now zero for both music and art and design, while bursaries have been reinstated for other subjects. This, incidentally, on top of the 50%

cuts to higher education arts courses, sends yet another signal about the value that the Government ascribe to arts subjects.

The decision about music is curious in the light of the ISM's finding that the number of trainees starting secondary music ITT courses in the 10-year period to 2018-19 fell by 64%. Such long-term trends throw a question mark against the target recruitment figures that the Government use. Can the Minister tell me precisely what criteria are now being used for the awarding of bursaries and, in particular, for the decision not to award bursaries to music or art and design subjects? In this context, there is a growing realisation that the recent small increase in art and design GCSE uptake has been artificially inflated by the destructive loss of design and technology teaching.

How, too, would these proposals address representation in the teaching profession? The Runnymede Trust will produce its own report next year on representation in arts education, but the DfE reported in 2017 that only 6% of art and design teachers were from ethnically diverse communities, compared with 31% of the student population. Bursaries and scholarships alongside other strategies could be used to help address this imbalance.

In conclusion, it is difficult to understand how these proposals will enhance the teaching of subjects themselves. Indeed, many of the concerns that the arts have are shared by other subjects too. There are questions then both of principle and logistics. In terms of principle, the strong sense that one gets is that the Government would like to have closer, more centralised control over education and wish the multi-academy trust to be a focus of that control. It is a narrow-minded approach that ignores the importance of the wider educational ecosystem. In the longer term, too, we must rethink the Government's—any Government's—relationship to education, which, in England, is in danger of becoming far too close.

4.52 pm

Lord Kirkham (Con): Surely none of us can be in any doubt at all about the critical importance of teachers in society. We all know from our own experience, or that of our children and grandchildren, how a good teacher can spark interests, arouse enthusiasm and encourage engagement that will set a child on a positive course for life.

Teaching is the profession that creates all other professions, and capable and motivated teachers working alongside responsible parents are the key to influencing and shaping our good citizens of the future—tomorrow's movers and shakers and captains of industry. Conversely, inadequate teachers and bad schools can wreck lives and prevent children from realising their potential. I have had much personal experience of seeing both the best and the worst, working over many years to help young people from all backgrounds through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Outward Bound Trust.

This is, I think, a great moment to re-evaluate and improve our approach to teacher recruitment and training, to give teachers the tools to do a good job and feel good in doing a good job. The pandemic made parents aware, as they faced the challenge of home schooling for the first time, just how hard it is to teach their own children. But many were also left

feeling that schools and teachers could have done more to support them than they actually did, particularly during the first national lockdown.

We should make these perceptions a starting point for change. Our priority should be improving the supply of teachers, particularly in disadvantaged areas; reducing the number of teachers who leave their jobs, particularly in the early years after qualifying; and ensuring that high-quality, dedicated people are attracted to and retained within the teaching profession. I feel strongly that the Government's carefully researched proposed reforms of teacher training are a definite step in the right direction on all these fronts, notably in ensuring that teachers continue to receive training, not just in their first year of work but in years 2 and 3 as well, together with ongoing mentoring from an experienced teacher.

I note from my previous experience in a customer-focused business that built an outstanding reputation and won many awards for the quality of its service that it is not just training that delivers results: it is constant mentoring that helps build morale and ensures that the training is effectively applied in practice.

It is entirely reasonable, right and beneficial to seek to level up teacher training by making every organisation involved in it apply for reaccreditation, and the Government should not be deterred by vested interests, however distinguished, protesting against this. The Government should make their intentions clear on the issue of reaccreditation and move ahead with implementation. They should not allow themselves to be put off by any personal interests or the teaching unions' traditional opposition to all change, however well intentioned—an odd approach, one might think, from a profession dominated, in many eyes, by the left, underlining the importance in this review of taking the politics out of both teacher training and teaching in our schools.

That is not, incidentally, a party-political point. There have been 13 Secretaries of State for Education since 1997, both Labour and Conservative, and as far as I can recall the teaching unions have been at odds with all of them. Even before 1997, the then Labour education spokesman, now the noble Lord, Lord Blunkett, was forced to spend some time trapped in a small room with his guide dog for his own protection when chanting militants took exception to his attempt to address the NUT conference, because he had had the temerity to condemn school strikes and seek to fire incompetent teachers. That sort of militant behaviour does nothing to raise public esteem for teachers, which is actually the key to winning them the high rewards that they seek.

We can see around the world that teachers enjoy a higher status in countries that invest heavily in their continuing training—countries such as Singapore and Finland. In countries where teachers are held in greater esteem, more parents aspire for their children to become teachers and encourage them on that career path. It really is a virtuous circle.

I am not speaking in support of the reform of teacher training because I am against teachers anyway, or because I want to stamp out individuality and creativity. I certainly do not want us to turn out identikit teachers reciting to their classes each day

[LORD KIRKHAM]

from a little red—or, for that matter, blue—book. I am supporting these reforms because I want teachers to be more highly valued in society. I want their status to reflect the responsibility and importance of their role, and I strongly believe that we will help to achieve this by levelling up and depoliticising their training, and by ensuring that their training does not end when they leave university or college.

High-quality, continuing training, not only in years 2 and 3 but throughout a teacher's career, could and should, with performance reviews, be linked to pay progression, with the best-trained and most highly skilled teachers reaping the greatest rewards. The countries with the best-performing education systems also tend to give teachers more time to plan, evaluate and improve their lessons. They give them the breathing space to improve their skills, not expecting them to fill every hour of the working day with teaching—or, worse still, crowd control. We should do the same. By improving and extending training, depoliticising teaching and fighting militancy, we greatly increase the chances of parents respecting teachers and working with them, hand in hand, to shape the well-educated, highly motivated and properly civilised citizens of tomorrow. We must prioritise continuing training and upskilling for our teachers, so that we can match the very best educational systems in the world, and give our young people a head start in life.

4.59 pm

Lord Knight of Weymouth (Lab): My Lords, I start by paying tribute to the excellent opening by my noble friend Lady Donaghy and commending my noble friend Lady Morris on her excellent contribution, joined by the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, and others: it was a really good start to the debate. I remind your Lordships of my education interests as recorded in the register. In particular, I chair the E-ACT multi-academy trust board, I am an adviser to Nord Anglia Education, and an occasional client is my former employer Tes Global, where I co-founded the Tes Institute, now the fifth largest qualifier of teachers in England. I also recently led the inquiry into initial teacher training by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Teaching Profession, of which I am vice-chair.

The inquiry was triggered by the market review chaired by Ian Bauckham. We received evidence from teacher training providers, both school-centred and universities, from schools, the College of Teachers and the teaching unions. I say to the noble Lord, Lord Kirkham, that I do not totally agree with his view on teaching unions; my experience is that when you work with teaching unions as proper stakeholders, you can achieve quite a lot alongside them. We titled the report of the all-party group, *If It Ain't Broke, Handle with Care*. This reflected the lack of evidence to support the assertion from the then schools minister, Nick Gibb, that there was an urgent problem that needed solving. In fact, the biggest problem was the threat to teacher supply created if the outcome of this review were implemented.

I spent the first three days of this week in long meetings reviewing the performance of the 28 schools in the E-ACT group. Across the board, one of the biggest challenges we face is recruiting enough teachers,

especially in shortage subjects such as maths. The majority of schools are not fully staffed, meaning more use of agency staff than we want and some roles having to be re-advertised because of a poor response. This is important context for the suggestion that we can just jettison a number of ITT providers in pursuit of the clear agenda of centralised control, dressed up as re-accreditation. The very idea that universities such as Oxford and Cambridge might follow through with the threat to walk away from training teachers if these proposals are implemented demonstrates what a pickle the department has got itself into. And it is not just the elite universities: the MillionPlus group is just as animated, as are the school-centred ITT providers. Some of these may be small in scale, but they provide important training opportunities in remote areas that universities struggle to reach.

The combined effect of some of these providers being excluded by re-accreditation, or walking away because of the threat to academic freedom and an uneconomic model, could be catastrophic. This country is short of teachers. The spike in numbers applying to train at the beginning of the pandemic was short-lived. If transitioning to a new system disrupts the supply of new trainees, then there are serious consequences for our schools and for the life chances of our children. I remind your Lordships that this is not just about the delivery of training: as others have said, there are problems now with there not being enough placements for trainees in schools. Losing existing providers means losing established partnerships and their school placements.

The new two-year induction that started nationally this September in the form of the early career framework is delivering some good quality—that is the feedback from the schools I am accountable for. However, it is resource-hungry for schools, particularly in mentoring capacity. This, in turn, makes it harder for ITT placement, because of capacity constraint, particularly if the review's understandable emphasis on mentoring is implemented. I met the chair of the market review a couple of times and respect him and his view. I understand his desire to collect the best evidence of what works in ITT and to impose that on everyone. However, I believe that it leads us into standardised, uniform approaches to training that imply that teaching is a craft skill and, if everyone did the same thing, it would work for all types of teachers working with all types of pupils.

That goes to the heart of the problem. These proposed changes are not about building teacher professionalism. They are not showing trust in the profession—just the opposite. If we want better, more experienced teachers, we need to recruit more into teaching and then retain them. That means leaning in to their intrinsic motivation to be teachers. If my friend Sharath Jeevan is right in his new book, that means focusing on purpose, autonomy and expertise. If we erode professional autonomy, we erode motivation. Successive Governments have done that—I hold up my hand—but it is now time to reverse that.

We should be working with a diversity of providers of ITT. The Government should abandon the market review and the unnecessary expense of the Institute of Teaching. We should respect the training providers' professionalism and let them decide how best to train

teachers. Then we should use Ofsted to regulate the quality against the agreed standards for qualified teacher status—regulate the outcome, not the input. We should then properly resource teachers, at every stage of their careers, to have time to observe each other and engage in professional dialogue and development. Perhaps those that are crammed into teaching through successful schemes such as Teach First should be given time, relatively early in their careers, to have a sabbatical period in universities reflecting on practice and acquiring the academic, theoretical underpinning they missed due to their acceleration into the classroom. In doing so, we may retain more of those excellent teachers in our schools.

Teaching is the most important of professions; it shapes our future. We should nurture it, respect it as a profession and resist those who seek to use a Whitehall sledgehammer to crack a problem that does not really exist. Please, handle with care.

5.05 pm

Baroness Coussins (CB): My Lords, my noble friend Lord Clancarty is right that the proposed reforms call for a subject-by-subject analysis, as well as looking at the overall context of ITT. I will focus on the training and recruitment of teachers of modern languages, and I declare my interest as co-chair of the APPG on Modern Languages.

The supply chain of MFL teachers is shrinking to such a serious extent that the sustainability of language teaching and learning in our schools could be under existential threat. If the UK's deficit in language skills deteriorates much further, our capacity to deliver public policy in education, research, diplomacy, defence and security will be significantly weakened, as will our ability to supply UK businesses with the school-leavers and graduates they need to compete in a global market, and to build export growth.

Let me illustrate the scale of the problem. A language is one of the subjects required at GCSE for a student to achieve the EBacc. Yet in 2020, only 72% of the target for MFL teachers were recruited; only physics fared worse. This shortfall needs to be seen as being on the back of under-recruitment over many years. Numbers of German and French teachers declined by over a third and a fifth, respectively, in the decade between 2010-11 and 2020-21. Even if every single university student currently doing a languages degree went into teaching, we still would not meet the shortfall, yet a mere 6% of MFL graduates actually end up in teaching.

Part of the systematic collapse in the supply chain of MFL teachers is due to university department closures. Since 2000, over 50 university languages departments have closed and the reforms in ITT, mentioned by the noble Baroness, Lady Donaghy, may exacerbate the problem even further. If 35 universities, accounting for 10,000 teacher training places, go through with their threat to withdraw teacher training if reforms progress in their current form, this will have a disproportionate impact on MFL. However, I believe there are various measures which Her Majesty's Government could take immediately and which might help.

First, we need to reverse the cut in bursaries for MFL trainees. These have been slashed for 2021-22 from £26,000 right down to £10,000, even though the

reduction for physics, chemistry, maths and computing is only a slight cut, from £26,000 to £24,000. I understand that in 2022-23 the MFL bursaries will rise again, but only to £15,000—still significantly short of the £24,000 for the other subjects I have mentioned. The MFL scholarships have been scrapped altogether. Can the Minister explain this disparity, given that all these subjects are part of the EBacc requirement?

Secondly, we need to look at the barriers we have created, presumably unintentionally, to the smooth and continued recruitment of EU nationals into MFL training. EU students have typically made up between 30% and 75% of ITT cohorts for MFL, but now face a cliff edge in recruitment. Those with settled status were able to access bursaries or student loans last year, but those without this status will not be eligible in future, despite MFL teachers now being on the shortage occupations list—a change for which I commend the Government, but which needs to be followed through logically in policy terms, such as by giving access to these bursaries. Has there been any impact assessment for how these changes will affect future MFL teacher recruitment, especially given that MFL is of course uniquely reliant on recruiting native speakers from EU member countries, particularly France, Germany and Spain?

Thirdly, the cuts to funding for subject knowledge enhancement, or SKE—yet another acronym, I am afraid—should be reversed. SKE is a recruitment tool which was introduced in 2005 to try to bridge that shortfall by attracting UK graduates with a modern language as a subsidiary part of their degree. Typically, 40% to 70% of MFL trainees undertake SKE as a condition of entry, but the funding cuts in the last academic year translated into an estimated reduced capacity in the number of trainees one provider could offer from an anticipated 40 to just 13.

Finally, I want to emphasise how relevant these issues are to the Government's levelling-up agenda. There is a clear link between low MFL take-up and disadvantage, as measured, for example, by eligibility for free school meals. Lower GCSE take-up correlates with regions of poor productivity and low skill levels. There is also a growing disparity between state and independent schools. For example, the latest Language Trends survey reveals that independent schools are more than three times as likely as a state school to host a native speaker language assistant.

School leavers and graduates with even a basic working or conversational knowledge of another language are more employable and mobile than they would be otherwise. Languages are not just for an internationally mobile elite. One survey showed that lack of language skills accounted for a 27% vacancy rate in clerical and admin jobs.

I hope to hear from the Minister that Her Majesty's Government will look again with some urgency at restoring the cuts to MFL bursaries, scholarships and SKE funding and access for eligible EU students to these financial incentives. These measures have the potential to save language learning throughout our education system, boost the supply chain of teachers once more and equip young people to compete with their peers from the rest of the world.

5.11 pm

Baroness Blower (Lab): My Lords, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in this debate. I congratulate my noble friend Lady Donaghy on securing it and on her opening speech. I fully endorse the important points and speeches made by my noble friends Lady Morris and Lord Knight, with whom I believe I worked pretty well as a highly elected member of the National Union of Teachers when they were at the Department for Education.

Teacher supply is clearly at the heart of ensuring that our schools can fulfil society's aspiration that all children and young people should be afforded a high-quality, broad and balanced curriculum—I endorse the points made by the noble Baroness, Lady Coussins, and the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, on breadth and balance—in whichever institution they are educated, allowing all to achieve their full potential and push beyond any constraints of lack of self-confidence or self-esteem which some students experience. Proposed policy on initial teacher education and training does not seem to provide securely for a sufficiency of teachers to respond to that task in all its complexity. Currently, even where places are taken up for pre-service training, as noble Lords have heard on a number of occasions in this House, the rate of attrition is very high. We are losing teachers from our classrooms at a much higher rate than is consistent with a stable profession.

The Government have now proposed a course for reform which represents a radical shift in the approach to teacher education and training. As was mentioned earlier, it was subject to consultation between 7 June and 22 August 2021—substantially, of course, during the academic year holidays. At the time, Nick Gibb was the Minister for School Standards; he justified the short timescale on the basis that it was urgent, yet 13 weeks later we are still awaiting the outcome. Meanwhile, the process has been opaque, with no record that I have been able to find of how a small, hand-picked group chaired by Ian Bauckham of the Tenax Schools Trust—as my noble friend said—went about the review of the ITTP provider market.

The Library briefing on initial teacher training providers and the review gives a large number of figures for recruitment to a variety of routes into teaching and faithfully reports what the review was ostensibly set up to do—to ensure that:

“All trainees receive high-quality training ... The ITT market maintains the capacity to deliver enough trainees and is accessible to candidates ... The ITT system benefits all schools.”

All are highly laudable aims. However, it also records that while

“many in the sector welcomed the aims of the review”,

there has been criticism that the reality might be “potentially disruptive”, with Cambridge University among others, as referenced by my noble friend Lady Donaghy, asserting that there is

“no ‘single right way’ to train teachers”

and suggesting that it may withdraw from the market if the proposed reforms go ahead. As I understand it, it was not alone among Russell group universities in taking this view.

There is a clear sense among many who have sought to engage with the Government's proposals that they are a straightforward step along the road to central,

national control of how teachers are taught to teach and how they will be expected to teach. This may well have its genesis in Michael Gove's time as Secretary of State for Education, when he famously insulted academics in university education departments, describing them as “the Blob”. Whether he secretly feared that university education departments were hotbeds of Marxism or was just pursuing a centralising and controlling agenda while ostensibly lauding school autonomy may be a matter for debate.

It is clear that jurisdictions held to be successful take a different approach from that suggested in the direction of current government policy. There are clearly elements that could be welcomed. However, while greater support for newly qualified teachers—what we now call early-career teachers—is a good thing, the need for schools to provide a mentor for each early-career teacher may put enormous pressure on staffing in schools and could lead to them employing fewer early-career teachers.

I trust that the Minister will be able to update the House on progress towards the establishment of an institute for teaching. There is talk of there being only two bidders on the shortlist, Star Academies and the Ambition Institute, neither of which has strong links with higher education institutions.

I hope the Minister will be able to reassure us that university departments of education are considered an important part of initial teacher training and education going forward. Professional autonomy and agency for teachers are critical for a successful teaching profession. It is in the universities that they develop these capacities.

5.18 pm

Lord Lexden (Con): My Lords, I offer a few comments on some of the important issues that are the subject of this debate—for which we are so indebted to the noble Baroness, Lady Donaghy—drawing on the perspective of the Independent Schools Council, whose member schools, I am pleased to say, work today in ever-increasing and ever-closer partnership with their colleagues in maintained schools. Just this week, the latest account of partnership between them has been published. It reports on nearly 6,000 cross-sector schemes that are forging ahead, covering a wealth of activities from rigorous academic study to orchestral concerts, drama and sport.

I declare my interests as a former general secretary of the council, which works on behalf of some 1,400 schools, and as the current president of the Independent Schools Association, one of the council's constituent bodies, which has some 570 of those schools in its membership. The association's members are for the most part notably small schools, often having no more than 200 pupils, with deep roots in the local communities they serve. The council's member schools as a whole have on average fewer than 400 pupils. They therefore differ in size from so many of their counterparts in the maintained sector—an important factor that tends to be insufficiently recognised and has an important bearing on the subject of this debate.

The council's schools have long been involved in helping to train our country's teachers and, year by year, they reaffirm their commitment to their work in

this crucial area. Teachers trained in them can gain qualified teacher status and complete the statutory induction year under arrangements agreed with the Department for Education—by me, as it happens, with the support of the noble Baroness, Lady Morris of Yardley. This enables the teachers they train to take jobs in either maintained or independent schools. Whenever I see the noble Baroness, Lady Morris, I think of the early days of partnership, which began under not a Conservative but a Labour Government.

So schools within the Independent Schools Council contribute significantly to replenishing and enlarging the teaching profession. They have perhaps a particularly important role in helping to train subject specialists in shortage subjects, such as maths and physics—a role that is widely recognised for its importance to the country as a whole.

As we all agree, our education system today needs more teachers, trained to high standards, not least to assist recovery from the pandemic. The Government were right to review the existing state of initial teacher training at this particularly important juncture and to bring forward proposals designed to help to improve the system. The proposals should bring significant benefits in some respects, but in others they create grounds for concern so widely exhibited during this debate.

Despite my noble friend Lord Kirkham's comments, is the compulsory reaccreditation of providers really sensible, particularly at this point, when schools are so preoccupied with recovery from the pandemic? The tight timetable that is contemplated might well lead to serious disruption—some refer to the likelihood of chaos—and a fall in the number of training opportunities. Would it not be better to trust the continued work of Ofsted, despite the criticisms that have been made of it, in ensuring that providers are of high quality, taking full account of the latest evidence?

A second area of concern, felt particularly keenly in independent schools, is the requirement to follow a single core content framework in the teacher-training curriculum in order to gain accreditation as a provider of initial teacher training. Independent schools have a well-established track record of provision, including through employment-based routes, delivered in ways that suit their size and capacities. The requirements of the proposed framework are likely to prove too inflexible for many of them and throw doubt on their ability to continue training specialists in shortage subjects, despite their strong desire to maintain their traditional role in this area. It would be a loss that our country could ill afford.

There are other difficulties as well. It would be hard for many independent schools to release experienced staff to take part in the intensive training that they will need to undergo in order to fulfil the role of mentors in a system changed in the way that is being proposed. Far too little time is being allowed to prepare for the substantial changes that the proposals entail.

Schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council want to make the greatest possible contribution to teacher training. I hope that those elements of the Government's reform proposals that could impede their full participation in the future will be carefully re-examined before final decisions are made. This is,

after all, another sphere in which partnership between the two education sectors can achieve so much, to their mutual benefit and our country's.

Viscount Hanworth (Lab): My Lords, the teaching profession is highly esteemed in many European countries. I have witnessed this in France, Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands. It is not so in Britain, where the status of teachers has suffered a steep decline since the 1960s.

In the perception of the public at large, the status of teachers is equivalent to that of social workers. It is no exaggeration to say that teachers have been the victims of a culture war. The Labour Party has been generally supportive of teachers. A previous Labour Government made a commitment to raise their status to that of senior consultants and surgeons by 2006. Animosity towards teachers and their supposed political orientation has been forthcoming from the right wing of the Conservative Party and from the allied press. They are liable to accuse teachers of being proponents of a so-called woke culture that, supposedly, intimidates people into assenting to liberal or left-wing opinions.

At present, teachers and schools within the state-maintained sector are suffering considerable stress. The available funds have long been inadequate for maintaining the fabric of schools and their supplies of consumables. The pay of teachers is inadequate. Their workload is excessive and there are acute problems with the recruitment and retention of teachers. It is against this background that the Government have decided to overhaul the system of teacher training and the induction of newly qualified teachers into the profession.

A requirement that all teachers in state-maintained schools should be university graduates was imposed in the autumn of 1970 in fulfilment of the recommendation of William Plowden. What ensued was a variety of routes towards qualified teacher status or QTS. It became possible to obtain QTS in the course of a three-year degree that had a component of teacher training. The degree could be that of a bachelor of education, a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science. Graduates who had not obtained qualified teacher status as an adjunct to their degrees were able to obtain it via a postgraduate certificate of education—PGCE—that resulted from following a course that was typically of one year's duration.

The Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 imposed a requirement that all newly qualified teachers should undergo a period of statutory induction. The requirements of the induction have been revised and extended via subsequent acts and regulations, and the present Government are intent on a radical overhaul of the regulations which will extend the induction period to two years. This will be part of an early career framework. Given their service in maintaining teacher training over many decades, one might have expected universities and institutions of higher and further education to be charged with overseeing the system. The new arrangements could be expected to profit from their knowledge and experience.

Instead, the Government have decided to side-step these organisations and establish a wholly new structure of so-called appropriate bodies to provide independent quality assurance of the statutory induction. For some

[VISCOUNT HANWORTH]

time, the Government have been calling into question the provision of initial teacher training by universities. They have allowed the universities to be bypassed by establishing the School Direct provision, which allows the initial teacher training of graduates, who have other work experience, to take place in schools. They have also established a system of school-centred initial teacher training that has bypassed the traditional providers of teacher training.

From 2021, the teaching practice associated with the PGCE and other modes of initial teacher training will take place in schools that will be subsumed under teaching school hubs. They are to be based in specially selected schools within multi-academy trusts that have been chosen by the Department for Education. The department has named 87 new teaching school hubs, including six that participated in a pilot project. Each will provide professional development in around 250 schools. The hubs replace a network of 750 teaching schools which will lose their designation and their government funding, resulting in an overall saving of £25 million.

There have been doubts about the adequacy of the provision of placements for trainees. There is an understanding that the Government are attempting, by these means, to align teacher training with their own nostrums. Throughout their period in power, the Conservative Government have been keen to abrogate to themselves the role of directing and regulating state-maintained education. Hitherto, the role has been taken by organisations at arm's length from the Government. The Department for Education will now be charged with accrediting the provision of the new and extended statutory teacher induction. Schools will be allowed to devise their own courses, provided that they are approved, but it is expected that they will choose to work with one of six providers accredited and funded by the department. All but one of these are recently established commercial organisations which will work under the guise of a charity.

Some of these organisations have already provided samples of their teaching materials on the web. These place an emphasis on classroom practice and attempt to instruct new teachers in how to maintain order and discipline. I have heard it said that much of this material is fatuous, but I hesitate to make my own judgment.

The early career framework engenders a vision in which newly qualified teachers undergo a benign induction under the tutelage of knowledgeable mentors. This vision is liable to be confounded when confronted by the realities that prevail in our schools.

Reports from the pilot studies suggest that, given the straitened circumstances within which they are operating, schools will be unwilling to recruit young trainee teachers in view of the burdens they will bring with them. Instead, schools may prefer to rely on young teachers supplied by agencies, which are liable to deduct substantial fees from their pay. The advantage of schools employing young teachers under such arrangements is that they can avoid paying sickness and holiday pay and pension contributions, a material consideration when money is scarce. Schools can release such teachers at the end of the school term or even before, thereby circumventing the agency regulations that give the teachers security of employment if they

serve for more than 12 weeks. These circumstances, which are severely disadvantageous to early career teachers, must already account for a large proportion of the wastage whereby they leave the profession prematurely without securing permanent posts.

In view of the recent accumulation of their powers, and of the opportunity to pursue new and exciting initiatives, many people within the Department for Education are subject to a dangerous degree of optimism and self-congratulation. I fear that they are undertaking projects that will severely unsettle and damage the state education system.

5.31 pm

Lord Storey (LD): My Lords, I declare an interest as a vice-president of the LGA. I thank the noble Baroness, Lady Donaghy, for opening this important debate.

It is a pleasure to speak on the Government's policy on initial teaching training and how to ensure that every school in every part of the country can confidently appoint the teachers it needs to deliver an excellent education to every child and young person. As the noble Lord, Lord Kirkham, rightly said, the quality of our teachers must be paramount in our education system. If a primary pupil has a poor teacher, they cannot repeat that year. If a secondary student has a poor subject teacher, they have lost a year of learning and understanding.

We need to ensure that our teachers are highly trained, highly motivated and have the pedagogical skills to enable them to teach and relate to children. Children need teachers who can teach, enrich their learning, motivate and give them the confidence that education is all about. As a nation, we need teachers who are well trained, well respected—and well paid. As a historical footnote, it is interesting to observe that, when Margaret Thatcher was Secretary of State for Education, she implemented in full the Houghton review—the largest ever increase in teachers' salaries.

As I listened to the cogent arguments made by my learned friends in this House, I reflected on my own teacher training. The world has changed considerably since I started at St Katharine's Church of England Teacher Training College in Liverpool—now Liverpool Hope University. As another historical footnote, the principal, as he was called, discovered in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* that his college was about to be closed down by the then Wilson Government, as was the Roman Catholic Christ's College across the road. They had the political nous to join together, daring the Secretary of State for Education to close an ecumenical establishment—which, of course, he did not. Now Liverpool Hope University is flourishing. It is a gold standard university and the only ecumenical university in Europe.

The pattern of teacher training was much simpler then. The majority of teachers went to what was known as a teacher training college to do a three-year course, until, in the 1990s, the four-year B.Ed. was introduced. Another route into teaching was for graduates, who took a one-year postgraduate certificate in education at university. The third route was to go straight into teaching with a degree in the subject you intended to teach; this happened in many secondary and independent schools. Such people learned their teaching on the job.

In the last decade, as we have heard from the noble Viscount, Lord Hanworth, there has been a steady growth of different routes into teaching, and ITT has become very fragmented. Teaching is now pretty much a graduate profession, with most teachers getting their degree before deciding which route to take. In addition to the traditional degree plus PGCE route, the balance has swung very much towards school-based initial teacher training. The traditional years spent at university, with a placement in a school for an extended teaching practice, has been replaced for many students with a year based in a school, with the school buying in the pedagogical element from a university.

Teach First—the implication being that teaching will be the first of many careers—has grown enormously in recent years, with good honours graduates going into challenging schools after a six-week summer school camp and very much learning on the job. I still have grave reservations about whether you can learn to be a school-based teacher after just six weeks in a summer school.

All the while, there has been a range of initiatives to try to recruit teachers of so-called shortage subjects, particularly maths and physics, with bursaries—the equivalent of a golden handshake—offered to encourage applicants. The reaction of the university sector to the market review of teacher training, as the noble Lord, Lord Knight, has told us, was, by and large, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” But I welcome the opportunity to look at the sector. Given the multiplicity of routes into teaching, the quality of the training offered has been patchy, to say the least.

The Liberal Democrats have consistently emphasised that our teachers are the greatest asset of our education system. The disruption to our children’s education caused by the pandemic, with long periods of enforced absence from school, has served to emphasise how valuable face-to-face teaching is. However good the technology, however well planned the lessons, virtual lessons are a pale shadow of an excellent school education.

I welcome any and every attempt by the Government to attract high-quality graduates to the teaching profession and will support the proposals to make teaching an attractive profession. I can see some merit in the Government’s attempt to improve the quality of initial teacher training. There does seem to be a need to ensure that every trainee teacher, at the end of their professional training, is confident and well equipped to face what is the one of the best, but most challenging, jobs in the world.

I also believe it important that certain elements are mandatory in teacher training. We heard from my noble friend Lord Addington about the importance of special needs. Every primary school teacher needs to do a unit on child development. If they do not know how a child develops from a very young age, how can they really have the rapport to teach them? Every teacher, whether in the primary or secondary phase, needs to know how to identify a child who suffers from dyslexia. It seems crazy to me that that does not happen. When I was doing my degree after my teacher training, my education tutor told me that there was no such thing as dyslexia. That was in the early 1980s.

Universities do have an important role in teacher training, as I have said. However, the emphasis of the Government’s market review of teacher training seems

to be on the market aspect. The noble Baroness, Lady Blower, emphasised this, and she is right: it is a pity that the Government’s consultation on the future of initial teacher training was carried out in the summer, between early June and the end of August. The Government maintain that delaying the consultation until this autumn would have delayed plans to push forward with the reforms. Although the consultation ended on 22 August, almost three months ago, we have not yet had any information on the response to it. Maybe we can blame the pandemic; I do not know.

Teachers are the lifeblood of our education system and we must recruit and retain the very best teachers. We can do this only if we can offer them an excellent preparation for the role, support them during the early years of teaching and enable them to flourish in their chosen profession.

A number of questions have arisen during the course of this debate and I look forward to hearing the Minister’s answers. I am concerned that we are still waiting to hear what will emerge from the market review and how much of teacher training will be to do with the market. We have heard today about the Institute of Teaching, with a £122 million contract up for grabs to run the flagship teacher training establishment. Will that be run by a private provider? The top priority of teacher training is the quality and, as in many areas, there is a mixed economy of providers, but I am concerned that we do not throw the HEI baby out with the bathwater. How will the Government ensure that the market is managed so that every teacher benefits from the teacher training experience?

I end by saying that teacher training does not just start before they go into schools, or however they do that; the training of a teacher goes throughout their teaching career, and continuing professional development has to be a hugely important part of the role of schools and, indeed, of government.

5.41 pm

Lord Watson of Invergowrie (Lab): My Lords, we are all hugely indebted to my noble friend Lady Donagh, not just for securing this important debate but for opening it in a manner so comprehensive that frankly she left very little extra to be said. My noble friend mentioned that it took a Written Question to force the DfE to reveal what was going on regarding the future of teacher education. She was typically too modest to say that she was the one who asked that searching Question.

It is much to be regretted that teacher education appears not to be sufficiently valued for its own worth by those whose task it is to shape education in its broadest sense. I use the term “teacher education” advisedly, because that is what has been cast aside here—downgraded to what is now termed “teacher training”.

The Tory manifesto in 2019 had nothing to say on teacher training, though it did say:

“We want to attract the best talent into teaching and recognise the great work they do, so we’re raising teachers’ starting salaries to £30,000”.

I will spare the Minister the embarrassment of having to tell me two years on how many teachers have actually received that starting salary. Of more relevance

[LORD WATSON OF INVERGOWRIE]

is why her party's manifesto contained no mention at all of teacher education, despite the fact that we now know that Conservatives were so concerned about the underperformance of the sector that they believed the only policy response was to rip it up and start again. In passing, it is only fair to say that neither Labour nor the Liberal Democrats mentioned teacher education in our manifestos—but in our defence these two parties did not believe it to be in such a dilapidated state that it required a complete revamp.

The fact that the Government prefer the term “teacher training” is instructive. Teacher education generally includes four elements: improving the general educational background of the trainee teachers; increasing their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are to teach; pedagogy and an understanding of child development—as mentioned by the noble Lord, Lord Storey—and learning; and the development of practical skills and competences.

In recent years, the distinctive and long-established role of university teacher education has been weakened to the point where I believe serious questions are raised about the very purpose of teaching. When I take my car to the garage for repairs, I do not want it done by someone who is not qualified; when I go to hospital, I do not want my medical care delivered by somebody who is not qualified; and when I go to a restaurant, I certainly do not want my meal prepared by somebody who is not qualified. So why should any parent at any school be expected to accept their child being taught by a well-meaning amateur? Yet, to this Government, that is perfectly acceptable.

Every parent has the right to expect that those entrusted on a day-to-day basis with ensuring that their child's development is stretched to the limit of their capabilities have themselves been subject to a rigorous grounding in both the theory and the practice of pedagogy—not just what works, but why it works. Prior to the review, Ofsted had rated all ITE provision as being “good” or “outstanding”—so, to paraphrase my noble friend Lord Knight and his all-party group, “not much was broke there”.

My noble friend Lady Donaghy described the outcome of Ofcom inspections this year, with some in need of improvement, and that is accepted, but it sounds suspiciously as though the headline about the review had been written by the DfE and the storyline then had to be made to fit it. In any case, the review was under way well before the latest Ofsted inspections took place, so they cannot have provided the rationale for it. If we know anything at all about the effect of the past two years on education, it is that the pandemic has rendered the use of any benchmarks from that period next to useless.

The new system would apply to maintained schools, academies and free schools, yet there were no representatives of local authorities or maintained schools on the so-called expert working group. The members of that group may indeed be experts in their own areas but not in regard to maintained schools—although Teach First sends its graduates to both types of school. The suspicion remains that the group was a hand-picked collection of individuals who were left in no doubt what the DfE wanted to emerge from this review, and

the DfE's bias against maintained schools prevented anyone from that sector participating. If that is a wrong interpretation, no doubt the Minister will set the record straight, but why would the group have two people from academy trusts, including the chair, but none from schools that are not academies? At least there was one voice from the university sector, although we hear that she has in part dissented from the report, warning that the reforms could be “hugely risky” to teacher supply and quality. For that reason, she has advocated a year's delay in implementing the changes to allow the issues to be addressed. At the very least, we very much support that call.

The noble Lord, Lord Storey, my noble friend Lady Blower and others have commented on the fact that the proposal's consultation period covered school holidays. I will not repeat that, but it is a recurring issue and one that I have raised previously with the Minister concerning the skills Bill. We shall shortly have a debate in your Lordships' House on an SI on teachers' pay and conditions, which was also issued over the summer. I believe this is a deliberate practice by the DfE designed to limit responses—and it must stop.

The review's proposals make recommendations on curriculum content, course structure and mentoring, with the central recommendation that all ITT providers implement a new set of quality requirements, and that “a robust accreditation process should take place”.

That is a worry for many institutions, which are concerned that the DfE will seek to favour larger and, perhaps, compliant institutions. It would be helpful, to echo my noble friend Lady Donaghy, if the Minister could offer reassurance that the accreditation process will be open, transparent and equitable. Can she also say whether all accreditation applications that meet the new quality requirements will be approved, with no contrived rationing taking place? There are fears that the process could be used to ensure that ITE providers deliver only DfE-approved curricula over and above what is already required through the core content framework.

This is one issue of concern to universities, which play a key role in the delivery of ITE, accounting for 40% of all those entering teacher education each year. They, of course, work on long-term planning structures dependent on the stability of provision, so being confronted by a review with the clear objective of changing the very nature of who operates it naturally sets alarm bells ringing in universities.

My noble friend Lady Donaghy clearly enunciated the concerns of universities about the proposals, and I will not repeat them. However, if the number involved in teacher education were to be significantly reduced—particularly by the threatened departure from the scene of Cambridge and Oxford—that would be damaging not just for that sector but for the supply of future generations of teachers.

The reforms risk recruitment and retention by narrowing the ITE curriculum, reducing choice for prospective students and making ITE more onerous for student teachers. There are also worries that the review changes the focus to assessment of trainee teachers against the core content framework, not on how good they are as teachers. Schools are under a duty to support their early career teachers, but not

under a duty to take on trainee teachers. Given the onerous duties of the early careers framework, schools will inevitably redirect resources to support early career teachers, thereby exacerbating teacher supply.

Universities and schools have developed strong relationships over many years, becoming exemplars of good practice. Neither the need nor the political imperative to break those links exists, yet the introduction of market forces sees universities competing more directly with each other, as well as with the disproportionate share of resources—and student places—channelled to schools.

Although the substance of the review proposals is largely generic, I had intended to mention the question of music teaching but, following the remarks of the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, all I need to do is say that I wholeheartedly endorse what he said. He made a very persuasive case for music teaching. I do not expect the Minister to respond on that point today but perhaps she would do so in writing to both him and me.

The strong partnerships that have developed between accredited higher education institutions and schools have been one of the education sector's great success stories in recent years. Schools should have a choice about how they participate in ITE. It is, as the report itself acknowledges, already difficult for providers to secure a sufficient number of placements, particularly in some key subjects such as physics and, as the noble Baroness, Lady Coussins, said, modern foreign languages. That in turn has led to an artificial cap being placed on recruitment. Should they proceed, the reforms should surely do nothing to make these challenges even more acute.

The Government should acknowledge the opposition that their proposals have generated. They should, as my noble friend Lord Knight said, abandon the review and then facilitate much wider consultation aimed at building a broad base of support for what works, not simply what it might be possible to force the sector to tolerate. We are not saying that the current situation is perfect, but that is no basis for a way forward—certainly not with something so important to the future of this country as teacher education.

5.51 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education (Baroness Barran) (Con): My Lords, I echo other noble Lords in thanking the noble Baroness, Lady Donaghy, for securing this debate and bringing to the House's attention the crucial matter of initial teacher training recruitment and the role of universities and other bodies in ensuring the supply and education of new teachers. I am sure she was being harsh on herself when she described her teaching assistant career, and I am sure her pupils would have disagreed with her reflection.

The Government's vision is for all children and young people to have access to a world-class education, no matter where they are from or what their background is. At a time when there are more pupils in our schools than ever before, the recruitment and retention of outstanding teachers is a key priority.

The noble Baroness, Lady Donaghy, said that she was a fan of teachers. I think all of us in this House are. I genuinely do not recognise the characterisation

that has come from a number of noble Lords that this Government are critical and unsupportive of teachers; quite the reverse. I do not think there is a family in this country that does not value teachers deeply, particularly after the last two years and the critical role they have played in supporting our children. I absolutely agree with my noble friend Lord Kirkham when he talks, as have many other noble Lords, about the importance of valuing and giving proper status to teachers. We are trying to thread that through everything we do, as I will try to set out in my remarks.

I respectfully refute the suggestion by the noble Lord, Lord Watson, that the department is in any way being deliberate in its practice regarding the timing of consultations. I know he will agree with me that the officials in the department have the highest integrity, as do the Ministers, and there is genuinely no truth in that suggestion.

Lord Watson of Invergowrie (Lab): I accept what the Minister says about integrity, but three over just one summer and all in education—is that just a coincidence?

Baroness Barran (Con): I cannot speak accurately for what went before but I know the noble Lord will accept that this has been an incredibly disrupted time. I am sure that, had we delayed the consultations further in terms of our response, as we have heard today, there would have been criticism. There is always a risk; we are damned if we do and damned if we don't.

I will revert to the important subject of the debate. We know that there are no great schools without great teachers, and I thank the noble Lord, Lord Storey, for the personal experience that he brings to his reflections. I will do my best to answer his and other noble Lords' questions. We know that the evidence shows that teacher quality is the single most important factor within school in improving outcomes for children and young people, and reforms to teacher training and early-career support are key to the Government's plans to improve school standards for all.

The noble Baroness, Lady Morris, talked about the time that it takes to qualify. I am sure that she recognises the value in the continued support, for two years now, for early-career teachers. The Government share the ambition of the initial teacher training sector that all people training to be a great teacher get the best possible start to their careers.

We published our *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy* in 2019, working with key stakeholders to set out a shared vision for the teaching workforce. At the heart of this strategy is a golden thread of training and professional development—the noble Lords, Lord Storey and Lord Watson, raised these points—informed by high quality evidence, which will run through each phase of a teacher's career. As your Lordships may have heard me say in answer to a recent question, there has been an increase of over 20% in applicants to the profession. The noble Viscount, Lord Hanworth, had his head in his hands, but I hope that he will share my pleasure to see that increase in applicants.

The starting point of this golden thread is initial teacher training, which is why we developed a new core content framework for this purpose. The new

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framework was published in November 2019, and, since September 2020, all new teachers have been benefiting from initial teacher training, underpinned by the best independently peer-reviewed evidence.

The noble Lord, Lord Addington, asked about initial teacher training in relation to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. ITT providers must design their courses to incorporate the skills and knowledge detailed in the core content framework to support their developing expertise. This clearly includes the requirement, in standards, that all teachers must have a clear understanding of all the needs of their pupils, including, critically, those with special educational needs. That is also carried forward into the early-career framework, which was designed in consultation with the education sector, including specialists on SEND, of course.

Lord Addington (LD): I am hearing that this can be one or two days' training. Is that adequate to get a rough understanding of even the neurodiverse sector, especially those who are not the most glaring examples? I cannot see how it can be.

Baroness Barran (Con): The framework obviously focuses on the outcome, which is that teachers are competent in all aspects. Given the percentage of children in the classroom with SEN, that is obviously a core part.

In view of the time, I shall continue. This desire to create the best initial start for teachers is why we asked Ian Bauckham to lead a review of the ITT market, focusing on how we can ensure that the quality of ITT is consistently of a world-class standard. As mentioned, Ian has been supported by an advisory group, and the report making recommendations to government was published in July 2021. As we have heard this evening, government has consulted on the recommendations made in the report, and we are currently considering them in light of the responses that we had to the consultation. We expect to publish our full response shortly.

In making their recommendations, the expert advisory group reviewed the available evidence on initial teacher training, including international and UK evidence. The objective evidence shows that there is clearly much to be proud of, as we have heard from your Lordships, in our current system of initial teacher training, with many examples of world-class practice, delivered by providers of all types. As would be expected, it also shows that there is scope to improve further.

To level up standards in every school, for every child, we need to strive for excellence in all corners of the country. The evidence we have available suggests that there is more we can do to make sure that high-quality training is being consistently delivered across the whole system. We must ensure that all trainees receive the training that they deserve.

The noble Baroness, Lady Donaghy, raised concerns about the content of the national professional qualifications. The NPQ frameworks have all been independently reviewed by the Education Endowment Foundation, which has her extremely knowledgeable noble friend, the noble Baroness, Lady Morris of

Yardley, in its fan club—I will join her there if I may. That is obviously to ensure that the content is based on the best available evidence. The delivery of the NPQs will be quality assured by Ofsted, which I hope gives the noble Baroness some confidence.

The noble Baroness, Lady Morris, raised—these may be my words rather than hers—the absolute importance of developing critical thinking skills. We have built that into the framework at a number of levels, including in our consultation around the new specialist NPQs. There was a clear demand for more qualifications at the middle leadership level, for teachers who want to specialise in leading teaching or curriculum in their subject or phase, as well as supporting the professional development of other teachers. I hope that goes some way to addressing her question.

We continue to value the expertise of all types of ITT providers in developing courses that are underpinned by a strong evidence base. All courses leading to qualified teacher status must incorporate the mandatory core content framework in full. However, to be absolutely clear, in response to the suggestion of several noble Lords, including the noble Baroness, Lady Blower, the Government do not prescribe the curriculum of ITT courses beyond this and we have no plans to do so. It remains for individual providers to draw on their own expertise to design courses of high quality that are based on evidence and appropriate to the needs of trainees and to the subject, phase and age range that they will be teaching.

In response to the question from the noble Lord, Lord Storey, about training, child development and dyslexia, the core content framework sets out a minimum entitlement of knowledge, skills and experiences that trainees need to enter the profession in the best position possible to teach and support pupils to succeed, including pupils identified within the four areas of need set out in the SEND code of practice.

On a point raised by the noble Lord, Lord Knight of Weymouth, and others, I reassure the House that the Government have no plans to remove certain types of providers from the ITT market. The market is formed from a rich tapestry of provision and partnerships, as we have heard this afternoon, including higher education institutions and school-based providers, and we want to retain this diversity in the future. We value the choice this offers trainees, and our objective is not to reduce the range of ITT providers but to ensure that supply is of the highest quality it can be.

There have been some calls to pause the review or, from the noble Lord, Lord Knight, to cancel it altogether. He will not be surprised that that is not in the Government's plans. We know that there have been particular pressures and we are very grateful to ITT providers for what they have achieved during the pandemic. However, we believe that supporting our teachers with the highest-quality training and professional development is the best way that we can improve pupil outcomes.

That said, as we develop our response to the report, we are considering the timescales for implementation and will ensure that we allow reasonable time for ITT partnerships to implement any of the review's recommendations that we take forward.

My noble friend Lord Lexden asked about the compulsory reaccreditation of suppliers. The review report recommends that an accreditation process is the best way in which to implement the recommended quality requirements. If any of the recommendations are accepted, we will proceed carefully to maintain enough training places to continue to meet teacher supply needs across the country. I can reassure the noble Lord, Lord Watson, that the accreditation process will indeed be open, transparent and equitable.

There is agreement across all involved in initial teacher training that mentors play a pivotal role in providing trainees with strong professional support and subject-specific support—points that my noble friend Lord Kirkham made. Ian Bauckham's report identifies effective mentoring as a critical component of high-quality ITT and makes a number of recommendations about the identification and training of mentors. Alongside mentoring, school placements are critical to teacher training. It is right that people training to become a teacher spend the majority of their time based in schools. That is why having enough high-quality school placements is fundamental to ensuring the quality and sufficiency of teachers entering the system each year.

I am puzzled by the suggestion of the noble Viscount, Lord Hanworth, and the noble Lord, Lord Knight, that schools will be put off from employing early-career teachers. Certainly, in my conversations with schools that are involved in initial teacher training and the teaching school hubs, they feel that this is a fantastic opportunity to build the culture of their school or multi-academy trust into that initial training. They believe that this will help give those teachers the best start to their careers and improve retention.

As we consider our response to the recommendations we are, of course, very aware of the need to protect teacher supply. Many noble Lords, including the noble Baroness, Lady Blower, raised concerns about that. We will ensure that the ITT market has the capacity to deliver enough well-trained newly-qualified teachers to the schools and ultimately the pupils who need them. This will include ensuring that there is good geographical availability of initial teacher training.

The noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, asked about the criteria used for awarding bursaries. Initial teacher training bursaries are offered in subjects where recruitment is the most challenging. In the academic year 2020-21, we exceeded the postgraduate ITT targets in art, in which it was 132%. In response to the question of the noble Lord, Lord Watson, regarding music, the figure was 225%.

The noble Baroness, Lady Coussins, asked about the recruitment of modern foreign language teachers from abroad. As she pointed out and is well aware, EEA and Swiss citizens with settled or pre-settled status under the EU settlement scheme can continue living, working and studying in the UK. In England, that also allowed continued eligibility for home fee status, financial support from Student Finance England and ITT bursaries on a similar basis to domestic students, subject to their meeting the usual residence requirement. There is no limit on the number of international students who can come to the UK to

study. For modern foreign languages in 2020-21, 29% of new entrants to postgraduate ITT were from the EEA or Switzerland and 5% were from outside. That overseas/UK split for modern foreign languages has remained broadly consistent for the past few years.

The noble Baroness, Lady Blower, asked about the new Institute of Teaching, and it will, from September 2022, be England's flagship teacher development provider. As the first organisation of its kind, it will design and deliver a coherent teacher development pathway, from trainee through to executive headship. It will base its teacher development on the best available research evidence about what works, as set out in the ITT core content framework. There are so many acronyms here—the ECF and NPQ frameworks and the NLE development programme—but I know noble Lords are familiar with all these TLAs. We really believe this will ensure that teacher development in England goes from strength to strength. In answer to the question from the noble Lord, Lord Storey, I say that we are running an open procurement to identify the suppliers that will allow us to establish the institute next year.

I thank all noble Lords for their thoughtful and constructive challenge to the Government's plans. The response to the ITT review will be published later this year, and I look forward very much to debating this further once that has happened. We also look forward to working with the ITT sector and its partners to ensure that all ITT in England is of the highest quality possible.

Baroness Coussins (CB): Just before the noble Baroness sits down, could she undertake to write to me with answers to my questions on bursaries, SKE funding and scholarships for MFL trainees?

Baroness Barran (Con): I would be delighted to write to the noble Baroness and any other noble Lords, where I have not answered their questions.

6.11 pm

Baroness Donaghy (Lab): I thank all those who contributed to this debate for their passion about teacher education and the quality of teachers. I am disappointed by the Minister's response. "Shortly" presumably means before Christmas, so we could be having another debate on this in the next few days. I am glad she said that there were no plans to remove partners from ITT and that she wants to keep variety. Let us wait and see. If the Government still have decided to keep compulsory reaccreditation, I do not see how that promise can be fulfilled. It sounds to me as if that decision has already been taken not to give in on compulsory reaccreditation. I can only urge for that to be looked at again.

The other thing the Minister said is that the Government would ensure that supply would not suffer, but she did not say how, in light of all those uncertainties. I think it is a "wait and see" for the responses to the consultation. Let us hope they are more positive than her response.

I leave one last bit of advice, if I may, about the Institute of Teaching. When bodies are imposed without the proper institutional framework and belong to other

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live, organic institutions, they nearly always fail. I would like the Minister to have a look at the history of the Council for National Academic Awards, of which I watched the birth and demise. It is an important lesson when one is creating these artificial institutions run, possibly, by bodies that are not going to be well qualified.

Motion agreed.

Charities Bill [HL]
Reported from Committee

The Bill was reported from the Special Public Bill Committee with amendments. The Bill, as amended, was ordered to be printed.

House adjourned at 6.14 pm.