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**HOUSE OF COMMONS  
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY  
DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**Monday 14 March 2016**



# House of Commons

*Monday 14 March 2016*

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

## PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## BUSINESS BEFORE QUESTIONS

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON BILL [*LORDS*]

*Consideration of Bill, as amended, opposed and deferred until Monday 21 March (Standing Order No. 20.)*

## Oral Answers to Questions

### WORK AND PENSIONS

*The Secretary of State was asked—*

#### **Welfare Reform**

1. **Peter Grant** (Glenrothes) (SNP): What assessment he has made of the effect of his Department's welfare reforms on low and middle-income households since 2010. [904050]

**The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr Iain Duncan Smith):** As a result of our reforms, the number of people in work is at a record high; income inequality is lower than it was in 2009-10; the number of workless households in the social rented sector is also at a record low; the number of children living in workless households is at a record low; youth unemployment is at the lowest level in a decade; and the employment rate for women is also at a record high.

**Peter Grant:** I am grateful to the Secretary of State for his answer, but the question was not about work—it was about low income. It is one thing being in work, but it is quite a different matter if people are in work that does not pay them enough to earn a living. Is he concerned about reports at the weekend that the latest changes to the personal independence payment system will adversely affect 640,000 people by 2020, making it difficult or impossible for them to live independent lives? Does he not accept that welfare changes that start with a target saving before any consideration is given to the impact on vulnerable people are always going to go wrong?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** The hon. Gentleman talks about my answers to him about low and middle-income people and work, but the point to make is that work is the best route of poverty, and it is by getting people back to work that we are getting people out of poverty. It is worth reminding him that the poverty figures show that poverty has fallen, both for adults and for children, and that is the critical bit. The reforms we are making are helping people to help themselves to get beyond dependency and back into full-time work.

**Andrew Bridgen** (North West Leicestershire) (Con): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the latest low-income statistics show that the percentage of individuals and children in relatively low-income circumstances is at its lowest level since the 1980s?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** Yes, and it is also worth noting that income inequality is now lower than it was in 2009-10. It is worth reminding ourselves that, for all the complaining from the Opposition, income inequality rose under Labour to the highest levels it had ever been.

**Andrew Gwynne** (Denton and Reddish) (Lab): But the Secretary of State will know that research analysis from the House of Commons Library shows that three in four people who are currently receiving tax credits will see that in-work support reduced when they are naturally migrated over to universal credit. What does he have to say to those millions of workers whose in-work support will be revised downwards?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** As we have made clear on a number of occasions, anybody migrating across from tax credits will see no change to their income—the Institute for Fiscal Studies has made that clear publicly and we also make it clear. It is also worth reminding the hon. Gentleman, because his party seems to have opposed the advent of universal credit, that in the latest IFS-supported research universal credit claimants are seen to be much more likely to go into work than they would be under jobseeker's allowance, they move into work faster, they stay in work longer and they earn more money. Those are major positives for people who are trying hard and working, whereas the last Labour Government penalised anybody who wanted to go to work.

**Neil Gray** (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): A report published yesterday by the Women's Budget Group highlighted that this Tory Government's policies are predicted to be more regressive even than those of their coalition predecessor. The report highlighted that single parent women and single female pensioners will see their standard of living reduced by an average of 23% by 2020. The Secretary of State's Department's policies are having a negative impact on gender equality. Will he go back to the drawing board to create a social security and pensions system that is fair and equitable?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** There have been many forecasts and most of them have been absolutely wrong—even the IFS forecast about child poverty has been wrong. It is worth reminding the hon. Gentleman of our reforms: the national living wage will give a boost of £900 to full-time workers who are currently on the national minimum wage; the personal tax allowance rising to £12,500 helps those on low income; and general childcare provision is available. That brings me to his point about lone parents, because universal credit, coupled with the incredibly generous childcare provision, now makes lone parents better off in work than they ever would have been before. That is why more people are going to work.

**Neil Gray:** That answer will not provide a crumb of comfort to those being hammered by social security cuts up and down this country. Today I have written to the Chancellor, highlighting the devastating impact that

the cuts to employment and support allowance and to universal credit will have on disabled and sick recipients. These cuts are predicted to save £1.4 billion, yet just £100 million appears to be set aside for the long-awaited, much vaunted White Paper on health and work. Does the Secretary of State agree that the White Paper must be properly resourced in order to provide direct financial support to the sick and disabled people who are seeing their support cut? Will he today finally confirm when that White Paper will be published?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** The White Paper will be published well before the summer break. It is worth reminding the hon. Gentleman of two things. First, and really importantly, half the spending on welfare and public services still goes to the poorest 40%, as it did in 2009-10. Secondly, it is also important to note that we expect no change in the proportion of spending projected to be received by the lowest and middle quintiles between 2010-11 and 2020. I also say to him that it is a bit rich that the Scottish Nationalists, who are in Government in Scotland and who now face a £15 billion deficit, which would have racked them had they gone for independence, have not once referred to the tough choices that they might have to make to reduce that deficit.

**Owen Smith (Pontypridd) (Lab):** Politics is always about choices, about priorities and about values. This past weekend, we saw the values and priorities of the current Government laid bare in their decision to implement a so-called welfare reform that will see £1.2 billion cut from the incomes of disabled people to pay for—we are told—a tax cut for top-rate taxpayers. Will the Secretary of State come back to the Dispatch Box and honestly describe that as a welfare reform, and then justify those choices?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** The changes that have been announced on personal independence payment are about changing, reforming and improving what goes to those who most need it in this disability allowance. The key point about this, which has been made by the Under-Secretary of State for Disabled People, my hon. Friend the Member for North Swindon (Justin Tomlinson), is that we put out a consultation long before the Christmas period. The Opposition had an opportunity to make their submissions, which they did, and we listened to all the submissions that came back. As a result, we are not implementing any of the first four options. It is right to continue to recognise aids and appliances and all the activities, as we previously did, but with a change to activities 5 and 6, changing the points numbers from two to one. That brings them into line with activity 3, in which one point has always been awarded for aids and appliances. Finally, activities 5 and 6 are less reliable indicators of additional cost. This all came on the back of an independent review published just after the last election, asking us to look again at the way those indicators are used. We have done that and, in fairness, this is the right way to go and will improve the lot of the worst off.

**Owen Smith:** For the benefit of the House, may I translate what the Secretary of State has just said? What he means is that he will take away £1.2 billion, completely eroding access to personal independence payment for 200,000 people, and cutting it by a third, from £70 to

£50, for a further 450,000 people—people who are quite often unable to use the toilet or get dressed unaided. That comes on top of the cuts to ESA that went through the House last week. Before I came to the Chamber this afternoon, I asked disabled people what question they would like to put to the Secretary of State. One answer stood out. It was quite simply, “How does he sleep at night?”

**Mr Duncan Smith:** May I remind the hon. Gentleman that, under this Government, spending on sickness and disability benefits has risen every year. We spend more than £50 billion, which is more than any other OECD country of equivalent size, such as Germany. I am proud of that, and, even with these changes, we will continue to see spending on PIP rise every year all the way to the end of this Parliament. As I have said, I am proud of that, because our reforms ensure that those most in need get full support and that the way that we do it is fair to everybody. I am also proud of the fact that this represents 6% of all Government spending, because, by reforming the economy and reforming welfare, we can get the money to those who most need it. By contrast, when Labour was in Government, we had a lot of promises, a broken economy and cuts all round.

## Disability and Employment

2. **Helen Whately (Faversham and Mid Kent) (Con):** What steps he is taking to support people with disabilities into employment. [904051]

12. **Peter Aldous (Waveney) (Con):** What steps he is taking to support people with disabilities into employment. [904061]

16. **Rebecca Harris (Castle Point) (Con):** What steps he is taking to support people with disabilities into employment. [904066]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Disabled People (Justin Tomlinson):** This Government are committed to halving the disability employment gap. In the spending review, we announced a real terms spending increase on supporting disabled people into work. In the last year, 152,000 more disabled people entered employment. Our forthcoming White Paper will set out our plans to support more disabled people into work.

**Helen Whately:** I recently met the Kent Learning Disability Partnership, and the people there with disabilities told me that they are keen to work and welcome the Government's support for that, but they asked me whether the Government would consider following the example of the NHS and introducing an accessible information standard, because they said they often found the communications from my hon. Friend's Department too confusing and would like them to be easier to understand.

**Justin Tomlinson:** That is a powerful point. On 14 January I launched a taskforce that included the Royal National Institute of Blind People, the British Deaf Association, Action on Hearing Loss, the National Federation for the Blind, People First, the British Institute of Learning Disabilities, Sense and Mencap to look at that issue and

at how, as a Department, we can lead across Government. I would be delighted if my hon. Friend would join that taskforce.

**Peter Aldous:** May I urge the Minister to publish the White Paper on employment support for those with disabilities as soon as practically possible? I take note of the Secretary of State's earlier response that it would be before the summer break, but there has been some slippage on that. Will my hon. Friend outline what provisions the White Paper will contain on integrating employment and health support?

**Justin Tomlinson:** We will shortly be publishing the White Paper, which will set out the reforms for improved support for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions. We will be looking at a number of issues, including ways to engage with employers as part of our commitment to halve the disability employment gap, integration across health and employment, and further localised tailored support. This is an exciting opportunity.

**Rebecca Harris:** My hon. Friend the Minister will be aware of the superb work that the Salvation Army does in my constituency in helping disabled people get back into employment, and of the fact that I and the jobcentre are about to hold a Disability Confident event. Can my hon. Friend expand on what more his Department can do in Castle Point, not least by engaging with employers to get more of them to take on disabled employees?

**Justin Tomlinson:** I thank my hon. Friend for agreeing to host her own Disability Confident event. More than 50 MPs from all parties are doing that, supporting our work to halve the disability employment gap, and promoting services such as access to work, where we now have funding for an additional 25,000 places on top of the near-record 38,000 that we are currently helping.

**Mr Speaker:** I call Naz Shah.

**Naz Shah** (Bradford West) (Lab): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Question 21.

**Mr Speaker:** No, on this question. Do you wish to come in on this question?

**Naz Shah:** No.

**Mr Speaker:** We may or may not get to question 21. Patience may be rewarded. We shall see.

**Carolyn Harris** (Swansea East) (Lab): Last Friday we heard that an additional £1.2 billion is to be cut from the PIP budget. That translates into £2,000 a year less for more than 60,000 claimants. What method or madness led the Minister to think that cutting support could help PIP claimants into work or to achieve independent living?

**Justin Tomlinson:** We are continuing to make improvements for claimants across the assessment process for PIP. At the end of this Parliament, we will continue to see increased numbers going through the system and benefiting from PIP.

**Stephen Pound** (Ealing North) (Lab): The establishment of a taskforce is occasionally a mechanism for kicking the can down the road, but in this case I give the Minister credit for his good intentions. Will he consider adding the Royal British Legion to the list of consultees, because there is a real issue of disabled ex-servicemen and women having a great deal of difficulty getting into work?

**Justin Tomlinson:** That is an important point, and something we are already doing work on. I would be happy to discuss that further.

**Debbie Abrahams** (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab): The Government have sunk to a new low with this cut to the personal independence payment. As my hon. Friends have said, by 2020 some 640,000 disabled people will have their personal independence payment cut, a third by £2,865 a year and two thirds by £1,400 a year, stripping disabled people of their independence and their dignity. That is on top of the £24 billion cut to 4 million people since 2012. What are the Government's estimates of how many of those disabled people will be in work, and how many will be unable to work as a consequence of those cuts?

**Justin Tomlinson:** PIP is about the extra costs that those with a disability would face. We made these changes on the back of the independent review published by Paul Gray, in which he highlighted concerns about the use of aids and appliance, the three recent legal judgments, and the fact that in the past 18 months we saw a trebling of the number of claimants who were able to access the benefit purely for aids and appliances. We listened carefully to the extensive consultation, including feedback from the hon. Lady, and for that reason aids and appliances will continue to be taken into account across all eight of the daily living components. We have ruled out the other four measures, and by the end of this Parliament there will be even greater numbers benefiting from the PIP system. [*Interruption.*]

**Debbie Abrahams:** Well, a Government Member is saying, "Listen to the answer." Again, I am afraid, it is a non-answer—a hallmark of this dodgy, inept and unjust Government. Let us see whether they can do a bit better with this question.

Social security spending on disabled people as a percentage of GDP is lower now than it was in 1960. The Conservative manifesto for the last general election pledged not to cut social security support for disabled people. How and why have the Government gone back on that commitment, and how much more do they think disabled people will be able to take?

**Justin Tomlinson:** We spend almost double what the Germans spend—about 6% of our Government spending, which is more than we spend on our police and defence budgets combined.

### Family Stability

3. **John Glen** (Salisbury) (Con): What assessment he has made of the effect of family stability on levels of poverty and on life chances. [904052]

15. **Suella Fernandes** (Fareham) (Con): What assessment he has made of the effect of family stability on levels of poverty and on life chances. [904065]

**The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr Iain Duncan Smith):** Our family stability review found that family instability is one of the main drivers of poverty, with unstable families more likely to have low incomes. That is why support for families is firmly at the heart of what we are doing in Government, such as doubling the funding for relationship support and doubling the amount of free childcare.

**John Glen:** I welcome the Government's determination to tackle the root causes of poverty. With respect to the doubling of funding for the relationship support scheme, what steps is the Secretary of State taking to ensure that the scheme can be accessed across the country by those who find it hardest to reach Government support and those who most need it?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right, and I pay tribute to the huge amount of work he has done in backing this up and supporting it, and to the work he is doing at present to make sure it gets across to everybody. We are clear that any new or extended support that we provide—and we do—will need to be accessible and effective for all families, no matter where they are, with additional, complex needs, and more will be said on that when we bring forward the life chances strategy, to be published this summer. However, I can guarantee to him that it is the No. 1 priority to make sure everybody who needs support gets it.

**Suella Fernandes:** Domestic violence is a stain on our society and often a cause of family instability. The Southern Domestic Abuse Service supports victims of domestic violence in Fareham, providing help in the community as an alternative to fleeing for refuge, which is often more costly and disruptive for the family. Will my right hon. Friend join me in congratulating the Southern Domestic Abuse Service on the vital work it does?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I certainly will. I myself have been in the House on a ten-minute rule Bill to try to improve access to legal means to prosecute those who drive people to suicide, and I still believe this is something that could be done. I congratulate my hon. Friend and her remarkable charity. The Government have backed that work up, because we have now trebled the amount of money going to these organisations. I would be very happy, at some point, to meet them to congratulate them myself.

**Frank Field** (Birkenhead) (Lab): Would the Secretary of State like to confirm that if we look at the current poverty data, we see that there are almost no poor children in those households where there is a parent in work and one parent is available for part-time work? What lesson does he draw from that?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I simply draw the lesson that we want more people to get back into work, because a household with work is a household that is more likely to be out of poverty. As usual, I pay tribute to the right

hon. Gentleman, because he has done a huge amount of work on this issue. That lesson has been the drive behind everything that we have done—universal credit, our attempt to make sure that people get into work, and increased childcare to improve the possibility for more women to be in work to boost household income. However, universal credit also ensures that the first person into work is better off, and that therefore improves the likelihood of a household having more income and less chance of being in poverty.

**Conor McGinn** (St Helens North) (Lab): If we are talking about cause and effect, I fear the question is the wrong way around. What I would like the Secretary of State to explain is how increasing levels of poverty under his Government are affecting family stability. Perhaps he might answer that question.

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I just wish the hon. Gentleman would check the figures. There are 800,000 fewer people in relative poverty, including 300,000 fewer children. [Interruption.] I know it is always awkward for the Opposition when the facts do not bear out the rhetoric, but the reality is that the proportion in relative low income is the lowest since the 1980s, income inequality is lower than it was when his Government left office, and household disposable income is £1,500 higher than two years ago. It is improving, but it is not good enough—we want to go further and further. All I can say is that we are working to get people into work and make sure that work always pays, as it is the route out of poverty. I just wish that instead of carping Labour Members would one day support that.

#### Disability: Welfare Support

4. **Rachael Maskell** (York Central) (Lab/Co-op): What steps he has taken to review the system of assessments for disabled people seeking welfare support. [904053]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Disabled People (Justin Tomlinson):** Independent reviews have been carried out on the assessments for personal independence payment and work capability assessment. The first review of the assessment for personal independence payment was undertaken and published in December 2014. There have also been five independent reviews of the work capability assessment.

**Rachael Maskell:** Disabled people, particularly those with mental challenges, report that the work capability assessment is exacerbating their ill health, even to the point of wanting to take their own life. Those constituents are vulnerable and fragile. The situation is made worse by changes in benefits, financial hardship, and threats of future cuts. Rather than deny the problem, will the Secretary of State order an independent review of those with mental health challenges to assess the impact of the system from a service user's perspective?

**Justin Tomlinson:** Following the Dr Litchfield recommendations, we accept that more needs to be done. We are improving training for staff, and now, across the jobcentre networks, we have mental function champions who can spread best practice in mental health.

**Mr David Winnick** (Walsall North) (Lab): In view of Friday's statement, why do the Government have such a compulsive need to hit out at disabled people at every opportunity? Does not the Minister realise how difficult it is for those people to lead their lives while their income is being undermined by the Government? This can only be described as an ongoing Tory war against the disabled.

**Justin Tomlinson:** I simply do not accept that. We are increasing the numbers of people who will benefit from the PIP system, we continue to improve the claimant's journey, and we work extensively with our stakeholders to make sure that improvements are ongoing. By the end of this Parliament, we will be spending more money in this area than we are today.

**Drew Hendry** (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) (SNP): One of my constituents, a Mr McLoughlin, is registered as blind, but he has been denied, through the access to work scheme, essential equipment to help him work. The reason given was that able-bodied people would also be able to use the equipment. I am interested to know what equipment the Minister believes an able-bodied person could not use that a registered blind person could. Will he personally look into Mr McLoughlin's case and that of others who face the same difficulty?

**Justin Tomlinson:** I will happily look into it, because without having all the details I cannot comment. On the broader issue, we are now helping more than 38,000 people a year—close to record numbers—with the access to work funding, which is in the fourth year of growth, and we have just secured funding for a further 25,000.

**Mark Pawsey** (Rugby) (Con): My constituent, who is also registered blind, has told me how valuable the access to work scheme has been in getting him into work. His disability employment adviser contacted a new employer about his needs and they made workplace adjustments without which it would be very difficult for him to hold down his job. Is it not the case that this scheme is extremely valuable in supporting people such as my constituent?

**Justin Tomlinson:** I thank my hon. Friend. That is why we were so delighted to secure the extra funding for a further 25,000 places. We will be doing a lot more to promote this scheme, and I encourage employers to take advantage of it.

### Steel Workers

5. **Tom Pursglove** (Corby) (Con): What support the Government are providing to redundant steel workers to help them get back into skilled work. [904054]

**The Minister for Employment (Priti Patel):** The rapid response service delivers tailored support for individuals and communities affected by large-scale redundancies. This service was used to help steel workers affected by recent job losses at SSI in Redcar, and of course at Tata in Scunthorpe and Port Talbot.

**Tom Pursglove:** I thank the Minister for that answer. A few weeks ago we heard the very troubling news that 30 jobs were to be lost at Corby's Tata site. What support has the Department provided, alongside others, to those 30 individuals and their families?

**Priti Patel:** My hon. Friend is right to mention the Corby site. Again, support from the rapid response service and the Department's team was offered to Tata workers following the announcement of the job losses. On top of that, at this very difficult time, we are giving those individuals support through our DWP network—for example, guidance on job applications, training and support—to enable them to get into work all over again.

### Universal Credit

6. **Neil Coyle** (Bermondsey and Old Southwark) (Lab): How many people his Department expects to be naturally migrated on to universal credit during this Parliament. [904055]

**The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr Iain Duncan Smith):** Universal credit is rolling out, with the live service available in over 90% of jobcentres, and full roll-out will continue according to the published plan. It is worth reminding everybody that it is complete in London, and very shortly—probably by the end of this month or the beginning of next—universal credit will be in pretty much every single jobcentre in the country.

**Neil Coyle:** The Secretary of State made reference earlier to unreliable predictions. He predicted that by today's date 8 million people would be on universal credit, but the DWP confirmed last week that fewer than 365,000 people are on universal credit—a staggeringly pathetic success rate of 4.4%. The only reason why the Government are pushing out universal credit now is to deliver the tax credit cut that will hit thousands of working families in my constituency, so is it not time the quiet man went silent on pretending that universal credit is a success?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I bet that looked good when the hon. Gentleman wrote it down. It is utter rubbish.

**Mr Barry Sheerman** (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op): I hope that the Secretary of State does not think that this is a load of rubbish. I visited this morning, with Dame Steve Shirley, a wonderful place where young people with autism are prepared for work. They are very concerned about how universal credit is going to affect them, because they have already seen education not being allowed in their personal plans. Remember that autism costs this country £34 billion a year. If we do not get those young people into employment, the sum will increase and the misery of the families will also increase.

**Mr Duncan Smith:** The hon. Gentleman is right. Autism is a real problem, and we want to help the young people and adults who have that problem as much as we can. Universal credit lends itself hugely to that. Unlike in the past, when those people would have gone from jobseeker's allowance to working tax credits by themselves and had no advice, help or support once in work, under universal credit the adviser will stay with them all the way.

Importantly, we have now committed £100 million to train advisers to be specialists in helping people who have medical conditions such as autism, and that should help enormously. I would be very happy for the hon. Gentleman to come and discuss with me and the Minister

for Disabled People what more we can do, because we are determined to make sure that universal credit helps those in the deepest need as much as it possibly can.

**Nick Thomas-Symonds** (Torfaen) (Lab): The Secretary of State told “The Andrew Marr Show” show on 6 December:

“Nobody will lose any money on arrival on universal credit from tax credits because they’re cash protected, which means there’s transitional protection. They won’t be losing any money.”

If there were any doubt about that reassurance, the Secretary of State repeated it earlier to my hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Andrew Gwynne). But according to the Library, only 27% of the final case load for universal credit will have got there through managed migration, so 73% of them will not have received transitional protection. Apply that to the current tax credit claimants in work, and 2.3 million families will be worse off as a result of moving from tax credits to universal credit. *[Interruption.]* Oh, I will give you the question. Will the Secretary of State apologise to those families for giving such nonsensical reassurances?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I say to the hon. Gentleman that he is completely wrong on all that. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has made it absolutely clear that

“no family will take an immediate...hit”

when transferred to universal credit. That is a reality. They are cash protected. Therefore, as they move across, their income levels at the time will remain exactly the same. As we said earlier, we are transitionally protecting them. I just wish that the Opposition, unless they want to stay forever in opposition, would get with it and support universal credit instead of attacking it all the time.

### Universal Credit

7. **Christian Matheson** (City of Chester) (Lab): What estimate his Department has made of the likely average change in income for a disabled worker as a result of changes to the universal credit work allowance. [904056]

**The Minister for Employment (Priti Patel):** The effect of changes to universal credit work allowances cannot be considered in isolation. They form part of a broader package of measures, including the new national living wage and the increase in the personal tax allowance.

**Christian Matheson:** I thank the Minister for that response, but the Library disagrees and suggests that next year, disabled people will lose £1,700 on average. May I suggest respectfully to the Minister that nobody chooses to be disabled; they are that way through illness, accident or simply bad luck? Now is the time not to pile more misery on those unfortunate people, but to give them a bit of dignity by not making this dreadful cut.

**Priti Patel:** The only point I would make is that this Government are supporting more disabled people to get them back into work. I of course agree with the hon. Gentleman’s point about dignity. We absolutely are providing dignity to individuals, by supporting them into work and also in giving them the financial support that will secure their employment in the long run.

### Women and the State Pension

8. **Jo Cox** (Batley and Spennings) (Lab): What the average notice period was for women whose pension age was brought forward by the Pension Act 2011. [904057]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr Shailesh Vara):** Women whose pension age was increased had a notice period, between Royal Assent and their new state pension age, of between four years and eight months and 14 years and five months. The average notice period was 10 years and 11 months.

**Jo Cox:** One of the 1,400 women in my constituency affected by these changes recently told me that she is still waiting for official notification from the Department. Does the Minister accept the abject failure on the part of the DWP to communicate these changes to the women affected by them? Does he think it is acceptable that some women have found out only through the brilliant work of the Women Against State Pension Inequality campaigners?

**Mr Vara:** Between 2009 and 2010, over 5 million notices were sent to people, according to the records held by Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs. I would point out to the hon. Lady that, in 2012, only 6% of women within 10 years of state pension age thought that their state pension age would be at age 60.

**Kevin Foster** (Torbay) (Con): Given the rhetoric in the recent Opposition day debate about the state pension age changes, does the Minister share my surprise that the six options put forward by the shadow Secretary of State would not make much difference at all to many women born in the 1950s? Does he agree that it is time for the Opposition to be clear about the choices they would make and how they would pay for them, and also to be clear about the changes they would not make?

**Mr Speaker:** Order. I know that the Minister will want to focus exclusively, and doubtless with loving care, on his own policy, and will not dilate on that of the Opposition, which would be disorderly. Knowing the hon. Gentleman, I do not think he does disorderly.

**Mr Vara:** You put that so eloquently, Mr Speaker, but I hope you will allow me to make the odd comment. It would be impractical to follow the Opposition’s policies because they have no sense of arithmetic.

**Ian Blackford** (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP): We are not just dealing with the issue of the notice period: there is a fundamental unfairness. Let us take an example: a constituent of mine born in 1953 would have retired at age 63, but a woman born on 10 February 1954 will not retire until July 2019, two and a half years later. That is patently unjust. What the Government can do is to mitigate the timetable so that people have time to react. That is the right thing to do, and the Government should act.

**Mr Vara:** The hon. Gentleman talks about mitigating things. May I just say to him that transitional arrangements were made at the time? Those transitional arrangements cost £1.1 billion. The period that women would have to work before they retired was reduced from two years to



18 months, and 81% of the women affected by that period of 18 months will not have an extension of beyond 12 months.

**Angela Rayner** (Ashton-under-Lyne) (Lab): I am really disappointed that the Minister still does not recognise that those women were given a totally inadequate notice period. Given that unfairness and the Secretary of State's earlier comments—this Government are pretending they want to take people out of poverty—will the Minister look at the six options we have presented to the Government to deal with this injustice? Will he, as is supported by many Members of his party, allow those affected—*[Interruption.]* I am coming to that, if the hon. Member for Hexham (Guy Opperman) would listen. Will the Minister allow those affected to take a reduced state pension at an earlier age and be paid a lower state pension for a longer period?

**Mr Vara:** As far as the six options are concerned, all of them have a cost. It is time that the Opposition started to think about where the money would come from. The hon. Lady lays the blame at the feet of this Government, but she might reflect on the 13 years during which her party was in power, when it did absolutely nothing. *[Interruption.]* She is chuntering from a sedentary position about £20-something billion. May I just say to her that the cost of undoing the Pensions Act 2011 would be £30 billion?

### Unemployment

9. **Amanda Solloway** (Derby North) (Con): What progress his Department has made on reducing the rate of unemployment. [904058]

13. **Matt Warman** (Boston and Skegness) (Con): What progress his Department has made on reducing the rate of unemployment. [904063]

**The Minister for Employment (Priti Patel):** In 2010, we inherited from Labour an unemployment rate of 8%. Since then, we have made excellent progress and the unemployment rate has continued to fall. It is now 5.1 %, which is the lowest rate in a decade.

**Amanda Solloway:** I thank the Minister for that answer. As I am sure all hon. Members are aware, this week is apprenticeship week. May I therefore ask her what steps are being taken to help to convert apprenticeship places into full-time positions, particularly in my constituency of Derby North?

**Priti Patel:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right—this week is national apprenticeship week. In her area, there have been in excess of 5,000 apprenticeship starts. We are working with employers and have an employer engagement strategy across the Government, to ensure not only that we leverage our work in terms of encouraging more employers to take apprentices, but that apprenticeships are converted into careers—not just full-time jobs, but lifelong careers—for those young people who have the privilege of participating in those schemes.

**Matt Warman:** Many of my constituents work hard in the tourist industry but unfortunately become unemployed at the end of the season. Forward-thinking

employers are annualising those seasonal contracts so that people are better able to plan their money and fewer people become unemployed. Will my right hon. Friend tell me what the Government are doing to encourage that good annualising of contracts?

**Priti Patel:** My hon. Friend is right, particularly about seasonal work and seasonal trends in local labour markets. Working with employers is crucial in ensuring that the Department for Work and Pensions and our jobcentres understand the flows and patterns that take place in the local labour market. It is also crucial for us in the Department for Work and Pensions—we are doing this—to work with those individuals who find that seasonal work or changes in hours suit their individual needs and flexibility. Obviously, we work with Jobcentre Plus to ensure that we support people to fill those roles.

### Women Against State Pension Inequality

11. **Mr Alistair Carmichael** (Orkney and Shetland) (LD): Whether he has had discussions with the Women Against State Pension Inequality campaign; and if he will make a statement. [904060]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr Shailesh Vara):** It is fair to say that many in the House have had discussions or correspondence with members of the WASPI campaign. The right hon. Gentleman will be aware that, in recent weeks, we have had a number of debates in which Members of Parliament on both sides of the House have expressed the views of their constituents.

**Mr Carmichael:** I am grateful to the Minister for that answer and encourage him to continue the engagement with the WASPI campaign. One of its achievements has been to bring forward an army of women who say that they were not given proper and effective notice of what was coming towards them in terms of their retirement age. Whether that was the right thing or the wrong thing to do is no longer the issue. The fact is that it was done badly, and that now needs proper attention.

**Mr Vara:** I have a huge amount of respect for the right hon. Gentleman—I had the privilege of serving in the coalition Government Whips Office when he was one of the deputy Whips. At the time, he supported the Pensions Act 2011 and was responsible for persuading his Lib Dem colleagues to do likewise. One thing that was always the case with the Lib Dems before the coalition Government was that they blew with the wind. There was a temporary pause during the coalition Government. He is now proving that blowing with the wind is part of the Lib Dems' DNA, and that they are back to normal.

**Richard Graham** (Gloucester) (Con): The Opposition suggestion that the Government could allow that group of women to take their pensions early from the age of 63 has not been fully costed by anyone. Will my hon. Friend share with the House what the implications might be in terms of cost, whether it needs primary legislation and whether men over the age of 65 will be affected?

**Mr Vara:** We have today published information regarding that. It would cost additional funds, and the Opposition and others who support that position might wish to take that into account.

### Youth Employment

17. **Alberto Costa** (South Leicestershire) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to help young people into employment. [904067]

**The Minister for Employment (Priti Patel):** We are determined that young people should not slip into a life on benefits, but that they are either earning or learning. That is why we have launched Jobcentre Plus support in schools and will introduce the youth obligation in 2017, to ensure that young people get the best possible start in life.

**Alberto Costa:** In my constituency of South Leicestershire, we have seen a welcome fall of 81% in the youth claimant count, from 505 in 2010 to 95 now. That has been achieved through the strong joint working between my right hon. Friend's Department, local authorities such as Blaby and Harborough District Councils, local enterprise partnerships, and not least businesses. Does she agree that it is through empowering and devolving responsibilities to those closest to the communities that we are most able to provide the support needed to help young people to get back to work?

**Priti Patel:** I pay tribute to all the local stakeholders in my hon. Friend's constituency who have been providing vital employment support to people to get the claimant count down so low. He is right to say that local decisions help to get people into work. That is why we are always mindful of local labour market trends.

**Huw Merriman** (Bexhill and Battle) (Con): Next month, Bexhill will be holding its first jobs and apprenticeships fair. This event, which I have put on in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and other local organisations, will allow constituents to meet 50 participating organisations. Does my right hon. Friend agree that local organisations working together can help us towards the goal of full employment?

**Priti Patel:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I speak with experience of not just my own constituency but the many other constituencies I have visited where jobs and apprenticeships fairs have taken place. The crucial point is that they can only happen with the support of local employers. The Department will continue to work at national and constituency level with local employers to support jobs and apprenticeships fairs like the one to which he refers.

### Private Sector Jobs

18. **Sir Henry Bellingham** (North West Norfolk) (Con): What recent assessment he has made of trends in the number of private sector jobs; and if he will make a statement. [904069]

**The Minister for Employment (Priti Patel):** Supported by welfare reform and the Government's long-term economic plan, we have seen worklessness fall. This has

helped to boost private sector employment. There are now a record 26 million people working in the private sector, up by 2.7 million since 2010.

**Sir Henry Bellingham:** Is the Minister aware that since 2010 unemployment in my constituency has fallen by 67% from 1,900 to 624? Does she agree that one should look behind those statistics to all those lives that have been transformed: families with hope for the future and pride in themselves?

**Priti Patel:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Work and employment turn around the lives of families and communities. In his constituency and region, we have seen record levels of employment. That is down to the Government's policies and, as I said earlier, to the support we have had from employers, who are, ultimately, the job creators in our economy.

### Workless Households

19. **Chris Green** (Bolton West) (Con): What progress his Department has made on reducing the number of workless households. [904070]

**The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr Iain Duncan Smith):** When we took office almost one in five households had no one in work and about 1.4 million people had been on benefits for most of the previous decade. Since 2010, the number of workless households has fallen by more than 680,000 to its lowest level since records began. The number of children in workless households is at a record low, down nearly 480,000 since 2010.

**Chris Green:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that making progress in reducing the number of people in workless households is key to improving the life chances of millions of children?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I do agree with my hon. Friend. From all the evidence, we know that children in workless households grow up without the aspiration to achieve, something they might have if they grow up in driven families who are in work. They are almost certain to repeat the difficult lives of their parents and we want to turn those lives around. Since 2010, the number of workless households in the social rented sector has fallen by more than 280,000 to a record low. It is worth remembering that when we took office in 2010 the number of households where no one had ever worked had nearly doubled under the previous Labour Government.

**Mr Speaker:** I call Angus Brendan MacNeil. He is not here. Where is the fellow? I call Naz Shah.

### Child Poverty

21. **Naz Shah** (Bradford West) (Lab): What assessment his Department has made of the effect of recent changes to benefits on levels of child poverty. [904072]

**The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr Iain Duncan Smith):** I congratulate the hon. Lady on getting her question in.

We have seen relative child poverty fall by 300,000 since we came to office. The number of children living in workless households is also down 480,000 to a record low. Living standards are up 3.3% and income inequality, which rose under the previous Labour Government, is down since 2010.

**Naz Shah:** In light of research published by the Children's Society, which shows that 104,000 children in Bradford are adversely affected by the benefit freeze and that in my constituency alone 29,500 children are living in poverty, does the Minister not think he would be better off arguing with his Chancellor about his Budget rather than needlessly pushing more families and children into poverty?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I simply do not agree with the hon. Lady, because the figures do not bear it out. It is worth remembering that in-work and out-of-work poverty rose under the last Labour Government. Under this Government, out-of-work poverty, which was 71% of households with children in 2009-10, has fallen to 61% and is still falling. As we know, three quarters of poor children living in families that move into employment leave poverty altogether. A child poverty transitions report made that very clear. I think we should all celebrate getting people and families back to work, as we have been doing, and giving them a real chance to earn and have aspiration.

### Topical Questions

T1. [904040] **Daniel Zeichner** (Cambridge) (Lab): If he will make a statement on his departmental responsibilities.

**The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr Iain Duncan Smith):** As agreed with the Work and Pensions Select Committee when I was last in front of it, I can now inform the House that today we are launching the sanctions early warning trial for claimants. From April, early warning letters will begin to be issued to claimants within the trial site. The trial is being run in Scotland and gives jobseekers an extra 14 days to provide further evidence of their reasons for not complying before a sanction is applied.

**Daniel Zeichner:** My constituent Nick Dale is 36 years old and has a complex range of disabilities. His care package has just been reduced by Cambridgeshire County Council from 17 hours a week to 6.5 hours. The council told him he should see this not negatively but as a way “of utilizing the strengths and resources that he may not realise he has within himself.”

His mother is appalled by his loss and the patronising tone—borrowed from the Government. If I lift the Secretary of State's wallet in the Lobby tonight, would it help him utilise hidden strengths he did not realise he had, or is he as furious as I am about the way Nick Dale has been treated?

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Disabled People (Justin Tomlinson):** I am happy to go and look at that case. The Health and Social Care (Safety and Quality) Act 2015 should have put stronger protections in place, but I am happy to look at this matter further.

T2. [904041] **Michael Tomlinson** (Mid Dorset and North Poole) (Con): JPMorgan Chase, Sunseeker, Lush, Cobham and many other local businesses are supporting the inaugural Mid Dorset and North Poole apprenticeships and jobs fair. Does the Minister agree that supporting young people into apprenticeships is vital, and will she agree to open my jobs fair in Wimborne?

**The Minister for Employment (Priti Patel):** I thank my hon. Friend for his kind invitation. I would be happy to look into it and try to come to his constituency. It is National Apprenticeship Week as well. He is right of course that employers, such as the outstanding ones he referred to, continue to do their utmost to support young people. I myself will be visiting many employers in Essex this week just to make that point to them.

T4. [904043] **Joan Ryan** (Enfield North) (Lab): Last month, the Minister said that the idea there was a 20-metre rule for assessing eligibility for enhanced mobility allowance was an “urban myth”, but in the case of my constituent Cathy Walsh—I must acknowledge that the Minister listened to my case—it was only when her consultant provided evidence that she could walk no more than 20 metres that her eligibility was reviewed and her benefit reinstated. What steps will the Government take to clarify this issue with assessors and to ensure that other disabled people do not have to suffer as my constituent has?

**Justin Tomlinson:** To be absolutely clear, the assessment is whether an individual can safely, repeatedly, to an acceptable standard and in a reasonable time period walk a certain distance. It is not a case of saying that if someone gets to 19.9 metres, they qualify for the money, but if they get to 20.1 metres, they do not. It is assessed according to the criteria I have set out, and we will continue to make sure that assessors are aware of that.

T3. [904042] **Alex Chalk** (Cheltenham) (Con): Unemployment in Cheltenham has fallen by 66% since 2010. Will the Minister join me in thanking staff at Cheltenham's Jobcentre Plus office, who hosted a very successful jobs fair recently and who are working hard to bring opportunity to those seeking to get on in life and provide for their families?

**Priti Patel:** I am delighted to hear of the outstanding work undertaken by our local Jobcentre Plus staff. In fact, all our JCP staff across the country do great work supporting people, getting them off benefits and into work and helping to transform their lives. I am delighted to see that the employment rates in my hon. Friend's constituency are going from strength to strength.

T5. [904044] **Ian Blackford** (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP): The House will be aware that hundreds of thousands of pensioners live in countries where there is no uprating. Now that we are facing the EU referendum, and given that 400,000 British pensioners live elsewhere in the EU, will the Minister tell us what will happen to either the partial or the full uprating for British pensioners if we leave the EU?

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr Shailesh Vara):** I remind the hon. Gentleman that the position of the Government is that we are better off in the EU; the people of Britain will be safer and more secure.

T8. [904049] **Chris Green** (Bolton West) (Con): The Octagon theatre in Bolton is undergoing an upgrade to improve accessibility to disabled people. Will my right hon. Friend update us on the work being done to ensure that more public venues have better accessibility to disabled people?

**Justin Tomlinson:** I thank my hon. Friend for raising this issue. We are doing extensive work in this area, recognising the combined spending power of £212 billion for those with disabilities. We are doing particular work with my colleagues in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to make cultural and music venues accessible. Attitude is Everything is a fantastic charity. A task group is looking with leading operators at restaurants and good progress has been made with sports facilities, particularly with the premier league.

T6. [904046] **Liz McInnes** (Heywood and Middleton) (Lab): The Minister dismisses the six suggestions of my hon. Friend the shadow Secretary of State for transitional arrangements as being somehow mathematically challenged—or perhaps it was challenging. This issue is about fairness, however, and about establishing a fair transitional arrangement for the WASPI women. Has the Minister actually costed any of the six suggestions, or has he just dismissed them all out of hand?

**Mr Vara:** Yes, we have costed them, and a response to a freedom of information request is coming out today. When the hon. Lady talks about fairness and says that there should be transitional arrangements, I simply ask her to look back at *Hansard* for the year 2011, where she will find that on Second Reading, the then Secretary of State who is the current Secretary of State said that he would go away and consider—and he did. Four months later, transitional arrangements were implemented. They cost £1.1 billion and a reduction was made to the period from two years to 18 months, so transitional arrangements have been put in place.

**Amanda Milling** (Cannock Chase) (Con): Last year, the Under-Secretary of State for Disabled People, my hon. Friend the Member for North Swindon (Justin Tomlinson), met Newlife, a Cannock-based charity that provides specialist disability equipment to children across the countries. Will my hon. Friend join me in commending Newlife's work, and does he agree that the provision of this equipment at this early stage means that these children can have a better quality of life?

**Justin Tomlinson:** It is a fantastic organisation; I enjoyed meeting Newlife. I have already taken the opportunity to highlight its good work and how we can promote it further in tandem with my colleagues in the Department of Health.

T7. [904048] **Paula Sherriff** (Dewsbury) (Lab): In December, the Secretary of State said:

“For those already on universal credit, advisers will...ensure that their status remains the same”.—[*Official Report*, 7 December 2015; Vol. 603, c. 703.]

However, the Government's decision appears to have changed; they are now saying that it is at the discretion of work coaches to use the flexible support fund. Will the Secretary of State confirm that the 60,000 workers currently on universal credit will, in his own words, have their status remain “the same”?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** Universal credit is now pretty much rolled out all over the country. The Institute for Fiscal Studies made it clear in respect of anybody transitioning from tax credits that

“no family will take an immediate...hit”

because they are “transitionally protected”. I said at the time that we would do our level best, working with the advisers and through the flexible support fund, to make sure that people's situations continued and actually improved. That is exactly what universal credit will do. That is why I wonder why the Opposition do not support it. More people go into work quicker; they get into work faster; they actually earn more money; and they stay and work longer.

**Michelle Donelan** (Chippenham) (Con): The Minister will be aware that almost 15% of the working population are self-employed, and that in five years' time, about 40,000 of them will be living in Wiltshire. Does he agree that something needs to be done and that a self-employed auto-enrolment scheme could be looked at? Would he welcome the inclusion of such a thing in this week's Budget?

**Mr Vara:** Auto-enrolment is a very important issue that this Government are undertaking. I am happy to report that some 6 million people have already taken part in the initiative. This is something that will be of particular benefit to women, who will have the opportunity to enrol as part of a pension, which will certainly help their chances in the future.

**Mary Glendon** (North Tyneside) (Lab): When the Minister for Disabled People recently met Ravi Metha, Sulaiman Khan and Tanvi Vyas-Brady, campaigners from Muscular Dystrophy UK's Trailblazers group, he heard at first hand the challenges that young disabled people face looking for work. Will he confirm that he can and will arrange for these young people to meet his access to work team so that their experiences can directly influence future DWP policies?

**Justin Tomlinson:** I pay tribute to the hon. Lady for taking the time to introduce those truly inspirational young ambassadors. They were brilliant in the meeting, and I look forward to them actively engaging with our access to work team to help to improve that service. It was a real pleasure.

**Stephen Metcalfe** (South Basildon and East Thurrock) (Con): One of the welcome provisions of the Pensions Act 2014 was the lifting of the Pension Protection Fund cap; yet, nearly two years on, this clause is still to be implemented. Will the Secretary of State agree to meet with me and a cross-party delegation to discuss how we might move the issue forward and bring security in retirement to those who have found their pensions seriously curtailed through no fault of their own?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I am very happy to meet with my hon. Friend and any others he wants to bring with him. This Government have a proud record on reforming pensions. The single tier will mean that pension incomes improve dramatically, particularly for those who have broken care. We also have auto-enrolment, which is massively increasing savings among those who have

never saved before. Finally, the freedom to take an annuity or not, as and when a pension comes due, is enormous. I am very happy to make sure that reform programme continues, and I will happily meet my hon. Friend.

**Alison Thewliss** (Glasgow Central) (SNP): Can the Secretary of State tell me how many jobseeker's allowance claimants have been sanctioned in the period between being offered work and taking up work?

**Mr Duncan Smith:** I do not have the figures to hand, but I am very happy to write to the hon. Lady about that. I have to say, the number of people who have been sanctioned has fallen dramatically in the last 12 months, and I am sure she will be very happy to see the figures.

**Peter Heaton-Jones** (North Devon) (Con): I thank my hon. Friend the Minister for Disabled People for attending a highly successful Disability Confident event

in my constituency on Friday 10 days ago. Does he agree that such events are vital to ensuring that employers get the help they need and, crucially, that people with disabilities are moved closer to the world of employment?

**Justin Tomlinson:** I thank my hon. Friend for his hard work in championing disability employment opportunities. The good businesses of Ilfracombe seized that opportunity, which will make a real difference in the local community.

**Diana Johnson** (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab): Have any DWP Ministers had conversations with Department of Health Ministers about the consultation on financial support for those who received contaminated blood in the '70s and '80s and whether they should have their benefits passported through to the new personal independence payment scheme?

**Justin Tomlinson:** I am very happy to meet the hon. Lady to discuss that further.

## EU Referendum (Privy Council)

**Mr Speaker:** Before I call the hon. Member for West Bromwich East (Mr Watson) to ask the urgent question, which I am allowing him to ask, I remind all Members of the House that, and I quote from “Erskine May”:

“Her Majesty cannot be supposed to have a private opinion, apart from that of her responsible advisers; and any attempt to use her name in debate to influence the judgment of Parliament is immediately checked and censured. . . . A Minister is, however, permitted to make a statement of facts in which the Sovereign’s name may be concerned.”

I earnestly hope that hon. Members will spare me the embarrassment of having to stop them in their tracks if they seek to draw to the House’s attention any alleged views of the monarch on the EU or, indeed, anything else. The urgent question has been carefully drafted by the hon. Member for West Bromwich East to cover process and not substance. I hope that colleagues will frame their questions accordingly.

3.33 pm

**Mr Tom Watson** (West Bromwich East) (Lab) (*Urgent Question*): I seek not to embarrass you in any way, Mr Speaker, but to ask the Leader of the House if he will make a statement on the adherence to the rules and conventions of the Privy Council in the light of the suspension of collective responsibility in connection with the European Union referendum.

**The Lord President of the Council (Chris Grayling):** The Privy Council provides support to Her Majesty in the implementation of the functions of the Crown. The members of the Council also have access to confidential national information and documentation related to national security, and receive briefings about secrets related to these matters. They swear an oath to maintain the confidentiality of these briefings. None of that has changed because of the current circumstances.

**Mr Watson:** Last Wednesday, *The Sun* published a front-page story relating to the EU referendum, which it said was based on two “impeccably placed” sources. The Leader of the House will know that every member of the Privy Council swears a solemn and binding oath to the Queen that they will, in the words of the oath, “keep secret all Matters committed and revealed unto you”.

My hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant) has written to the Leader of the House asking for an investigation. Will the Leader of the House please confirm that that will take place? Will he also confirm that the Privy Council rules have not been suspended as a result of the referendum? Three members have categorically denied that they are the source, yet the Justice Secretary has only said:

“I don’t know how *The Sun* got all its information”.

That is hardly categorical.

The sovereign’s constitutional impartiality is an established principle of our democracy, and it is incumbent on those in political office to ensure that that remains the case. Such a breach would be particularly serious and significant. Had the Justice Secretary disclosed this information, he would have breached the principle of confidentiality and prayed in aid the monarch in a politically controversial manner, but he would also have

undermined his role as the Minister responsible for upholding the rule of law. Does the Leader of the House therefore agree that the public have a right to know whether the Justice Secretary was a source of this story, and will he now urge his colleague to confirm or deny such allegations?

There has been a referral to the Independent Press Standards Organisation to investigate a complaint about the story, but IPSO cannot investigate whether a Privy Counsellor has broken his oath. Only the Minister or the Prime Minister can order that investigation. A cover-up will not do. Surely any member of the Privy Council who was a source of this story, or whose special adviser or ally was, stands in contempt of his Privy Council oath, and should be removed from office if he will not honourably resign himself.

**Chris Grayling:** As the hon. Gentleman said, last week a national newspaper published a story that was allegedly based on a conversation that had taken place at a lunch following a Privy Council meeting. However, my predecessor as Lord President, the right hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr Clegg), has said very clearly that the story is categorically untrue. As the House is aware, Buckingham Palace has referred the matter to IPSO, the new press complaints body, which is now investigating. Given all those facts, I do not believe that there is any need for further action here.

**John Redwood** (Wokingham) (Con): I agree with my right hon. Friend that the proper way to conduct this matter is the way in which Her Majesty’s office has conducted it, and I do not see how the House can spend all its time investigating every story in the newspapers that upsets some people to try to find out who the sources were if neither the sources nor the newspapers wish to reveal it.

**Chris Grayling:** My right hon. Friend makes an important point. As I have said, the last Lord President said very clearly that the story was categorically untrue, and therefore, by definition, it must be a matter for the body that investigates complaints about the media.

**Stephen Gethins** (North East Fife) (SNP): I am surprised that the Leader of the House does not want to carry out an inquiry. Let me call on him again to do so. After all, the Government were able to carry out a successful leak inquiry into the Scotland Office’s dealings before the independence referendum. Will the Leader of the House reflect on that experience?

There also seems to be a disagreement on a question of fact between the Prime Minister and the Justice Secretary. Does the Leader of the House think that the Prime Minister is handling the situation well?

**Chris Grayling:** I can only refer to what I said a moment ago, which is that the former Lord President, who attended the said event, has said that the story is categorically untrue. It is therefore a matter for the press complaints body, and not a matter for anyone in the House or in the Government.

**Dr Liam Fox** (North Somerset) (Con): Does my right hon. Friend agree that what we are witnessing is a poorly disguised example of the tendency of the Labour

party to play the man and not the ball in any given circumstances? Does he also agree that the workings of the Privy Council are a matter for the Privy Council, and its rules are not the same rules that apply to Ministers who are answerable to the House of Commons?

**Chris Grayling:** My right hon. Friend is absolutely right—and it is worth pointing out that the conversation that is alleged to have taken place, and which the former Lord President said did not take place, did not take place at a Privy Council meeting.

**Tom Brake** (Carshalton and Wallington) (LD): Does the Leader of the House agree that when it comes to serial offenders, one of the most effective forms of reparation for the victim is restorative justice, whereby the offender apologises directly to the victim? Does he support the principles of restorative justice?

**Chris Grayling:** I support the principles of justice, and I also support the principle that people are innocent unless proven guilty.

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg** (North East Somerset) (Con): As the Lord High Chancellor is the keeper of the Queen's conscience, is it not inconceivable that he could misapply his conscience to Her Majesty? In the Privy Council oath, Privy Counsellors are asked to swear:

“You will to your uttermost bear Faith and Allegiance to the Queen's Majesty; and will assist and defend all civil and temporal Jurisdictions, Pre-eminences, and Authorities, granted to Her Majesty and annexed to the Crown by Acts of Parliament, or otherwise, against all Foreign Princes, Persons, Prelates, States, or Potentates.”

How, therefore, can members of the Privy Council go off and be European Commissioners swearing allegiance to the European Union?

**Mr Speaker:** That is an interesting point—some would say a fascinating point—but it is perhaps mildly tangential to the urgent question that I have selected. But we all savour the observations of the hon. Member for North East Somerset (Mr Rees-Mogg), so let us savour the reply.

**Chris Grayling:** Mr Speaker, I think you would agree that my hon. Friend makes his remarks in his customary way and that what he has said perhaps says it all.

**Kevin Brennan** (Cardiff West) (Lab): The Leader of the House played in aid the former Deputy Prime Minister's categorical denial that that conversation ever took place. Could not this matter be put to bed very simply and straightforwardly by the Justice Secretary, who is an honourable man, coming to the House himself and categorically denying that the conversation ever took place?

**Chris Grayling:** All I can repeat is what I said earlier, which is that my predecessor said that the story was categorically untrue. I therefore do not think that there is anything to answer for.

**Mrs Anne Main** (St Albans) (Con): The Cabinet Office has established a referendum unit. Can my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House explain what it does, when it was established, to whom it reports and how many civil servants work in it?

**Mr Speaker:** The short answer is no, not now. The right hon. Gentleman might be able to do that in the course of a private chat over a cup of tea with the hon. Lady, or by answering a written question if she were to table such, but today we must focus on the narrow terms of the urgent question that has been granted.

**Joan Ryan** (Enfield North) (Lab): I have always considered it an honour and privilege to be a member of the Privy Council, and I take very seriously the trust that is placed in those of us who are part of it. I believe that the allegations carry a great deal of currency, and that if they are not properly investigated, they could undermine the whole of the Privy Council and everybody in it. The Prime Minister was right to say that it would be very serious if a member of the Privy Council was the source of the newspaper story in *The Sun*. I therefore think that it behoves the Government to ask the Member involved to come to this House and to make a statement himself, in order to lay this matter to rest.

**Chris Grayling:** All of us who are members of the Privy Council take that responsibility enormously seriously. It is a great honour for us to serve the Crown in that way. However, I simply repeat that my predecessor as Lord President, who is a Privy Counsellor and who also takes that responsibility very seriously, has said that the story is categorically untrue, and that there is therefore nothing to answer for.

**Mr Philip Hollobone** (Kettering) (Con): It is quite right that Her Majesty, our sovereign, should have no views on important issues such as the EU referendum. How can it be in any way acceptable for members of Her Majesty's Government from the Prime Minister downwards to encourage foreign Heads of State to comment on the EU referendum? Does this not demonstrate the fact that the international Bilderberg group is ganging up against the British people?

**Chris Grayling:** I would discourage any foreign leader from entering the debate at the moment. This is a matter for the British people and it should remain so.

**Vicky Foxcroft** (Lewisham, Deptford) (Lab): What discussions, if any, has the Leader of the House had with the Prime Minister and the Justice Secretary about allegations that the Justice Secretary might have been the source of the leaked information, since such allegations were made in the media?

**Chris Grayling:** Since my predecessor has said that the story is categorically untrue, there is no need for me to have such conversations.

**Mr Peter Bone** (Wellingborough) (Con): I suppose the one thing that we have learned today is that we should not believe everything we read in the newspapers. However, I am learning more about the Privy Council and things like that, because I am obviously not a member of the Privy Council and not likely to be.

Sticking narrowly to the point, do Privy Council rules extend to former colonies that might now have a President who might want to come over here and tell us how to vote in the EU referendum?

**Mr Speaker:** Order. I think we know the President of whom the hon. Gentleman speaks. The President is a most illustrious individual, but the last time I looked he was not a member of the Privy Council. We will leave it there as I think it was a rhetorical question.

**Toby Perkins** (Chesterfield) (Lab): The Leader of House is clinging to the defence that he is using today, but it is clear that the Secretary of State for Justice wants people to believe that he was the source and that the story is true. Given that the right hon. Member for Mid Sussex (Sir Nicholas Soames), whom we all respect tremendously on such matters, considers this to be treason, the Leader of the House's rather flippant approach massively undermines the importance of this important role.

**Chris Grayling:** I am not quite sure where the hon. Gentleman is coming from. Someone cannot be found guilty of an offence when none has taken place. My predecessor has said that the story is categorically untrue, so that really should be the end of the matter.

**Andrew Bridgen** (North West Leicestershire) (Con): Does the Leader of the House agree that if the right hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr Clegg) or someone else at the Privy Council meeting made a note of their recollection of a conversation with Her Majesty, perhaps for a book or diaries, which, amazingly, politicians tend to want to write at the end of their careers, perhaps the number of people who may have been privy to the information may include not only Privy Counsellors? That may be where the leak came from.

**Chris Grayling:** Lots of people talk to lots of others about lots of things, but the former Lord President has said that the story is categorically untrue and that the conversation did not take place.

**Mr Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover) (Lab): I have never been to this palace, so I do not know what takes place there, but the most bizarre thing for me is what on earth the Queen was doing confiding in Clegg. [*Laughter.*]

**Chris Grayling:** The response to the hon. Gentleman's comment from across the House suggests that not everyone disagrees with the view he puts forward. I hope that he gets the chance to go to the palace before he ends his illustrious career.

**Mr David Nuttall** (Bury North) (Con): Will those members of the Privy Council who are also members of Her Majesty's Government ensure that all the statistics that are usually published are published between now and 23 June?

**Chris Grayling:** I am sure that we will want to ensure that everyone on both sides of the debate has all the facts that they need to reach a conclusion when the vote comes in June.

**Jo Stevens** (Cardiff Central) (Lab): The Prime Minister has described the EU referendum as a once-in-a-generation decision and "more important than a general election".

Does the Leader of the House agree that public confidence in the outcome of this significant vote rests largely on members of the Government on both sides of the argument behaving fairly and abiding by agreed rules and conventions?

**Chris Grayling:** Ministers on both sides of the argument are making their case clearly and will remain friends afterwards. I am pleased to have my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, whose view is different from mine, sitting alongside me, demonstrating that we are a united team that is doing the right thing for this country.

**Henry Smith** (Crawley) (Con): Without invoking the body of the sovereign, may I ask the Government when they plan to introduce a British sovereignty Bill?

**Chris Grayling:** We will soon be having a visitation from the Queen to this Palace for the Queen's Speech, on 18 May, and I am sure that my hon. Friend will see on that occasion what our plans are for the legislative programme in the years ahead.

**Mr Speaker:** My natural generosity got the better of me; the hon. Member for Crawley (Henry Smith) is unfailingly courteous, but his question was a bit wide of the mark. Half a dozen or so people, perhaps slightly more, are still seeking to catch my eye and it would be good if everybody remained in order—led by Mr Stephen Pound.

**Stephen Pound** (Ealing North) (Lab): Thank you, Mr Speaker. This whole business leaves a pretty nasty stench in the nostrils. Does the Leader of the House agree that there is an unpleasant characteristic emerging, whereby people are picking up little scraps, trifles, tittle-tattle, gossip and rumour and then parlaying that into a book later on in their careers? My Sunday morning fry-up was ruined when I turned to my copy of *The Mail on Sunday* only to read the memoirs of Mr Laws, so does the Leader of the House agree that we should impose a self-denying ordinance and stop writing these dreadful scandalous books, seeking to expose what should be confidential? May I say that I have no intention of doing this?

**Mr Speaker:** I am not sure that a self-denying ordinance can be imposed. Those who have consulted their scholarly craniums advise me that that might not be possible—indeed, it might be either a contradiction in terms or a tautology. I will leave the hon. Gentleman to reflect on the matter.

**Chris Grayling:** We will see how robust the hon. Gentleman's determination to stay outside the world of diary and book writing is when he concludes his illustrious career and receives a lavish offer from a publisher.

**Paul Flynn** (Newport West) (Lab): Early-day motion 1182 and interrogation at a recent Select Committee hearing raised two other possible breaches of this kind involving Her Majesty and Prince William. It was noted that the carefully crafted answer from the Justice Secretary said that he did not know where the Queen gets all her information. As we have now been told that the Justice Secretary is a "Maoist", may we take it that this is an



attempt to do what Maoists do and achieve revolution by destruction—in this case, the destruction of the monarchy?

**Chris Grayling:** If we are talking about revolution by destruction, I have to say that the current Leader of the Opposition and shadow Chancellor take the biscuits.

**Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh** (Ochil and South Perthshire) (SNP): I hope you will not deem my question to be tangential, Mr Speaker. Clearly, the Government have strong views on this matter and we are witnessing varied opinions from those on their Benches, but for future reference might the Leader of the House consider drawing up a list of approved contributors to the EU debate, saying whose view is acceptable and whose is not? Such a list would be very handy for future reference for the Scottish National party.

**Chris Grayling:** As far as I am aware, Mr Speaker, we are having a debate where everybody's views are being put forward, on both sides of the argument, and that is going to carry on for another three months.

**Clive Efford** (Eltham) (Lab): I am racking my brain trying to think of a previous occasion when the Leader of the House has agreed so readily with the right hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr Clegg). Surely the Leader of the House must accept that the Justice Secretary's failure unequivocally to state that he had nothing to do with this is the reason he is sitting there answering this urgent question now. Should the Justice Secretary not either make such a statement or resign?

**Chris Grayling:** So the hon. Gentleman is asking the Justice Secretary to say that something that did not happen did not happen—that just does not make any sense.

**Justin Madders** (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab): Millions of working people throughout this country know that when an allegation of gross misconduct comes to an employer's attention, it is usually expected that an investigation will follow and that if the allegation is proven, dismissal is a potential outcome. Doing nothing creates a precedent that others may rely on in future if

other allegations are made, so does the Leader of the House agree that the failure even to investigate this shows a lack of courage and creates an unwelcome precedent?

**Chris Grayling:** Normally, investigations are not launched into unsubstantiated stories. I simply say again that my predecessor, the former Lord President of the Council, said that the story is categorically untrue.

**Melanie Onn** (Great Grimsby) (Lab): I am disappointed to hear the response of the Leader of the House, because Buckingham Palace is sufficiently concerned by this story to have made a formal complaint to the press watchdog. There are two impeccable sources involved, so why are the Government not taking the matter seriously by holding an investigation?

**Chris Grayling:** If I understand it correctly, Buckingham Palace is complaining about the story in the newspaper, and the proper body to investigate a complaint of that kind is the Independent Press Standards Organisation.

**Mike Kane** (Wythenshawe and Sale East) (Lab): The Prime Minister has described the situation as "very serious". Does the Leader of the House agree with him that it is very serious if a member of the Privy Council has breached confidential codes and been the source for *The Sun* story? If he does, why is he not launching his own investigation?

**Chris Grayling:** If I understand it correctly, the serious issue is about the story in the newspaper, which is being investigated, but my predecessor, the former Lord President of the Council, has said that the story is categorically untrue.

**Naz Shah** (Bradford West) (Lab): Yesterday, the *Sunday Telegraph* reported that Government sources had described the alleged leak by the Justice Secretary as a "sackable offence". Will the Leader of the House confirm that the Justice Secretary had the support of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues to remain in post?

**Chris Grayling:** Yes.

## Point of Order

3.55 pm

**Mrs Anne Main** (St Albans) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. On 7 March, I tabled a question which asked the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills whether he would publish any contingency plans that his Department has made on trade agreements in the event of the UK's exit from the EU. I received this answer today:

“At the February European Council, the Government negotiated a new settlement, giving the United Kingdom a special status in a reformed European Union. The Government's position, as set out by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the House on 22 February, is that the UK will be stronger, safer and better off remaining in a reformed EU.”

That is not an answer to my question. I believe that, at the time of the Iraq inquiry, Lord Justice Scott agreed that it was parliamentary protocol that questions must be given a substantive answer. Is it possible that, through your good offices, Mr Speaker, I can get an answer to that particular question?

**Mr Speaker:** As the hon. Lady knows, the Chair is not responsible for the content of answers. There is a general presumption in favour of answers to questions that are both timely and substantive. If, however, the hon. Lady is dissatisfied with the substance of the reply, which she believes fails adequately to respond—or to respond at all—to her inquiry, she has two recourses open to her, neither of which involves the Chair. One is to table further questions with that dogged persistence for which she has become renowned over the past nearly 11 years in the House, and the other is to complain to the Chair of the Procedure Committee, the hon. Member for Broxbourne (Mr Walker), with a view to securing an inquiry into the approach by Ministers to providing answers to parliamentary questions. I hope that that constitutes an adequate answer to the hon. Lady, who has aired her concern today.

## ENERGY BILL [*LORDS*] (PROGRAMME) (NO. 2)

*Ordered,*

That the Order of 18 January 2016 (Energy Bill [*Lords*] (Programme)) be varied as follows:

1. Paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Order shall be omitted.
2. Proceedings on Consideration shall be taken in the order shown in the first column of the following Table.
3. The proceedings shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion at the time specified in the second column of the Table.

Table	
<i>Proceedings</i>	<i>Time for conclusion of proceedings</i>
New Clauses relating to wind power; amendments to Part 5	Two hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion for this order
New Clauses relating to carbon capture; emissions and decarbonisation; remaining new Clauses; remaining proceedings on Consideration	One hour before the moment of interruption

4. Proceedings in Legislative Grand Committee and proceedings on Third Reading shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion at the moment of interruption.—(*Andrea Leadsom.*)

*Question agreed to.*

**Mr Speaker:** As I informed the House on Monday 26 October, before a Report stage begins on a Bill, I will seek to identify in advance those changes made in Committee which I would expect to certify together with any Government amendments tabled for Report stage, which, if passed, would be likely to lead me to issue a certificate. My provisional certificate based on those changes and expected amendments is available in the Vote Office and on the Bills before Parliament website. At the end of the Report stage on a Bill, I am required to consider the Bill as amended on Report for certification. At that point, later today, I will issue my final certificate.

## Energy Bill [Lords]

*Consideration of Bill, as amended in the Public Bill Committee*

### New Clause 2

#### ONSHORE WIND POWER: RENEWABLES OBLIGATION

“The power to make a renewables obligation closure order in respect of electricity generated by an onshore wind generating station in Scotland may only be exercised by Scottish Ministers.”

*This new clause would return to the Scottish Ministers the power to close the renewables obligation in relation to electricity generated by onshore wind generating stations in Scotland.—(Callum McCaig.)*

*Brought up, and read the First time.*

3.59 pm

**Callum McCaig** (Aberdeen South) (SNP): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

**Mr Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to discuss the following:

Amendment 24, in clause 79, page 46, line 20, leave out “31 March 2016” and insert “1 March 2017”.

*This amendment and amendments 25, 26, 40, 41, 42, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 have the effect of closing the Renewables Obligation for onshore wind a month earlier than the original date set out in the Statutory Instrument: Renewables Obligation Closure Order 2014: 2388, rather than a year earlier, as the Bill does in its present form.*

Amendment 25, page 46, line 25, leave out “31 March 2016” and insert “1 March 2017”.

Amendment 22, page 47, line 22, leave out clause 80.

Amendment 26, in clause 80, page 47, line 27, leave out “31 March 2016” and insert “1 March 2017”.

Amendment 27, page 47, line 30, leave out “31 March 2016” and insert “1 March 2017”.

Amendment 28, page 47, line 36, leave out “31 March 2017” and insert “1 March 2017”.

Amendment 29, page 47, line 42, leave out “31 March 2017” and insert “1 March 2017”.

Amendment 30, page 48, line 3, leave out “31 March 2016” and insert “1 March 2017”.

Amendment 31, page 48, line 6, leave out “31 March 2017” and insert “1 March 2017”.

Amendment 32, page 48, line 20, leave out “31 March 2016” and insert “1 March 2017”.

Amendment 33, page 48, line 33, leave out “1 April 2017” and insert “2 March 2017”.

Amendment 34, page 48, line 43, leave out “1 April 2017” and insert “2 March 2017”.

Amendment 35, page 49, line 8, leave out “1 April 2017” and insert “2 March 2017”.

Amendment 36, page 49, line 17, leave out “1 April 2017” and insert “2 March 2017”.

Amendment 37, page 50, line 13, leave out “18 June 2015” and insert “18 May 2016”.

Amendment 1, page 50, line 18, leave out “planning permission” and insert  
“an application for 1990 Act permission or 1997 Act permission”.

Amendment 38, page 50, line 19, leave out “18 June 2015” and insert “18 May 2016”.

Amendment 2, page 50, line 20, leave out “or judicial review”.

Amendment 3, page 50, line 30, after “Act” insert  
“(excluding an extension agreed for the purposes of section 78(2) of the 1990 Act or section 47(2) of the 1997 Act)”.

Amendment 52, page 50, line 34, after “application”, insert

“(provided that this period does not include any extension agreed for the purposes of section 78(2) of the 1990 Act or section 47(2) of the 1997 Act”.

Amendment 4, page 50, line 35, leave out paragraph (iii).

Amendment 39, page 50, line 40, leave out “18 June 2015” and insert “18 May 2016”.

Amendment 53, page 50, line 40, after “18th June 2015”, insert “whether”.

Amendment 6, page 50, line 40, leave out “following an appeal”.

Amendment 5, page 50, line 40, after “following an appeal” insert—

“or a decision made by the Secretary of State, Welsh Ministers or Scottish Ministers following directions given under section 77 of the 1990 Act or section 46 of the 1997 Act, and”.

Amendment 54, page 50, line 40, after “appeal”, insert “or otherwise”.

Amendment 23, page 50, line 46, at end insert

“, or

(e) evidence that—

- (i) an application for 1990 Act permission or 1997 Act permission was made on or before 18th June 2015 for the station or for additional capacity,
- (ii) a grant of planning permission was resolved by the relevant planning authority on or before 18th June 2015,
- (iii) planning permission was granted after 18th June 2015, and
- (iv) any conditions as to the time period within which the development to which the permission relates must be begun have not been breached.”.

Amendment 7, page 50, line 46, at end insert—

“( ) evidence that—

- (i) an application for 1990 Act permission or 1997 Act permission was made on or before 18 June 2015 for the station or additional capacity,
- (ii) the period allowed under section 78(2) of the 1990 Act or (as the case may be) section 47(2) of the 1997 Act (excluding an extension agreed for the purposes of section 78(2) of the 1990 Act or section 47(2) of the 1997 Act) ended on or before 18 June 2015 without the things mentioned in section 78(2)(a) or (aa) of the 1990 Act or section 47(2)(a) or (b) of the 1997 Act being done in respect of the application,
- (iii) the application was referred to the Secretary of State, Welsh Ministers or Scottish Ministers in accordance with directions given under section 77 of the 1990 Act or section 46 of the 1997 Act,
- (iv) 1990 Act permission or 1997 Act permission was granted after 18 June 2015, and
- (v) any conditions as to the time period within which the development to which the permission relates must be begun have not been breached.”.

Amendment 8, page 50, line 46, at end insert—

“( ) evidence that—

- (i) an application for 1990 Act permission or 1997 Act permission was made on or before 18 June 2015 for the station or for additional capacity,
- (ii) the relevant planning authority resolved to grant 1990 Act permission or 1997 Act permission on or before 18 June 2015,
- (iii) 1990 Act permission or 1997 Act permission was granted after 18 June 2015, and
- (iv) any conditions as to the time period within which the development to which the permission relates must be begun have not been breached.”.

Amendment 9, page 50, line 46, at end insert—

“( ) evidence that—

- (i) an application for consent for the station or for additional capacity was made under section 36 of this Act,
- (ii) the consultation period prescribed by Regulations made under paragraphs 2(3) or 3(1)(c) of Schedule 8 to this Act had expired on or before 18 June 2015,
- (iii) the Secretary of State caused a public inquiry to be held under paragraph 2(2) or 3(3) of Schedule 8 to this Act or decided that a public inquiry need not be held,
- (iv) consent was granted by the Secretary of State after 18 June 2015, and
- (v) any conditions as to the time period within which the development to which the permission relates must be begun have not been breached.”.

Amendment 10, page 50, line 46, at end insert—

“( ) evidence that—

- (i) an application for development consent for the station or for additional capacity was made under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008,
- (ii) the deadline for receipt of representations under section 56(4) of the Planning Act 2008 had expired on or before 18 June 2015,
- (iii) consent was granted by the Secretary of State after 18 June 2015, and
- (iv) any conditions as to the time period within which the development to which the permission relates must be begun have not been breached.”.

Amendment 11, page 50, line 46, at end insert—

“( ) evidence that—

- (i) planning permission for the station or additional capacity was granted on or before 18 June 2015,
- (ii) planning permission under sections 73, 90(2), 90(2ZA) or 96A of the 1990 Act or sections 42, 57(2), 57(2ZA) or 64 of the 1997 Act, a consent under section 36C of this Act, or an order under section 153 of, and paragraph 2 or 3 of Schedule 6 to, the Planning Act 2008 varying the planning permission under clause 32LJ(4)(i)(i) was granted after 18 June 2015, and
- (iii) any conditions as to the time period within which the development to which the permission relates must be begun have not been breached.”.

Amendment 12, page 50, line 46, at end insert—

“( ) evidence that—

- (i) 1990 Act permission or 1997 Act permission for the station or additional capacity was granted on or before 18 June 2015,
- (ii) consent under section 36 of this Act that permits a greater capacity for the station than that permitted by the planning permission under clause 32LJ(4)(j)(i) was granted after 18 June 2015, and

- (iii) any conditions as to the time period within which the development to which the permission relates must be begun have not been breached.”.

Amendment 13, page 50, line 46, at end insert—

“( ) evidence that—

- (i) planning permission for the station or additional capacity was granted on or before 18 June 2015,
- (ii) planning permission under clause 32LJ(4)(k)(i) was superseded by a subsequent planning permission granted after 18 June 2015 permitting a station with the same or a lower capacity than that granted under the planning permission referred to in clause 32LJ(4)(k)(i), and
- (iii) any conditions as to the time period within which the development to which the permission relates must be begun have not been breached.”.

Amendment 14, page 50, line 46, at end insert—

“( ) evidence that—

- (i) planning permission for the station or additional capacity was granted or refused on or before 18 June 2015, and was subsequently confirmed or granted after that date following a statutory challenge under section 288 of the 1990 Act, section 237 of the 1997 Act or section 118 of the Planning Act 2008, or following a judicial review, and
- (ii) any conditions as to the time period within which the development to which the permission relates must be begun have not been breached.”.

Amendment 15, page 50, line 48, leave out sub-paragraph 5(a) and insert—

- “(a) evidence of an agreement with a network operator to carry out grid works in relation to the station or additional capacity and was originally made on or before 18th June 2015 notwithstanding the fact that may have subsequently been amended or modified, and
- (ab) a copy of a document written by, or on behalf of, the network operator which estimated or set a date for completion of the grid works which was no later than 31 March 2017; or”.

Amendment 40, page 50, line 49, leave out “18 June 2015” and insert “18 May 2016”.

Amendment 41, page 51, line 10, leave out “18 June 2015” and insert “18 May 2016”.

Amendment 16, page 51, line 26, at end insert

“and includes planning permission deemed to be granted in accordance with section 90 of that Act”.

Amendment 17, page 51, line 31, at end insert

“and includes planning permission deemed to be granted in accordance with section 57 of that Act”.

Amendment 18, page 52, line 6, leave out “from a recognised lender”.

Amendment 42, page 52, line 16, leave out “31 March 2017” and insert “1 March 2017”.

Amendment 19, page 52, leave out lines 27 to 29, and insert—

“In this section “recognised lender” means a bank or financial institution or trust or fund or other financial entity which is regulated by the relevant jurisdiction and which is engaged in making, purchasing or investing in loans, securities or other financial instruments.”.

Amendment 20, page 52, line 32, leave out subsection (6).

Amendment 43, page 54, line 19, leave out “31 March 2016” and insert “1 March 2017”.

Amendment 44, page 54, line 21, leave out “31 March 2017” and insert “1 March 2017”.

Government amendment 50.

Amendment 45, in clause 81, page 56, line 3, leave out “31 March 2016” and insert “1 March 2017”.

Amendment 21, page 56, line 3, leave out subsection (a) and insert—

“(aa) by a 33kV connected onshore wind generating station consented after 30 September 2015, or

(ab) by a cluster connected onshore wind generating station consented after 31 October 2015, and”.

Amendment 46, page 56, line 6, leave out “31 March 2016” and insert “1 March 2017”.

**Callum McCaig:** New clause 2 is straightforward. It would re-devolve the power to issue a closure order in respect of the renewables obligation for onshore wind back to the Scottish Government, where it used to belong. That power was re-reserved, so to speak, on the explicit understanding that there would be no changes—no closure and no material impact on Scotland from agreeing to that proposal. The proposal would have allowed for closure of the renewables obligation later next year, as had previously been agreed.

We have been through this. There has been extensive debate on the renewables obligation. It is worth reiterating briefly some of the concerns. As I said, power over the renewables obligation was removed from Scotland against the explicit undertaking that the Government had given to Scottish Ministers. An element of betrayal of trust has come about. That has woven its way through the entirety of the Government’s handling of onshore wind and the closure of the renewables obligation. For a long time the industry had trust in the Government. That trust has vanished.

Today’s debate and a number of the amendments offer the opportunity to improve the measure that introduces the closure of the renewables obligation, notably the numerous amendments tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill (Philip Boswell), who has meticulously detailed how the closure of the RO and the accompanying grace periods could be carried out in a way that is fairest to developers.

Last week the Energy and Climate Change Committee produced a report on investor confidence which suggested that

“Sudden and numerous policy announcements have marred the UK’s reputation for stable and predictable policy development.”

That is fairly damning. I am not steeped in the ways of Select Committee reports and how Committees finesse their arguments, but that is a clear criticism of the Government’s policy and how it has been implemented. It did not need to be done that way.

Through the various stages of the Bill we have accepted that the Government have a commitment to pursue that policy. We disagree with it. Their policy is short-sighted and is not the correct way of going about things. Onshore wind, in the view of the Scottish National party, has a significant role to play in the energy mix in the United Kingdom and should not have been taken out of the mix in a rather crude and cack-handed manner, but the Government have chosen to act in that way. *[Interruption.]* If the Government are to do that,

they should do so in the best way possible. *[Interruption.]* I feel there is something else happening that I am not aware of.

**Mr Speaker:** Very disorderly conduct. The hon. Gentleman is pressing a serious case. If I may, at the risk of making an in-joke, be permitted to say this, that whatever is the subject of this debate, fortunately, not least for him, Otis is not.

**Callum McCaig:** I do not think I quite caught that, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Speaker:** Fortunately for the hon. Gentleman, he does not need to do so. He is innocent. He has been transgressed against; he has not transgressed. He can now speed ahead with his oration, to which we look forward.

**Callum McCaig:** Speed is the operative word, I think. We have called for the re-devolution of the power and for the grace periods to be dealt with in the most appropriate manner. In its manifesto and in debates the Conservative party has professed a desire to see local control of this matter, and nobody would argue with that. However, that requires that we respect local decisions, but the grace periods as they stand do not do that. That is why the new clause and the amendments are necessary, particularly amendment 8, in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill, which relates to planning decisions at committee that were dealt with before the closure date, but where the approval certificate was not granted, in Scotland, due to section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, on planning gain—in England, I think it is section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This issue is clearly about local decision making, and the Government should give their consent so that it can be included in the Bill.

We accept that the change is going to happen. Having been explicitly opposed to it, the industry now sees that it is better to have some certainty, rather than continued uncertainty. However, that certainty needs to be correct certainty—it needs to be fair certainty and it needs to be certainty that does what it is intended to do.

We should respect local decision making. Where locally elected bodies—councils in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, although there are different stipulations there—have agreed to projects but have not been able to get their certificate to allow them access to the renewables obligation because of the technical nature of decision making around planning gain and other such issues, that is simply wrong.

**John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):** Will the hon. Gentleman remind the House why he wishes to burden his constituents and others with much dearer electricity from an interruptible source we cannot rely on?

**Callum McCaig:** Onshore wind has clearly been demonstrated to be one of the cheapest forms of renewable energy. If we were having a tête-à-tête, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman why he supports the obscene waste of money that will be spent on the Hinkley power plant, which will cost considerably in excess of what would be spent on onshore wind. However, as we are not having a back-and-forth, I will resist that temptation.

[*Callum McCaig*]

The issue is straightforward: we need to press ahead. The industry needs to be given certainty. The issue has been handled incredibly badly, but there is time, particularly taking cognisance of last week's Energy and Climate Change Committee report, for the Government to make amends, to change some of the stipulations on the grace periods and to allow things to happen in the best way possible. Repenting, however late, is better than carrying on regardless.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman is not giving way—he has concluded his remarks.

**John Redwood** *rose*—

**Chris Heaton-Harris** (Daventry) (Con) *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** Does Mr Redwood wish to speak?

**John Redwood** *indicated dissent*.

**Mr Speaker:** No. We will take Mr Chris Heaton-Harris and then come to the hon. Member for Southampton, Test (Dr Whitehead).

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** Thank you for calling me early in the debate, Mr Speaker.

I sat on the Energy Bill Committee, along with many right hon. and hon. Members present today, and I want to add a bit of balance to the Scottish National party's contribution. We had this debate in Committee. The SNP would very much like the responsibility for the renewables obligation sent back to Scotland, and many people on the Government Benches would probably like the SNP to commit to paying for that, if it were to happen. However, only half of that is covered in the SNP proposal.

**Callum McCaig:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman wants me to give way.

**Callum McCaig:** The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right that we had that debate, but does he accept that we will be paying an extortionate price for the Conservative party's nuclear power plans if he gets his way?

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** If we are talking about paying for things, I wonder how the SNP would have paid for its proposals had Scotland gone independent, given that the oil price is residing around \$30 or \$40 a barrel. Let us make sure that we talk about energy in a sensible way. We did have a constructive and sensible debate in Committee, even though it was good fun to fall out occasionally on different points.

Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, you did not select any of the amendments to which I put my name. I was not being cheeky in tabling them; I just wanted to make a point. The Conservative party had a manifesto commitment on removing the renewables obligations a year earlier than expected, with no new subsidies for onshore wind,

and on some planning changes. Those provisions were in the Bill, but Members of the House of Lords did not like them. In Committee, we debated what would happen if we reinserted that clear manifesto commitment, and how that would be quite a foolish thing to do because there are other methods within the planning rules that we could use.

It would be fair to talk about amplitude modulation in relation to planning requirements. There is a huge amount of concern about noise from wind turbines. I thought that I would identify a couple of the concerns in a tiny bit more detail so that Members could understand my approach.

**Mr Stewart Jackson** (Peterborough) (Con): My hon. Friend has a great deal of knowledge and expertise on these issues. The other place set a very unfortunate precedent in disregarding the post-war Salisbury convention and considering it appropriate to decide that the British public were wrong to re-elect the Government on a manifesto commitment to undertake the proposals that he has elucidated.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** I thank my hon. Friend for that intervention. I actually think there has been some sensible debate about this at the other end of the building. A number of sensible Labour peers, and a handful of Lib Dems, understand this point. It would be foolish for a once-coalition partner that has very few MPs in this place, but way too many peers in another place, to use that bulk of unelected opinion to force down a Government manifesto commitment. However, there are many ways to get around this problem. We can solve one planning problem in a way that would be good for communities affected by onshore wind, but it might not be the route that the peers at the other end of this building would like to go down. Perhaps they should think very sensibly about how they view this Bill in future, just in case.

A couple of years ago, I put in a freedom of information request to every planning authority across England because I wanted to see whether any of them had experienced, or had knowledge of, an element within wind noise called amplitude modulation, which is a kind of low whooshing sound that causes people great concern. I asked every environmental health officer across the country whether they had any experience of this. A large number, especially from rural areas where there are lots of onshore wind turbines, said yes, they did have had some experience of amplitude modulation, but as the current Government guidelines did not cover it, there was nothing they could do, and they wanted more information on it and better guidance from the Government. In fact, neither the wind industry nor the Department recognised that amplitude modulation existed until only a couple of years ago. That is quite bizarre considering that it was well recognised across the world at that time.

Fortunately, after I presented my findings to the Department, it came up with this statement:

“DECC has recognised that amplitude modulation (AM) noise produced by wind turbines can be a cause of concern for some residents. DECC has appointed an external consultant to review the available evidence on AM, with a view to recommending how excessive AM might be controlled through a planning condition. The INWG's study”—

the independent noise working group study that I helped to commission, which studied what causes amplitude modulation and how it can be tempered—

“will be considered alongside other evidence that is being gathered as part of this review.”

The evidence that I presented showed that lots of communities and individuals up and down the country are living in houses close to wind turbines that are directly affected by excessive amplitude modulation.

In fact, it is a significant factor in people’s lives. Noise complaints from wind farms are primarily related to the phenomenon of the whooshing noise. In many cases, it means that people cannot get to sleep in their own houses, which puts them under a great deal of stress. The “whoomph”, swish or beating noise is known about by engineers, and we experience it when we stand next to helicopters or other turbine-like blades when they are turning. It is the most intrusive element of noise from wind turbines.

4.15 pm

The Scots are at the forefront of everything to do with—I was going to say noise, but I will say onshore wind turbine knowledge, and leave it at that. A Scottish study found that at a distance of 1 to 2 km from a wind farm, 72% of people who suffered audible noise strongly disliked it, and that a vast number of those were suffering from the effects of excessive amplitude modulation. That noise is not covered by the current Energy Technology Support Unit noise guidelines.

**Mr Jackson:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the issue that he rightly raises is compounded by the complementary problem of shadow flickering, which has caused distress to many people in the environs of onshore wind infrastructure? The movement of very large plant and machinery on suboptimal rural roads can also have an impact on the quality of life of people adjacent to those facilities.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** Those are two very valid points. I have seen flicker for myself. Although I stood in the flicker of a wind turbine for only 10 minutes on one occasion, I understand how intrusive it could be if it affected someone’s house or their place of work. I know from my constituency—I am sure that other hon. and right hon. Members will have had similar experiences—that when those turbines are moved through small villages, sometimes they cannot get through without some sort of remedy having to be made to the road. A number of people visited me this morning from the lovely village of Guilsborough, where, if a turbine shaft were to be driven through the village to a nearby wind farm, there would be a gap of inches between the turbine shaft and the houses on each side of the road. Those things do cause concern. I would say that flicker causes more concern than traffic movement, and amplitude modulation probably more than flicker.

**Jonathan Edwards** (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (PC): Does the hon. Gentleman share my concern about the fact that in Wales, policy is concentrated in strategic zones, and all developments are put into five or six big development zones? The fact that there is a series of different projects makes enforcement difficult when noise levels go above what they should be. Although technically we are talking about one giant development, as far as

the planning regime is concerned it is a series of smaller developments within the strategic zone, so the issue about noise enforcement becomes acute.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** That is a very wise point, and one that I will come to later, if I may. I will just tease the hon. Gentleman briefly. It is possible to monitor such noise and predict where it might occur. Therefore, when amplitude modulation is causing distress to nearby residents and that is being monitored, it is possible with the agreement of the wind farm developer to stop the turbines from turning during that period of time—this has happened in a couple of places in England—so the noise stops and everybody goes about their business happily.

I know that some of the proposals in Wales have been massive, and I have been working hard with my hon. Friend the Member for Montgomeryshire (Glyn Davies) on some amazingly large proposals for his constituency. I know that the matter is of real concern to many people across Wales.

As I have said, the current guidelines do not require amplitude modulation to be monitored at all. In fact, the noise falls outside ETSU monitoring. I know of only one wind farm planning decision in the United Kingdom in which a planning condition for amplitude modulation noise was imposed, which was the Den Brook development in Devon.

My concern is that everybody has known about this issue for a very long time—for decades—but no one has spoken up about it. We gave the green light to this industry, and I have previously spoken in this place about how some of the developers have not been particularly kind to villages and constituents of mine when proposing developments, because they knew everything was stacked on their side. I have previously made the argument to the hon. Member for Wigan (Lisa Nandy) that developers could have done a lot better in the past, and we might not have the current problem if it had been recognised that local people’s views should carry a great deal of weight.

For decades, there was no such recognition. The wind industry has consistently denied the existence of excessive amplitude modulation, even though I can point hon. Members to experts who have demonstrated that amplitude modulation is a frequent occurrence that potentially affects all large industrial wind turbines. It often does so for long periods, and more frequently than not during the night. I point to my survey of environmental health officers and planning authorities, many of whom said that they knew amplitude modulation or something of that ilk was happening, but had no powers to deal with it and did not have the correct guidance from Government to point them in the right direction.

People complain about amplitude modulation to Members of Parliament and local planning authorities, but I think there is a hidden silent majority. People are willing to suffer such noise in silence and do not want to complain because they fear the adverse implications of getting involved, such as having to disclose any complaint they have made to a planning authority or a council when they come to sell their house.

The existing legal remedies have been found wanting. Remedies are available for neighbours of wind farms who are affected by turbine noise under ETSU, but they

[Chris Heaton-Harris]

are simply not fit for purpose, and they are certainly not fit for measuring amplitude modulation. Taking action for statutory nuisance has been actively advocated by the wind industry and supported by planning inspectors, but the evidence suggests that an abatement notice is not an effective control to protect nearby residents from excessive amplitude modulation. Other remedies, such as taking action for private nuisance and similar legal actions, have been considered, but they place too much risk and burden on residents for a problem that is not of their making, with the likelihood of adverse long-term financial implications.

In addition, the recent trend is for secondary operators to form individual shell companies for each wind farm. The impact of that was highlighted in July 2015 when my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) introduced a Bill to require wind farm developers to obtain public liability insurance for any nuisance they caused to nearby residents. That was particularly aimed at noise nuisance. One of his constituents had had a problem with noise from a local wind farm, but had found it impossible to sue because the operator was purely a shell company and had very limited assets.

Of more concern is the effect of amplitude modulation on health. I have read studies demonstrating adequately that wind turbine noise adversely affects sleep and health. It is abundantly clear from evidence examined by a world-renowned expert, Chris Hanning—I asked him to help me, and he worked with the group that I got together—that wind turbine noise adversely affects sleep and health at set-back distances and noise levels that are permitted by the current ETSU noise regulation. There is no reliable evidence—not one single study—that wind turbines are safe at those distances and noise levels. In contrast, an increasing volume of studies and evidence have outlined the contrary. There is a particular concern about the health of children exposed to excessive wind turbine noise. The inadequate consideration of amplitude modulation is a major factor in why I believe that ETSU fails to protect the majority of people who live near wind turbines and why I believe that it needs to be reformed. The wind industry's denial is reminiscent of other denials of health issues in the past. It could be a very big public health issue.

I contend that the current noise standard, ETSU-97, is not fit for purpose and I have plenty of evidence to suggest that its methodology is completely incorrect. I do not have to go into that evidence because I am fortunately supported by the findings of a recent Northern Ireland Assembly report in January 2015 on wind energy. The report recommends a review of the use

“of the ETSU-97 guidelines on an urgent basis, with a view to adopting more modern and robust guidance for measurement of wind turbine noise, with particular reference to current guidelines from the World Health Organisation.”

I therefore contend that we need an effective planning condition for amplitude modulation. The wind industry claims that an amplitude modulation planning condition is not necessary, and that the legal remedy of statutory nuisance provides adequate protection, are thoroughly discredited by the evidence I have seen and that I have published on my website. Without a planning condition, there is no effective remedy for wind farm neighbours who suffer from excessive noise. The relevance of amplitude

modulation in causing noise complaints has driven the wind industry to ensure that a planning condition of that type is not applied as standard planning practice. That is why I raise it today when we are having a conversation about renewables obligation certificates and the planning guidance that goes alongside them as part of our manifesto commitment.

**Philip Boswell** (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (SNP): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the decision on whether projects go ahead should sit with the local people via the planning process, so that when local people have agreed to and are in favour of the project, it should be allowed to go ahead?

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** I have long contended—I have said it in pretty much every speech I have given on wind in the House—that, if local people want a wind farm, who is the local MP or any politician to get in their way? I want it to be subsidy-free and I want people to benefit from it, but if the majority of local people believe that it is a benefit to their local community, I have no issue with it whatever.

People should be aware of the potential health concerns from the noise from amplitude modulation. We have the opportunity to ensure that those concerns can be mitigated. When a local community steps forward and says, “Yes, we’d desperately love to have 100 wind turbines surround our village, devalue our houses and hide us from our rural hinterland,” they can do so knowing that they could get the turbines that produce amplitude modulation turned off, so that they could at least sleep comfortably in bed at night.

**Mr Jackson:** Is my hon. Friend aware of the work of Professor Peter Styles of Keele University, who published a study on vibrations from 60 metre-high wind turbines at Dun Law in Scotland? He states that

“when the windfarm starts to generate, even at low wind speeds, considerable infrasound signals can be detected at all stations out

about 10 km. He adds that some developers propose to install bigger turbines, so the older studies that showed that turbines are safe for the purposes of noise are out of date. He says that modern wind turbines in excess of 100 metres high cause more problems.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** I am very much aware of that study and obviously agree with what Professor Styles found. The interesting thing is that, as turbines get larger, amplitude modulation is generated over a slightly larger area. We have gone past the 80-metre stage. My constituency has dozens of wind turbines of 126.5 metres and upwards. That is about the size of the London Eye. When the blades move around and chop the wind, they create amplitude modulation. There is an understanding now that this is happening, so we need a suitable and sensible planning condition to ensure local communities affected by this problem have a way of stopping it happening to them.

4.30 pm

This is why I wanted to talk about the application of an amplitude modulation planning condition, such as the one that came forward in 2009 for Den Brook in Devon. That represented a serious risk to the wind



industry, which fought it tooth and nail. A planning condition of this type can add cost and make it more difficult to get turbines through the planning process. People might well decide to campaign even more against a big industrial turbine being placed near them if it has potential health risks.

**John Redwood:** Can my hon. Friend tell us what the fix is for this? Is there a realistic way of suppressing the noise?

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** The best way to suppress the noise is to turn the turbine off for the period of time when the noise is likely to occur. As acousticians have demonstrated to me, the noise is more likely to occur at night when other background noises have dropped down. We can predict it, because we know which way the wind is blowing and at what speed. It drops down to ground level in a certain way, so we can know exactly which houses and which zone it will affect. Therefore, with sensible meteorological readings using the correct monitoring equipment, which is now remarkably cheap to purchase—it used to cost an awful lot—we can do a lot better.

**Heidi Allen** (South Cambridgeshire) (Con): Will my hon. Friend give way?

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** I will give way to my hon. Friend, who has a vast amount of experience in this area.

**Heidi Allen:** Not me personally, but certainly the residents in my constituency have. Everything my hon. Friend has said is right. I find it staggering, given that the world of physics and wave technology is well understood, that amplitude modulation should suddenly be a surprise to us in relation to wind farms. It is a natural occurrence of wave technology. We have a wide knowledge and evidence base in my constituency mostly because of Cotton Farm wind farm, which is just outside my constituency in Huntingdon. The residents have been blighted for years by the wind farm. They cannot sell their houses and they cannot open their windows. The data are available and the Government would be wise to make use of them and incorporate them into their review.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** I thank my hon. Friend for her contribution and I agree with her. I have been to Cotton Farm to see the wind farm for myself and to meet some of the residents. I met the illustrious Bev Gray—I do not know if he is a constituent of my hon. Friend—who has provided me with more information than any man could ever possibly want about amplitude modulation readings and the noise his community suffers on a regular basis. As my hon. Friend suggests, this is not rocket science. Where there is amplitude modulation, people suffer and genuine health concerns have for too long been swept under the carpet.

The Den Brook planning condition, as it has become known, was a chance to introduce a sensible planning condition that evoked amplitude modulation and tried to deal with it. The wind industry could have welcomed it as a method to defeat wind farm opponents across the country who say “You don’t deal with the problem of wind” by saying, “We understand there is a problem

with wind noise, and we will deal with it and mitigate it when it happens.” Instead, the industry went into complete denial and actual upfront aggressiveness. It fought the planning condition through the courts over an eight-year period to ensure that it was not applied, and to get it removed and then sufficiently weakened so as to make it pretty pointless if it were ever to return. In fulfilling our manifesto commitment and making this change to the renewables obligation as of the end of the month, I suggest that we also bring forward the appropriate planning conditions to address the problem of amplitude modulation and make wind developers and farms a bit more acceptable in the parts of the country where they already exist.

**David Mowat** (Warrington South) (Con): My hon. Friend is making an interesting speech about amplitude modulation. Is it predictable—is it possible to say, given a certain design, “There will be this much modulation”—or is it something that just happens, depending on other factors, and therefore quite hard to plan for?

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** It is as predictable as the wind. We know which direction the wind will come from and how fast it will be, which means we can predict a zone that will be affected by amplitude modulation on any given day. So yes, we can predict it.

I ask the Minister not to give up on the changes to the renewables obligation, which were part of a manifesto commitment, and to hear our plea about amplitude modulation. I have some concerns about the report she has commissioned from her Department and would like it judged against the evidence I have given her. Had the wind industry behaved more pragmatically and sensibly few years ago, we probably would not be in this position. I am known for my views on this subject, but I know that there are sensible developers of wind technology who try to do their best for the local communities in the areas in which they install turbines. Unfortunately, I do not have an example of that in my constituency. It might be that the wind industry has woken up to this issue after the horse has bolted.

**Dr Alan Whitehead** (Southampton, Test) (Lab): I rise to speak to our amendments 24 to 33 and 40 to 46, which, although standing individually, form a collective whole and refer to successive amendments the Government made to the Bill in another place in Committee to bring forward the closure date of the renewables obligation from 31 March 2017 to 31 March 2016. Our amendments would move that date and those of the various grace periods to 1 March 2017. They would therefore bring forward the closure date by one month, rather than one year, as is the present proposal.

I have some fears about the robustness of the present closure date in the face of the Bill’s passage. We are discussing a closure date that is very close to the day on which we are actually discussing it. The passage of the Bill, given that it came from the other place in the first instance, will have to finish in the other place shortly. The fact that the closure date before us is just a fortnight or so away from today creates considerable difficulties for the closure of the RO itself. It is not the case that we are discussing something that does not exist that can be brought into existence under legislation. We are discussing something that not only exists but, if we do nothing

[Dr Alan Whitehead]

by way of legislation, will continue to carry on until 31 March 2017. We are discussing something that is in the legislation already, in that there is a specific mention in the Bill that the RO comes to an end on 31 March 2017, so if nothing happens to stop the RO from carrying on, it will carry on until that date. In a sense, then, we have just one go in this place at changing the date in the legislation. If the Bill continues its passage through Parliament after the closure date has come into being, we will be dealing with retrospective legislation.

**John Redwood:** Is it not the case that from the moment people knew who had won the general election, they knew what would be Government policy in this area and they knew that it would be done as expeditiously as possible? Surely everyone could plan perfectly well around that obvious point.

**Dr Whitehead:** The right hon. Gentleman might have jumped the gun in respect of the point he wanted to make about the effect of the proposed closure, but it is a different point from the one I am making about the closure. My point is that we stand in danger not only with respect to investor confidence, investor certainty or other considerations about what investors should do, which I shall come on to in a minute, but in respect of what we do, potentially exposing this House to legal action. Although the Government will have closed the renewables obligation administratively, they will not have closed it legislatively. There could be difficulties if discussions here and in the other place mean that the Bill receives Royal Assent after 31 March 2016.

**Mr Jackson:** I hear what the hon. Gentleman is saying, but is there not an issue of fairness and social equity here? He is making a special plea on behalf of the renewables companies for what is effectively a de facto fiscal payment from some of the poorest consumers who are in fuel poverty to those individuals and those companies. Is that not the bigger issue, not least when we also have an electoral mandate to carry through this policy, as the hon. Gentleman is well aware?

**Dr Whitehead:** I shall come on in a few moments to the question of whether the Conservative party has an electoral mandate to carry through this particular policy. This is not the point I am making right now. My point is that we stand in some danger of making legal action available to those who do not want this RO to be closed. The hon. Gentleman might like to reflect on the fact that if there is a mandate, it is to get on and do it, but to do it properly, not incompetently, so that exposure to legal action can be avoided. The point about the fact that the RO is here, has been here for quite a long time and, as the legislation states, will continue until 31 March 2017—unless someone does something to stop that—is that, in principle, if no one does anything to stop it by 31 March 2016, then claims can still be put forward for receipt of an RO after that date, because that is what the legislation says. Although I do not think that in practice very many people would venture to seek certification of an RO after 31 March 2016 if we are still discussing this in the House, that possibility is nevertheless open.

4.45 pm

**John Redwood:** Is the hon. Gentleman inventing a new doctrine: that Governments should never try and change the law because the Opposition might delay it?

**Dr Whitehead:** Again, the right hon. Gentleman misses the point I am making. This is not about the Opposition attempting to delay the imposition of the law. It is about the rush to close the renewables obligation on the part of the Government, not the Opposition, and the subsequent, rather dilatory way in which the Energy Bill was placed before this House—and, indeed, the way in which it has been scheduled in this House and the distinct possibility that further stages of the Bill may be scheduled. The net result of that dilatoriness in the legislative process is that the Government, not the Opposition, may put us in a position where retrospective legislation is apparently the case and the possibility of legal action is also apparently the case. It is important that we remember that today. One reason I am suggesting that the closure of the RO ought to be much later, albeit still early, is that it would avoid that potential legal action.

In reality, we know that the proposed closure of the renewables obligation a year early is not about implementing a manifesto pledge. The RO is not a new subsidy—that is what was in the Conservative manifesto. Indeed, we had discussions about that in Committee. The proposals before us are not only about putting an end to something that has been in place for a considerable period, that has worked well and that was about to change, in good time, to a new system that allows for degression in underwriting and a path towards effectively dissolving subsidies for a technology that has achieved close to market parity; they are about putting an end to something that industry investors were clear and confident about. Investors were confident not just because the renewables obligation had worked for a while; there was also a clear process whereby it would come to an end and a clear line of progression to contracts for difference—the new system, which we discussed at some length during the passage of the Energy Act 2013—and an orderly roll-out of renewable energy as something progressively more effective and cheaper.

**Jonathan Edwards:** In formulating his amendments, has the hon. Gentleman had time to consider the recent excellent report by the Select Committee on Energy and Climate Change, which said that the Government's current policy would lead to bills increasing due to uncertainty?

**Dr Whitehead:** The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right to draw attention to that report and, indeed, to the issue that has arisen not just from these changes, but from a series of other abrupt lurches in policy from the Government in the field of renewable energy. The net result has been a dramatic drop in investor confidence and a dramatic fall from our advanced position as a country that was regarded as a safe, good place to invest in renewable energy. This policy lurch has led to a feeling among many investors that they are now living in a world of confusion, in which it may be recommended in the boardroom that—perhaps in light of the competitiveness of many other countries—they should invest elsewhere when it comes to renewables. It has

thrown a great many programmes into confusion and affected a great deal of potential investment in this country, not just in onshore wind but in many other renewables. Policy lurches of this sort tend to creep and spread across confidence in other areas of investment. If things had been left well alone, it would have been possible to envisage the continued progression of a secure investment circumstance, along with a clear understanding of what investors were doing and of how investments would change over a period.

This is not about putting an end to new subsidies; it is about the removal of a well-understood, long-lived subsidy before the point at which investors, the market and everyone else had expected it to be replaced by another system. As late as the spring of last year—after, I imagine, the Conservative manifesto had been written—the Secretary of State announced that the renewables obligation would close in March 2017, and the changeover would then be undertaken. I think that that came as a particular surprise to investors and the market because the Government had previously seemed to be so confident that the procedure would be as it had been originally set out.

It has been claimed that the removal of the renewables obligation at an early date is okay because we are reaching one of our European targets relating to the proportion of renewable energy that should make up our overall energy mix by 2020. The claim is that because the component that is represented by wind, and particularly by onshore wind, is reaching its target, it is okay to throw the market into its current confusion. We must, however, bear it in mind that we are failing substantially on the two other components of our European 15% target, heat and transport. Incidentally, the United Kingdom can be fined for missing that target.

The target can be achieved through overachievement in some areas, even if there is underachievement in others. The 12% renewable heat target, on which we are failing fairly miserably at the moment, and the 10% renewable fuel target, on which we are also failing, could be supported by our continuing to deploy onshore wind in particular. It might be suggested that to cut onshore wind at this time, given the extent of the failure to keep up with the overall energy target, is irresponsible to say the least.

A further claim that we have heard during the Bill's passage is that all this is being done to help the customers who will have to pay for the underwriting of onshore wind. Of course it is important for us to we consider the bills that customers are paying when deciding how best to establish our energy mix for the future.

We will have to establish an energy mix that is the most affordable, the most secure and the least carbonising over the next period, but the claim that this change is being introduced to help customers is in reality paper thin.

If the Government were serious about renewables in general, as they claim, the hole left by onshore wind over the next period as a result of the early closure of the RO—estimates suggest that a loss of investment of £1 billion is on the cards, as the Select Committee has noted—would have to be filled by other renewable sources that are currently more expensive to underwrite than the onshore wind they would replace. The net outcome of this measure could well be that the cost to

customers is considerably more than it would have been if the present arrangements had been allowed to continue to their conclusion.

Onshore wind is at the leading edge of market parity. As the Government will be aware, it was on a sustained glide path down to parity, with investor confidence high and costs coming down. I emphasise that the damage to investor confidence as a result of this essentially retroactive Bill will be enormous. If it goes through, it will effectively replace a steady path down to market parity in which competitive deployment could progress—a cliff over which investment will fall.

A further claim that the proposed change is necessary is connected to the levy control framework, the *éminence grise* in many of our discussions on energy, particularly renewable energy. It is a control framework formed in obscurity by the Government and continuing in background gloom as people attempt fruitlessly to find out about its calculations, its variations and its consequent prescriptions. The levy control framework was devised in 2011 by the Government to get us into a position where about £7.6 billion at 2012 prices of levy payers' money—money derived not from Government sources but from levies on energy companies, which would pass those costs on to their customers—would provide a framework within which renewables could develop.

However, the levy control framework is based on a static endpoint—2020 in this instance—even though prices will be variable over the period. It is based on the idea of a strike price that renewable energy will receive and that has been agreed, certainly for onshore wind, at an auction process, set against a reference price, which is the median price for energy at a particular time. The strike price is considered in relation to what rewards will be undertaken for that renewable energy. When and if energy prices go down, the difference between the strike price and the reference price widens. Although a renewable energy developer will receive the same amount of money for their energy, the make-up of the amount paid to the developer will be different. The more prices go down, the less the developer will get in relation to the reference price and the more they will get in relation to the difference between the reference price and the strike price, which will come from the levy control framework. Therefore, over a period of time the levy control framework, as designed, increases the reward to those inside the system, even though they do not get a total additional reward. New entrants are squeezed out, because the money goes to rewarding those who are already in the system and less money is provided to new entrants outside the system. Indeed, many commentators consider the present form of the levy control framework to be, in essence, bust as far as new entrants are concerned. The relatively small amount of change that the levy control framework will undergo through the ending of the renewables obligation period a year early is all about how the framework balances itself, which is a pretty thin claim bearing in mind the range of theoretical headroom in the framework and the difficulties it has experienced.

5 pm

I was recently struck by the Government announcing they were closing the RO early for an equally cheap and verging on competitive renewable technology—small commercial solar—to save customers an estimated £1 on

their bills by 2020. Almost in the same breath, they announced a hugely expensive and dubiously effective programme for capacity market auctions, which have precisely the same funding origin in that levies will eventually be paid for by customers and which will, in this instance, put at least £20 on bills by 2020. It is estimated that early closure of the RO will save bill payers some 30p while potentially increasing our carbon emissions by 63 million tonnes. It is far more about appeasing the obsessions of several Conservative Back Benchers—[*Interruption.*] the hon. Member for Daventry and his hon. Friends—about wind than a surgical strike on an area of difficulty for the levy control framework.

As shown by the inadequacies of the grace periods provided for in the Bill, it is not even as if the Government are changing the rules to benefit only those schemes that those Back Benchers have been praying in aid for some time. The Opposition support the need to ensure that local decision making favours onshore wind, provided that it really is the case that if a wind farm gets local support through the planning process and has community backing, as many schemes currently outstanding do, it will get the go ahead from Government. If the Government really support that as a principle behind the future deployment of onshore wind, they should immediately include rather than exclude, which is the case currently, those schemes that always have gone down the path of seeking local support and local planning agreement in their programmes. Instead, the Government have put in place an arbitrary cut-off date for such schemes, even if the schemes were in an advanced position, such as having plans agreed and being supported locally, and were just awaiting the final certificate following agreement on administrative matters.

**David Mowat:** A few moments ago, the shadow Secretary of State appeared unhappy that the capacity auction announced by the Government two weeks ago had been brought forward. Is the Labour Front-Bench position that the auction should not be brought forward?

**Dr Whitehead:** The question of whether the capacity auction should have been brought forward is secondary to the extent to which the Government believe that the auction will actually produce new capacity, as I am sure the hon. Gentleman is fully aware. Like the levy control framework, capacity auctions warrant a much deeper reorganisation than the rather tepid arrangement undertaken by the Government. Simply bringing an auction forward by a year, using roughly the same parameters about the likely clearance price and the distance between the clearance price and the likely price necessary to secure any new investment over a 15-year period for new gas-fired power stations, does not strike me as the smartest way to procure longer-term capacity in the capacity market. A deeper reorganisation of capacity auctions is required to secure that aim over the next period.

Before that intervention, I was briefly thinking about the subject of my amendments 23 and 52, to which I wish to draw the House's attention. If the Government were serious about the proposals in their manifesto—that schemes that have local support should proceed—they should immediately adopt these amendments. They are about schemes where all the right moves in getting local agreement to the plans have been undertaken, all inquiries, concerns and planning arrangements have been dealt

with, the schemes are on the cusp of getting agreement at planning and local authority level, and they have the support of local communities, but the Government have just pulled the plug on them and they now cannot proceed. The Government ought to adopt these amendments if they were, in principle, serious about their own principle that local areas should decide on local schemes and that those local schemes could be supported where local communities support them. Conversely, I fear that if clause 80 remains in the Bill, as amended, we will have in store a programme of onshore wind execution and not the execution of an onshore wind programme.

Labour's vision is for a locally supported, appropriate programme of onshore wind deployment, complementing other renewables such as solar, biomass, offshore wind and tidal in reaching renewable targets, not because we have to, but because it is the right thing to do in ensuring that we have a balanced, low-carbon energy mix for the future. This clause points us squarely in the opposite direction and I urge hon. Members to support amendments that put us back on track again.

**John Redwood:** I rise to support the Government and to urge the rejection of amendments that would delay getting rid of the subsidies for wind power. Our country desperately needs more electrical power to be available, and I am pleased that the Government are now taking action, with capacity auctions, to try to get some more power available. We need more affordable power. We need to tackle fuel poverty and have power at prices where households can afford to purchase. We also need to have affordable power for extra industry, which is one of the Chancellor's aims. We need reliable power; we want to know that the power is there whether the wind is blowing or not, and whether the sun is shining or not. People expect continuous power, in order to light and power their homes, and industry needs continuous power for its processes. On all those grounds, wind does not cut the mustard, and I am glad that we now have a Government who recognise that.

When the history of the past 15 or 20 years comes to be written, what the European Union is doing and what the previous Labour Government did on energy policy will go down as one of their catastrophic failures. It will be at least as big as the exchange rate mechanism, which destroyed so much activity, jobs and prosperity in our country. It may not be as big as the disaster of the euro, but it will be one of the big, classic disasters of the European Union that Europe as a whole is becoming an area of too-little energy and very high-cost energy, driving industry out of the European Union area and into Asia and America, where more plentiful and affordable energy is available. Far from sparing the planet extra carbon dioxide, all this mad policy is doing is making sure that the carbon dioxide is produced somewhere else, rather than within the European Union itself.

Germany has much more wind power than we do and many Opposition Members admire it in this respect, but what happens when the wind does not blow? I will tell them what happens: Germany relies on a large number of extremely dirty coal power stations to churn out the electricity, producing more carbon dioxide than it would if it had opted for a fleet of modern gas stations in the first place. On average, that would have been better than this strange mixture of intermittent

wind, which is very good on carbon dioxide when the wind blows, and back-up power, which in Germany and elsewhere in Europe is often generated from coal, and is extremely bad on carbon dioxide when the wind does not blow.

**David Mowat:** Germany uses coal all the time and the wind power is the intermittent stuff. Germany's carbon emissions are 30% higher than the UK's per unit of GDP and per capita just because it uses so much coal and fossil fuels, even though its renewables level is quite high as well.

**John Redwood:** Yes, but, as my hon. Friend will agree, when the wind does not blow, Germany has to use more coal. When there is no wind energy, the replacement must come from fossil fuel. A wind system with fossil fuel back-up does not even work on its own terms, and he is right that the German merit order is somewhat different.

I was going on to point out that from an economic point of view, we in this country have managed to damage every kind of power generation. If we insist on giving priority to dear, interruptible, intermittent sources such as wind, the more reliable, cheaper sources such as gas become intermittent, as they are switched off every time the wind blows and switched back on every time the wind is not blowing, which in itself is difficult and expensive. That undermines the economics of what would otherwise be good-value power. It means that we cannot run the plants flat out. We have higher operating costs because of the complications of switching on and off and managing the furnaces accordingly, with much less revenue coming in because less power is generated and power cannot continuously be sold to the market.

The ham-fisted interventions—[*Interruption.*] The hon. Member for Southampton, Test (Dr Whitehead) does not seem to understand the policy that his party put in place and that the European Union supports. The ham-fisted interventions in our energy market mean that we have less reliable energy, because we deliberately subsidise a lot of intermittent and unreliable energy; that we have dearer energy, because, as is commonly accounted, renewables are considerably dearer; and that we have much dearer energy overall, because of the extra cost, which is not included in the way that the cost of renewables is accounted for, which means that non-renewable power becomes a lot dearer per unit as well.

**Jonathan Edwards:** Has the right hon. Gentleman had an opportunity to reflect on the complete U-turn by Energy UK, which now says that the Government need to promote renewables instead of fossil fuels? Indeed, it says that an energy policy based on fossil fuels is a smartphone equivalent of placing all our bets on Nokia as opposed to Apple and Samsung.

**John Redwood:** No, I have not had the chance to reflect on that, but it does not seem to be a very interesting observation given the fundamental truth that I have just given him, on which the hon. Gentleman has not reflected at all. The truth of our current energy policy—

**Dr Whitehead** *rose*—

**John Redwood:** Let me just deal with the hon. Gentleman, and then I will happily deal with the shadow Minister. The truth about our energy policy is that the various interventions have conspired to make less power available

at a much higher price and that, unless we start to reverse some of those interventions, we will get those pernicious effects. If he is saying that, yes, the price of energy from fossil fuels is variable, depending on the world market price, that is self-evidently true, but it does not mean that it is a good idea to put in something that is very unreliable and intermittent and is dearer than fossil fuel at more or less any realistic market price that might be commanded in the market by fossil fuel.

**Dr Whitehead:** Has the right hon. Gentleman had the opportunity to go to the national balancing services centre, which is in his constituency, as it undertakes a great deal of work balancing the system? There are substantial constraints on non-fossil fuel as well as fossil fuel inputs to the system, which cause shortages in power delivery at various stages, whether non-fossil fuel or fossil fuel delivery. Perhaps he could reflect on that in his comments.

**John Redwood:** Of course, as Member of Parliament for Wokingham, I have visited the centre on several occasions, and met the dedicated group of people there. The last time I visited was quite recently, and they were saying to me how much more difficult it is to manage a system that relies on wind, which is becoming more and more intermittent. That is self-evidently true. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for reinforcing my point, although I am not sure whether that was what he was trying to do. It used to be much easier when we had baseload power that could be relied upon and that was not interrupted by changes in the weather or the wind, and where the swing factor could be accounted for primarily by the pumped storage systems at Dinorwig. A command could be sent from Wokingham to Dinorwig. The water would come down the hill very quickly, and the kettles could boil in the interval of the big movie or whatever it was that was causing the surge in power demand. It is much more difficult now to call up power if, at the same time, the wind suddenly drops.

That is leading to our having to put in more and more interconnectors with other countries, so we become a net importer of power on a more regular basis, which is not something I value. I want us to have security of energy supply in our own country. We are, after all, an island of coal in a sea of oil and gas, and one would think we could find environmentally acceptable ways of exploiting that and burning it to produce the power we need. As I want an industrial revival in this country, that could well start with us importing less electricity.

5.15 pm

**Matthew Pennycook** (Greenwich and Woolwich) (Lab): The right hon. Gentleman talks about security. Does he share the concerns that I have and that have been expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Southampton, Test (Dr Whitehead) about the operation of the capacity market? That is costing us a great deal of money and it is manifestly failing to bring on new gas, which is its central aim.

**John Redwood:** As I have been trying to explain, the reason we end up with dear gas is all the other subsidised interventions we have been making. We cannot run gas flat out and get the benefits of running it in the most economical way possible. Yes, I would rather have a much simpler market. The market worked a lot better in the 1980s and 1990s when we first set up a pretty open

[John Redwood]

competitive market and power prices came down a lot. We had roughly a 25% margin of extra supply so that we were secure and we never had to worry that, if there was a cold day with the wind not blowing when industry was doing quite well, we would have to tell industry to switch its machines off. We did not get to such a position under that regime.

Now that we have a grossly intervened regime with all sorts of subsidies and priorities that do not reflect the economics of power production, we get to exactly the point that the hon. Gentleman rightly identifies, when we have to bid quite high to get people to provide gas-based power because we cannot guarantee full access to the market on a continuous basis. Of course, the more interventions there have been over the years of Labour and coalition and now the Conservatives, the more changes are needed in that intervention regime as the Government tinker or try to change it to make it work better, and the higher the prices tend to have to be because people become more suspicious if Government have so much power and if Government keep changing their mind.

So it is quite easy to get from a relatively free, successful market to a badly damaged, rigged, subsidised market. It is quite difficult getting from a badly damaged, subsidised market where the interventions are not very helpful to one that works better, because there is suspicion in the minds of investors, and they need longer contracts, bigger guarantees and higher prices to give them some kind of offset as they fear the Government may tinker unnecessarily.

This debate is about the amendment. I support the Government in their view. I want the Government to get on with removing the subsidies to onshore wind, as we said we would do. I hope the Opposition and the other place will not delay that further. We gave plenty of notice of this, and the sooner we do it the sooner we will get a bit closer to having a less damaged energy market.

**Philip Boswell:** Onshore wind is one of the most inexpensive forms of renewable energy, and it is therefore critical to maximise its input into a renewable energy solution across the UK to enable Scotland and the rest of the UK to meet our climate change targets.

Closing the RO early puts in jeopardy £3 billion-worth of onshore wind investment in Scotland alone for a forecast 30p saving in energy bills. This is a false economy because £3 billion of onshore wind investment equates to 63 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. That is from DECC's own analysis and represents a missed opportunity both economically and in terms of hitting climate change targets.

I spoke at length in Committee on the grace periods and the importance of getting them right, so I will not labour the point here. However, it is important that they are fair and do not disadvantage projects which, through no fault of their own, fall through the crack owing to early closure of the RO.

My hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen South (Callum McCaig) and the hon. Member for Southampton, Test (Dr Whitehead), who is no longer in his place, spoke eloquently about the real and very difficult deterioration in investor confidence caused by the early

closure of the RO. Now that that is proceeding, it must be done fairly and with a view to the critical part that onshore wind plays in the overall energy solution for the UK. We must keep the lights on, which is why we intend to press amendment 8 to a Division.

**The Minister of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change (Andrea Leadsom):** Before dealing with other proposals, I would like to speak to Government amendment 50. As I made clear during our last debate on this issue, I would like to see an equivalent approach taken right across the UK to the early closure of the renewables obligation to onshore wind, to provide consistency to industry and to protect consumer bills. Amendment 50 relates to clause 81—the backstop power regarding Northern Ireland.

In Committee, I introduced a clause with a view to protecting consumers in Great Britain from the costs of any additional support that Northern Ireland may decide to provide to onshore wind. I remind hon. Members that the clause received considerable support at that stage and that it is a backstop power—this is to say, it is intended to be exercised only if Northern Ireland decides not to close the Northern Ireland renewables obligation scheme to new onshore wind on equivalent terms to those in Great Britain.

The new amendment simply clarifies the drafting of the clause to ensure consistency with the provisions relating to the early closure of the renewables obligation in Great Britain by making it clear that the power in clause 81 extends to capacity added to existing onshore wind stations, as well as to new stations. I should highlight that the intent behind the clause has not changed at all.

I thank all hon. Members for their comments on the non-Government provisions. A number of them—specifically amendments 1 to 21, tabled by the hon. Member for Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill (Philip Boswell)—were discussed in some detail and at length in Committee. As far as I can see, the amendments have not changed at all since we last discussed them. Following our agreement not to include them then, the hon. Gentleman has tabled them here once again.

To ensure clarity for hon. Members who did not attend the Committee debates and to move forward with this debate, and indeed the Bill, I am happy to set out the Government's position again. I will first remind hon. Members of the intended effect of clauses 79 and 80. Clause 79 implements the early closure of the renewables obligation to new onshore wind in Great Britain. Clause 80 sets out the grace period conditions under which certain projects may continue to accredit beyond the early closure date.

Let me be clear: the Government remain committed to delivering our manifesto pledge to end new subsidies for onshore wind, and I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (John Redwood) and my hon. Friend the Member for Daventry (Chris Heaton-Harris) for the clear support they expressed. The Government are, however, also conscious of the need for industry certainty. Therefore, in response to the question from the hon. Member for Southampton, Test (Dr Whitehead), I would like to make it clear that, if Royal Assent for the Bill goes beyond 31 March, the Government intend the provisions to come into force from the date of Royal Assent and do not intend to

backdate them. I reiterate that there is absolutely no change to our commitment to end new subsidies for onshore wind, and our actions have shown that we will be tough on subsidies to keep bills down for families and businesses.

Onshore wind has deployed successfully to date. Based on our analysis, and taking early closure of the renewables obligation into account, we still expect the deployment of onshore wind to fall within our electricity market reform delivery plan projections of 11 to 13 GW by 2020. That is our best estimate of what is needed to meet our 2020 targets and of what is affordable under our low-carbon spending cap.

When we announced early closure on 18 June, we made it clear that it was appropriate to curtail further deployment of onshore wind, balancing the interests of onshore wind developers with those of the wider public. As I explained in our earlier debates, the grace period conditions in clause 80 were developed following extensive stakeholder engagement and have been designed specifically to provide certainty and clarity for industry. In particular, we engaged in detail on the core grace period conditions, referred to as the “approved development condition” in the Bill. This requires projects wishing to accredit under the RO beyond 31 March 2016 to provide evidence that, as of 18 June 2015, they had, first, relevant planning consents; secondly, a grid connection offer and acceptance of that offer, or confirmation that no grid connection is required; and thirdly, access to land rights.

Following further industry engagement and analysis by my Department, the Bill’s provisions have been improved in a number of ways: first, to capture those projects that had a planning application refused on or before 18 June 2015, or where the relevant planning authority failed to determine a planning application where a decision was due by 18 June 2015, and which are then subsequently granted consent on appeal; secondly, to introduce an “investment freezing condition” allowing certain projects that qualify for the grace period an additional nine months in which to accredit where they have been unable to secure debt funding due to legislative uncertainty; and thirdly, to provide that the existing grid and radar grace period will continue to be available so that projects that have suffered delays outside their control in this area will have a further 12 months in which to accredit.

Let me take a moment to reflect on the important point about investor confidence. The Government believe that the early closure and grace period provisions that we have presented within the Bill strike the right balance between protecting investor confidence and ensuring our ability to control costs under the levy control framework.

**Jonathan Edwards:** The Minister has outlined the criteria for closing the scheme. Does she share my concern that in Wales this has created some difficulty in understanding which schemes will now fall outside the RO and which will fall within it, because in Wales the generation applications and infrastructure applications come separately, whereas in England they come together in the same application?

**Andrea Leadsom:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for making that point, but I think that our grace periods are absolutely clear, and that developers who have sought clarity have been able to get it from the words in our debates and in the Bill.

Investor confidence seems to be the main reason used to support further changes to the grace periods, as proposed in the amendments from the hon. Member for Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill and in many of the other amendments that have been tabled. The Energy and Climate Change Committee’s inquiry into investor confidence concluded earlier this year. I want to reflect on one point in particular that was raised during the Committee’s very thorough evidence sessions. The evidence given by Peter Dickson from Glenmont Partners suggested that

“investments continue to attract capital in the UK—for example in offshore wind”.

Far from Government policies putting investors off investing in renewables in the UK, in fact it seems that significant investment is still coming forward.

I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Daventry, my hon. Friends the Members for Peterborough (Mr Jackson) and for South Cambridgeshire (Heidi Allen), and my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) for raising with me the important issues around visual, amenity and noise impacts from onshore wind farms and the impact that they can have at local level. I can confirm that our manifesto commitment specifically called for a halt to the spread of onshore wind farms and a change in the law so that local people have the final say on wind farm applications. We are making sure that people’s concerns are addressed. Specifically, the Government are considering measures related to noise and amplitude modulation. We touched on this matter in Committee. As I said then, we are determined to address this and find a solution to the problem. This is possibly taking longer than my hon. Friends would like, but we are taking independent advice and will consider how best to act in the light of that advice, which I expect to receive shortly. At this stage, I cannot comment further, but I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Daventry will continue to be patient with me in the knowledge that we are looking at this very closely.

On new clause 2, tabled by the hon. Member for Aberdeen South (Callum McCaig), it is imperative that the early closure applies consistently across Great Britain in order to protect consumers from the risk of over-deployment beyond what has been agreed is affordable under the levy control framework. The new clause would allow Scottish Ministers to provide for further deployment of onshore wind in Scotland under the renewables obligation at a cost to consumers right across Great Britain. In fact, our estimates show that in 2015-16, £520 million, or approximately 60%, of RO support will already go towards funding Scottish onshore wind farms, even though only about 10% of UK bill payers are in Scotland.

The hon. Gentleman tabled the new clause in Committee at the beginning of February, and at that time we discussed the question of Scotland being willing to take responsibility for funding its own renewables obligation. During the debate, the hon. Member for Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill expressly responded to that suggestion:

“The short answer to that is no.”—[*Official Report, Energy Public Bill Committee*, 2 February 2016; c. 133.]

I cannot imagine that his position has changed in the brief period of time since that debate.

5.30 pm

Amendments 8 and 23 relate to projects for which a local planning committee may have indicated that it was minded to grant planning consent, but which did not have formal planning permission as of 18 June last year. That would include projects that just had an indication that they would receive planning consent subject to a section 106 or section 75 agreement being entered into, or projects for which the local planning committee was minded to approve a planning application before 18 June, but for which planning permission was not formally issued until after that date.

The amendments would lead to additional deployment and increased spend under the levy control framework, further blurring the clear, bright line that the Government have set out for projects wishing to accredit under the RO after 31 March this year. To be clear, those projects did not have formal planning permission as at 18 June last year, and therefore they would not meet the grace period criteria.

**Jonathan Edwards:** Further to my previous intervention, is the Minister in a position to inform the House and my constituents whether the Brechfa West project in my constituency will be eligible for the RO? It had generating planning permission but not infrastructure planning permission. Despite my requests to the Department and to Ofgem, nobody can tell me or my constituents whether the Brechfa West project will be able to claim the RO.

**Andrea Leadsom:** As I have said to the hon. Gentleman, I think our intentions are clear from words spoken in this Chamber and in the Bill Committee. I will certainly look into the case he mentions, but I do not have the information that he is looking for right now.

Amendments 24 to 46 are all intended to delay the early closure of the RO until 1 March 2017, closing it only one month earlier than the original closure date of 31 March 2017. It is therefore my understanding that the hon. Members who have tabled the amendments want the RO to close to onshore wind only a month earlier than planned, while maintaining the grace period provisions set out by the Government. Clearly, such a change would not meet the objectives of the early closure policy, which I have consistently set out in debates on the Bill and have explained again today. To change the early closure date to 1 March 2017 would go against the intentions of our manifesto commitment, and would be likely to make no reduction to overall deployment or costs under the levy control framework.

I remind hon. Members that those limits have been set for a crucial reason. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State set out in a speech in November last year:

“We can only expect bill payers to support low carbon power, as long as costs are controlled. I inherited a department where policy costs on bills had spiralled. Subsidy should be temporary, not part of a permanent business model.”

I remind hon. Members again that the Government have an electoral mandate to deliver on our manifesto commitment to halt the spread of onshore wind, and that is exactly what the clause is intended to do. However, the Government are mindful of the need to protect investor confidence and to take into account the interests of the onshore wind industry. That is why we have set out grace period provisions, which appear in clause 80.

I believe that I have consistently explained that the Government have an obligation to protect consumers from the risk of over-deployment of new onshore wind and rising energy bills. The date changes proposed in the amendments would simply put us back to where we started, providing no protection for consumers and putting us at risk of deploying up to 7.1 GW of additional onshore wind, which is well beyond what the Government have decided is affordable under the levy control framework.

To conclude, I stress the importance of swiftly moving forward with the proposals. I again quote the hon. Member for Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill, who said in Committee on this very issue:

“We agree that swift passage of the Bill with clear and consistent RO grace period provisions is needed in order to provide certainty to investors in the onshore wind sector as quickly as possible.”— [*Official Report, Energy Public Bill Committee*, 2 February 2016; c. 127.]

Clear and consistent provisions are exactly what the Government are attempting to provide, and we need to be able to move forward with the debate to do so.

**Callum McCaig:** I beg to ask leave to withdraw the clause.

*Clause, by leave, withdrawn.*

### Clause 79

#### ONSHORE WIND POWER: CLOSURE OF RENEWABLES OBLIGATION ON 31 MARCH 2016

*Amendment proposed:* 24, page 46, line 20, leave out “31 March 2016” and insert “1 March 2017”.— (*Dr Whitehead.*)

*This amendment and amendments 25, 26, 40, 41, 42, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 have the effect of closing the Renewables Obligation for onshore wind a month earlier than the original date set out in the Statutory Instrument: Renewables Obligation Closure Order 2014: 2388, rather than a year earlier, as the Bill does in its present form.*

*Question put,* That the amendment be made.

*The House divided:* Ayes 183, Noes 270.

**Division No. 214]**

**[5.35 pm**

#### AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane	Byrne, rh Liam
Abrahams, Debbie	Cadbury, Ruth
Alexander, Heidi	Campbell, rh Mr Alan
Ali, Rushanara	Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Allen, Mr Graham	Champion, Sarah
Austin, Ian	Chapman, Jenny
Barron, rh Kevin	Coaker, Vernon
Beckett, rh Margaret	Coffey, Ann
Benn, rh Hilary	Cooper, Julie
Betts, Mr Clive	Cooper, Rosie
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta	Cooper, rh Yvette
Blenkinsop, Tom	Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Blomfield, Paul	Cox, Jo
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben	Coyle, Neil
Brake, rh Tom	Crausby, Mr David
Brennan, Kevin	Creasy, Stella
Brown, Lyn	Cruddas, Jon
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas	Cryer, John
Bryant, Chris	Cummins, Judith
Buck, Ms Karen	Cunningham, Alex
Burgon, Richard	Cunningham, Mr Jim
Butler, Dawn	Dakin, Nic



Danczuk, Simon  
 David, Wayne  
 De Piero, Gloria  
 Donaldson, rh Mr Jeffrey M.  
 Doughty, Stephen  
 Dowd, Peter  
 Durkan, Mark  
 Eagle, Ms Angela  
 Eagle, Maria  
 Efford, Clive  
 Ellman, Mrs Louise  
 Esterson, Bill  
 Evans, Chris  
 Farrelly, Paul  
 Field, rh Frank  
 Fitzpatrick, Jim  
 Fletcher, Colleen  
 Flint, rh Caroline  
 Flynn, Paul  
 Fovargue, Yvonne  
 Foxcroft, Vicky  
 Gardiner, Barry  
 Glass, Pat  
 Glendon, Mary  
 Godsiff, Mr Roger  
 Greenwood, Lilian  
 Greenwood, Margaret  
 Griffith, Nia  
 Hanson, rh Mr David  
 Harris, Carolyn  
 Hayes, Helen  
 Hayman, Sue  
 Healey, rh John  
 Hermon, Lady  
 Hillier, Meg  
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon  
 Hollern, Kate  
 Howarth, rh Mr George  
 Hunt, Tristram  
 Huq, Dr Rupa  
 Hussain, Imran  
 Jarvis, Dan  
 Johnson, rh Alan  
 Johnson, Diana  
 Jones, Graham  
 Jones, Helen  
 Jones, Mr Kevan  
 Jones, Susan Elan  
 Kane, Mike  
 Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald  
 Keeley, Barbara  
 Kendall, Liz  
 Kinnock, Stephen  
 Kyle, Peter  
 Lamb, rh Norman  
 Lammy, rh Mr David  
 Lavery, Ian  
 Leslie, Chris  
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma  
 Lewis, Clive  
 Long Bailey, Rebecca  
 Lucas, Caroline  
 Lucas, Ian C.  
 Lynch, Holly  
 Mactaggart, rh Fiona  
 Madders, Justin  
 Mahmood, Shabana  
 Malhotra, Seema  
 Marris, Rob  
 Marsden, Mr Gordon  
 Maskell, Rachael  
 Matheson, Christian

McCabe, Steve  
 McCarthy, Kerry  
 McDonagh, Siobhain  
 McDonald, Andy  
 McDonnell, John  
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat  
 McGinn, Conor  
 McInnes, Liz  
 McKinnell, Catherine  
 McMahon, Jim  
 Mearns, Ian  
 Miliband, rh Edward  
 Morden, Jessica  
 Murray, Ian  
 Nandy, Lisa  
 Onn, Melanie  
 Onwurah, Chi  
 Osamor, Kate  
 Owen, Albert  
 Pearce, Teresa  
 Pennycook, Matthew  
 Perkins, Toby  
 Pound, Stephen  
 Powell, Lucy  
 Qureshi, Yasmin  
 Rayner, Angela  
 Reed, Mr Jamie  
 Reed, Mr Steve  
 Rees, Christina  
 Reynolds, Jonathan  
 Rimmer, Marie  
 Ritchie, Ms Margaret  
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey  
 Rotheram, Steve  
 Ryan, rh Joan  
 Saville Roberts, Liz  
 Shah, Naz  
 Sharma, Mr Virendra  
 Sheerman, Mr Barry  
 Sherriff, Paula  
 Siddiq, Tulip  
 Skinner, Mr Dennis  
 Slaughter, Andy  
 Smith, rh Mr Andrew  
 Smith, Angela  
 Smith, Cat  
 Smith, Nick  
 Smith, Owen  
 Smyth, Karin  
 Stevens, Jo  
 Stuart, rh Ms Gisela  
 Tami, Mark  
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick  
 Thornberry, Emily  
 Timms, rh Stephen  
 Trickett, Jon  
 Turley, Anna  
 Twigg, Derek  
 Twigg, Stephen  
 Vaz, Valerie  
 Watson, Mr Tom  
 West, Catherine  
 Whitehead, Dr Alan  
 Winterton, rh Dame Rosie  
 Woodcock, John  
 Wright, Mr Iain  
 Zeichner, Daniel

**Tellers for the Ayes:**  
 Grahame M. Morris and  
 Jeff Smith

## NOES

Adams, Nigel  
 Afriyie, Adam  
 Aldous, Peter  
 Allan, Lucy  
 Allen, Heidi  
 Amess, Sir David  
 Andrew, Stuart  
 Ansell, Caroline  
 Argar, Edward  
 Atkins, Victoria  
 Bacon, Mr Richard  
 Baker, Mr Steve  
 Baldwin, Harriett  
 Barclay, Stephen  
 Barwell, Gavin  
 Bellingham, Sir Henry  
 Benyon, Richard  
 Beresford, Sir Paul  
 Berry, Jake  
 Berry, James  
 Bingham, Andrew  
 Blackman, Bob  
 Blunt, Crispin  
 Bone, Mr Peter  
 Borwick, Victoria  
 Bottomley, Sir Peter  
 Bradley, Karen  
 Brady, Mr Graham  
 Brazier, Mr Julian  
 Bridgen, Andrew  
 Brine, Steve  
 Brokenshire, rh James  
 Bruce, Fiona  
 Burns, Conor  
 Burns, rh Sir Simon  
 Cairns, Alun  
 Carmichael, Neil  
 Cartlidge, James  
 Cash, Sir William  
 Caulfield, Maria  
 Chalk, Alex  
 Chishti, Rehman  
 Clark, rh Greg  
 Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth  
 Cleverly, James  
 Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey  
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse  
 Collins, Damian  
 Costa, Alberto  
 Cox, Mr Geoffrey  
 Crabb, rh Stephen  
 Davies, Byron  
 Davies, Glyn  
 Davies, Mims  
 Davis, rh Mr David  
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan  
 Donelan, Michelle  
 Double, Steve  
 Dowden, Oliver  
 Doyle-Price, Jackie  
 Drax, Richard  
 Drummond, Mrs Flick  
 Duddridge, James  
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan  
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain  
 Dunne, Mr Philip  
 Ellis, Michael  
 Ellison, Jane  
 Ellwood, Mr Tobias  
 Elphicke, Charlie  
 Eustice, George  
 Evans, Graham  
 Evennett, rh Mr David  
 Fabricant, Michael  
 Fallon, rh Michael  
 Fernandes, Suella  
 Field, rh Mark  
 Foster, Kevin  
 Fox, rh Dr Liam  
 Frazer, Lucy  
 Freeman, George  
 Freer, Mike  
 Fuller, Richard  
 Fysh, Marcus  
 Gale, Sir Roger  
 Garnier, rh Sir Edward  
 Garnier, Mark  
 Gauke, Mr David  
 Ghani, Nusrat  
 Gibb, Mr Nick  
 Glen, John  
 Goodwill, Mr Robert  
 Graham, Richard  
 Grant, Mrs Helen  
 Grayling, rh Chris  
 Green, Chris  
 Green, rh Damian  
 Griffiths, Andrew  
 Gummer, Ben  
 Gyimah, Mr Sam  
 Halfon, rh Robert  
 Hall, Luke  
 Hammond, Stephen  
 Hands, rh Greg  
 Harper, rh Mr Mark  
 Harrington, Richard  
 Harris, Rebecca  
 Hart, Simon  
 Hayes, rh Mr John  
 Heald, Sir Oliver  
 Heapey, James  
 Heaton-Harris, Chris  
 Heaton-Jones, Peter  
 Henderson, Gordon  
 Herbert, rh Nick  
 Hinds, Damian  
 Hoare, Simon  
 Hollinrake, Kevin  
 Hollobone, Mr Philip  
 Holloway, Mr Adam  
 Hopkins, Kris  
 Huddleston, Nigel  
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy  
 Jackson, Mr Stewart  
 Javid, rh Sajid  
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil  
 Jenkyns, Andrea  
 Jenrick, Robert  
 Johnson, Boris  
 Johnson, Gareth  
 Johnson, Joseph  
 Jones, Andrew  
 Jones, Mr Marcus  
 Kawczynski, Daniel  
 Kennedy, Seema  
 Kirby, Simon  
 Knight, rh Sir Greg  
 Knight, Julian

Kwarteng, Kwasi  
 Lancaster, Mark  
 Latham, Pauline  
 Leadsom, Andrea  
 Lee, Dr Phillip  
 Lefroy, Jeremy  
 Leigh, Sir Edward  
 Leslie, Charlotte  
 Letwin, rh Mr Oliver  
 Lewis, Brandon  
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian  
 Lidington, rh Mr David  
 Lilley, rh Mr Peter  
 Lord, Jonathan  
 Loughton, Tim  
 Mackinlay, Craig  
 Main, Mrs Anne  
 Mak, Mr Alan  
 Malthouse, Kit  
 Mann, Scott  
 Mathias, Dr Tania  
 Maynard, Paul  
 McCartney, Jason  
 McCartney, Karl  
 McPartland, Stephen  
 Menzies, Mark  
 Merriman, Huw  
 Metcalfe, Stephen  
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria  
 Milling, Amanda  
 Mills, Nigel  
 Milton, rh Anne  
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew  
 Mordaunt, Penny  
 Morgan, rh Nicky  
 Morris, Anne Marie  
 Morris, David  
 Morris, James  
 Morton, Wendy  
 Mowat, David  
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll  
 Murrison, Dr Andrew  
 Neill, Robert  
 Newton, Sarah  
 Nokes, Caroline  
 Norman, Jesse  
 Nuttall, Mr David  
 Offord, Dr Matthew  
 Opperman, Guy  
 Parish, Neil  
 Patel, rh Priti  
 Pawsey, Mark  
 Penning, rh Mike  
 Penrose, John  
 Percy, Andrew  
 Perry, Claire  
 Phillips, Stephen  
 Philp, Chris  
 Pincher, Christopher  
 Pow, Rebecca  
 Prentis, Victoria  
 Prisk, Mr Mark  
 Pritchard, Mark  
 Pursglove, Tom  
 Quin, Jeremy  
 Quince, Will  
 Raab, Mr Dominic  
 Redwood, rh John

Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob  
 Robinson, Mary  
 Rosindell, Andrew  
 Rudd, rh Amber  
 Rutley, David  
 Sandbach, Antoinette  
 Scully, Paul  
 Selous, Andrew  
 Shapps, rh Grant  
 Sharma, Alok  
 Shelbrooke, Alec  
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith  
 Skidmore, Chris  
 Smith, Chloe  
 Smith, Henry  
 Smith, Julian  
 Smith, Royston  
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas  
 Solloway, Amanda  
 Soubry, rh Anna  
 Spelman, rh Mrs Caroline  
 Spencer, Mark  
 Stephenson, Andrew  
 Stewart, Iain  
 Stewart, Rory  
 Streeter, Mr Gary  
 Stride, Mel  
 Stuart, Graham  
 Sturdy, Julian  
 Sunak, Rishi  
 Swayne, rh Mr Desmond  
 Syms, Mr Robert  
 Thomas, Derek  
 Throup, Maggie  
 Timpson, Edward  
 Tolhurst, Kelly  
 Tomlinson, Justin  
 Tomlinson, Michael  
 Tracey, Craig  
 Tredinnick, David  
 Trevelyan, Mrs Anne-Marie  
 Tugendhat, Tom  
 Tyrie, rh Mr Andrew  
 Vaizey, Mr Edward  
 Vara, Mr Shailesh  
 Vickers, Martin  
 Walker, Mr Charles  
 Walker, Mr Robin  
 Warburton, David  
 Warman, Matt  
 Watkinson, Dame Angela  
 Wharton, James  
 Whately, Helen  
 White, Chris  
 Whittaker, Craig  
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John  
 Wiggan, Bill  
 Williamson, rh Gavin  
 Wilson, Mr Rob  
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
 Wood, Mike  
 Wragg, William  
 Wright, rh Jeremy  
 Zahawi, Nadhim

**Tellers for the Noes:**  
**Margot James and**  
**George Hollingbery**

*Question accordingly negatived.*

## Clause 80

ONSHORE WIND POWER: CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH  
 CERTIFICATES MAY BE ISSUED AFTER 31 MARCH 2016

*Amendment proposed:* 8, page 50, line 46, at end  
 insert—

( ) evidence that—

- (i) an application for 1990 Act permission or 1997 Act permission was made on or before 18 June 2015 for the station or for additional capacity,
- (ii) the relevant planning authority resolved to grant 1990 Act permission or 1997 Act permission on or before 18 June 2015,
- (iii) 1990 Act permission or 1997 Act permission was granted after 18 June 2015, and
- (iv) any conditions as to the time period within which the development to which the permission relates must be begun have not been breached.”—(*Philip Boswell.*)

*Question put,* That the amendment be made.

*The House divided:* Ayes 229, Noes 271.

## Division No. 215]

**[5.49 pm**

### AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane	Coyle, Neil
Abrahams, Debbie	Crausby, Mr David
Ahmed-Sheikh, Ms Tasmina	Creasy, Stella
Alexander, Heidi	Cruddas, Jon
Ali, Rushanara	Cryer, John
Allen, Mr Graham	Cummins, Judith
Arkless, Richard	Cunningham, Alex
Austin, Ian	Cunningham, Mr Jim
Bardell, Hannah	Dakin, Nic
Barron, rh Kevin	Danczuk, Simon
Beckett, rh Margaret	David, Wayne
Benn, rh Hilary	Davies, Geraint
Betts, Mr Clive	Day, Martyn
Black, Mhairi	De Piero, Gloria
Blackford, Ian	Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Blackman, Kirsty	Donaldson, rh Mr Jeffrey M.
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta	Donaldson, Stuart Blair
Blenkinsop, Tom	Doughty, Stephen
Blomfield, Paul	Dowd, Peter
Boswell, Philip	Dromey, Jack
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben	Dugher, Michael
Brennan, Kevin	Durkan, Mark
Brock, Deidre	Eagle, Ms Angela
Brown, Lyn	Eagle, Maria
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas	Efford, Clive
Bryant, Chris	Ellman, Mrs Louise
Buck, Ms Karen	Esterson, Bill
Burgon, Richard	Evans, Chris
Burnham, rh Andy	Farrelly, Paul
Butler, Dawn	Field, rh Frank
Byrne, rh Liam	Fitzpatrick, Jim
Cadbury, Ruth	Fletcher, Colleen
Cameron, Dr Lisa	Flint, rh Caroline
Campbell, rh Mr Alan	Flynn, Paul
Campbell, Mr Ronnie	Fovargue, Yvonne
Champion, Sarah	Foxcroft, Vicky
Chapman, Douglas	Gardiner, Barry
Chapman, Jenny	Gethins, Stephen
Coaker, Vernon	Gibson, Patricia
Coffey, Ann	Glass, Pat
Cooper, Julie	Glindon, Mary
Cooper, Rosie	Godsiff, Mr Roger
Cooper, rh Yvette	Goodman, Helen
Corbyn, rh Jeremy	Grady, Patrick
Cox, Jo	Grant, Peter

Gray, Neil  
 Greenwood, Lilian  
 Greenwood, Margaret  
 Griffith, Nia  
 Hanson, rh Mr David  
 Harris, Carolyn  
 Hayes, Helen  
 Hayman, Sue  
 Healey, rh John  
 Hendry, Drew  
 Hermon, Lady  
 Hillier, Meg  
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon  
 Hollern, Kate  
 Hosie, Stewart  
 Howarth, rh Mr George  
 Hunt, Tristram  
 Huq, Dr Rupa  
 Hussain, Imran  
 Irranca-Davies, Huw  
 Jarvis, Dan  
 Johnson, rh Alan  
 Johnson, Diana  
 Jones, Graham  
 Jones, Helen  
 Jones, Mr Kevan  
 Jones, Susan Elan  
 Kane, Mike  
 Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald  
 Keeley, Barbara  
 Kendall, Liz  
 Kerevan, George  
 Kinnock, Stephen  
 Kyle, Peter  
 Lammy, rh Mr David  
 Lavery, Ian  
 Leslie, Chris  
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma  
 Lewis, Clive  
 Long Bailey, Rebecca  
 Lucas, Caroline  
 Lucas, Ian C.  
 Lynch, Holly  
 Mactaggart, rh Fiona  
 Madders, Justin  
 Mahmood, Shabana  
 Malhotra, Seema  
 Marris, Rob  
 Marsden, Mr Gordon  
 Maskell, Rachael  
 Matheson, Christian  
 Mc Nally, John  
 McCabe, Steve  
 McCaig, Callum  
 McCarthy, Kerry  
 McDonagh, Siobhain  
 McDonald, Andy  
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm  
 McDonald, Stuart C.  
 McDonnell, John  
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat  
 McGinn, Conor  
 McInnes, Liz  
 McKinnell, Catherine  
 McLaughlin, Anne  
 McMahan, Jim  
 Mearns, Ian  
 Miliband, rh Edward  
 Monaghan, Carol  
 Monaghan, Dr Paul  
 Morden, Jessica

Morris, Grahame M.  
 Mullin, Roger  
 Murray, Ian  
 Nandy, Lisa  
 Newlands, Gavin  
 O'Hara, Brendan  
 Onn, Melanie  
 Onwurah, Chi  
 Osamor, Kate  
 Oswald, Kirsten  
 Owen, Albert  
 Paterson, Steven  
 Pearce, Teresa  
 Pennycook, Matthew  
 Perkins, Toby  
 Pound, Stephen  
 Powell, Lucy  
 Qureshi, Yasmin  
 Rayner, Angela  
 Reed, Mr Jamie  
 Reed, Mr Steve  
 Rees, Christina  
 Reynolds, Emma  
 Reynolds, Jonathan  
 Rimmer, Marie  
 Ritchie, Ms Margaret  
 Robertson, rh Angus  
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey  
 Rotheram, Steve  
 Ryan, rh Joan  
 Shah, Naz  
 Sharma, Mr Virendra  
 Sheerman, Mr Barry  
 Sheppard, Tommy  
 Sherriff, Paula  
 Skinner, Mr Dennis  
 Slaughter, Andy  
 Smith, rh Mr Andrew  
 Smith, Angela  
 Smith, Cat  
 Smith, Jeff  
 Smith, Nick  
 Smith, Owen  
 Smyth, Karin  
 Stephens, Chris  
 Stevens, Jo  
 Stuart, rh Ms Gisela  
 Tami, Mark  
 Thewliss, Alison  
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick  
 Thornberry, Emily  
 Timms, rh Stephen  
 Trickett, Jon  
 Turley, Anna  
 Twigg, Derek  
 Twigg, Stephen  
 Vaz, Valerie  
 Watson, Mr Tom  
 West, Catherine  
 Whitehead, Dr Alan  
 Whitford, Dr Philippa  
 Wilson, Corri  
 Winterton, rh Dame Rosie  
 Woodcock, John  
 Wright, Mr Iain  
 Zeichner, Daniel

**Tellers for the Ayes:**

**Owen Thompson and  
 Marion Fellows**

**NOES**

Adams, Nigel  
 Afriyie, Adam  
 Aldous, Peter  
 Allan, Lucy  
 Allen, Heidi  
 Amess, Sir David  
 Andrew, Stuart  
 Ansell, Caroline  
 Argar, Edward  
 Atkins, Victoria  
 Bacon, Mr Richard  
 Baker, Mr Steve  
 Baldwin, Harriett  
 Barclay, Stephen  
 Barwell, Gavin  
 Bellingham, Sir Henry  
 Benyon, Richard  
 Beresford, Sir Paul  
 Berry, Jake  
 Berry, James  
 Bingham, Andrew  
 Blackman, Bob  
 Blunt, Crispin  
 Bone, Mr Peter  
 Borwick, Victoria  
 Bottomley, Sir Peter  
 Bradley, Karen  
 Brady, Mr Graham  
 Brazier, Mr Julian  
 Bridgen, Andrew  
 Brine, Steve  
 Brokenshire, rh James  
 Bruce, Fiona  
 Burns, Conor  
 Burns, rh Sir Simon  
 Cairns, Alun  
 Cameron, rh Mr David  
 Carmichael, Neil  
 Cartlidge, James  
 Cash, Sir William  
 Caulfield, Maria  
 Chalk, Alex  
 Chishti, Rehman  
 Clark, rh Greg  
 Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth  
 Cleverly, James  
 Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey  
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse  
 Collins, Damian  
 Costa, Alberto  
 Cox, Mr Geoffrey  
 Crabb, rh Stephen  
 Davies, Byron  
 Davies, Glyn  
 Davies, Mims  
 Davis, rh Mr David  
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan  
 Donelan, Michelle  
 Double, Steve  
 Dowden, Oliver  
 Doyle-Price, Jackie  
 Drax, Richard  
 Drummond, Mrs Flick  
 Duddridge, James  
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan  
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain  
 Dunne, Mr Philip  
 Ellis, Michael  
 Ellison, Jane  
 Ellwood, Mr Tobias  
 Elphicke, Charlie  
 Eustice, George  
 Evans, Graham  
 Evennett, rh Mr David  
 Fabricant, Michael  
 Fallon, rh Michael  
 Fernandes, Suella  
 Field, rh Mark  
 Foster, Kevin  
 Fox, rh Dr Liam  
 Frazer, Lucy  
 Freeman, George  
 Freer, Mike  
 Fuller, Richard  
 Fysh, Marcus  
 Gale, Sir Roger  
 Garnier, rh Sir Edward  
 Garnier, Mark  
 Gauke, Mr David  
 Ghani, Nusrat  
 Gibb, Mr Nick  
 Glen, John  
 Goodwill, Mr Robert  
 Graham, Richard  
 Grant, Mrs Helen  
 Grayling, rh Chris  
 Green, Chris  
 Green, rh Damian  
 Griffiths, Andrew  
 Gummer, Ben  
 Gyimah, Mr Sam  
 Halfon, rh Robert  
 Hall, Luke  
 Hammond, Stephen  
 Hands, rh Greg  
 Harper, rh Mr Mark  
 Harrington, Richard  
 Harris, Rebecca  
 Hart, Simon  
 Hayes, rh Mr John  
 Heald, Sir Oliver  
 Heapey, James  
 Heaton-Harris, Chris  
 Heaton-Jones, Peter  
 Henderson, Gordon  
 Herbert, rh Nick  
 Hinds, Damian  
 Hoare, Simon  
 Hollinrake, Kevin  
 Hollobone, Mr Philip  
 Holloway, Mr Adam  
 Hopkins, Kris  
 Huddleston, Nigel  
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy  
 Jackson, Mr Stewart  
 Javid, rh Sajid  
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil  
 Jenkyns, Andrea  
 Jenrick, Robert  
 Johnson, Boris  
 Johnson, Gareth  
 Johnson, Joseph  
 Jones, Andrew  
 Jones, Mr Marcus  
 Kawczynski, Daniel  
 Kennedy, Seema  
 Kirby, Simon  
 Knight, rh Sir Greg  
 Knight, Julian  
 Kwarteng, Kwasi  
 Lancaster, Mark  
 Latham, Pauline

Leadsom, Andrea  
 Lee, Dr Phillip  
 Lefroy, Jeremy  
 Leigh, Sir Edward  
 Leslie, Charlotte  
 Letwin, rh Mr Oliver  
 Lewis, Brandon  
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian  
 Lidington, rh Mr David  
 Lilley, rh Mr Peter  
 Lord, Jonathan  
 Loughton, Tim  
 Mackinlay, Craig  
 Main, Mrs Anne  
 Mak, Mr Alan  
 Malthouse, Kit  
 Mann, Scott  
 Mathias, Dr Tania  
 May, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Maynard, Paul  
 McCartney, Jason  
 McCartney, Karl  
 McPartland, Stephen  
 Menzies, Mark  
 Merriman, Huw  
 Metcalfe, Stephen  
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria  
 Milling, Amanda  
 Mills, Nigel  
 Milton, rh Anne  
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew  
 Mordaunt, Penny  
 Morgan, rh Nicky  
 Morris, Anne Marie  
 Morris, David  
 Morris, James  
 Morton, Wendy  
 Mowat, David  
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll  
 Murrison, Dr Andrew  
 Neill, Robert  
 Newton, Sarah  
 Nokes, Caroline  
 Norman, Jesse  
 Nuttall, Mr David  
 Offord, Dr Matthew  
 Opperman, Guy  
 Parish, Neil  
 Patel, rh Priti  
 Pawsey, Mark  
 Penning, rh Mike  
 Penrose, John  
 Percy, Andrew  
 Perry, Claire  
 Phillips, Stephen  
 Philp, Chris  
 Pincher, Christopher  
 Pow, Rebecca  
 Prentis, Victoria  
 Prisk, Mr Mark  
 Pritchard, Mark  
 Pursglove, Tom  
 Quin, Jeremy  
 Quince, Will  
 Raab, Mr Dominic  
 Redwood, rh John  
 Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob

Robinson, Mary  
 Rosindell, Andrew  
 Rudd, rh Amber  
 Rutley, David  
 Sandbach, Antoinette  
 Scully, Paul  
 Selous, Andrew  
 Shapps, rh Grant  
 Sharma, Alok  
 Shelbrooke, Alec  
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith  
 Skidmore, Chris  
 Smith, Chloe  
 Smith, Henry  
 Smith, Julian  
 Smith, Royston  
 Solloway, Amanda  
 Soubry, rh Anna  
 Spelman, rh Mrs Caroline  
 Spencer, Mark  
 Stephenson, Andrew  
 Stewart, Iain  
 Stewart, Rory  
 Streeter, Mr Gary  
 Stride, Mel  
 Stuart, Graham  
 Sturdy, Julian  
 Sunak, Rishi  
 Swayne, rh Mr Desmond  
 Syms, Mr Robert  
 Thomas, Derek  
 Throup, Maggie  
 Timpson, Edward  
 Tolhurst, Kelly  
 Tomlinson, Justin  
 Tomlinson, Michael  
 Tracey, Craig  
 Tredinnick, David  
 Trevelyan, Mrs Anne-Marie  
 Tugendhat, Tom  
 Tyrie, rh Mr Andrew  
 Vaizey, Mr Edward  
 Vara, Mr Shailesh  
 Vickers, Martin  
 Walker, Mr Charles  
 Walker, Mr Robin  
 Warburton, David  
 Warman, Matt  
 Watkinson, Dame Angela  
 Wharton, James  
 Whately, Helen  
 White, Chris  
 Whittaker, Craig  
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John  
 Wiggin, Bill  
 Williamson, rh Gavin  
 Wilson, Mr Rob  
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
 Wood, Mike  
 Wragg, William  
 Wright, rh Jeremy  
 Zahawi, Nadhim

**Tellers for the Noes:**  
**Margot James and**  
**George Hollingbery**

*Question accordingly negated.*

6 pm

*More than two hours having elapsed since the commencement of proceedings on consideration, the proceedings were interrupted (Programme Order, this day).*

*The Deputy Speaker put forthwith the Question necessary for the disposal of the business at that time (Standing Order No. 83E).*

### Clause 81

#### ONSHORE WIND POWER: USE OF NORTHERN IRELAND CERTIFICATES

*Amendment made: 50, page 56, line 2, leave out from “generated” to end of line 7 and insert*

“after 31 March 2016 (or any later date specified in the regulations)—

(a) using the original capacity of a Northern Ireland onshore wind generating station accredited after 31 March 2016 (or any later date so specified), or

(b) using additional capacity of a Northern Ireland onshore wind generating station, where in the Authority’s view the additional capacity first formed part of the station after 31 March 2016 (or any later date so specified).”—(*Andrea Leadsom.*)

*This amendment expands the definition of a relevant Northern Ireland certificate to include a certificate issued in respect of energy generated using additional capacity which first formed part of the generating station after the closure date.*

### New Clause 3

#### CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE STRATEGY FOR THE ENERGY INDUSTRY

“(1) By June 2017, the Secretary of State must develop, promote and implement a comprehensive national strategy for carbon capture and storage (CCS) for the energy industry to deliver the emissions reductions required to meet the fifth and subsequent, carbon budgets at the scale and pace required.

(2) In developing the strategy, the Secretary of State must consult—

- (a) HM Treasury;
- (b) the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills;
- (c) the Oil and Gas Authority;
- (d) the National Infrastructure Commission;
- (e) Scottish Ministers;
- (f) Welsh Ministers, and
- (g) other relevant stakeholders including the CCS industry.

(3) The strategy must include though shall not be restricted to—

- (a) the development of infrastructure for carbon dioxide transport and storage;
- (b) a funding strategy for implementation including provision of market signals sufficient to build confidence for private investment in the CCS industry;
- (c) priorities for such action in the immediate future as may be necessary to allow the orderly and timely development and deployment of CCS after 2020;
- (d) promotion of cost-effective innovation in CCS; and
- (e) clarification of the responsibilities of government departments with respect to the implementation of the strategy.”

(4) The Secretary of State must report to Parliament on the progress of its implementation of the strategy every three years starting in 2020.”.—(*Callum McCaig.*)

*This new clause would compel the Secretary of State to bring forward a strategy for carbon capture and storage for the energy industry*

*Brought up, and read the First time.*

6 pm

**Callum McCaig:** I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

**Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Lindsay Hoyle):** With this it will be convenient to discuss the following:

*New clause 6—Emissions trading: United Kingdom carbon account—*

In section 27 (net UK carbon account) of the Climate Change Act 2008, after subsection (2) insert—

“(2A) No carbon units deriving from the operation of the EU Emissions Trading System may be credited to or debited from the net United Kingdom carbon account for any period commencing after 31 December 2027.”

*New clause 7—Carbon capture and storage strategy for the energy industry—*

“(1) The Secretary of State must—

- (a) develop, promote and implement a comprehensive national strategy for carbon capture and storage (CCS) for the energy industry to deliver the emissions reductions required to meet the fifth and subsequent carbon budget, as advised by the committee on climate change;
- (b) develop that strategy in consultation with HM Treasury, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Oil and Gas Authority, the National Infrastructure Commission, energy intensive industries and other relevant stakeholders including the CCS industry; and
- (c) have that strategy in place by June 2017 and report to Parliament on the progress of its implementation every three years thereafter.

(2) The strategy provided for by subsection (1) shall, amongst other things, include—

- (a) the development of infrastructure for carbon dioxide transport and storage;
- (b) a funding strategy for implementation including provision of market signals sufficient to build confidence for private investment in the CCS industry;
- (c) a strategy for international co-operation on the development and implementation of relevant technologies;
- (d) priorities for such action in the immediate future as may be necessary to allow the orderly and timely development and deployment of CCS after 2020.
- (e) a strategy for co-operation through the European Union.”

*New clause 8—Decarbonisation target range—*

“(1) Section 1 of the Energy Act 2013 is amended as follows.

(2) Leave out subsection (2) and insert—

“(2) The Secretary of State must by order (“a decarbonisation order”) set a decarbonisation target range, which shall be reviewed annually thereafter.”

(3) Leave out subsection (5) and insert—

“(5) The decarbonisation order shall be made within six months of the adoption of the fifth carbon budget set by virtue of the duty of the Secretary of State under section 4 (2) (b) of the climate Change Act 2008.”

*New clause 9—Amendment to Energy Act 2013: Capacity agreements—*

After Section 28(4) of the Energy Act 2013, insert—

“(4A) Electricity capacity regulations introduced by subsection (1) for any fossil fuel generating plant granted 15 year capacity contracts under the capacity agreements established by this section shall be subject to the Emissions Performance Standard as established by Section 57 (2) of this Act.”

*New clause 10—Emissions trading: United Kingdom carbon account—*

In section 27 (net UK carbon account) of the Climate Change Act 2008, after subsection (3) insert—

“(3A) In respect of any period commencing after 31 December 2027, the regulations must not make provision for carbon units to be credited to or debited from the net United Kingdom carbon account on the basis of the number of carbon units surrendered by operators of installations in the United Kingdom pursuant to the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme.”

*New clause 11—Zero net UK [carbon] emissions—*

“(1) The Climate Change Act 2008 is amended as follows.

(2) After section (3) of the 2008 Act, insert the following—

3A Net UK carbon emissions target: zero emissions year

“(1) The Secretary of State shall set a date by which net UK emissions must be zero or lower (“the zero emissions year”) by order no later than 12 months from the date on which the Energy Act 2016 comes into force.

(2) It is the duty of the Secretary of State to ensure that the net UK emissions for the zero emissions year and each year thereafter is zero or less.

(3) If an annual statement of UK emissions under Section 16 for a year after the zero emissions year shows that net UK carbon emissions are more than zero, the Secretary of State must, as soon as reasonably practicable lay before Parliament a statement which—

- (a) explains why the zero net emissions target has not been met, and
- (b) sets out proposals and policies to ensure that the target will be met in subsequent years.

(4) The Secretary of State may by order amend the zero emissions year.

(5) The power in subsection (4) may only be exercised if it appears to the Secretary of State that it is appropriate to do so due to significant developments in—

- (a) scientific knowledge about climate change, or
- (b) European or international law or policy.

(6) An order under subsections (1) or (4) may only be made by statutory instrument that has been laid in draft before, and approved by a resolution of, each House of Parliament.

(7) Before laying a draft of a statutory instrument under subsection (6) the Secretary of State must obtain, and take into account, the advice of the Committee on Climate Change.

(8) As soon as is reasonably practicable after giving its advice to the Secretary of State, the Committee shall publish its advice in such manner as it considers appropriate.

(9) If an order under subsections (1) or (4) sets or amends the zero emissions year in a way that is different from the recommendation of the Committee under subsection (7), the Secretary of State must lay a statement before Parliament explaining his reasons for that decision.

(10) When the Secretary of State comes to any decision under this section, or the Committee on Climate Change considers its advice in relation to any such decision—

- (a) the matters listed in Section 10(2) must, and
  - (b) other matters may,
- be taken into account.”

*New clause 12—Strategy for a Just Transition away from fossil fuels—*

“(1) The Secretary of State must develop a comprehensive national strategy for the UK energy sector to move away from fossil fuels and towards 100% renewable energy by 2050, under the framework of a Just Transition outlined in subsection (5)(a).

(2) The strategy must be developed by June 2017 and the Secretary of State must report to Parliament on the progress of its implementation every year thereafter.

(3) The transition must ensure that UK carbon emission reductions make a fair contribution to the goals set out in the 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement.

- (4) The strategy must be developed in consultation with—
- energy sector workers,
  - trade unions,
  - the Committee on Climate Change,
  - HM Treasury,
  - the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills,
  - the Oil and Gas Authority,
  - the renewable energy industry,
  - the National Infrastructure Commission,
  - Scottish and Welsh Ministers,
  - civil society organisations, and
  - other relevant stakeholders.
- (5) The strategy must, amongst other things, include—
- the adoption of the principles of Just Transition set out by national and international trade unions, including—
    - full participation and engagement of workers, trades unions and communities most directly affected, and
    - training, education and skills policies to enable workers to make the transition to employment in sustainable, low carbon industries,
  - an assessment of the proportion of existing UK oil and gas reserves that should remain unexploited,
  - a strategy for redirecting all direct and indirect fossil fuel exploration and production subsidies into low carbon industry; and
  - cooperation with EU institutions and EU member states to embed the principles of Just Transition at EU level.”

*This new clause would require the Secretary of State to develop a strategy for a Just Transition away from fossil fuels and towards a renewable energy future.*

**New clause 1—Strategy for incentivising competitiveness of UK-registered companies in decommissioning contracts—**

“(1) By June 2017, the Secretary of State must develop a comprehensive strategy for the Department of Energy and Climate Change to incentivise the competitiveness of UK-registered companies in bidding for supply chain contracts associated with the decommissioning of oil and gas infrastructure (the strategy), which shall be reviewed annually thereafter.

(2) In developing the strategy, the Secretary of State must consult—

- HM Treasury;
- the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills;
- the Oil and Gas Authority;
- Scottish Ministers, and
- any other relevant stakeholders that the Secretary of State thinks appropriate.

(3) The strategy must include, though shall not be restricted to—

- an appraisal of tax incentives that can be extended to oil and gas operators to incentivise their use of UK-registered supply chain companies; and
- an outline of other appropriate support that can be provided by the Government, or its agencies, to UK-registered companies which express interest in bidding for decommissioning contracts.”

*This new clause would compel the Secretary of State to bring forward a strategy for ensuring that UK-registered supply chain companies benefit from decommissioning contracts.*

**New clause 4—Contract for Difference—**

After section 13(3) of the Energy Act 2013 insert—

“(3A) An allocation round must be held at least once in each year which the carbon intensity of electricity generation in the United Kingdom exceeds 100 grams per kilowatt hour.”

*This new clause would compel the Secretary of State to hold a Contract for Difference allocation round at least once in each year that the carbon intensity of electricity generation in the UK exceeds 100g per kilowatt hour.*

**New clause 5—Amendment to the Petroleum Act 1998: definition of “the principal objective”—**

In subsection 9A of the Petroleum Act 1998, leave out subsection (1) and insert—

“(1) The “principal objective” is the objective of maximising the economic return of UK petroleum, while retaining oversight of the decommissioning of oil and gas infrastructure, and securing its reuse for transportation and storage of greenhouse gases, in particular through—

- development, construction, deployment and use of equipment used in the petroleum industry (including upstream petroleum infrastructure), and
- collaboration among the following persons—
  - holders of petroleum licences;
  - operators under petroleum licences;
  - owners of upstream petroleum infrastructure;
  - persons planning and carrying out the commissioning of upstream petroleum infrastructure;
  - owners of offshore installations.””

**Government amendments 48 and 49.**

**Amendment 47**, in clause 8, page 6, line 10, at end insert—

*“Hierarchy of matters relating to decommissioning*

*The need to consider the most advantageous use of North Sea infrastructure for the overall benefit of oil and gas extraction prior to the decommissioning of such sites”*

*To require the OGA to have regard to the need to ensure most advantageous use of North Sea infrastructure for the overall benefit of oil and gas extraction prior to the decommissioning of such sites when exercising its functions.*

**Government amendment 51.**

**Callum McCaig:** Having moved new clause 3, I shall speak to new clauses 1 and 4—I am rather confused by the ordering—and I shall support the cross-party new clause 10 on behalf of the SNP.

I was struck when, in the earlier debate on the previous group, the right hon. Member for Wokingham (John Redwood), who is no longer in his place, talked about how to find an environmentally sustainable way of getting power from the island of coal in a sea of oil and gas. I take it that he was referring to Great Britain in that regard. There might well be a way of achieving that in an environmentally sustainable way—through carbon capture and storage. My new clause 3 calls on the Government to bring forward a proper, well thought out and extensively consulted on plan and strategy for carbon capture and storage for utilisation in both the energy industry in particular and industry more widely, including energy-intensive industries, which might move offshore if they are not able to consume power in an affordable way that meets our higher environmental standards.

We have talked about the discussion and report from the Energy and Climate Change Select Committee, which referred to the innumerable sudden changes to policy as having an impact on the reputation of the United Kingdom for investor confidence. The decision to withdraw the £1 billion funding available for the CCS competition at the same time as the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change was in Paris leading the “high-ambition coalition” on behalf of the country at the Paris talks is perhaps the most grave of the changes.

**Tom Blenkinsop** (Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland) (Lab): I agree with the hon. Gentleman. Does he agree with me that the fact that this information was extolled to the City of London and the stock exchange rather than this place on the very same day demonstrates this Government's real attitude to this place?

**Callum McCaig:** I very much agree. I remember sitting on this very Bench, looking through the Budget statement and being somewhat relieved that the rumours I had heard about this competition being scrapped did not appear to be in that statement. Lo and behold, however, an announcement was made to the stock market a few moments after the Chancellor had left the Chamber, removing that funding. I understand that no greater certainty was provided to the companies involved in both White Rose and Peterhead.

**Philip Boswell:** Further to that point, on the very morning of that Budget, I intervened on another Member and asked the Minister to provide assurances that both the Peterhead and the White Rose projects would not be cut, but no answer was forthcoming. There was nothing in the paperwork that day to show that this was going to happen.

**Callum McCaig:** I agree with my hon. Friend. The fact that different parties have the same essential view not only about the Government's abysmal handling of this process, but about how to salvage something from the ashes of the carbon capture competition suggests that there is not a huge amount of difference between my new clause and new clause 7, tabled in the names of Labour Front-Bench Members. The main difference—we discussed the issue in Committee—is that our provision includes the devolved Administrations as bodies that should be developing a strategy. I know that the Scottish Government—who, working with DECC, pursued what should have been the second phase of carbon capture and storage at Grangemouth—have high ambitions for the deployment of CCS and share the concerns of many Members here about the way in which the Government have handled this matter.

As for short-sighted decisions, I understand that the White Rose project had substantial European Union funding associated with it. The potential for Peterhead to use carbon capture and storage—or potentially carbon capture and utilisation to create a virtuous cycle for enhanced oil recovery—was there, but that potential has now been lost. The suggestion from the Energy and Climate Change Committee that this will make meeting our climate change commitments all the harder, highlights the need for the strategy that I am proposing.

We have seen the Government being all over the shop when it comes to CCS. One minute they are for it; another minute they are against it. One minute it is not working; the next minute it is looking promising for the future. These represent severe mixed messages for investor confidence, when we need clarity. If we are to get investment from industry—I hope we do, and I gain the impression that Members of all parties want to see this become a reality in the UK—we need an unequivocal statement from the Government. Then we need an unequivocal strategy, which is what I am calling for today.

There is tie-in between the utilisation of the infrastructure in the North sea and what can be deployed for CCS. I believe that it is also incumbent on the Government to bring forward a strategy for decommissioning, which is the subject of my new clause 1. Decommissioning is one of the sad realities of the North sea that is going to happen. We all, or at least the majority of us, hope that this will happen at some time in the future. The Government can take steps to deal with that. The industry has called for tax cuts, and loan guarantees for oil and gas companies are also a key part of ensuring that decommissioning happens as far in the future as possible. It is, however, going to come.

Decommissioning provides a huge opportunity, when there is upwards of £30 billion-worth of work to be done. A large part of the bill will be paid back by reimbursing the companies for previous tax paid. They have built up the tax to offset against decommissioning costs. Essentially, as we go forward, the Treasury will be footing the bill for a large part of decommissioning.

It strikes me and my party that we need to ensure that the greatest possible benefit comes to these shores. The east coast of this island is ripe with opportunities for ports and the like. Frankly, they should be champing at the bit to see the work come ashore. I believe that the Shell platform at Brent is coming to Hartlepool. That is a strong commitment and an investment in infrastructure, but also in skills.

**Tom Blenkinsop:** The hon. Gentleman is spot on about Teesport work at Hartlepool and the decommissioning of rigs. Does he agree, however, that including the decommissioning of rigs also provides potential for extra surveys of where rigs are currently based to investigate syngas potential? The infrastructure is already there for looking at sub-sea coal, for example.

**Callum McCaig:** A large number of things need to be done before we commence wholesale decommissioning, and this includes the widest possible consideration of what the infrastructure could be used for. The proposals and possibilities are perhaps not endless, but they are numerous. Whether we are talking about carbon capture, storage of hydrogen or looking for further hydrocarbon resources that are yet to be discovered, there are vast possibilities. While the infrastructure is there, the opportunities for doing other things with it will remain; once it is gone, the opportunity is gone. The Oil and Gas Authority—which a large part of this Bill deals with, although not the aspects we are debating at this precise moment—has done a lot of work on that and is to be commended on that development.

Decommissioning is a reality. If we are smart collectively—if we can line up the ducks, in terms of the supply chain, skills and investment in the ports and suchlike—there could be a massive windfall. We have considerable leverage, as funders of a large part of this work, through tax receipts offset against previous earnings, and we should be looking to maximise that economic potential, in the same way that we were looking to maximise the economic recovery of the North sea.

**Philip Boswell:** On the point about that opportunity, does my hon. Friend agree that decommissioning goes hand in hand with the critical assessment, evaluation and management of the infrastructure that surrounds

[Philip Boswell]

these isles to enable access to marginal fields, which would not otherwise be available, were the critical infrastructure not kept in place, as part of an overall plan with a long-term vision for the energy supplies of these isles?

**Callum McCaig:** I agree with my hon. Friend, and that is something the Oil and Gas Authority is set to look at. It will also be hugely beneficial to the oil and gas industry, so that work needs to take place. We need to be aware of what opportunities exist, but we also need to remember that this Government have a duty to support the oil and gas industry at this time, so I reiterate the calls made by myself and others in my party to see substantial movement in Wednesday's Budget.

It might seem somewhat ironic to some that I am moving from how we best exploit the North sea to how we best tackle climate change but, as I have said a number of times in this place, because we have been a major producer and user of hydrocarbons, there is a moral duty on us to do what we can. I note new clause 11, standing in the name of the right hon. Member for Doncaster North (Edward Miliband), among others, which is not something I would be ready to support, although I wholeheartedly endorse the principle. This is something we need to do, but I would see new clauses 4, 8 and 10—which deal more closely with the short term—plus the issue around carbon capture and storage, as being the correct pathway.

It strikes me that we are very much at a crossroads when it comes to the deployment of technology. It is likely—or, I am hopeful—that a zero-carbon future can be achieved, but the pathway to that is not clear to me, and I do not think it would be clear to the Government if they were to commence that work now. I would rather see things that are in the gift of the Government at this precise moment in time—if they were to focus on them, to deliver on them and act sooner rather than later—because the more work we do now, the less we have to do in future. It is about timing and priorities. The concept is to be wholeheartedly commended and supported, but I am not quite sure I am there when it comes to prioritising it now.

Finally, I would like to talk about new clause 10, to which I was happy to add my support—I imagine that a number of others who also put their name to it will talk about it in greater detail. Our carbon accounting mechanisms need to be brought into line with what is happening and going to happen. The fact that we can get to the stage where upwards of half our emissions do not properly factor into our carbon accounting means that we cannot set about achieving what we must in an open and honest way. Following on from Paris, numerous people have said that we need to get serious about this. If we are to get serious about taking the steps we need to take to make our contribution to tackling climate change, we absolutely have to be clear about what we are counting, which is the basics of this. The bean counting of climate change might not seem particularly appealing to some, but it is fundamental. If we do not know what the emissions are and we are not counting them properly, how can we tackle the challenge of reducing them properly?

6.15 pm

**David Mowat:** I rise perhaps early in this debate but, in the absence of alternatives on this side of the Chamber, I am happy to follow the hon. Member for Aberdeen South (Callum McCaig). I agree with much of what he said about carbon capture and storage, but my comments will be about new clause 10.

I do not agree with the thrust of new clause 10 and want to set out to the House why not, but first let me be clear: I, like possibly everybody in this House, also regard man-made climate change as a clear and present danger. The concern I have, though, is that we in this country are acting increasingly unilaterally in what we are doing to fix it. Indeed, the emissions trading system was an attempt to find a pan-European solution to a pan-European problem and I do not want us to turn our back on it.

I speak also for the 900,000 people who work in energy-intensive industries in this country and the many other millions of people who work in manufacturing industries. The central premise of my remarks is that I do not believe it is possible to rebalance our economy, to have a march of the makers and to do more in the north of the country predicated on electricity prices that are approximately double what they are in continental Europe. Of course, nobody in this House wants higher electricity prices, but the fact is that some of our actions are resulting in higher electricity prices, in so far as similar actions are not taken by our trading partners. This morning, our energy-intensive industries were paying something like 9p a unit of electricity; in Germany and France, they are paying 4p a unit. Broadly speaking, the gap between UK and EU electricity prices is 80% to 90%. I am an MP for the north of this country. I want to see manufacturing re-established much more strongly in the north, but it cannot be re-established on the basis of differentially higher electricity prices.

**Tom Blenkinsop:** In reference to new clause 10, it quite obvious that the market in the European ETS is set, yet we decided as a country—or rather, the Government decided—to introduce the carbon price floor, which exceeded the EU ETS, so this is an issue for those on the Government Benches. Our European competitors also weight the cost of energy far more to the consumer rather than industry, which is ultimately a Government decision, and by and large the costs are generally the same, varying from country to country.

**David Mowat:** The hon. Gentleman makes two points, the first of which is about the carbon price floor. As it happens, I do not support policy in that area. The consequence of that policy is that we are now importing electricity produced on the continent by power stations that do not pay the carbon tax at the level we do. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (John Redwood) said earlier, that is no sort of economic and industrial policy. I have forgotten the hon. Gentleman's second point. Perhaps he could just remind me.

**Tom Blenkinsop:** It was about the differential. The distribution of costs is much more on the consumer in EU member states.

**David Mowat:** That is true of Germany in particular. Apparently—I am not an expert in this area, but I hear Ministers from the Department for Business, Innovation



and Skills talking about this—there is an issue with state aid, which does not apply to Germany because it started doing that in advance of state aid rules being set up, which is why it can charge such a differential and apparently we cannot. I agree that that is unsatisfactory.

I was talking about the 900,000 jobs in energy-intensive industries that we in this place need to be cognisant of as we legislate and move forward. These are jobs in steel and what is left of our primary aluminium industry—there were three smelters in this country until a few years ago; there is now one left, in Scotland, and a consultation is under way on its closure. This stuff matters. Of course, so does climate change. My only point is that we must get it right. There is a balance to be struck, and the people who pay for that balance cannot be the people who work in some of those industries.

I have four points to make about what I believe is an increasing difference between the approaches of the United Kingdom—with our climate budgets and our Climate Change Act 2008—and the European Union. The first relates to the Paris agreement which was reached in December, and which we have discussed in the House before. Some people describe it as a triumph, and in many respects it was. I personally do not think that it will be enough to limit the temperature rise to 2.7°; I think that that is an optimistic analysis. However, the key fact that we, as legislators, need to understand is the fact that the United Kingdom did not have a submission to the “intended nationally determined contribution” process. Europe did, and Europe’s submission was a reduction in carbon emissions by 40% over 40 years. The UK is part of Europe, and it is therefore implicit that we must do the same, but the commitment for which we have legislated is to reduce emissions by—

**Tom Blenkinsop:** I recognise that the hon. Gentleman is talking about individual states’ emissions and Europe-wide emissions, but I have a responsibility for people who work in energy-intensive industries, and I know that a far more acute problem for the Government is the problem of Chinese dumping. Of course we cannot talk about that now, but it is far more serious than anything that is coming out of the European Union.

**David Mowat:** I agree that Chinese dumping is an issue. I also agree that business rates are an issue. However, I think that the hon. Gentleman is wrong if he is suggesting that energy prices are not an issue as well. The steel industry, and indeed the aluminium industry, are not under such pressure in parts of Europe as they are here.

**Tom Blenkinsop:** What the hon. Gentleman is saying contradicts comments from Eurofer and UK Steel. The two primary issues for energy-intensive industries, especially the steel industry, are market economy status for China and Chinese dumping. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will return to the point about the EU emissions trading system, but those are the main concerns of the industries themselves.

**David Mowat:** The hon. Gentleman’s position strikes me as rather odd. I agree with him that the EMS status is important, that dumping is important, and that business rates are important, but, as is made clear in report after report—there is one from the aluminium industry in my office now—so are energy prices.

I do not think that I am making a massively controversial point. I am merely saying that in an industry that uses significant amounts of electricity, it is not a competitive advantage if our electricity costs more than other people’s. I agree with the hon. Gentleman that Chinese dumping is probably more significant, but we are talking about economics, and in economics everything happens at the margin. The stuff that I am talking about matters to our manufacturing industry. My central point is that if we are intending to have a march of the makers that involves a rebalancing of industry predicated on high electricity prices, it is going to be tough.

As I was saying before the hon. Gentleman’s interventions, the cross-European Paris INDC submission is about 50% less onerous than the requirements of our own Climate Change Act. When I first saw that statistic, I thought it odd. Why had we allowed this to happen? Given that we have a stringent, rigorous and, in many respects, very good process involving carbon budgets driving down emissions, and all that goes with that, why did we become involved, at a big world summit, in a European submission that was so feeble? Although the requirements of the European submission are so much lower than those of the UK, in terms of the Climate Change Act, it is not allocated by country, even now. I believe that that process will start this year, or perhaps next year.

My second point relates to the European emissions trading system itself. New clause 10 was deemed necessary because it was felt that the system was not acting as enough of a brake on carbon emissions. The European price of carbon—which is implicit within the system—is too low: it is about €5 a tonne, as opposed to the €23 a tonne or so that we are paying. In 2013, precisely that point was debated in the European Parliament. It was proposed, in an amendment, that the emissions trading system should be “re-baselined” in a way that would have made it meaningful. The amendment might have prevented the need for a carbon price floor in the UK, and created a carbon price that properly reflected where the market needs to be in order to drive actions. However, the European Parliament did not pass it, probably in response to the vested interests of big manufacturers in a number of big countries in Europe. I think that that was a pity.

As a consequence, here we are now, saying that the EMS is not fit for purpose, that the accounting that it implies—which was intended, in the Climate Change Act, to serve as a way of controlling generated power—does not work, and that therefore we are doing something different. However, the right answer is not to turn our back on the European system. I am a Conservative. I may be an “inner”, but only just. It is odd that those in the Opposition parties who are deeply committed to the European ideal should turn their backs on this European solution.

My third point is that there is no country-based reporting or control of emissions in Europe. Since 1990, Austria has increased its emissions by 13%, Ireland has increased its emissions by 7%, and Holland has kept its emissions static. During the same period, the United Kingdom has reduced its emissions by some 28%. If the European Union were serious about getting to grips with emissions, and getting to grips with individual countries that are tackling the problem, it would have addressed that fact.

[David Mowat]

My final point is that we are seeing dysfunctional member state behaviour. Germany and Holland are building brand-new coal-powered stations—lignite-burning stations. I believe that those countries not only do not engage in carbon capture and storage, but have made it illegal, which does not suggest that they understand the challenge that must be faced.

I have just been given a note saying that I should wrap up. Let me end by saying that, while there is no doubt that we all agree that climate change is a clear and present danger, we must bring the rest of the world with us, and by turning our back on arrangements such as the European emissions trading system and allowing the EU to put a submission into the Paris COP talks that is frankly feeble, we are doing the opposite. We will not solve the problem of global warming by fixing our 1.5% of total global emissions.

**Dr Whitehead:** I want to speak about new clauses that relate to a number of aspects of the Bill, and to the position in which we find ourselves in relation to a low-carbon economy for the future.

New clause 7 is very similar to new clause 3, and concerns an issue about which I think both Opposition parties feel very strongly: the need to develop a systematic strategy for carbon capture and storage. We have heard several references to what the Conservative manifesto at the last general election did or did not say, but the Government mentioned CCS in that manifesto. They also mentioned the least-cost routes to decarbonisation. Clearly—this is certainly the advice of the Committee on Climate Change—they will have to think carefully about CCS when they respond on the fifth carbon budget this summer, because CCS, among other things, represents a substantial implementation of least-cost routes to decarbonisation in the long term. The shameful pulling of the two CCS pilot projects mentioned by the hon. Member for Aberdeen South (Callum McCaig), in essence on the grounds of cost, represents a missed investment opportunity that could have reduced the cost of decarbonisation at a later date. That cost is an important element of our approach to a future CCS strategy. It is important to be clear that the cancellation of the projects does not and should not mean the end of CCS in this country.

We will have to bring about large-scale CCS sooner than many people believe, if we are to stay even remotely on course to meet our climate change targets in the longer term. That is especially true because CCS relates not only to energy production but to energy-intensive industries and other intensive carbon emitters. The effect of the cancellation of the CCS pilots will be that this country will have to start importing technology from the rest of the world instead of taking the lead in technology as we might have done if the pilots had gone ahead.

**Mr Alistair Carmichael** (Orkney and Shetland) (LD): I absolutely agree with the hon. Gentleman. How likely does he think it will be that any private money will ever be forthcoming, given the somewhat irrational manner in which the funding for the projects has been abandoned in this country?

**Dr Whitehead:** The right hon. Gentleman makes an important point. Indeed, a carbon capture strategy that sets out a longer-term route for our carbon capture and storage would play an important part in ensuring that investment for CCS was available. He also makes the point that the cancellation of those pilot projects has cast quite a pall over the future investability of carbon capture and storage projects, despite the fact that many such projects are now getting under way across the world.

It is important to reflect on how we will import the relevant technology under a new CCS strategy and how we might keep as much as possible of the rest of the supply chain and other CCS arrangements in the UK, particularly the substantial developments and intellectual property gained from the White Rose and Peterhead projects, which must be retained in the UK for use in future CCS developments. All of that should be part of a strategy, but we simply do not have one at the moment. Having a strategy in place would enable us at least to recover substantially from the immense setback caused by the cancellation of those pilot projects. The new clause calls for such a strategy to be articulated at an early stage and for us to be clear about exactly how and why we will keep CCS on track for the future.

We have heard about targets today, but new clause 8 does not set a new target. It relates to the undertakings in part 1 of the Energy Act 2013 relating to setting a target for the decarbonisation of the energy sector by 2030. Part 1 makes it clear that the Secretary of State has a duty to ensure that the carbon intensity of electricity generation in the United Kingdom is no greater than the maximum permitted level of the decarbonisation target range. There is a clear undertaking in the Act to set a decarbonisation target range and a requirement for the Secretary of State to take related actions.

As I have mentioned, that target already exists. It has done so since the Energy Act 2013 was passed. The outstanding issue at the time was not whether there should be a target but what the target range should be. Under the legislation, it is up to Ministers to clear up that matter through secondary legislation. It is not a particularly small matter: it is in the gift of Ministers to decide whether the target for decarbonisation is strong or not. During the passage of that legislation, it became clear that Members across the Committee envisaged the target being strong and in line with the aim that carbon reductions should make a proper contribution.

Unfortunately, during the passage of this Bill in another place, we heard about a letter to the Opposition from the Minister in the other place. In Committee, I quoted the Minister stating in that letter that

“a power was taken within the Energy Act 2013 which gives the Secretary of State the ability to set a ‘decarbonisation target range’ for the electricity sector, for a year ‘not before’ 2030. This allows a target to be set on the same date or after setting the Fifth Carbon Budget which must be set before end of June 2016 (measured in emissions intensity in grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per kWh)...it is the intention of this Government not to exercise this power. This position is consistent with our manifesto pledge not to support additional distorting and expensive power sector targets.”—[*Official Report, Energy Public Bill Committee*, 4 February 2016; c. 206.]

Clause 8 does not propose an additional distorting target. It is a target that was included in the Energy Act 2013, and it is incumbent on the Government to take action on the decarbonisation target range through secondary legislation. It is extremely disappointing that

the Minister in the other place indicated that the Government were not going to exercise this power. The new clause would require the Secretary of State to set a decarbonisation target and discharge section 1 of the Energy Act 2013. I am sure that, in the light of our discussions this afternoon, Members would agree that it is extremely important that such targets should be placed as waystations on our way to 2050. That is what the new clause seeks to achieve.

New clause 9 addresses an aspect of that decarbonised structure for energy in looking at the perverse results of the first two capacity auctions in not procuring any long-term new large generating plant; instead, almost the only long-term outcome was the procurement of diesel sets as generators. More than 1 GW of generators was procured, and they are more polluting than coal, which the Secretary of State has pledged to take off the system by 2025. The new clause adds to the 2013 Act's requirements relating to fossil fuel-generating plant that is granted a 15-year capacity contract. That plant must adhere to certain conditions if the contract is to be granted. One of those conditions is the emissions performance standard. Section 57 of the Act contains a target or formula that, under subsequent secondary legislation, has led to a performance standard of 450 grams per kWh being established.

The new clause clearly does not seek to capture gas, because new plant for gas comes in at about 370 grams per kWh and is below the emissions performance standard. It refers to diesel coming into the provision of electricity, particularly in the context of what has happened in the two previous capacity auctions. Those diesel engines escaped the provisions of the 2013 Act because they were individually below the size at which plants were caught by the legislation. However, in terms of their individual emissions, they are among the dirtiest of the energy generation devices.

Diesel is exempt from present EPS levels because of the individual size of the reciprocating sets, and it has therefore cumulatively obtained a substantial proportion of long-term capacity payments coming into the system. Diesel sets have been able to get into the capacity auctions not because they are particularly cheap to run but because until recently they were already receiving a substantial underwriting from the Treasury through the enterprise investment scheme payments for the establishment of such plants. It appears that the payments were originally introduced to encourage the plants to be established for standby purposes, but they have of course been used for other purposes in the capacity auction. Although that route has been changed in the autumn statement, the most polluting generating plants have managed to get two lots of subsidies for generating and have got in through the capacity auction process as well. That is not only bad climate policy but bad public policy in general.

The question of diesel sets was discussed in Committee, and in a recent ministerial statement on changes to the capacity auctions, the Government undertook to look again at the matter. They suggested that this might happen through proposals to change the air quality regulations under the large plants directive, which might include diesel sets. However, they said that those changes might not occur until 2019 at the earliest, which would be too late for the next series of capacity auctions. The new clause seeks the most straightforward route to ensuring that diesel is not the perverse beneficiary of auctions as of now.

New clause 10 looks further forward, to the fifth carbon budget, but perhaps not quite so much further forward, in that we will have to decide on the fifth carbon budget by the summer. The new clause seeks to strengthen the Government's intention to use their powers to ensure that we keep on track by outlawing the use of private trading sector credits at and after the fifth carbon budget. The hon. Member for Warrington South (David Mowat) made some valuable points about that.

Hon. Members will recall that when the Bill arrived in the House from another place, clause 80 sought to simplify the accounting of the UK's carbon budgets under the Climate Change Act 2008. That clause was removed during the passage of the Bill in Committee. This new clause seeks a slightly different route to the goal of more effective carbon accounting in the fifth carbon budget and beyond. It seeks to make the Government directly accountable for emissions in the sectors covered by the EU emission trading system when determining whether the UK is staying within its national carbon budgets. The EU ETS covers emissions in the electricity sector and heavy industry, and the carbon accounting regulations currently allow the Government to ignore emissions from those sectors when determining whether the carbon budgets have been met. For that reason, the UK's carbon budgets, as currently designed, fail to provide a framework that offers investor confidence in the UK power sector. In particular, it provides no assurance that the Government will put in place the necessary measures to ensure that the power sector is largely decarbonised by 2030 despite the fact that the Committee on Climate Change has repeatedly indicated that the power sector must reduce emissions to below 100 grams per kWh by 2030 in order to maintain a cost-effective trajectory to our 2050 climate target.

If the accounting rules are changed, the Committee on Climate Change has indicated that it will provide new advice on the appropriate level for the fifth carbon budget, and the committee will for the first time be able to recommend a budget that reflects a cost-effective pathway for UK emissions across the economy. The new clause differs from the original clause 80 in a key respect: while clause 80 prevents any carbon units in the EU ETS from affecting the UK carbon account, the new clause specifically prevents the carbon trading behaviour of private firms from affecting the national accounts, which is what allows the Government to ignore emissions from the ETS sectors. Under the new clause, the Government would retain the option of purchasing and cancelling ETS carbon allowances to offset UK emissions at state level, an environmentally preferable form of carbon-offsetting compared with the many types of international offset credits available to the Government. If exercised, the offsetting option would also strengthen the EU ETS.

Finally, amendment 47 reminds us of the first part of the Bill and the wide consensus for change regarding North sea oil. It seeks to give the Oil and Gas Authority new powers and oversight to ensure that decommissioning is used to best advantage in the North sea. Decommissioning should not operate in the short-term interests of those involved in it but in the longer-term interests of the co-operative use of infrastructure, which hon. Members have touched on, and for the benefit of not only the production of future, more marginal fields over the next period, but the future possible use of the North sea as one of the world's finest repositories when

[Dr Whitehead]

carbon capture and storage gets under way. The amendment would add an important tool to the Oil and Gas Authority's arsenal and I hope that the Minister will accept it.

**Edward Miliband** (Doncaster North) (Lab): I rise to speak to new clause 11, which was tabled in my name, that of my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield Central (Paul Blomfield) and those of Members from five other parties across the House. I thank the hon. Members for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Tim Farron), for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas), for Beverley and Holderness (Graham Stuart), for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich (Dr Poulter), for Belfast South (Dr McDonnell) and for Arfon (Hywel Williams) for their support. I also thank my Front Bench team and Baroness Worthington in the other place for her support and advice.

The new clause would insert the commitment to zero emissions in the Paris climate change agreement into our domestic law, with the Committee on Climate Change advising on when it should be achieved. It is the right thing to do and the science is clear: the world needs to get to zero emissions early in the second half of this century, and it is worth reminding the House of the debate's context.

We know from recent scientific analysis that 2015 was the hottest year on record. The record for global temperatures has been broken in each of the past five months, with February's record broken in shocking fashion. Atmospheric concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> are now higher—this is hard to get your head around—than they have been for at least a million years. That is what the scientists tell us and it highlights the necessary urgency, which is shared by Members on both sides of the House.

My proposal makes economic, moral and political sense. It makes economic sense because we have to get to zero emissions eventually. It will be tough, so we need to start planning now. We are already aware of some of the tools we will need, but not all of them. We need clean energy supplies, a revolution in the household sector and reforestation. As the hon. Member for Aberdeen South (Callum McCaig), who speaks for the SNP, said, we need carbon capture and storage to trap emissions. We will also need other technologies that are in the early stages of development. Crucially, we need to start the work now so that we can get to zero emissions at least cost. The economic case is proven by the support from the business community, and I thank Aviva, GSK, Unilever, Kingspan, Kingfisher and the broader "We Mean Business" coalition for their backing. The proposal also makes moral sense. Achieving zero emissions is necessary, so it would be irresponsible to pretend otherwise. Future generations will look badly on a generation that stuck its head in the sand and refused to plan ahead.

6.45 pm

My proposal makes political sense. Those of us across the House who care about such issues were pleased with the Paris agreement, but the danger is that we could lose momentum or go backwards, and there are some early straws in the wind suggesting that might happen. We need to build on the momentum, not squander it. The hon. Member for Warrington South (David Mowat) is right that we need to close the gap between the Paris ambition to keep global warming to no more than 1.5° C and the reality of the current pledges, which are

off track. We can make a difference. We may contribute only 1.5% of global emissions, but look at the experience of the Climate Change Act 2008—the hon. Gentleman and I have discussed this matter outside the House—which was passed with the support of all parties. It pushed others to follow us—perhaps not as much as we would have wanted, but others did follow.

The hon. Member for Aberdeen South is right about getting things right in the short term, but the long term affects the short term. The 80% target that we put into law in 2008 shapes the current discussions and holds Governments of all parties to account and the same would be true if we put zero emissions into law. Since we know that that will have to be the backstop, we might as well get on with it.

**Rebecca Pow** (Taunton Deane) (Con): I have enormous respect for the right hon. Gentleman. I applaud his positive steps and everything that happened in the 2008 Act, but we must be economically realistic. I wonder whether this is the right time and whether it might be better to ask the Committee on Climate Change to have a closer look at the proposal. After all, we are in the process of agreeing the first carbon budget, so perhaps all the energy should be put into that.

**Edward Miliband**: I agree with the end of the hon. Lady's point. My proposal is deliberately pragmatic. It would put zero emissions into law, but the date would be decided by Government on the basis of advice from the Committee on Climate Change. That is right and it would be the lowest-cost way of proceeding. We need the experts' advice. After all, they were appointed with cross-party support.

I am delighted to say that since I made this proposal three months ago I have had constructive discussions with the Government. I will not try to predict the reaction of the Minister of State, but I want to record my thanks to her, the Secretary of State, and the Minister for the Cabinet Office for their willingness to engage. I hope that we can move the idea forward in the months ahead and demonstrate once again the cross-party commitment to tackling climate change that is shared by the vast majority of hon. Members. I look forward to the Minister's response.

**Mr Alistair Carmichael**: New clauses 5 and 6 stand in my name, but they are covered by other new clauses, so I do not intend to press either of them to a vote; the other new clauses lead in broadly the same direction.

First, let me deal with carbon capture and storage. When I intervened on the hon. Member for Southampton, Test (Dr Whitehead), the term I used in relation to the Government's decision to pull the funding from the project was "irrational". I hope I was not unkind to the Government in saying that, but if it was not irrational it must have been ideological. In any event, it certainly did not make any sense. A competition was running and the point at which they withdrew the funding was significant. Had they allowed the competition to run a little longer, it might have reached the conclusion that there would be no more money to be spent—who knows? We will never know now. The decision was irrational, because of the impact it will have on getting our own CCS sector up and running in this country. As he said, the work on this is being done elsewhere and

inevitably we will end up playing catch up and importing expertise that could have been generated here. Who will ever suggest that a shareholder put money into CCS in this country? This is the ultimate failure of evidence-based policy. Notwithstanding the provisions on the amendment paper tonight, I now wonder whether it is worth calling for any more rethinks, because even if we got new Government commitment, who on earth is going to believe it, given events thus far?

The hon. Friend Member for Aberdeen South (Callum McCaig) made the point that there is a synergy between CCS and the issues relating to decommissioning in the North sea. For some years, the technology used in CCS has been routinely and effectively used in the North sea in enhanced oil recovery; gas has been used to extract more oil from other parts of the existing substantial infrastructure network. It gladdens my heart that the Oil and Gas Authority goes from strength to strength, as I have followed the project closely from its inception, from the work of the Wood commission and through the creation of the shadow authority. To get the maximum benefit, it will be necessary for the OGA to get on, use the powers that we have already given it and those we give it in this Bill, and come forward with the strategy that will make these things happen.

Of course, for there to be a strategy there will first have to be survival, and the very real danger at the moment is that the age of the assets in the North sea, especially those in the north North sea, will mean that the critical mass may tip over and there is then a rush to decommissioning. Not only could any such rush be bad for the economy of the north-east of Scotland, and the Northern Isles in particular, but it would be tragic if it meant that the infrastructure was removed and the opportunities to develop CCS at some future date were therefore then lost.

**Callum McCaig:** I made the point about a large part of the tax liability for decommissioning falling on the Treasury. If there is the rush to decommissioning that the right hon. Gentleman describes, the Chancellor will find it more difficult to meet his fiscal target, as he will have to hand out the cash. Does the right hon. Gentleman therefore agree that there needs to be proper support from Government to delay that?

**Mr Carmichael:** There absolutely has to be that support. We have seen the tax intake from the North sea fall off a cliff. I cannot recall the exact figures, but I seem to recall that about £20 billion is set aside to deal with this rush to decommissioning, if it occurs. That is a future liability at the moment, but if the liability were to appear on the left of the sheet, the Treasury would be dealing with a double-whammy; it would not only be losing the income, but it would suddenly be liable for expenditure at an earlier stage. The real significant event in that regard will take place not tonight but on Wednesday, when the Chancellor comes forward with his Budget. The Minister and the Secretary of State will doubtless have heard the measured and well-thought-out requests from Oil & Gas UK, and I trust that even at this stage they will be using all their influence in government to ensure that as many of these requests as possible are delivered when the Chancellor stands up.

The right hon. Member for Doncaster North (Edward Miliband) spoke to his new clause 11, and he has been absolutely right in how he has brought it forward. It is

measured and it future-proofs the commitments. Given the substantial commitment the Secretary of State showed in relation to the Paris negotiations, it would be a suitable way for this House to give that commitment some legislative heft.

**Caroline Lucas** (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): I wish to speak mainly to new clause 12, which stands in my name and deals with the need for a strategy for a just transition from fossil fuels and towards 100% renewable energy. I also wish to highlight a few of the other proposals in this group that I support.

First, I wish to speak in favour of new clause 11, tabled by the former Secretary of State, the right hon. Member for Doncaster North (Edward Miliband), and to thank him for the constructive work he has been doing on promoting zero emissions. The new clause would put one crucial part of the Paris climate agreement into UK law. The somewhat convoluted text of that historic agreement makes it clear that globally we must reach net zero emissions in the second half of this century. Many argued that this long-term goal should have been stronger, including by making explicit reference to phasing out fossil fuels. None the less, it seems immensely reasonable for the UK Government to set a date for zero emissions, on advice from the Committee on Climate Change. It seems like a win-win, both economically and environmentally, to have that date set, so that we can have a clear direction of travel and clarity for investors. I am reassured to hear that the right hon. Gentleman has had constructive conversations with the Government and I look forward to hearing their response.

I also support new clause 10, which deals with carbon accounting and the ETS, as it would mean the UK taking responsibility for making our own carbon emission cuts and is another immensely reasonable proposal. The need for such a change is underlined by the recent incredible claims that a new dash for gas would be compatible with our climate obligations. The UK's renewable energy potential is vast. The costs of solar and wind power are falling, and the need to leave the vast majority of fossil fuel reserves in the ground gets more mainstream by the week. There is no longer a case for using the EU ETS as an excuse for not meeting our own carbon budgets by cutting our own emissions here in the UK. The global carbon budget is rapidly shrinking and there is simply no room for free riders. The UK should be leading the race to a zero-carbon economy, not weaselling out of making a fair contribution, which is why new clause 10 is so important.

My new clause 12 deals with a just transition, which is another aspect of the Paris climate agreement that should become a central tenet of the UK's climate and energy policy. A just transition is about the essential steps a country needs to take to transform into a zero-carbon economy in a way that creates new jobs and supports and engages workers and communities currently reliant on high-carbon sectors.

**Jonathan Edwards:** Does the hon. Lady think the German strategy, *energiewende*, offers a way forward for the UK? It is about that transition from fossil fuels to renewables, with specific targets?

**Caroline Lucas:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention and I agree with what he says, as that strategy does point to a helpful direction of travel.

[Caroline Lucas]

As we would expect, trade unions are at the forefront of campaigning for a just transition, in the UK, the EU and globally. During the Paris climate talks, the unions made an incredibly powerful case for stronger ambition and faster action to cut emissions, and for making this transition away from fossil fuels. Central to that is the huge opportunity for job creation in new low-carbon industries. I spoke a moment ago about win-win situations, but I should have said win-win-win, as we have the jobs, the economy and the environment and energy advantages of having a clear direction of travel for this transition.

7 pm

The European Trade Union Confederation, which represents 90 trade unions from 39 countries, was very vocal on this issue. As it explained, a just transition means achieving ambitious climate action in a way that benefits the whole of society and does not simply pile the costs on the least privileged. It defines key elements of a just transition, some of which are incorporated in my amendment. For example, participation is included, as consistent and strong worker participation is essential so that change can be managed in a socially acceptable way. Secondly, on jobs, Sharan Burrow, the head of the International Trade Confederation, argues that there are no jobs on a dead planet. This is about not whether we embark on a transition, but a proactive approach to ensure that that transition happens in a way that protects, maintains and creates decent jobs and wages.

Thirdly, the ETUC looks at what this means in practice, which is essentially a Government-led active education, training and skills policy and a social safety net through active labour market policies, strong social protection and support measures. There is no lack of clarity on what a just transition might look like. At the minute, the political commitment and an inclusive plan of action are sadly lacking. During the Paris climate talks, Unison's national officer for energy said:

"Thanks to the efforts of trade unions...the EU is committed to supporting the principle of Just Transition, but this commitment needs to be delivered in a meaningful way otherwise it is just words on paper."

The same is urgently needed in the UK, although here we also need a first step, which is the commitment to the principle of just transition as well. I hope that, as what I have described here is fairly straightforward, the Government will at least support that part of my amendment.

New clause 12 also requires the Secretary of State to be clearer about the proportion of existing UK fossil fuel reserves that should remain unexploited. The Energy Minister answered a parliamentary question a few months ago in a very helpful way, repeating the fact that the International Energy Agency has suggested that around a third of global fossil fuel reserves are burnable under a 2° scenario. That means that two thirds are unburnable, and that is for a 2° scenario and not a 1.5° one. It is also a 2012 statistic. I would be really grateful if the Department gave us an up-to-date figure, both globally and for the UK, so that we have a bit more clarity on the matter.

Major new research from University College London found that, globally, 82% of fossil fuel reserves must be left underground. Mark Carney, the Governor of the Bank of England, warned recently that the vast majority of fossil fuels are essentially unburnable.

The Government, as we know, have signed up to the Paris agreement, which goes even further, especially with the 1.5° goal. As delegates in Paris heard, that is essentially the balance between life and death for many citizens in poorer countries that are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Therefore, on unburnable fossil fuels, we need an up-to-date, clear number to aim for and concrete policies to get us there.

New clause 12 also requires the Government to redirect fossil fuel subsidies to low carbon alternatives. Ministers rather stubbornly stick to their own special definition of what a subsidy is—it seems to have a particular meaning only in energy circles, but that meaning allows them to claim that they do not have any subsidies. By any other definition—for example, that of the World Trade Organisation or the OECD—this is clearly nonsense. A study by the Overseas Development Institute revealed that the Government give the fossil fuels industry nearly £6 billion a year in subsidies, mainly through tax breaks. That is almost twice the financial support they provide to renewable energy providers, which urgently needs to change. The barriers to 100% renewable energy are not about technology or even about money, but about political will and vested interests. Those who argue against 100% renewable energy seem to think that perhaps they are the only people who are clever enough to know that the wind does not always blow or that the sun does not always shine, but they are not, and they need to get up to speed with 21st century innovation and technology. For example, why is the UK doing so little on things such as energy storage, energy efficiency and demand-side response? Those are practical, affordable and modern ways of meeting peak demand, rather than the backward thinking that simply says build more power stations.

During the Paris climate talks, a group consisting of 43 companies committing to get all power from renewable sources issued what it called "An entrepreneurs call to climate action". That was a joint statement from 119 chief executive officers with international operations calling for 100% renewables by 2050, keeping 1.5° in reach, and an urgent end to fossil fuel subsidies. Those are the voices to which the Government need to listen. They should also be listening to leading academics. For example, last year, Stanford University laid out a road map for 139 countries to power their economies with solar, wind and hydro energy by 2050. It said that the world can reach 80% wind, water and sunlight by 2030 and 100% by 2050, with no negative impact on economic growth.

Here in the UK, a report last September from consultancy Demand Energy Equality detailed how the UK can get 80% of energy from renewables by 2030. Even if that were not the case, the sensible course of action is not to turn our backs on a goal of 100% renewables, but to invest in the research and development to ensure that we can get there. This is about fairness and justice as well as about jobs and creating a modern, resilient and successful British economy.

During the Paris climate talks, the Climate Vulnerable Forum issued the strongest call to date for full decarbonisation of the world economy, 100% renewable energy by 2050 and zero emissions by mid-century to keep the world on track for under 1.5° of warming. That group, which represents some 200 million people and which has contributed less than 2° of global emissions would suffer around 50% of climate impacts. This Energy Bill should be heeding that call for 100% renewables and putting in place policies to lead the way in getting there.

In conclusion, those are the reasons I have tabled new clause 12 on just transition. The Government urgently need to recognise the imperative of leaving the vast majority of fossil fuel reserves in the ground and to stop squandering taxpayers' money in a suicidal search for new sources of oil and gas that we simply cannot afford to burn. In doing so, there is a huge opportunity to embrace the employment potential of renewables and energy efficiency, and to collaborate with workers, trade unions, industry and others to build a just transition to a secure sustainable economy for workers of today and the future.

**Alex Cunningham** (Stockton North) (Lab): I rise specifically in support of new clause 7 relating to carbon capture and storage both as chair of the APPGs on CCS and energy intensive industries and as a Teesside MP who sees it as a major generator of jobs and potential saviour of many of the country's manufacturing plants.

The absence of CCS policy in the UK is a major concern, being a critical technology for reducing emissions from steel, cement and other industrial processes, as well as power stations. In the past 72 hours, another steel company at Stillington in my constituency had decided that it will close its doors in May with the loss of 40 jobs, so it is critical that we start making the right decisions now.

The Chancellor's decision to axe the funding to develop the two power station projects on Humberside and at Peterhead was a major blow not just to those two projects but to the entire industry and also very specifically to Teesside, where the country's first industrial CCS project is still being planned by the Teesside collective.

When the Energy Minister attended a packed meeting of the CCS all-party group just over a month ago, she claimed that the economics did not add up, despite the fact that the final business cases were yet to be submitted. She said that an updated policy would be developed by the autumn, but then went on to suggest that we learn from other countries as they develop their CCS industries. Well, that is not good enough. Britain has tremendous capability in this area, and could be leading where the Minister says that we should follow. I am also worried that the Chancellor does not even understand what CCS is—a worry made all the worse when I asked him a question at Treasury questions a few weeks ago. I asked him what funding would be available for CCS projects once the Department for Energy and Climate Change comes up with its new policy in the autumn. He answered:

“We have set out our capital budget and our energy policy, which will see a doubling of the investment in renewable energy over the next five years.”—[*Official Report*, 19 January 2016; Vol. 604, c. 1269.]

There was no capital for CCS projects there. The Chancellor talked not of CCS but of renewable energy. I would like to think that he was just dodging my question, but I am not too sure that he understood it or the need for him to send a signal to industry that he was personally committed to making CCS a reality in our country.

New clause 7 provides the Government with a new opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to CCS and to develop a real strategy with a real intention to make the UK a leader in the field.

**Tom Blenkinsop:** CCS is vital, because it gives a means by which steel—and other existing energy intensive industries—manufactures the very foundation product that then goes into wind turbines and other mechanisms that we need for renewables. This is absolutely and fundamentally dependent on carbon-intensive technologies, such as virgin steel capacity and oxygen burning intensive processes. If we want a renewable strategy, whether 42% or higher, we need to have steelworks that burn in the traditional sense.

**Alex Cunningham:** My hon. Friend and near neighbour makes the point clear.

Being a leader is critical to our energy-intensive and other industries if we are to overcome the competition threat from across the world. It is no use hanging back when other nations look like stealing a march on us. I have mentioned the Teesside Collective project to develop an industrial CCS project on Teesside, home to some of the country's most energy-intensive industries. I invite the Minister and the Chancellor to the next meeting of the all-party parliamentary group on 23 March to learn about those ambitious plans. I know the Chancellor will be busy until the night before, but I guarantee that the APPG will be much more focused on the needs of industrial Britain than will his Budget.

The Government have made clear their intention to build a new series of gas-fired power stations and nowhere is better placed than Teesside to build one. Not only does a site exist there, but so does the infrastructure to put the electricity out directly into the national grid. Developers Sembcorp believe it could house a conventional combined cycle gas turbine plant or an integrated gasification combined cycle plant, both of which could incorporate carbon capture. Although Sembcorp could develop its own power station, a potential partner is looking to install a 300 MW gas-fired power plant on the plot.

I know that some may have reservations about the use of fossil fuels, but what an opportunity for the Government to put some meaning into the much abused term, “northern powerhouse”—a large-scale power plant, an opportunity to develop it with CCS, but with the immeasurable bonus of doing it with the Teesside Collective and developing an exciting project that could mean boom time for Teesside, with the kind of inward investment that only people in the south believe can be a reality.

**Anna Turley** (Redcar) (Lab/Co-op): I appreciate my hon. Friend's generosity. He is right. At a time when Teesside has seen so many job losses in the past few weeks, carbon capture and storage could provide a huge opportunity for people there. Does he agree that in order to enable a transition to a low-carbon economy, we need to ensure that such jobs go to local people, and that nationally agreed terms and conditions are not undercut by recruitment from overseas?

**Alex Cunningham:** Indeed. I know that local trade unions have been campaigning on this. There are examples on Teesside of companies undercutting what is, in effect, a living wage for the skilled people on Teesside.

I know that projects such as a power station are always fraught with planning complications, but I hope that when the time comes the doors of Ministers in both the Department of Energy and Climate Change and the

[Alex Cunningham]

Department for Communities and Local Government will be open to ensure a quick decision on the planning application.

It is difficult to see how some of our industries, many of them critical to our economy, can remain located in the UK without CCS if our long-term national carbon reduction commitments are to be met. The Government appear to have no strategy for CCS development, let alone a means of funding it.

New clause 7 could compel Government to fill this huge hole in their energy policy platform. It does everything that any self-respecting Government would want to do, but, more than that, it could send that much wanted signal to the sector that Ministers are serious about carbon capture and storage, understand it and are prepared to deliver, and our country could benefit from potentially hundreds of thousands of jobs if they got it right.

7.15 pm

**Paul Blomfield** (Sheffield Central) (Lab): I shall speak briefly in support of new clause 11, to which I am delighted to have added my name, and I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Member for Doncaster North (Edward Miliband) for the amendment, the consensual way in which he has built the discourse around it, and the work that he did as the country's first Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change.

Climate change is an issue on which all of us have been lobbied by many groups. Most strikingly for me, I was lobbied last year by a group of students from Notre Dame school, a secondary school on the edge of my constituency, who came to Westminster to make the point that their generation was conscious of the consequences they would face if our generation failed to act. It is an incredibly powerful point, but our responsibility goes beyond the immediate generation.

A report published only last month in the journal *Nature Climate Change* pointed out that much of the discourse has been focused on the consequences of failing to act by the end of this century. Looking beyond that, the problems are even more serious. According to one of authors,

“We are making choices that will affect our grandchildren's grandchildren and beyond.”

He continued:

“We need to think carefully about the long timescales of what we are unleashing.”

That was Professor Daniel Schrag from Harvard University.

The need to act, and to act more ambitiously, has never been clearer. The agreement of the Paris summit is a step forward, but as last month's report highlighted, even if global warming is capped at Governments' target of 2 °C, which is already seen as difficult, 20% of the world's population will eventually have to migrate away from coasts swamped by rising oceans. Cities including New York, London, Rio de Janeiro, Cairo, Calcutta, Jakarta and Shanghai would all be submerged. We have seen the struggle to grapple with the refugee crisis that has grown over the last couple of years, a crisis driven by war in one country and a number of other related conflicts. Imagine for a moment what we will face if 20% of the world's population is forced to do what people have always done when their homes become uninhabitable—to move to somewhere better.

So we need greater ambition and a greater sense of urgency. That is provided by new clause 11. In the words of Professor Thomas Stocker from the University of Bern, one of the other authors of the report:

“The actions of the next 30 years are absolutely crucial for putting us on a path that avoids”

the worst outcomes

“and ensuring, at least in the next 200 years, the impacts are limited and give us time to adapt.”

The reservations that the hon. Member for Aberdeen South (Callum McCaig) expressed in his comments on the new clause are taken into account in the careful and thoughtful way that the clause has been drafted and the role that it provides for the Committee on Climate Change. What we need is the ambition embodied in the clause. As my right hon. Friend said, we did it with the Climate Change Act 2008, passed with all-party support, which sent a signal to the world. We can do that again; we cannot afford not to. The future is bleak if we do not cut our emissions further than Paris suggested.

The role that the new clause proposes for the Committee on Climate Change is important for the robustness of that ambition and its workability. I am pleased to hear the constructive engagement that there has been between my right hon. Friend and the Secretary of State. I hope that in her comments later we will hear that together we can move forward on the issue.

**Andrea Leadsom:** Government amendments 48 and 49 add the relevant provisions of the Oil Taxation Act 1975 and the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the legislation listed at clause 2(6), which contains the Secretary of State's relevant oil and gas functions. This ensures that the functions provided for by these Acts fall within the definition of “relevant functions” and can be transferred from the Secretary of State to the Oil and Gas Authority by regulations made under clause 2(2).

Schedule 1 to the Oil Taxation Act 1975 and chapter 9 of part 8 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 contain the important oil and gas functions of determining oil fields and cluster areas, respectively. These functions form the basis of oil taxation. Petroleum revenue tax is applied by determined field, and allowances are given by cluster area to reduce the amount of profits to which the supplementary charge is applied. Both of these are functions currently undertaken by the Oil and Gas Authority in its capacity as an Executive agency, and are fundamental to our tax regime and to incentivising investment. These amendments are technical in nature and simply seek to put beyond doubt that these key functions can be transferred to the OGA once it becomes a Government company, as we have always intended.

Let me briefly explain Government amendment 51, to the long title. The amendment is consequential on the removal from the Bill in Committee of the clause on carbon accounting under the Climate Change Act 2008, which was introduced in the other place. It ensures that the Bill is compliant with the parliamentary convention that Bills should move between the Houses in a proper state.

New clause 3 was tabled by the hon. Member for Aberdeen South (Callum McCaig), and new clause 7 was tabled by the hon. Member for Wigan (Lisa Nandy) and others. I should add that the hon. Member for



Stockton North (Alex Cunningham) has been a long-standing advocate of CCS, which he and I have discussed on a number of occasions, so I hope he will acknowledge that I have studied the subject.

**Alex Cunningham:** I am pleased to acknowledge the work the Minister has done, but the important thing is that we convince the Chancellor to fund CCS at some time in the future. How optimistic is she that we will be able to do that?

**Andrea Leadsom:** The new clauses seek to place a duty on the Secretary of State to produce and implement a CCS strategy by June 2017 and to report to Parliament on progress every three years. They also set out that the strategy must help to deliver the emissions reductions needed to meet the fifth and subsequent carbon budgets.

As I emphasised in Committee, the Government's view remains that CCS has a potentially important role to play in the long-term decarbonisation of the UK's industrial and power sectors, the long-term competitiveness of energy-intensive industries and the longevity of North sea industries. However, CCS costs are currently high, which is why we remain committed to working with industry to bring forward innovative ideas for reducing the costs of this potentially important technology.

**Philip Boswell:** I thank the Minister for her commitment to carbon capture and storage. However, in terms of our commitment on climate change, we have seen the increased construction and usage of coal-fired power stations around the world, and it has also been well noted in the House that the removal of the CCS competition was a missed opportunity. In Scotland, we still have the Grangemouth CCS project, involving a facility fitted with CCS technology that would cut 90% of emissions. Does the Minister agree that the CCS advisory group should look at that, as an opportunity to get us back on track?

**Andrea Leadsom:** What I can say is that the Government have invested more than £220 million in CCS since 2011. This financial year alone, we have invested £6 million, including £1.7 million in October 2015, to support three innovative CCS technologies—from Carbon Clean Solutions, C-Capture Ltd and FET Engineering—and £2.5 million to investigate potential new CO<sub>2</sub> stores. We have also invested £60 million of our international climate fund to support CCS capacity building and action internationally. The hon. Member for Stockton North will be aware that DECC provided £1 million in 2014 for a feasibility study into industrial CCS on Teesside, as part of the city deal.

As I said, CCS prices are currently high, so we are committed to working with industry on bringing forward innovative ideas to reduce costs. A key part of that is our continuing investment in CCS through innovation support, international partnerships and industrial research projects.

I recognise that industry and others are keen for the Government to set out our approach to CCS as soon as possible. As I emphasised in Committee, we will do that by the end of 2016. In doing so, we will continue to engage closely with industry, the all-party group on carbon capture and storage, the CCS strategy group and Lord Oxburgh's CCS advisory group, which is planning to deliver its findings and recommendations to the Government by the summer.

I hope I have reassured hon. Members that the new clauses are unnecessary. I therefore hope they will be content not to press them.

**Alex Cunningham:** Before the Minister moves on, will she hazard a comment on the proposed project on Teesside, which would see a 300 MW power station built on the Wilton site and wrapped up with CCS?

**Andrea Leadsom:** As I have said to the hon. Gentleman, I continue to engage with him and others, and Lord Oxburgh's CCS advisory group will publish its findings. We will be looking at individual projects, but as the hon. Gentleman and other hon. Members will know, CCS costs are currently extremely high, so I absolutely cannot make any commitments on particular projects right now.

New clauses 6 and 10, tabled by the right hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr Carmichael), the hon. Member for Wigan and others, are intended to restrict the carbon accounting rules that are allowed under the Climate Change Act from 2028—from the fifth carbon budget period. Under the current rules, we count the UK's actual emissions for some sectors; for other sectors, we reflect how the EU emissions trading system works.

The new clauses would prevent us from continuing with that approach beyond the fourth carbon budget. Instead, the intention is presumably that the UK's actual emissions for all sectors would be counted, but without the ability to offset any of those through a system of carbon accounting. As I have said previously, we would still participate in the EU emissions trading system even with that change, and the effect of the new clauses would simply be that we would not reflect how the EU emissions trading system works in our carbon budgets.

Of course, there are arguments for and against different accounting methods, and the issue requires careful consideration of several different factors, including the impact on consumers, businesses and industry, and on our ability to meet our domestic, EU and international commitments in the cheapest way. My hon. Friend the Member for Warrington South (David Mowat) clearly set out some of the challenges for energy-intensive industries in that respect.

It is absolutely right that we keep under review our carbon accounting practices, but now is not the right time to make the proposed changes, because we are focused on setting the fifth carbon budget. We have to do that by 30 June, as required by the Climate Change Act, and that is less than four months away. Accepting new clause 6 or 10 at this point in the process would threaten serious delay in setting the fifth carbon budget. That cannot be right, and it cannot be what hon. Members intended. I just cannot accept putting us at risk of not complying with our legal commitment under the Climate Change Act. I therefore hope hon. Members will be prepared not to press the new clauses.

New clause 11, tabled by the right hon. Member for Doncaster North (Edward Miliband), would set a new climate change target for the UK. Specifically, it would require the Government to set a year by which net emissions will be zero or less, and to ensure that that target was met for that year and subsequent ones. The year would have to be set within 12 months of the Bill coming into force and following advice from the Committee on Climate Change.

[*Andrea Leadsom*]

I sincerely thank the right hon. Gentleman for raising this important issue and for his statements to the House on the matter over a long period. I know the House was delighted with the Paris agreement, which included a goal for global net zero emissions by the end of this century. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State played a crucial role in securing support for that goal in Paris, and I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his support in securing such an ambitious deal. I am grateful for his past and continued commitment to the important subject of climate change.

The Government believe we will need to take the step of enshrining the Paris goal of net zero emissions in UK law—the question is not whether, but how we do it, and there is an important set of questions to be answered before we do. The Committee on Climate Change is looking at the implications of the commitments made in Paris and has said it will report in the autumn. We will want to consider carefully its recommendations, and I am happy to give the right hon. Gentleman the undertaking that we will also discuss with him and others across the House how best to approach this matter, once we have undertaken that consideration.

This is an example, once again, of the House demonstrating on a cross-party basis a determination to tackle climate change, as we showed in the Climate Change Act. The Government are determined to build on the momentum of Paris, and our positive response to the right hon. Gentleman today is a clear example of that. On that basis, I hope he will not press his new clause to a Division.

Next I will respond to new clause 12, tabled by the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas). This would require the Secretary of State to develop and publish a national strategy for the energy sector towards 100% renewable energy by 2050, under the framework of a so-called just transition. I want to start by recognising the areas where I hope the hon. Lady and I can agree. She is a passionate advocate for action to tackle climate change, to which this Government are firmly committed. Our domestic Climate Change Act is world leading, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State played a critical role last year in securing a strong global deal in Paris. We can also agree on the important role for renewables in helping to reduce emissions. In particular, I welcome the progress we have seen so far in driving down the cost of renewables technologies such as offshore wind and solar.

7.30 pm

While I hope that we can indeed agree on those points, we do have different views on the best way to go about reducing emissions. There are three reasons why I cannot accept the hon. Lady's new clause. First, it goes against the principle of technology neutrality, which ensures that we can cut emissions at the lowest cost to consumers. Secondly, we already engage very widely on our approach to decarbonisation. Thirdly, the new clause overlaps significantly with the existing legislative requirement for us to publish policies and proposals for tackling climate change. We are committed to ensuring that the UK continues to do its part to tackle climate change, but we want to cut emissions as cheaply as possible and to drive down costs for families and for businesses.

**Caroline Lucas:** Will the hon. Lady elaborate a little more on her point about technology neutrality? All I am talking about is renewables, energy efficiency, storage and so forth. If she knows of some wonderful new technology that can get our emissions down more quickly and more cheaply, I would love to hear about it.

**Andrea Leadsom:** As the hon. Lady well knows, one transitional approach to decarbonisation is to move away from coal and towards gas as a bridge to a low-carbon future. She will also be very aware that new nuclear offers a low-carbon technology for the future, and this Government are committed to supporting that.

I appreciate the intent behind much of the hon. Lady's new clause, but I hope that she can see why I cannot accept its specifics and that she will be content to withdraw it.

I turn now to new clause 8, tabled by the hon. Member for Wigan and others. This would require the Secretary of State to set a decarbonisation target range for the electricity generating sector. We debated very similar amendments in the previous Parliament, and during the passage of this Bill in the other place and in earlier Commons stages. The Government have made our position on this matter very clear. We are committed to ensuring that the UK continues to play its part to tackle climate change, in line with the Climate Change Act and our international and EU obligations. However, we want to do this as cost-effectively as possible in order to keep costs down for families and businesses while delivering on legally binding commitments. We cannot do that by locking ourselves into additional expensive and inflexible targets relating to the power sector. There are too many things we cannot predict about how the energy system will develop over the next 15 years and beyond. The costs of getting this wrong now would be picked up by families and businesses for decades to come.

I find it strange that Opposition parties often argue that we are not doing enough to tackle fuel poverty, and yet they are urging us to sign consumers up to a distorting and expensive power sector target. Investors want to know that we have clear, credible and affordable plans. The Government are now setting out the next stages in their long-term commitment to move to a low-carbon economy, providing a basis for electricity investment into the next decade. The huge investment we have seen so far is evidence that our approach is working. Between 2010 and 2014, our policies have secured an estimated £42 billion of investment in low-carbon electricity, including £40 billion in renewables, and we have more in the pipeline for the future. I therefore cannot accept this new clause, and I ask hon. Members to withdraw it.

I would now like to deal with new clause 9, tabled by the hon. Member for Wigan and others. This seeks to introduce additional capacity market eligibility criteria requiring any new-build capacity accessing 15-year capacity agreements to be made subject to the emissions performance standard, or EPS. As I have explained previously, the new clause does not achieve its intended aim, so I am surprised to see it reappear. The EPS sets an annual limit specifically on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from new fossil fuel plant with an output above 50 MW. Any new fossil fuel generators above 50 MW seeking to participate in the capacity market will already be subject to this limit, so

nothing would be gained by introducing this as a further eligibility requirement in the capacity market. Existing generators, which form the majority of capacity market participants, cannot access 15-year agreements, so the new clause would also have no impact on those generators.

As I have set out before, the emissions impact from smaller generators that sit below the 50 MW threshold is often assumed to be larger than it is in reality. Small “peaking” generators have a relatively small impact on overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to the short hours that they run. These generators typically run for less than 100 hours a year, in the case of diesel engines, while larger fossil fuel plants will run for 2,000 hours or more. The new clause is therefore not effective, for the simple reason that the annual EPS CO<sub>2</sub> emissions limit would be very unlikely to have any impact on small generators participating in the capacity market.

**Dr Whitehead:** Is not the proposal that the Minister herself is putting forward for the future inclusion of small diesel sets into air quality standards subject to exactly the same problem, in that smaller diesel set generators are brought into a scheme that was originally proposed for larger generators, thereby including them in the system? That is exactly what the new clause proposes through smaller diesel sets coming into an emissions performance standard that otherwise would apply to larger plants.

**Andrea Leadsom:** As I have explained to the hon. Gentleman, his new clause would not actually have that effect.

However, I am not complacent about concerns associated with local pollutants from small generators. I am very aware of the concern about diesel, in particular. Later this year, the Department will consult on options that will include legislation that would set binding emissions limit values on relevant air pollutants from smaller engines, with a view to having legislation in force no later than January 2019, and possibly sooner. These limits would apply to generators or groups of generators with a rated thermal input equal to or greater than 1 MW and less than 50 MW, irrespective of their number of hours of operation during any given year. This shows that the Government are taking appropriate action to avoid any disproportionate impact on air quality from smaller engines where those could contribute to harmful levels of air pollutants and the exceeding of existing air quality limit values. These limits, along with other proposals we have recently announced, send a clear message about the viability of developing and running diesel generators in future. I hope that hon. Members have found my explanation reassuring and will be content to withdraw their new clause.

I turn now to new clause 5, tabled by the right hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr Carmichael). This seeks to reinsert the clause added by the Opposition in the other place, once again rewriting the Oil and Gas Authority’s principal objective of maximising economic recovery of UK petroleum. This topic has been debated at length throughout the passage of the Bill. The Government successfully removed the previous iteration of this clause at Committee, with the support of Scottish National party Members. Importantly, I note that it was agreed across the room, including by Opposition Front Benchers, that diluting the focus of the OGA in

such a way was undesirable. In light of this, I am surprised and rather disappointed that the right hon. Gentleman has tabled this new clause, not least because of the serious implications it has for jobs and growth in Scotland. As I have said many times, any amendment that detracts from the OGA’s focus on maximising economic recovery is damaging to the North sea. Such a move is unacceptable, particularly at a time of unprecedented challenge for the oil and gas industry.

**Mr Carmichael:** I am as disappointed with the Minister as she claims to be with me. To suggest that the OGA, which is an exceptionally effective public body, is incapable of doing more than one thing is rather insulting to the body that we worked so hard to set up.

**Andrea Leadsom:** The right hon. Gentleman misses the point. The OGA is going to have an enormous brief. The point about its principal objective being to maximise the economic recovery is that that would focus its efforts on the long-term sustainability of the North sea and not what the other House tried to put in place, which is related to short-termism and trying to maximise profitability and so on. That would be counter to the interests of jobs and growth in his constituency and others. Removing the OGA’s focus on that principal objective seriously risks weakening its ability to provide support to an industry that is urgently in need of it, and the potential knock-on effect would be significant. Doing so would risk the premature decommissioning of key North sea infrastructure and would seriously jeopardise vital skills and experience, including those that could help to promote the longevity of the industry through carbon storage projects. From that perspective, the amendment is self-defeating. Furthermore, the “Maximising the Economic Recovery” UK strategy has now been published and is currently before Parliament. The amendment would undo the significant amount of work that has been undertaken with industry and would require the OGA to revise its MER UK strategy to take into account the expansion in the principal objective.

As the hon. Member for Aberdeen South has mentioned on several occasions, it is mission critical that the OGA maintains a “laser-like focus” on maximising economic recovery above all else. Without such a focus, we risk conflicting the OGA—setting it up to fail in its crucial mission to protect our domestic energy mix and to support hundreds of thousands of jobs. That is not what is best for the UK continental shelf now or in future.

**Callum McCaig:** I thank the Minister for drawing attention to that. It is absolutely fundamental that the OGA has that laser-like focus. It is also fundamental for the industry that the Chancellor has that laser-like focus. I reiterate to the Minister the need for her to use her good offices to make sure the industry gets the support it needs on Wednesday.

**Andrea Leadsom:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for that. He will be aware that the Chancellor and the Prime Minister have looked carefully at the matter, so I hope that he will be pleased. I assure him that his interests and the interests of the UK continental shelf are being carefully considered. I hope that the right hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland will be content not to press the amendment to a vote.

[Andrea Leadsom]

Finally, hon. Members will be pleased to know, I turn to amendment 47, which was tabled by the hon. Member for Wigan and others. The amendment would oblige the OGA to consider the most advantageous use of North sea infrastructure for the overall benefit of oil and gas extraction prior to the decommissioning of such sites. I am delighted to note the support across the House for the measures to establish the OGA and give it the powers needed to maximise economic recovery. The impact of the fall in oil prices on industry makes that even more critical.

Although we are taking urgent steps to stimulate investment in exploration, it is equally important to the overall viability of the North sea that we make the best use of infrastructure in order to mitigate the risks of premature decommissioning. That requires a holistic approach in which operators, licence holders and infrastructure owners collaborate to ensure the maximum economic recovery of petroleum from the UK continental shelf. That is precisely provided by the OGA's principal objective set out in section 9A of the Petroleum Act 1998.

The strategy to maximise economic recovery further addresses that issue. It includes duties to plan, commission and maintain infrastructure in a way that meets the optimum configuration for maximising the value of economically recoverable petroleum, taking into account the operational needs of others. The strategy and the measures in the Bill ensure that before commencing the decommissioning of any infrastructure in relevant UK waters, both the owners of the infrastructure and the OGA must ensure that all viable options for its continued use have been suitably explored. The OGA is already working to support a stable and sustainable decommissioning framework focused on improving late-life management. The OGA will publish its decommissioning sector strategy early in the summer. I hope that hon. Members have found my explanation reassuring and will be content not to press the amendment to a vote.

**Mr Speaker:** I call Callum McCaig, if he wishes to speak.

**Callum McCaig** *indicated dissent.*

*Question put, That the clause be read a Second time.*

*The House divided: Ayes 229, Noes 268.*

**Division No. 216]**

**[7.44 pm**

**AYES**

Abbott, Ms Diane	Blomfield, Paul
Abrahams, Debbie	Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
Ahmed-Sheikh, Ms Tasmina	Brennan, Kevin
Ali, Rushanara	Brock, Deidre
Allen, Mr Graham	Brown, Lyn
Arkless, Richard	Bryant, Chris
Austin, Ian	Buck, Ms Karen
Bardell, Hannah	Burgon, Richard
Barron, rh Kevin	Burnham, rh Andy
Beckett, rh Margaret	Butler, Dawn
Benn, rh Hilary	Byrne, rh Liam
Betts, Mr Clive	Cadbury, Ruth
Black, Mhairi	Cameron, Dr Lisa
Blackford, Ian	Campbell, rh Mr Alan
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta	Campbell, Mr Ronnie
Blenkinsop, Tom	Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair

Champion, Sarah	Hosie, Stewart
Chapman, Douglas	Howarth, rh Mr George
Chapman, Jenny	Hunt, Tristram
Coaker, Vernon	Huq, Dr Rupa
Coffey, Ann	Hussain, Imran
Cooper, Julie	Jarvis, Dan
Cooper, Rosie	Johnson, rh Alan
Cooper, rh Yvette	Johnson, Diana
Corbyn, rh Jeremy	Jones, Graham
Cowan, Ronnie	Jones, Helen
Cox, Jo	Jones, Mr Kevan
Coyle, Neil	Jones, Susan Elan
Crausby, Mr David	Kane, Mike
Creasy, Stella	Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald
Cruddas, Jon	Keeley, Barbara
Cryer, John	Kendall, Liz
Cummins, Judith	Kerevan, George
Cunningham, Alex	Kinnock, Stephen
Cunningham, Mr Jim	Kyle, Peter
Dakin, Nic	Lavery, Ian
Danczuk, Simon	Leslie, Chris
Davies, Geraint	Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Day, Martyn	Lewis, Clive
De Piero, Gloria	Long Bailey, Rebecca
Docherty-Hughes, Martin	Lucas, Caroline
Donaldson, rh Mr Jeffrey M.	Lucas, Ian C.
Donaldson, Stuart Blair	Lynch, Holly
Doughty, Stephen	MacNeil, Mr Angus Brendan
Dowd, Peter	Mactaggart, rh Fiona
Dromey, Jack	Madders, Justin
Dugher, Michael	Mahmood, Shabana
Durkan, Mark	Malhotra, Seema
Eagle, Ms Angela	Marris, Rob
Edwards, Jonathan	Marsden, Mr Gordon
Efford, Clive	Maskell, Rachael
Ellman, Mrs Louise	Matheson, Christian
Esterson, Bill	Mc Nally, John
Evans, Chris	McCabe, Steve
Farrelly, Paul	McCaug, Callum
Fellows, Marion	McCarthy, Kerry
Field, rh Frank	McDonagh, Siobhain
Fitzpatrick, Jim	McDonald, Andy
Fletcher, Colleen	McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
Flint, rh Caroline	McDonald, Stuart C.
Flynn, Paul	McDonnell, John
Fovargue, Yvonne	McFadden, rh Mr Pat
Foxcroft, Vicky	McGinn, Conor
Gardiner, Barry	McInnes, Liz
Gethins, Stephen	McKinnell, Catherine
Gibson, Patricia	McLaughlin, Anne
Glass, Pat	McMahon, Jim
Glendon, Mary	Mearns, Ian
Godsiff, Mr Roger	Miliband, rh Edward
Goodman, Helen	Monaghan, Carol
Grady, Patrick	Monaghan, Dr Paul
Grant, Peter	Morden, Jessica
Gray, Neil	Morris, Grahame M.
Greenwood, Lilian	Mullin, Roger
Greenwood, Margaret	Murray, Ian
Griffith, Nia	Nandy, Lisa
Hanson, rh Mr David	Newlands, Gavin
Harris, Carolyn	Nicolson, John
Hayes, Helen	O'Hara, Brendan
Hayman, Sue	Onn, Melanie
Healey, rh John	Onwurah, Chi
Hendry, Drew	Osamor, Kate
Hermon, Lady	Oswald, Kirsten
Hillier, Meg	Owen, Albert
Hodgson, Mrs Sharon	Paterson, Steven
Hoey, Kate	Pearce, Teresa
Hollern, Kate	Pennycook, Matthew
Hopkins, Kelvin	Perkins, Toby

Powell, Lucy  
 Qureshi, Yasmin  
 Rayner, Angela  
 Reed, Mr Jamie  
 Reed, Mr Steve  
 Rees, Christina  
 Reynolds, Jonathan  
 Rimmer, Marie  
 Ritchie, Ms Margaret  
 Robertson, rh Angus  
 Robinson, Gavin  
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey  
 Rotheram, Steve  
 Ryan, rh Joan  
 Saville Roberts, Liz  
 Shah, Naz  
 Sharma, Mr Virendra  
 Sheerman, Mr Barry  
 Sheppard, Tommy  
 Sherriff, Paula  
 Siddiq, Tulip  
 Skinner, Mr Dennis  
 Slaughter, Andy  
 Smith, rh Mr Andrew  
 Smith, Angela  
 Smith, Cat  
 Smith, Jeff  
 Smith, Nick

Smith, Owen  
 Smyth, Karin  
 Stephens, Chris  
 Stevens, Jo  
 Stuart, rh Ms Gisela  
 Tami, Mark  
 Thewliss, Alison  
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick  
 Thornberry, Emily  
 Timms, rh Stephen  
 Trickett, Jon  
 Turley, Anna  
 Twigg, Derek  
 Twigg, Stephen  
 Vaz, Valerie  
 Watson, Mr Tom  
 West, Catherine  
 Whiteford, Dr Eilidh  
 Whitehead, Dr Alan  
 Whitford, Dr Philippa  
 Wilson, Corri  
 Winterton, rh Dame Rosie  
 Woodcock, John  
 Wright, Mr Iain  
 Zeichner, Daniel

**Tellers for the Ayes:**  
**Philip Boswell and**  
**Owen Thompson**

#### NOES

Afriyie, Adam  
 Aldous, Peter  
 Allan, Lucy  
 Allen, Heidi  
 Amess, Sir David  
 Andrew, Stuart  
 Ansell, Caroline  
 Argar, Edward  
 Atkins, Victoria  
 Bacon, Mr Richard  
 Baker, Mr Steve  
 Baldwin, Harriett  
 Barclay, Stephen  
 Barwell, Gavin  
 Bellingham, Sir Henry  
 Benyon, Richard  
 Beresford, Sir Paul  
 Berry, Jake  
 Berry, James  
 Bingham, Andrew  
 Blackman, Bob  
 Blunt, Crispin  
 Bone, Mr Peter  
 Borwick, Victoria  
 Bottomley, Sir Peter  
 Bradley, Karen  
 Brady, Mr Graham  
 Brazier, Mr Julian  
 Bridgen, Andrew  
 Brine, Steve  
 Brokenshire, rh James  
 Bruce, Fiona  
 Burns, Conor  
 Burns, rh Sir Simon  
 Cairns, Alun  
 Carmichael, Neil  
 Cartledge, James  
 Cash, Sir William  
 Caulfield, Maria  
 Chalk, Alex  
 Chishti, Rehman

Clark, rh Greg  
 Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth  
 Cleverly, James  
 Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey  
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse  
 Collins, Damian  
 Costa, Alberto  
 Cox, Mr Geoffrey  
 Crabb, rh Stephen  
 Davies, Byron  
 Davies, Glyn  
 Davies, Mims  
 Davis, rh Mr David  
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan  
 Donelan, Michelle  
 Double, Steve  
 Dowden, Oliver  
 Doyle-Price, Jackie  
 Drax, Richard  
 Drummond, Mrs Flick  
 Duddridge, James  
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan  
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain  
 Dunne, Mr Philip  
 Ellis, Michael  
 Ellison, Jane  
 Ellwood, Mr Tobias  
 Elphicke, Charlie  
 Eustice, George  
 Evans, Graham  
 Fabricant, Michael  
 Fallon, rh Michael  
 Fernandes, Suella  
 Foster, Kevin  
 Fox, rh Dr Liam  
 Frazer, Lucy  
 Freeman, George  
 Freer, Mike  
 Fuller, Richard  
 Fysh, Marcus  
 Gale, Sir Roger

Garnier, rh Sir Edward  
 Garnier, Mark  
 Gauke, Mr David  
 Ghani, Nusrat  
 Gibb, Mr Nick  
 Gillan, rh Mrs Cheryl  
 Glen, John  
 Goodwill, Mr Robert  
 Graham, Richard  
 Grant, Mrs Helen  
 Grayling, rh Chris  
 Green, Chris  
 Green, rh Damian  
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic  
 Griffiths, Andrew  
 Gummer, Ben  
 Gyimah, Mr Sam  
 Halfon, rh Robert  
 Hall, Luke  
 Hammond, Stephen  
 Hancock, rh Matthew  
 Hands, rh Greg  
 Harper, rh Mr Mark  
 Harrington, Richard  
 Harris, Rebecca  
 Hart, Simon  
 Hayes, rh Mr John  
 Heald, Sir Oliver  
 Heapey, James  
 Heaton-Harris, Chris  
 Heaton-Jones, Peter  
 Henderson, Gordon  
 Herbert, rh Nick  
 Hinds, Damian  
 Hoare, Simon  
 Hollinrake, Kevin  
 Hollobone, Mr Philip  
 Holloway, Mr Adam  
 Hopkins, Kris  
 Huddleston, Nigel  
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy  
 Jackson, Mr Stewart  
 Javid, rh Sajid  
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil  
 Jenkyns, Andrea  
 Jenrick, Robert  
 Johnson, Boris  
 Johnson, Gareth  
 Johnson, Joseph  
 Jones, Andrew  
 Jones, rh Mr David  
 Jones, Mr Marcus  
 Kawczynski, Daniel  
 Kennedy, Seema  
 Kirby, Simon  
 Knight, rh Sir Greg  
 Knight, Julian  
 Kwarteng, Kwasi  
 Latham, Pauline  
 Leadsom, Andrea  
 Lee, Dr Phillip  
 Lefroy, Jeremy  
 Leigh, Sir Edward  
 Leslie, Charlotte  
 Letwin, rh Mr Oliver  
 Lewis, Brandon  
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian  
 Lidington, rh Mr David  
 Lilley, rh Mr Peter  
 Lord, Jonathan  
 Loughton, Tim  
 Mackinlay, Craig

Main, Mrs Anne  
 Mak, Mr Alan  
 Malthouse, Kit  
 Mann, Scott  
 Mathias, Dr Tania  
 May, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Maynard, Paul  
 McCartney, Jason  
 McCartney, Karl  
 McPartland, Stephen  
 Menzies, Mark  
 Merriman, Huw  
 Metcalfe, Stephen  
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria  
 Milling, Amanda  
 Mills, Nigel  
 Milton, rh Anne  
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew  
 Mordaunt, Penny  
 Morgan, rh Nicky  
 Morris, Anne Marie  
 Morris, David  
 Morris, James  
 Morton, Wendy  
 Mowat, David  
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll  
 Murrison, Dr Andrew  
 Neill, Robert  
 Newton, Sarah  
 Nokes, Caroline  
 Norman, Jesse  
 Nuttall, Mr David  
 Offord, Dr Matthew  
 Opperman, Guy  
 Parish, Neil  
 Patel, rh Priti  
 Pawsey, Mark  
 Penning, rh Mike  
 Penrose, John  
 Percy, Andrew  
 Perry, Claire  
 Phillips, Stephen  
 Philp, Chris  
 Pincher, Christopher  
 Pow, Rebecca  
 Prentis, Victoria  
 Prisk, Mr Mark  
 Pritchard, Mark  
 Pursglove, Tom  
 Quin, Jeremy  
 Quince, Will  
 Raab, Mr Dominic  
 Redwood, rh John  
 Robinson, Mary  
 Rudd, rh Amber  
 Rutley, David  
 Sandbach, Antoinette  
 Scully, Paul  
 Selous, Andrew  
 Shapps, rh Grant  
 Sharma, Alok  
 Shelbrooke, Alec  
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith  
 Skidmore, Chris  
 Smith, Chloe  
 Smith, Henry  
 Smith, Julian  
 Smith, Royston  
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas  
 Solloway, Amanda  
 Soubry, rh Anna  
 Spelman, rh Mrs Caroline

Spencer, Mark  
 Stephenson, Andrew  
 Stevenson, John  
 Stewart, Iain  
 Stewart, Rory  
 Streeter, Mr Gary  
 Stride, Mel  
 Stuart, Graham  
 Sturdy, Julian  
 Sunak, Rishi  
 Swayne, rh Mr Desmond  
 Swire, rh Mr Hugo  
 Syms, Mr Robert  
 Thomas, Derek  
 Throup, Maggie  
 Timpson, Edward  
 Tolhurst, Kelly  
 Tomlinson, Justin  
 Tomlinson, Michael  
 Tracey, Craig  
 Tredinnick, David  
 Trevelyan, Mrs Anne-Marie  
 Tugendhat, Tom

Tyrie, rh Mr Andrew  
 Vaizey, Mr Edward  
 Vara, Mr Shailesh  
 Vickers, Martin  
 Walker, Mr Charles  
 Walker, Mr Robin  
 Warman, Matt  
 Watkinson, Dame Angela  
 Wharton, James  
 Whately, Helen  
 White, Chris  
 Whittaker, Craig  
 Wiggin, Bill  
 Williamson, rh Gavin  
 Wilson, Mr Rob  
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
 Wood, Mike  
 Wragg, William  
 Zahawi, Nadhim

**Tellers for the Noes:**  
**George Hollingbery and**  
**Margot James**

Crausby, Mr David  
 Creasy, Stella  
 Cruddas, Jon  
 Cryer, John  
 Cummins, Judith  
 Cunningham, Alex  
 Cunningham, Mr Jim  
 Dakin, Nic  
 Danczuk, Simon  
 Davies, Geraint  
 Day, Martyn  
 De Piero, Gloria  
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin  
 Donaldson, rh Mr Jeffrey M.  
 Donaldson, Stuart Blair  
 Doughty, Stephen  
 Dowd, Jim  
 Dowd, Peter  
 Dromey, Jack  
 Dugher, Michael  
 Durkan, Mark  
 Eagle, Ms Angela  
 Edwards, Jonathan  
 Efford, Clive  
 Ellman, Mrs Louise  
 Esterson, Bill  
 Evans, Chris  
 Farrelly, Paul  
 Fellows, Marion  
 Field, rh Frank  
 Fitzpatrick, Jim  
 Fletcher, Colleen  
 Flint, rh Caroline  
 Flynn, Paul  
 Fovargue, Yvonne  
 Foxcroft, Vicky  
 Gardiner, Barry  
 Gethins, Stephen  
 Gibson, Patricia  
 Glass, Pat  
 Glendon, Mary  
 Godsiff, Mr Roger  
 Goodman, Helen  
 Grady, Patrick  
 Grant, Peter  
 Gray, Neil  
 Greenwood, Lilian  
 Greenwood, Margaret  
 Griffith, Nia  
 Hanson, rh Mr David  
 Harris, Carolyn  
 Hayes, Helen  
 Hayman, Sue  
 Healey, rh John  
 Hendry, Drew  
 Hermon, Lady  
 Hillier, Meg  
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon  
 Hoey, Kate  
 Hollern, Kate  
 Hopkins, Kelvin  
 Hosie, Stewart  
 Howarth, rh Mr George  
 Hunt, Tristram  
 Huq, Dr Rupa  
 Hussain, Imran  
 Jarvis, Dan  
 Johnson, rh Alan  
 Johnson, Diana  
 Jones, Graham  
 Jones, Helen  
 Jones, Mr Kevan

Jones, Susan Elan  
 Kane, Mike  
 Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald  
 Keeley, Barbara  
 Kendall, Liz  
 Kerevan, George  
 Kinnock, Stephen  
 Kyle, Peter  
 Lavery, Ian  
 Leslie, Chris  
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma  
 Lewis, Clive  
 Long Bailey, Rebecca  
 Lucas, Caroline  
 Lucas, Ian C.  
 Lynch, Holly  
 McNeil, Mr Angus Brendan  
 Mactaggart, rh Fiona  
 Madders, Justin  
 Mahmood, Shabana  
 Malhotra, Seema  
 Marris, Rob  
 Marsden, Mr Gordon  
 Maskell, Rachael  
 Matheson, Christian  
 Mc Nally, John  
 McCabe, Steve  
 McCaig, Callum  
 McCarthy, Kerry  
 McDonagh, Siobhain  
 McDonald, Andy  
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm  
 McDonald, Stuart C.  
 McDonnell, John  
 McGinn, Conor  
 McGovern, Alison  
 McInnes, Liz  
 McKinnell, Catherine  
 McLaughlin, Anne  
 McMahan, Jim  
 Mearns, Ian  
 Miliband, rh Edward  
 Monaghan, Carol  
 Monaghan, Dr Paul  
 Morden, Jessica  
 Mullin, Roger  
 Murray, Ian  
 Nandy, Lisa  
 Newlands, Gavin  
 Nicolson, John  
 O'Hara, Brendan  
 Onn, Melanie  
 Onwurah, Chi  
 Osamor, Kate  
 Oswald, Kirsten  
 Owen, Albert  
 Paterson, Steven  
 Pearce, Teresa  
 Pennycook, Matthew  
 Perkins, Toby  
 Powell, Lucy  
 Qureshi, Yasmin  
 Rayner, Angela  
 Reed, Mr Jamie  
 Reed, Mr Steve  
 Rees, Christina  
 Reynolds, Jonathan  
 Rimmer, Marie  
 Ritchie, Ms Margaret  
 Robertson, rh Angus  
 Robinson, Gavin  
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey

*Question accordingly negated.*

### **New Clause 8**

#### **DECARBONISATION TARGET RANGE**

“(1) Section 1 of the Energy Act 2013 is amended as follows.

(2) Leave out subsection (2) and insert—

“(2) The Secretary of State must by order (“a decarbonisation order”) set a decarbonisation target range, which shall be reviewed annually thereafter.”

(3) Leave out subsection (5) and insert—

“(5) The decarbonisation order shall be made within six months of the adoption of the fifth carbon budget set by virtue of the duty of the Secretary of State under section 4 (2) (b) of the climate Change Act 2008.”  
 —(*Dr Whitehead.*)

*Brought up, and read the First time.*

*Question put, That the clause be read a Second time.*

*The House divided: Ayes 227, Noes 272.*

**Division No. 217]**

**[7.56 pm**

#### **AYES**

Abbott, Ms Diane  
 Abrahams, Debbie  
 Ahmed-Sheikh, Ms Tasmina  
 Ali, Rushanara  
 Allen, Mr Graham  
 Arkless, Richard  
 Austin, Ian  
 Bardell, Hannah  
 Barron, rh Kevin  
 Beckett, rh Margaret  
 Benn, rh Hilary  
 Betts, Mr Clive  
 Black, Mhairi  
 Blackford, Ian  
 Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta  
 Blenkinsop, Tom  
 Blomfield, Paul  
 Boswell, Philip  
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben  
 Brennan, Kevin  
 Brock, Deidre  
 Brown, Lyn

Bryant, Chris  
 Buck, Ms Karen  
 Burgon, Richard  
 Burnham, rh Andy  
 Butler, Dawn  
 Byrne, rh Liam  
 Cadbury, Ruth  
 Cameron, Dr Lisa  
 Campbell, rh Mr Alan  
 Campbell, Mr Ronnie  
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair  
 Champion, Sarah  
 Chapman, Douglas  
 Chapman, Jenny  
 Coaker, Vernon  
 Coffey, Ann  
 Cooper, Julie  
 Cooper, Rosie  
 Cooper, rh Yvette  
 Cowan, Ronnie  
 Cox, Jo  
 Coyle, Neil

Ryan, rh Joan  
Saville Roberts, Liz  
Shah, Naz  
Sharma, Mr Virendra  
Sheerman, Mr Barry  
Sheppard, Tommy  
Sherriff, Paula  
Siddiq, Tulip  
Skinner, Mr Dennis  
Slaughter, Andy  
Smith, rh Mr Andrew  
Smith, Angela  
Smith, Cat  
Smith, Nick  
Smith, Owen  
Smyth, Karin  
Stephens, Chris  
Stevens, Jo  
Stuart, rh Ms Gisela  
Tami, Mark  
Thewliss, Alison

Thomas-Symonds, Nick  
Thompson, Owen  
Thornberry, Emily  
Timms, rh Stephen  
Trickett, Jon  
Turley, Anna  
Twigg, Derek  
Twigg, Stephen  
Vaz, Valerie  
West, Catherine  
Whiteford, Dr Eilidh  
Whitehead, Dr Alan  
Whitford, Dr Philippa  
Wilson, Corri  
Winterton, rh Dame Rosie  
Woodcock, John  
Wright, Mr Iain  
Zeichner, Daniel

**Tellers for the Ayes:**  
**Grahame M. Morris and**  
**Jeff Smith**

### NOES

Afriyie, Adam  
Aldous, Peter  
Allan, Lucy  
Allen, Heidi  
Amess, Sir David  
Andrew, Stuart  
Ansell, Caroline  
Argar, Edward  
Atkins, Victoria  
Bacon, Mr Richard  
Baker, Mr Steve  
Baldwin, Harriett  
Barclay, Stephen  
Baron, Mr John  
Barwell, Gavin  
Bellingham, Sir Henry  
Benyon, Richard  
Beresford, Sir Paul  
Berry, Jake  
Berry, James  
Bingham, Andrew  
Blackman, Bob  
Blunt, Crispin  
Bone, Mr Peter  
Borwick, Victoria  
Bottomley, Sir Peter  
Bradley, Karen  
Brady, Mr Graham  
Brazier, Mr Julian  
Bridgen, Andrew  
Brine, Steve  
Brokenshire, rh James  
Bruce, Fiona  
Burns, Conor  
Burns, rh Sir Simon  
Cairns, Alun  
Carmichael, Neil  
Cartledge, James  
Cash, Sir William  
Caulfield, Maria  
Chalk, Alex  
Chishti, Rehman  
Clark, rh Greg  
Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth  
Cleverly, James  
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey  
Coffey, Dr Thérèse  
Collins, Damian

Costa, Alberto  
Cox, Mr Geoffrey  
Crabb, rh Stephen  
Davies, Byron  
Davies, Glyn  
Davies, Mims  
Davis, rh Mr David  
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan  
Donelan, Michelle  
Double, Steve  
Dowden, Oliver  
Doyle-Price, Jackie  
Drax, Richard  
Drummond, Mrs Flick  
Duddridge, James  
Duncan, rh Sir Alan  
Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain  
Dunne, Mr Philip  
Ellis, Michael  
Ellison, Jane  
Ellwood, Mr Tobias  
Elphicke, Charlie  
Eustice, George  
Evans, Graham  
Fabricant, Michael  
Fallon, rh Michael  
Fernandes, Suella  
Foster, Kevin  
Fox, rh Dr Liam  
Frazer, Lucy  
Freeman, George  
Freer, Mike  
Fuller, Richard  
Fysh, Marcus  
Gale, Sir Roger  
Garnier, rh Sir Edward  
Garnier, Mark  
Gauke, Mr David  
Ghani, Nusrat  
Gibb, Mr Nick  
Gillan, rh Mrs Cheryl  
Glen, John  
Goodwill, Mr Robert  
Graham, Richard  
Grant, Mrs Helen  
Grayling, rh Chris  
Green, Chris  
Green, rh Damian

Grieve, rh Mr Dominic  
Griffiths, Andrew  
Gummer, Ben  
Gyimah, Mr Sam  
Halfon, rh Robert  
Hall, Luke  
Hammond, Stephen  
Hancock, rh Matthew  
Hands, rh Greg  
Harper, rh Mr Mark  
Harrington, Richard  
Harris, Rebecca  
Hart, Simon  
Haselhurst, rh Sir Alan  
Hayes, rh Mr John  
Heald, Sir Oliver  
Heappey, James  
Heaton-Harris, Chris  
Heaton-Jones, Peter  
Henderson, Gordon  
Herbert, rh Nick  
Hinds, Damian  
Hoare, Simon  
Hollinrake, Kevin  
Hollobone, Mr Philip  
Holloway, Mr Adam  
Hopkins, Kris  
Huddleston, Nigel  
Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy  
Jackson, Mr Stewart  
Javid, rh Sajid  
Jayawardena, Mr Ranil  
Jenkyns, Andrea  
Jenrick, Robert  
Johnson, Boris  
Johnson, Gareth  
Johnson, Joseph  
Jones, Andrew  
Jones, rh Mr David  
Jones, Mr Marcus  
Kawczynski, Daniel  
Kennedy, Seema  
Kirby, Simon  
Knight, rh Sir Greg  
Knight, Julian  
Kwarteng, Kwasi  
Latham, Pauline  
Leadsom, Andrea  
Lee, Dr Phillip  
Lefroy, Jeremy  
Leigh, Sir Edward  
Leslie, Charlotte  
Letwin, rh Mr Oliver  
Lewis, Brandon  
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian  
Lidington, rh Mr David  
Lilley, rh Mr Peter  
Lord, Jonathan  
Loughton, Tim  
Mackinlay, Craig  
Main, Mrs Anne  
Mak, Mr Alan  
Malthouse, Kit  
Mann, Scott  
Mathias, Dr Tania  
May, rh Mrs Theresa  
Maynard, Paul  
McCartney, Jason  
McCartney, Karl  
McPartland, Stephen  
Menzies, Mark  
Merriman, Huw

Metcalfe, Stephen  
Miller, rh Mrs Maria  
Milling, Amanda  
Mills, Nigel  
Milton, rh Anne  
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew  
Mordaunt, Penny  
Morgan, rh Nicky  
Morris, Anne Marie  
Morris, David  
Morris, James  
Morton, Wendy  
Mowat, David  
Murray, Mrs Sheryll  
Murrison, Dr Andrew  
Neill, Robert  
Newton, Sarah  
Nokes, Caroline  
Norman, Jesse  
Nuttall, Mr David  
Offord, Dr Matthew  
Opperman, Guy  
Parish, Neil  
Patel, rh Priti  
Pawsey, Mark  
Penning, rh Mike  
Penrose, John  
Percy, Andrew  
Perry, Claire  
Phillips, Stephen  
Philp, Chris  
Pincher, Christopher  
Pow, Rebecca  
Prentis, Victoria  
Prisk, Mr Mark  
Pritchard, Mark  
Purglove, Tom  
Quin, Jeremy  
Quince, Will  
Raab, Mr Dominic  
Redwood, rh John  
Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob  
Robinson, Mary  
Rudd, rh Amber  
Rutley, David  
Sandbach, Antoinette  
Scully, Paul  
Selous, Andrew  
Shapps, rh Grant  
Sharma, Alok  
Shelbrooke, Alec  
Simpson, rh Mr Keith  
Skidmore, Chris  
Smith, Chloe  
Smith, Henry  
Smith, Julian  
Smith, Royston  
Soames, rh Sir Nicholas  
Solloway, Amanda  
Soubry, rh Anna  
Spelman, rh Mrs Caroline  
Spencer, Mark  
Stephenson, Andrew  
Stevenson, John  
Stewart, Iain  
Stewart, Rory  
Streeter, Mr Gary  
Stride, Mel  
Stuart, Graham  
Sturdy, Julian  
Sunak, Rishi  
Swayne, rh Mr Desmond

Swire, rh Mr Hugo  
 Syms, Mr Robert  
 Thomas, Derek  
 Throup, Maggie  
 Timpson, Edward  
 Tolhurst, Kelly  
 Tomlinson, Justin  
 Tomlinson, Michael  
 Tracey, Craig  
 Tredinnick, David  
 Trevelyan, Mrs Anne-Marie  
 Tugendhat, Tom  
 Tyrie, rh Mr Andrew  
 Vaizey, Mr Edward  
 Vara, Mr Shailesh  
 Vickers, Martin  
 Walker, Mr Charles  
 Walker, Mr Robin

Warburton, David  
 Warman, Matt  
 Watkinson, Dame Angela  
 Wharton, James  
 Whately, Helen  
 White, Chris  
 Whittaker, Craig  
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John  
 Wiggin, Bill  
 Williamson, rh Gavin  
 Wilson, Mr Rob  
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
 Wood, Mike  
 Wragg, William

**Tellers for the Noes:**  
**George Hollingbery and**  
**Margot James**

De Piero, Gloria  
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin  
 Donaldson, rh Mr Jeffrey M.  
 Donaldson, Stuart Blair  
 Doughty, Stephen  
 Dowd, Jim  
 Dowd, Peter  
 Dromey, Jack  
 Dugher, Michael  
 Durkan, Mark  
 Eagle, Ms Angela  
 Edwards, Jonathan  
 Efford, Clive  
 Ellman, Mrs Louise  
 Esterson, Bill  
 Evans, Chris  
 Farrelly, Paul  
 Fellows, Marion  
 Field, rh Frank  
 Fitzpatrick, Jim  
 Fletcher, Colleen  
 Flint, rh Caroline  
 Flynn, Paul  
 Fovargue, Yvonne  
 Foxcroft, Vicky  
 Gardiner, Barry  
 Gethins, Stephen  
 Gibson, Patricia  
 Glass, Pat  
 Glindon, Mary  
 Godsiff, Mr Roger  
 Goodman, Helen  
 Grady, Patrick  
 Grant, Peter  
 Gray, Neil  
 Greenwood, Lilian  
 Greenwood, Margaret  
 Griffith, Nia  
 Hanson, rh Mr David  
 Harris, Carolyn  
 Hayes, Helen  
 Hayman, Sue  
 Healey, rh John  
 Hendry, Drew  
 Hermon, Lady  
 Hillier, Meg  
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon  
 Hoey, Kate  
 Hollern, Kate  
 Hopkins, Kelvin  
 Hosie, Stewart  
 Howarth, rh Mr George  
 Hunt, Tristram  
 Huq, Dr Rupa  
 Hussain, Imran  
 Jarvis, Dan  
 Johnson, rh Alan  
 Johnson, Diana  
 Jones, Graham  
 Jones, Helen  
 Jones, Mr Kevan  
 Jones, Susan Elan  
 Kane, Mike  
 Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald  
 Keeley, Barbara  
 Kendall, Liz  
 Kerevan, George  
 Kinnock, Stephen  
 Kyle, Peter  
 Lavery, Ian  
 Leslie, Chris  
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma

Lewis, Clive  
 Long Bailey, Rebecca  
 Lucas, Caroline  
 Lucas, Ian C.  
 Lynch, Holly  
 MacNeil, Mr Angus Brendan  
 Mactaggart, rh Fiona  
 Madders, Justin  
 Mahmood, Shabana  
 Malhotra, Seema  
 Marris, Rob  
 Marsden, Mr Gordon  
 Maskell, Rachael  
 Matheson, Christian  
 Mc Nally, John  
 McCabe, Steve  
 McCaig, Callum  
 McCarthy, Kerry  
 McDonagh, Siobhain  
 McDonald, Andy  
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm  
 McDonald, Stuart C.  
 McDonnell, John  
 McGinn, Conor  
 McGovern, Alison  
 McInnes, Liz  
 McKinnell, Catherine  
 McLaughlin, Anne  
 McMahon, Jim  
 Mearns, Ian  
 Miliband, rh Edward  
 Monaghan, Carol  
 Monaghan, Dr Paul  
 Morden, Jessica  
 Mullin, Roger  
 Murray, Ian  
 Nandy, Lisa  
 Newlands, Gavin  
 Nicolson, John  
 O'Hara, Brendan  
 Onn, Melanie  
 Onwurah, Chi  
 Osamor, Kate  
 Oswald, Kirsten  
 Owen, Albert  
 Paterson, Steven  
 Pearce, Teresa  
 Pennycook, Matthew  
 Perkins, Toby  
 Powell, Lucy  
 Qureshi, Yasmin  
 Rayner, Angela  
 Reed, Mr Jamie  
 Reed, Mr Steve  
 Rees, Christina  
 Reynolds, Jonathan  
 Rimmer, Marie  
 Ritchie, Ms Margaret  
 Robertson, rh Angus  
 Robinson, Gavin  
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey  
 Rotheram, Steve  
 Saville Roberts, Liz  
 Shah, Naz  
 Sharma, Mr Virendra  
 Sheerman, Mr Barry  
 Sheppard, Tommy  
 Sherriff, Paula  
 Siddiq, Tulip  
 Skinner, Mr Dennis  
 Slaughter, Andy  
 Smith, rh Mr Andrew

*Question accordingly negatived.*

### **New Clause 10**

#### **EMISSIONS TRADING: UNITED KINGDOM CARBON ACCOUNT**

“In section 27 (net UK carbon account) of the Climate Change Act 2008, after subsection (3) insert—

“(3A) In respect of any period commencing after 31 December 2027, the regulations must not make provision for carbon units to be credited to or debited from the net United Kingdom carbon account on the basis of the number of carbon units surrendered by operators of installations in the United Kingdom pursuant to the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme.”—(*Lisa Nandy.*)

*Brought up, and read the First time.*

*Question put, That the clause be read a Second time.*

*The House divided: Ayes 229, Noes 275.*

**Division No. 218]**

**[8.8 pm**

#### **AYES**

Abbott, Ms Diane  
 Abrahams, Debbie  
 Ahmed-Sheikh, Ms Tasmina  
 Ali, Rushanara  
 Allen, Mr Graham  
 Arkless, Richard  
 Austin, Ian  
 Bardell, Hannah  
 Barron, rh Kevin  
 Beckett, rh Margaret  
 Benn, rh Hilary  
 Betts, Mr Clive  
 Black, Mhairi  
 Blackford, Ian  
 Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta  
 Blenkinsop, Tom  
 Blomfield, Paul  
 Boswell, Philip  
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben  
 Brennan, Kevin  
 Brock, Deidre  
 Brown, Lyn  
 Bryant, Chris  
 Buck, Ms Karen  
 Burgon, Richard  
 Burnham, rh Andy  
 Butler, Dawn  
 Byrne, rh Liam

Cadbury, Ruth  
 Cameron, Dr Lisa  
 Campbell, rh Mr Alan  
 Campbell, Mr Ronnie  
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair  
 Champion, Sarah  
 Chapman, Douglas  
 Chapman, Jenny  
 Coaker, Vernon  
 Coffey, Ann  
 Cooper, Julie  
 Cooper, Rosie  
 Cooper, rh Yvette  
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy  
 Cowan, Ronnie  
 Cox, Jo  
 Coyle, Neil  
 Crausby, Mr David  
 Creasy, Stella  
 Cruddas, Jon  
 Cryer, John  
 Cummins, Judith  
 Cunningham, Alex  
 Cunningham, Mr Jim  
 Dakin, Nic  
 Danczuk, Simon  
 Davies, Geraint  
 Day, Martyn



Smith, Angela  
 Smith, Cat  
 Smith, Nick  
 Smith, Owen  
 Smyth, Karin  
 Stephens, Chris  
 Stevens, Jo  
 Stuart, rh Ms Gisela  
 Tami, Mark  
 Thewliss, Alison  
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick  
 Thompson, Owen  
 Thornberry, Emily  
 Timms, rh Stephen  
 Trickett, Jon  
 Turley, Anna

Twigg, Derek  
 Vaz, Valerie  
 Watson, Mr Tom  
 West, Catherine  
 Whiteford, Dr Eilidh  
 Whitehead, Dr Alan  
 Whitford, Dr Philippa  
 Wilson, Corri  
 Winterton, rh Dame Rosie  
 Woodcock, John  
 Wright, Mr Iain  
 Zeichner, Daniel

**Tellers for the Ayes:**  
**Grahame M. Morris and**  
**Jeff Smith**

### NOES

Afriyie, Adam  
 Aldous, Peter  
 Allan, Lucy  
 Allen, Heidi  
 Amess, Sir David  
 Andrew, Stuart  
 Ansell, Caroline  
 Argar, Edward  
 Atkins, Victoria  
 Bacon, Mr Richard  
 Baker, Mr Steve  
 Baldwin, Harriett  
 Barclay, Stephen  
 Baron, Mr John  
 Barwell, Gavin  
 Bellingham, Sir Henry  
 Benyon, Richard  
 Beresford, Sir Paul  
 Berry, Jake  
 Berry, James  
 Bingham, Andrew  
 Blackman, Bob  
 Blunt, Crispin  
 Bone, Mr Peter  
 Borwick, Victoria  
 Bottomley, Sir Peter  
 Bradley, Karen  
 Brady, Mr Graham  
 Brazier, Mr Julian  
 Bridgen, Andrew  
 Brine, Steve  
 Brokenshire, rh James  
 Bruce, Fiona  
 Burns, Conor  
 Burns, rh Sir Simon  
 Cairns, Alun  
 Carmichael, Neil  
 Cartlidge, James  
 Cash, Sir William  
 Caulfield, Maria  
 Chalk, Alex  
 Chishti, Rehman  
 Clark, rh Greg  
 Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth  
 Cleverly, James  
 Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey  
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse  
 Collins, Damian  
 Costa, Alberto  
 Cox, Mr Geoffrey  
 Crabb, rh Stephen  
 Davies, Byron  
 Davies, Glyn

Davies, Mims  
 Davis, rh Mr David  
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan  
 Donelan, Michelle  
 Double, Steve  
 Dowden, Oliver  
 Doyle-Price, Jackie  
 Drax, Richard  
 Drummond, Mrs Flick  
 Duddridge, James  
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan  
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain  
 Dunne, Mr Philip  
 Ellis, Michael  
 Ellison, Jane  
 Ellwood, Mr Tobias  
 Elphicke, Charlie  
 Eustice, George  
 Evans, Graham  
 Fabricant, Michael  
 Fallon, rh Michael  
 Fernandes, Suella  
 Foster, Kevin  
 Fox, rh Dr Liam  
 Frazer, Lucy  
 Freeman, George  
 Freer, Mike  
 Fuller, Richard  
 Fysh, Marcus  
 Gale, Sir Roger  
 Garnier, rh Sir Edward  
 Garnier, Mark  
 Gauke, Mr David  
 Ghani, Nusrat  
 Gibb, Mr Nick  
 Gillan, rh Mrs Cheryl  
 Glen, John  
 Goodwill, Mr Robert  
 Graham, Richard  
 Grant, Mrs Helen  
 Grayling, rh Chris  
 Green, Chris  
 Green, rh Damian  
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic  
 Griffiths, Andrew  
 Gummer, Ben  
 Gyimah, Mr Sam  
 Halfon, rh Robert  
 Hall, Luke  
 Hammond, Stephen  
 Hancock, rh Matthew  
 Hands, rh Greg  
 Harper, rh Mr Mark

Harrington, Richard  
 Harris, Rebecca  
 Hart, Simon  
 Haselhurst, rh Sir Alan  
 Hayes, rh Mr John  
 Heald, Sir Oliver  
 Heapey, James  
 Heaton-Harris, Chris  
 Heaton-Jones, Peter  
 Henderson, Gordon  
 Herbert, rh Nick  
 Hinds, Damian  
 Hoare, Simon  
 Hollinrake, Kevin  
 Hollobone, Mr Philip  
 Holloway, Mr Adam  
 Hopkins, Kris  
 Huddleston, Nigel  
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy  
 Jackson, Mr Stewart  
 Javid, rh Sajid  
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil  
 Jenkin, Mr Bernard  
 Jenkyns, Andrea  
 Jenrick, Robert  
 Johnson, Boris  
 Johnson, Gareth  
 Johnson, Joseph  
 Jones, Andrew  
 Jones, rh Mr David  
 Jones, Mr Marcus  
 Kawczynski, Daniel  
 Kennedy, Seema  
 Kirby, Simon  
 Knight, rh Sir Greg  
 Knight, Julian  
 Kwarteng, Kwasi  
 Lancaster, Mark  
 Latham, Pauline  
 Leadsom, Andrea  
 Lee, Dr Phillip  
 Lefroy, Jeremy  
 Leigh, Sir Edward  
 Leslie, Charlotte  
 Letwin, rh Mr Oliver  
 Lewis, Brandon  
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian  
 Lidington, rh Mr David  
 Lilley, rh Mr Peter  
 Lord, Jonathan  
 Loughton, Tim  
 Mackinlay, Craig  
 Main, Mrs Anne  
 Mak, Mr Alan  
 Malthouse, Kit  
 Mann, Scott  
 Mathias, Dr Tania  
 May, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Maynard, Paul  
 McCartney, Jason  
 McCartney, Karl  
 McPartland, Stephen  
 Menzies, Mark  
 Merriman, Huw  
 Metcalfe, Stephen  
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria  
 Milling, Amanda  
 Mills, Nigel  
 Milton, rh Anne  
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew  
 Mordaunt, Penny  
 Morgan, rh Nicky

Morris, Anne Marie  
 Morris, David  
 Morris, James  
 Morton, Wendy  
 Mowat, David  
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll  
 Murrison, Dr Andrew  
 Neill, Robert  
 Newton, Sarah  
 Nokes, Caroline  
 Norman, Jesse  
 Nuttall, Mr David  
 Offord, Dr Matthew  
 Opperman, Guy  
 Parish, Neil  
 Patel, rh Priti  
 Pawsey, Mark  
 Penning, rh Mike  
 Penrose, John  
 Percy, Andrew  
 Perry, Claire  
 Phillips, Stephen  
 Philp, Chris  
 Pincher, Christopher  
 Pow, Rebecca  
 Prentis, Victoria  
 Prisk, Mr Mark  
 Pritchard, Mark  
 Pursglove, Tom  
 Quin, Jeremy  
 Quince, Will  
 Raab, Mr Dominic  
 Redwood, rh John  
 Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob  
 Robinson, Mary  
 Rudd, rh Amber  
 Rutley, David  
 Sandbach, Antoinette  
 Scully, Paul  
 Selous, Andrew  
 Shapps, rh Grant  
 Sharma, Alok  
 Shelbrooke, Alec  
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith  
 Skidmore, Chris  
 Smith, Chloe  
 Smith, Henry  
 Smith, Julian  
 Smith, Royston  
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas  
 Solloway, Amanda  
 Soubry, rh Anna  
 Spelman, rh Mrs Caroline  
 Spencer, Mark  
 Stephenson, Andrew  
 Stevenson, John  
 Stewart, Iain  
 Stewart, Rory  
 Streeter, Mr Gary  
 Stride, Mel  
 Stuart, Graham  
 Sturdy, Julian  
 Sunak, Rishi  
 Swayne, rh Mr Desmond  
 Swire, rh Mr Hugo  
 Syms, Mr Robert  
 Thomas, Derek  
 Throup, Maggie  
 Timpson, Edward  
 Tolhurst, Kelly  
 Tomlinson, Justin  
 Tomlinson, Michael

Tracey, Craig  
 Tredinnick, David  
 Trevelyan, Mrs Anne-Marie  
 Tugendhat, Tom  
 Turner, Mr Andrew  
 Tyrie, rh Mr Andrew  
 Vaizey, Mr Edward  
 Vara, Mr Shailesh  
 Vickers, Martin  
 Walker, Mr Charles  
 Walker, Mr Robin  
 Warburton, David  
 Warman, Matt  
 Watkinson, Dame Angela

Wharton, James  
 Whately, Helen  
 White, Chris  
 Whittaker, Craig  
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John  
 Wiggin, Bill  
 Williamson, rh Gavin  
 Wilson, Mr Rob  
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
 Wood, Mike  
 Wragg, William

**Tellers for the Noes:**  
**George Hollingbery and**  
**Margot James**

*Question accordingly negatived.*

## Clause 2

### TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS TO THE OGA

*Amendments made:* 48, page 2, line 39, at end insert—

“( ) Schedule 1 to the Oil Taxation Act 1975,”

*This amendment adds functions under Schedule 1 to the Oil Taxation Act 1975 to the list of functions that can be transferred to the OGA under clause 2. It is likely to be used to transfer the function of determining oil fields under paragraph 1 of that Schedule.*

Amendment 49, page 2, line 41, at end insert—

“( ) Chapter 9 of Part 8 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010,”  
 —(*Andrea Leadsom.*)

*This amendment adds functions under Chapter 9 of Part 8 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the list of functions that can be transferred to the OGA under clause 2. It is likely to be used to transfer the function of determining cluster areas under section 356JD of that Act.*

### Title

*Amendment made:* 51, line 8 leave out from “power;” to “and” in line 10.—(*Andrea Leadsom.*)

*This amendment is consequential on the removal of the provision about emission trading schemes from the Bill in Public Bill Committee.*

**Mr Speaker:** Our consideration having been completed, I will now suspend the House for no more than five minutes in order to make a decision about certification. The Division bells will be rung two minutes before the House resumes. Following my certification, the Government will table the appropriate consent motion, copies of which will be made available in the Vote Office and distributed by the Doorkeepers.

8.21 pm

*Sitting suspended.*

8.25 pm

*On resuming—*

**Mr Speaker:** I can now inform the House that I have completed certification of the Bill, as required by the Standing Order. I have confirmed the view expressed in my provisional certificate issued on 9 March. Copies of my final certificate will be made available in the Vote Office and on the parliamentary website.

Under Standing Order No. 83M, a consent motion is therefore required for the Bill to proceed. Copies of the motion are available in the Vote Office and on the parliamentary website, and have been made available to Members in the Chamber. Does the Minister intend to move the consent motion?

**Andrea Leadsom** *indicated assent.*

**Mr Speaker:** Under Standing Order 83M(4), the House must forthwith resolve itself into the Legislative Grand Committee (England and Wales).

*The House forthwith resolved itself into the Legislative Grand Committee (England and Wales) (Standing Order No. 83M).*

[MRS ELEANOR LAING *in the Chair*]

8.27 pm

**The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Mrs Eleanor Laing):** There will now be a debate on the consent motion for England and Wales. I remind hon. Members that all Members may speak in the debate but, if there are Divisions, only Members representing constituencies in England and Wales may vote on the consent motion. I call the Minister to move the consent motion for England and Wales.

**Andrea Leadsom:** I beg to move,

That the Committee consents to the following certified clause of the Energy Bill [Lords].

*Clause certified under Standing Order No. 83L(2) as relating exclusively to England and Wales and being within devolved legislative competence.*

Clause 78 of the Bill as amended in Committee (Bill 128).

The consent motion stands in the name of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, as set out in the written ministerial statement tabled on 10 March. Nothing has changed since the Bill was introduced. I urge hon. and right hon. Members to support the consent motion.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*The occupant of the Chair left the Chair to report the decisions of the Committee (Standing Order No.83M(6)).*

*The Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair, decisions reported.*

*Third Reading*

*Queen's and Prince of Wales's consent signified.*

8.29 pm

**The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Amber Rudd):** I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

This Government are focused on delivering measures that support our long-term plan for secure, clean and affordable energy supplies. This Bill puts in place key manifesto commitments to achieve those objectives—first, by meeting our commitment to support the development of oil and gas in the North sea. The Bill provides the Oil and Gas Authority with the direction and powers it needs to be an effective regulator and to maximise recovery of resources in the North sea to the benefit of Britain's energy security. Secondly, the Bill meets our commitments to ending new public subsidies for onshore wind and giving local people the final say on wind farm

applications. In doing so, the Bill will protect bill payers by helping to control the costs to the public of support for renewable energy.

Let me take those in turn, addressing the action we have taken since the Bill's Second Reading in January, before touching on other measures in the Bill. As I set out on Second Reading, amendments made in the other place sought to expand considerably the objectives of the Oil and Gas Authority. Our view is that this would dilute the focus of the OGA at a crucial time for the oil and gas industry. This House has reinstated the OGA's original principal objective for maximising economic recovery. Both the industry and the unions are agreed on that. The OGA must have clarity on its primary objective. The Bill as it now stands provides that.

I set out our intention on Second Reading to re-introduce clauses on onshore wind that were removed in the other place. This was a clear Government commitment, and I am pleased to see those provisions put back. Let me be explicit: this Bill enacts a manifesto commitment. Clause 79 helps to implement that commitment to end new public subsidies for onshore wind. Onshore wind has deployed successfully to date, but without control there is a risk of over-deployment beyond the range we have set for 2020—the range that we consider affordable. Over-deployment could add extra costs to consumer bills or reduce the amount of support available to less mature technologies such as offshore wind that need help to bring their costs down, just as public subsidies have brought down the costs of onshore wind. To protect investor confidence, we have inserted clause 80, which sets out in legislation the grace period for those projects meeting certain conditions as of 18 June last year. That allows such projects to continue to seek accreditation under the renewables obligation after the early closure date.

I have also introduced a clause relevant to Northern Ireland. It remains my position that consumers in Great Britain should not bear the cost of Northern Ireland providing additional support to onshore wind. We have been clear about that throughout the process. The intention of the backstop power is to ensure that, should Northern Ireland chose to provide additional support for onshore wind, consumers in Northern Ireland, not Great Britain, will bear the cost.

The Government are committed to the Climate Change Act 2008 and our target to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050. We will meet our obligations and responsibilities by setting the fifth carbon budget by the end of June this year, covering the period 2028 to 2032. As the Committee on Climate Change has said, while we are on course to meet the second and third carbon budgets, the fourth carbon budget will be tough to achieve. We will set out our proposals for meeting our targets in our new emissions reduction plan. Our working assumption is that this will be published at the end of the year. Work on the fifth carbon budget is well under way across Government and has been progressing for over a year.

I understand the intentions of those who have sought to amend the Bill to change the way we count carbon for the purposes of the fifth carbon budget, and of course it is right that we keep our accounting practices under review, but I am afraid that accepting such an amendment to the Bill this far into the fifth carbon budget process would have risked serious delay, at a time when the UK should be showing clear, decisive leadership in the aftermath of the Paris climate change conference.

Before I conclude, I wish to express my thanks to those who have supported the proper scrutiny of the Bill. First, I give thanks to my team on the Front Bench: the Minister of State, who has expertly steered the Bill through the House, and Lord Bourne for his management of the Bill in the other place. I would like to thank my hon. Friends the Members for Skipton and Ripon (Julian Smith), for Blackpool North and Cleveleys (Paul Maynard) and for South East Cornwall (Mrs Murray) for their excellent contributions and support. We are very grateful.

Let me also express my gratitude to Opposition Members for their measured approach to the scrutiny of the Bill. It is fair to say that there have been moments of disagreement, but we have also agreed on many issues, including the need swiftly to complete the work started in the previous Parliament to implement fully the recommendations of the Wood review. I therefore thank the hon. Members for Wigan (Lisa Nandy), for Southampton, Test (Dr Whitehead), for Norwich South (Clive Lewis), for Aberdeen South (Callum McCaig), and for Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill (Philip Boswell) for their considered scrutiny. I am also extremely grateful to my hon. Friends for their participation in our proceedings and in discussions both in and outside the Chamber, which has been very helpful.

During the passage of the Bill, my colleagues and I have listened carefully, and, where appropriate, have made amendments or added details to provisions. However, when it comes to the fundamental purpose of the Bill, we have stood firm on our commitments, and we intend to continue to do so.

8.35 pm

**Lisa Nandy (Wigan) (Lab):** With the important exception of its provisions relating to the North sea industries, the Bill has absolutely nothing to say about the major energy challenges that we face. It constitutes a missed opportunity to mend our broken energy market, and to make good the promise that the Prime Minister delivered four years ago when he told the House that he would legislate to put every household in Britain on to the cheapest energy tariff. It is extraordinary that, during the Bill's passage, we have learnt that that broken promise has cost Britain's households an extra £1.7 billion every year, and that, once again, an Energy Bill led by this Government has let the energy companies off the hook.

Despite our best efforts, the Bill is also silent on the growing risk of power shortages. That is astonishing, given that official figures from National Grid show that next winter Britain could be forced to rely on back-up measures and imports from abroad just to keep the lights on. We sought to address that in Committee, especially in view of the doubt that has been cast over Hinkley Point C, the failure of which would blow a major hole in the Government's energy policy. Where is the plan B? It is not in this Bill.

Against a background of failure—the failure to get new power stations built—it is a great shame that Ministers rejected our attempts to amend the Bill in order to correct that failure and provide incentives for the building of a number of new gas plants by changing the design of the failing and expensive capacity market scheme. Our proposals would also have had the benefit of ending the absurd practice of increasing household energy bills to provide generous handouts for dirty

[Lisa Nandy]

diesel generators. Now, however, there is nothing in the Bill that will help to address the power crunch and secure the investment in the new power stations that we so urgently need.

**John Redwood:** Will the hon. Lady remind us why, when Labour was in office for all those years, it made no decisions to put in new capacity?

**Lisa Nandy:** The right hon. Gentleman is wrong. As a matter of fact, he is wrong about a number of other things, but I will stick to the point that he has just raised. It was a Labour Government who initiated the new nuclear process for Hinkley Point C, but, six years after the right hon. Member for Witney (Mr Cameron) became Prime Minister we have seen no further progress. In fact, the only new gas station that has appeared under the present Government was initiated and commissioned by the last Labour Government.

Remarkably, the Bill will actually make our energy security position worse. It seeks to shut down, a year early, a major energy investment scheme that has been helping to ensure that wind farms are built. Wind farms already provide a substantial amount of electricity—enough power for more than 8 million homes every year—but, because of their ideological crusade against green energy, the Government do not want to increase their number even if that means that they are sending our power supply into the red. [Interruption.] Ministers can protest, but the reality is in front of us. It is there for us all to see—not just Labour Members, but Ministers’ constituents, who will pay the price for it. The Government will pursue their proposal even if it means retrospectively blocking projects whose development is well advanced and even if it means ruling out one of the cheapest energy options that are available to us, thus breaking their manifesto promise to cut emissions as cheaply as possible.

The aim of every one of our amendments has been to attract new investment in new energy projects, to create jobs and to improve our energy security, but the Government have rejected all of them. Energy UK, the trade body that represents businesses across the sector, recently called for more clarity from the Government about what was expected from companies on reducing carbon pollution. It stated:

“It is essential the industry gets a clear signal of the focus, direction and speed of travel to 2030 and beyond.”

It is hardly surprising that Energy UK wants more clarity, because while Ministers talk about their action on climate change, they are simultaneously dismantling the clean energy schemes that could help to address the problem. We proposed to amend the Bill, in response to calls from business leaders, by requiring the Secretary of State to offer clarity on the direction and speed of emissions reduction to 2030, but the Government rejected our proposals. Together with other parties from across the House, we tried to close a loophole that will enable Ministers to square this circle through carbon accounting tricks, but that move was also rejected. This all means more uncertainty for investors, rather than less.

I welcome the fact that the Government have accepted the principle, put forward by my right hon. Friend the Member for Doncaster North (Edward Miliband), that

we must ultimately build a carbon-neutral economy. I welcome the spirit in which they accepted that principle and the basis on which they accepted it, which was that we need to develop a strategy that will give a clear signal to the top businesses that are supporting my right hon. Friend’s campaign as well as to the leading environmental campaigners who have shown that energy policy need not be contentious.

The truth is that few people in this country beyond those on the Conservative Back Benches doubt the need to act on emissions. Only today, NASA reported shocking levels of global warming, and one top scientist said this morning that we are in a “climate emergency now”. Despite the Energy Secretary’s words today, however, people will be left scratching their heads over what exactly the Government’s plan is to make good on their new commitment and on the promises that the Prime Minister made at the historic Paris summit in December.

Let us take carbon capture and storage as an example. The Government’s own advisers say that without this cutting-edge technology the cost of achieving emissions reduction in Britain could double. Some experts say that, without it, making good on the Paris agreement might even be impossible. As my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton North (Alex Cunningham) pointed out, however, the Chancellor has shamefully pulled the rug away from businesses that were on the cusp of pioneering CCS projects in Yorkshire and Scotland. Investment and jobs have gone, and the possibility of a new maritime industry in our North sea has been put on hold. We proposed that a comprehensive new CCS strategy should be adopted within a year to undo the damage caused by that decision but, despite strong cross-party support, our reasonable proposal was rejected.

When the Bill arrived here from the other House, it was in a much better state than we now find it in. That makes it difficult for us to support it this evening, but the low oil price means that our North sea industries need and deserve our support. We have all benefited from the revenues produced by North sea oil in better times, and we owe it to those industries to support them now that times are hard. The Bill contains important measures that act on the recommendations of the Wood review which can support workers in this crucial sector of our economy.

Yesterday, with my support, colleagues in Scottish Labour rightly called for the government to go further and to invest directly in strategically important offshore assets in the North sea. I hope that the Energy Secretary will support that call. The fact is that substantial reserves remain unexploited and it is essential that we work on a cross-party basis to support investment in those untapped opportunities. For that reason alone, we will not oppose the Bill tonight.

However, I say to the Energy Secretary that the poverty of ambition encapsulated in the Bill is increasingly clear, and that it is increasingly untenable to dismantle plan A without putting a plan B in its place, to duck the challenges of the coming century and to set Britain’s face against the opportunities that that century presents. I should like to thank my hon. Friends the Members for Southampton, Test (Dr Whitehead), for Norwich South (Clive Lewis) and for Brent North (Barry Gardiner). Together, we will look to Ministers to do much better than this in future.

8.44 pm

**John Redwood:** I welcome the Bill because it attempts to deal with some of the damage that has accumulated in recent years as a result of the policies of the Labour Government, who neglected the need for more energy and security of supply, and some of the European Union's interventions.

I welcome the cross-party attempts to breathe some life into the North sea industry, which has been crucial over many years. As many have pointed out, it is going through a troubled time and anything that can be done by the Oil and Gas Authority or directly by the Government is to be welcomed. For example, now is a good time to remove the petroleum revenue tax, which is a rather silly, unpleasant tax introduced by the Labour party for internal political reasons near the beginning of activities in the North sea. It yields no revenue at the moment, so it would be a good time to get rid of it to show that we want normal profit and revenue taxes, not super-taxes, on North sea activities when the good times return. I hope that the Chancellor will bear in mind the needs of the industry in his forthcoming Budget, because things could be done on tax to promote more investment against the background of a weak oil price, which is no great incentive for making new things happen.

I hope that the Bill will contribute towards taking security of supply seriously. The Government regularly tell us that they want our country to be secure—an aim that I hope is shared across the Chamber. An important way for a country to become more secure is through controlling its own energy resources. The United Kingdom is a relatively privileged country geographically, because it has substantial reserves of oil, gas and coal. We have recently discovered the likelihood of new gas reserves onshore, which should be available to exploit sensibly. We also have plenty of water around that allows us to have hydro-type renewables, which are genuinely renewable and continuously available, unlike the unreliable wind, about which we had a good debate earlier. As the Government go about implementing the Bill, I trust that they will have security of supply at the forefront of their mind.

**George Kerevan** (East Lothian) (SNP): Where does the security of supply lie in the Prime Minister flying to Paris to ask the French President to fund a nuclear power station that will supply 7% of our electricity, when France clearly will not do so?

**John Redwood:** That must be worked out between the contracting parties. I have not been urging them to do that, but I wish them well in whatever negotiations are under way. I accept that if they can find a way of producing relatively sensibly priced power on a continuous basis from a nuclear power station, that has all sorts of advantages for the security of supply. I assume that they will ensure that all the technology and the ability to control, repair and maintain the station will rest in the United Kingdom, because we can have true security only if we control the technology and have the industrial resources to be able to build and mend the facility being created. We must also bear that in mind for weapons procurement. If we want a secure country, we need an industry that can support it and is capable in adversity of seeing us through. We cannot rely on imports for everything, and we are already relying too much on

imports in the crucial area of energy, so I hope the Bill will help us to stop thinking that we can automatically rely on French electricity and Russian gas indirectly through the European system.

**George Kerevan:** On that point, after France, the Chancellor of the Exchequer seems bent on handing over the entire British nuclear industry to China.

**John Redwood:** I trust not. I have not seen all the documents, but I am sure that we will see more of the detail in due course as and when more decisions are taken. If my right hon. Friend the Chancellor is negotiating such a deal, I urge him to ensure that we have control of and an understanding of the technology. I see from the nods from my Front-Bench team that that is exactly what they have in mind. A country does not have secure power if it is dependent on those abroad to maintain a power station and does not understand how to mend it, improve it or make it function at a crucial moment. Of course we need to probe to make sure that the Government are doing the right thing, but we get that security only if we control the technology.

Let me return to the point about security vis-à-vis imports and our own capability. We are becoming too dependent on imported power, and we have to remember that if our imports are to come from the European continent, that area is short of energy in general, and it has a policy to make energy scarce and very expensive. The west of the continent does not get on well with Mr Putin, yet indirectly it relies on his gas, and that is not a strong strategic position to be in. I want our country not to be in any way beholden indirectly to Putin's gas or to the general network on the continent, which is clearly weakened by the necessity to have Russian supplies in the eastern part of the system. The UK, as an island nation, with access to such riches both onshore and offshore, and with the ability to generate more genuine renewables that are continuously available, should be able to have a secure supply and sufficient capacity in reserve when need arises.

We wish to be a greater industrial power than we are. We are the fifth largest economy in the world but we are very dependent on a very big service sector and our industrial sector has, under Governments of all persuasions in the past 30 years, shrunk as a proportion of it. We still have some great companies and some great technology but we need more of them and we need to broaden the industrial base. In order to have that capability in Britain, so that we can make our own power stations, generators and engines, we need to make sure that we have sufficient and cheap energy to fuel those factories, forges, facilities and blast furnaces.

We meet tonight against the backdrop of our steel industry gravely at risk. One of the main contributory factors to the risk to our steel industry is scarce and dear energy; there are also chronic problems with steel prices and Chinese competition now, but this began with an energy problem. We cannot hope to be one of the big world forces in energy-intensive industries if we do not have more plentiful energy at cheaper prices.

I wish the Bill and the Secretary of State well. The Government must have as their fundamental aim security of supply, because without secure energy a country is very limited in its foreign policy options and has to tailor its diplomacy accordingly. I see us becoming too

[John Redwood]

dependent. We wish to correct our balance of payments, and getting into energy surplus would not only be a very good contribution to that aim, but would strengthen our diplomatic and political security. As we wish to reindustrialise, we need more and cheaper energy. We are not going to get that on a diet of wind farms and speculative renewable technologies that are not yet available, and are very expensive and difficult to scale up. We can get that affordable energy if we extract the oil, gas and coal, and process it in an environmentally friendly way to the extent that can be achieved, if we have more gas turbine power stations and more reliable baseload power stations. We are going to leave ourselves vulnerable and insecure if we depend on a combination of European imports and too many wind farms. I therefore say: may the OGA do well, may it find ways of bringing on stream the new reserves we are just discovering and may it find ways of extending the lives of the existing fields and of the pools of talent and expertise we have, particularly in Scotland, where we need them still.

8.53 pm

**Callum McCaig:** I have learned a lot from this process, and I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill (Philip Boswell) for helping me to work things out as we have gone along. This has been an interesting process, but I am happy that I will not have to go through it for the first time again.

Throughout the process, as is natural in a political environment, we have focused on that which divides us, and there have been significant and, in some cases, profound divisions on aspects of this Bill. I do not wish to go back over that at this stage, because the discussions we have had repeatedly about onshore wind are a matter of record. I am aware that the Bill will go back to the House of Lords, so I make a final plea to the Secretary of State to look once again at grace periods. We accept that the Government have a mandate to do this, but we disagree with how it is being done and we ask that it be done in the best way possible. If there are concessions to be made in the Lords, please make them and take the possible benefits into account.

We have had some good suggestions and individual contributions from Members from all parts of the House. The Government have said that they are prepared to listen to a number of those suggestions. In fact, generally speaking, there has been a spirit of open-mindedness. The view was expressed that now is not the time for some measures to be put into practice, but the time will come soon, so I hope that we will continue to see that open-mindedness to suggestions, particularly to those from my party about making the most of the opportunities arising from decommissioning. We need to create a stable and sensible platform to ensure that the United Kingdom can develop a carbon capture and storage industry.

I wish to focus on one part of the debate that has received little attention, but which, to my mind, is the most important, and that is the creation of the Oil and Gas Authority. Broadly speaking, there has been unanimous support for that across the House, which is impressive in and of itself, but what is perhaps more impressive is the fact that in Aberdeen and in the north-east of Scotland—and probably the oil and gas industry the

length and breadth of the United Kingdom—the Oil and Gas Authority is seen as the correct body with the correct tools at its disposal. That will be even more so once this Bill has completed its passage, as the authority will be properly equipped.

There is also tremendous support for Andy Samuel and his team in the work that they are doing, and I wish to pay tribute to him and all his staff in their endeavours. The OGA was envisaged in very different times. The role that Andy Samuel and his team have taken on was not what they expected, and they have taken to it impressively with sheer determination. They have taken the industry with them on a journey that none of them was expecting. The work that they have done, which was not really in their remit, has fostered the collaborative spirit that the industry needs if it is to ride out this time, and that is to be commended. In large part, this industry will survive if those in it work constructively together and stop some of the needless competition that adds unnecessarily to cost merely for the sake of differentiating themselves from their competitors.

The industry was rife with daft practices, by which I mean unnecessary duplication. By bringing people together and facilitating the exchange of ideas in a constructive way, the OGA has a major part to play. It is interesting that it has such support in the House, but it also has the support of the trade unions and the large and small players in the industry, and that is something that needs to continue. I wish the OGA well in its efforts.

We must recognise that the OGA was formed as part of the Wood review, which has also had cross-party support, but both come from different times. The Wood review was commissioned and completed at a time when oil was trading at above \$100 a barrel. We cannot expect the creation and the formalisation of the OGA's powers to be enough to solve the difficulties of the oil and gas industry at this moment in time.

I welcome the comments from the right hon. Member for Wokingham (John Redwood) about the need for fiscal concessions. [Interruption.] I see that the hon. Member for Waveney (Peter Aldous), chair of the all-party group on offshore oil and gas, is seeking to intervene on that point, and I would expect nothing less from him than to be pushing for that too. This is critical. The Oil and Gas Authority will do what it can. Industry is doing what it can. A 40% reduction in costs has been achieved, which is impressive. More needs to be done, but the one thing that has not moved on since last May are the changes to taxation. The suggestion was welcome then, but we must recognise that that was a different time. Oil was selling at about \$60 a barrel then as opposed to \$40 a barrel now. These are changing times. The oil price has been lower and lower for longer and longer than anyone expected, and to expect the taxation regime from the time of super-profits to work for this basin at this time would be naive at best.

In the Budget on Wednesday the Chancellor will have the opportunity to provide the oil and gas industry with the shot in the arm that it requires. That opportunity cannot be missed.

9 pm

**Peter Aldous (Waveney) (Con):** As we have heard, this Bill is predominantly about setting up the Oil and Gas Authority. We need to complete this task as a matter of

urgency. The North sea oil and gas industry is facing significant challenges. There have been 75,000 job losses in the past 15 months and there is a risk that whole communities along the North sea coast could be very badly affected.

The United Kingdom continental shelf is now a mature basin, but the remaining reserves are significant and they are vital to the UK in many different respects. These resources are best managed through a new tripartite approach, with the Oil and Gas Authority, industry and the Treasury working together—the Oil and Gas Authority promoting the maximisation of economic recovery, industry working to deliver efficiencies, building on the good work that it has carried out since 2014, securing a 40% fall in operating costs, and the Treasury. This is a last minute plea to provide the low tax regime that will attract footloose global investment.

The UKCS has so much to offer in terms of promoting energy security in an uncertain world, facilitating the transition to a low-carbon economy and continuing to be the cornerstone of British industry. Perhaps we could have done this better over the past 50 years. To do so now it is essential that the OGA continuously promotes collaboration. That must be ingrained in its DNA. What is needed is not just collaboration between the OGA, industry and the Treasury; it is collaboration between operators, as evidenced by the partnership of Faroe, Petrofac and Eni working together, collaboration between operators and their service providers, building long-term partnerships and learning lessons from other sectors, such as aviation and the car industry, and collaboration with other sectors, in particular offshore wind. I urge the Chancellor to consider introducing measures on Wednesday that encourage such collaboration.

The North sea oil and gas industry has been the leading actor in the country's post-war economy. In the past we have perhaps taken it for granted and perhaps at times not managed it prudently. If we had our time again, perhaps we would do it differently. It now needs us to act and work for it to ensure that it can move forward. We must not let it wither on the vine. We must grasp the opportunity tonight and the Chancellor must do so on Wednesday to give the industry every opportunity to survive and then thrive. We owe it to those working in the industry and the communities in which they live.

The final chapter of oil and gas exploration on the UKCS must not be a harsh, bleak winter. It must be an Indian summer. Let us pass this Bill tonight and get on with the task of securing that Indian summer.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read the Third time and passed, with amendments.*

## Business without Debate

### DELEGATED LEGISLATION

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),*

#### TAX CREDITS

That the draft Tax Credits (Income Thresholds and Determination of Rates) (Amendment) Regulations 2016, which were laid before this House on 14 January, be approved.—(*Julian Smith.*)

*The House divided: Ayes 272, Noes 228.*

### Division No. 219]

[9.4 pm

#### AYES

Afriyie, Adam	Ellwood, Mr Tobias
Aldous, Peter	Elphicke, Charlie
Allan, Lucy	Eustice, George
Amess, Sir David	Evans, Graham
Andrew, Stuart	Fabricant, Michael
Ansell, Caroline	Fallon, rh Michael
Argar, Edward	Fernandes, Suella
Atkins, Victoria	Field, rh Mark
Bacon, Mr Richard	Foster, Kevin
Baker, Mr Steve	Fox, rh Dr Liam
Baldwin, Harriett	Frazer, Lucy
Barclay, Stephen	Freeman, George
Baron, Mr John	Freer, Mike
Barwell, Gavin	Fuller, Richard
Bellingham, Sir Henry	Fysh, Marcus
Benyon, Richard	Gale, Sir Roger
Beresford, Sir Paul	Garnier, rh Sir Edward
Berry, Jake	Garnier, Mark
Berry, James	Gauke, Mr David
Bingham, Andrew	Ghani, Nusrat
Blackman, Bob	Gibb, Mr Nick
Blunt, Crispin	Gillan, rh Mrs Cheryl
Bone, Mr Peter	Glen, John
Borwick, Victoria	Goodwill, Mr Robert
Bottomley, Sir Peter	Graham, Richard
Bradley, Karen	Grant, Mrs Helen
Brady, Mr Graham	Grayling, rh Chris
Brazier, Mr Julian	Green, Chris
Bridgen, Andrew	Green, rh Damian
Brine, Steve	Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
Brokenshire, rh James	Griffiths, Andrew
Bruce, Fiona	Gummer, Ben
Burns, Conor	Gyimah, Mr Sam
Burns, rh Sir Simon	Halfon, rh Robert
Cairns, Alun	Hall, Luke
Carmichael, Neil	Hammond, Stephen
Cartlidge, James	Hands, rh Greg
Cash, Sir William	Harper, rh Mr Mark
Caulfield, Maria	Harrington, Richard
Chalk, Alex	Harris, Rebecca
Chishti, Rehman	Hart, Simon
Clark, rh Greg	Haselhurst, rh Sir Alan
Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth	Hayes, rh Mr John
Cleverly, James	Heald, Sir Oliver
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey	Heapey, James
Coffey, Dr Thérèse	Heaton-Harris, Chris
Collins, Damian	Heaton-Jones, Peter
Costa, Alberto	Henderson, Gordon
Cox, Mr Geoffrey	Herbert, rh Nick
Crabb, rh Stephen	Hinds, Damian
Davies, Byron	Hoare, Simon
Davies, Glyn	Hollinrake, Kevin
Davies, Mims	Hollobone, Mr Philip
Davis, rh Mr David	Holloway, Mr Adam
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan	Hopkins, Kris
Donelan, Michelle	Huddleston, Nigel
Double, Steve	Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy
Dowden, Oliver	Jackson, Mr Stewart
Doyle-Price, Jackie	Javid, rh Sajid
Drax, Richard	Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Drummond, Mrs Flick	Jenkin, Mr Bernard
Duddridge, James	Jenkyens, Andrea
Duncan, rh Sir Alan	Jenrick, Robert
Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain	Johnson, Boris
Dunne, Mr Philip	Johnson, Gareth
Ellis, Michael	Johnson, Joseph
Ellison, Jane	Jones, Andrew

Jones, rh Mr David  
 Jones, Mr Marcus  
 Kawczynski, Daniel  
 Kennedy, Seema  
 Kirby, Simon  
 Knight, rh Sir Greg  
 Knight, Julian  
 Kwarteng, Kwasi  
 Lancaster, Mark  
 Latham, Pauline  
 Leadsom, Andrea  
 Lee, Dr Phillip  
 Lefroy, Jeremy  
 Leigh, Sir Edward  
 Leslie, Charlotte  
 Letwin, rh Mr Oliver  
 Lewis, Brandon  
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian  
 Lidington, rh Mr David  
 Lilley, rh Mr Peter  
 Lord, Jonathan  
 Loughton, Tim  
 Mackinlay, Craig  
 Main, Mrs Anne  
 Mak, Mr Alan  
 Malthouse, Kit  
 Mann, Scott  
 Mathias, Dr Tania  
 May, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Maynard, Paul  
 McCartney, Karl  
 Menzies, Mark  
 Merriman, Huw  
 Metcalfe, Stephen  
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria  
 Milling, Amanda  
 Mills, Nigel  
 Milton, rh Anne  
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew  
 Mordaunt, Penny  
 Morgan, rh Nicky  
 Morris, Anne Marie  
 Morris, David  
 Morris, James  
 Morton, Wendy  
 Mowat, David  
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll  
 Murrison, Dr Andrew  
 Neill, Robert  
 Newton, Sarah  
 Nokes, Caroline  
 Norman, Jesse  
 Nuttall, Mr David  
 Offord, Dr Matthew  
 Opperman, Guy  
 Parish, Neil  
 Patel, rh Priti  
 Pawsey, Mark  
 Penning, rh Mike  
 Penrose, John  
 Percy, Andrew  
 Perry, Claire  
 Phillips, Stephen  
 Philp, Chris  
 Pincher, Christopher  
 Pow, Rebecca  
 Prentis, Victoria  
 Prisk, Mr Mark  
 Pritchard, Mark  
 Pursglove, Tom  
 Quin, Jeremy

Quince, Will  
 Raab, Mr Dominic  
 Redwood, rh John  
 Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob  
 Robinson, Mary  
 Rudd, rh Amber  
 Rutley, David  
 Sandbach, Antoinette  
 Scully, Paul  
 Selous, Andrew  
 Shapps, rh Grant  
 Sharma, Alok  
 Shelbrooke, Alec  
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith  
 Skidmore, Chris  
 Smith, Chloe  
 Smith, Henry  
 Smith, Julian  
 Smith, Royston  
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas  
 Solloway, Amanda  
 Soubry, rh Anna  
 Spelman, rh Mrs Caroline  
 Spencer, Mark  
 Stephenson, Andrew  
 Stevenson, John  
 Stewart, Iain  
 Stewart, Rory  
 Streeter, Mr Gary  
 Stride, Mel  
 Stuart, Graham  
 Sturdy, Julian  
 Sunak, Rishi  
 Swayne, rh Mr Desmond  
 Swire, rh Mr Hugo  
 Syms, Mr Robert  
 Thomas, Derek  
 Throup, Maggie  
 Timpson, Edward  
 Tolhurst, Kelly  
 Tomlinson, Justin  
 Tomlinson, Michael  
 Tracey, Craig  
 Tredinnick, David  
 Trevelyan, Mrs Anne-Marie  
 Tugendhat, Tom  
 Turner, Mr Andrew  
 Tyrie, rh Mr Andrew  
 Vaizey, Mr Edward  
 Vara, Mr Shailesh  
 Vickers, Martin  
 Walker, Mr Charles  
 Walker, Mr Robin  
 Warburton, David  
 Warman, Matt  
 Watkinson, Dame Angela  
 Wharton, James  
 Whately, Helen  
 White, Chris  
 Whittaker, Craig  
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John  
 Wiggin, Bill  
 Williamson, rh Gavin  
 Wilson, Mr Rob  
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
 Wood, Mike  
 Wragg, William

**Tellers for the Ayes:**  
**George Hollingbery and**  
**Margot James**

## NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane  
 Abrahams, Debbie  
 Ahmed-Sheikh, Ms Tasmina  
 Ali, Rushanara  
 Arkless, Richard  
 Austin, Ian  
 Bailey, Mr Adrian  
 Bardell, Hannah  
 Barron, rh Kevin  
 Beckett, rh Margaret  
 Benn, rh Hilary  
 Betts, Mr Clive  
 Black, Mhairi  
 Blackford, Ian  
 Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta  
 Blenkinsop, Tom  
 Blomfield, Paul  
 Boswell, Philip  
 Brennan, Kevin  
 Brock, Deidre  
 Brown, Lyn  
 Bryant, Chris  
 Buck, Ms Karen  
 Burgon, Richard  
 Burnham, rh Andy  
 Butler, Dawn  
 Byrne, rh Liam  
 Cadbury, Ruth  
 Cameron, Dr Lisa  
 Campbell, rh Mr Alan  
 Champion, Sarah  
 Chapman, Douglas  
 Chapman, Jenny  
 Coaker, Vernon  
 Coffey, Ann  
 Cooper, Julie  
 Cooper, Rosie  
 Cooper, rh Yvette  
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy  
 Cowan, Ronnie  
 Cox, Jo  
 Coyle, Neil  
 Crausby, Mr David  
 Creasy, Stella  
 Cruddas, Jon  
 Cryer, John  
 Cummins, Judith  
 Cunningham, Alex  
 Cunningham, Mr Jim  
 Dakin, Nic  
 Danczuk, Simon  
 Davies, Geraint  
 Day, Martyn  
 De Piero, Gloria  
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin  
 Donaldson, rh Mr Jeffrey M.  
 Donaldson, Stuart Blair  
 Doughty, Stephen  
 Dowd, Jim  
 Dowd, Peter  
 Dromey, Jack  
 Dugher, Michael  
 Durkan, Mark  
 Eagle, Ms Angela  
 Edwards, Jonathan  
 Efford, Clive  
 Ellman, Mrs Louise  
 Esterson, Bill  
 Evans, Chris  
 Farrelly, Paul  
 Fellows, Marion  
 Field, rh Frank  
 Fitzpatrick, Jim  
 Fletcher, Colleen  
 Flint, rh Caroline  
 Fovargue, Yvonne  
 Foxcroft, Vicky  
 Gardiner, Barry  
 Gethins, Stephen  
 Gibson, Patricia  
 Glass, Pat  
 Glindon, Mary  
 Godsiff, Mr Roger  
 Goodman, Helen  
 Grady, Patrick  
 Grant, Peter  
 Gray, Neil  
 Greenwood, Lilian  
 Greenwood, Margaret  
 Griffith, Nia  
 Hanson, rh Mr David  
 Harris, Carolyn  
 Hayes, Helen  
 Hayman, Sue  
 Healey, rh John  
 Hendry, Drew  
 Hermon, Lady  
 Hillier, Meg  
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon  
 Hoey, Kate  
 Hollern, Kate  
 Hopkins, Kelvin  
 Hosie, Stewart  
 Howarth, rh Mr George  
 Hunt, Tristram  
 Huq, Dr Rupa  
 Hussain, Imran  
 Jarvis, Dan  
 Johnson, rh Alan  
 Johnson, Diana  
 Jones, Graham  
 Jones, Helen  
 Jones, Mr Kevan  
 Jones, Susan Elan  
 Kane, Mike  
 Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald  
 Keeley, Barbara  
 Kendall, Liz  
 Kerevan, George  
 Kerr, Calum  
 Kinnock, Stephen  
 Kyle, Peter  
 Lamb, rh Norman  
 Lavery, Ian  
 Leslie, Chris  
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma  
 Lewis, Clive  
 Long Bailey, Rebecca  
 Lucas, Caroline  
 Lucas, Ian C.  
 MacNeil, Mr Angus Brendan  
 Mactaggart, rh Fiona  
 Madders, Justin  
 Mahmood, Shabana  
 Malhotra, Seema  
 Marris, Rob  
 Marsden, Mr Gordon  
 Maskell, Rachael  
 Matheson, Christian  
 Mc Nally, John  
 McCabe, Steve  
 McCaig, Callum



McCarthy, Kerry  
 McDonagh, Siobhain  
 McDonald, Andy  
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm  
 McDonald, Stuart C.  
 McDonnell, Dr Alasdair  
 McDonnell, John  
 McGinn, Conor  
 McGovern, Alison  
 McInnes, Liz  
 McKinnell, Catherine  
 McLaughlin, Anne  
 McMahan, Jim  
 Mearns, Ian  
 Miliband, rh Edward  
 Monaghan, Carol  
 Monaghan, Dr Paul  
 Morden, Jessica  
 Morris, Grahame M.  
 Mullin, Roger  
 Murray, Ian  
 Nandy, Lisa  
 Newlands, Gavin  
 Nicolson, John  
 O'Hara, Brendan  
 Onn, Melanie  
 Onwurah, Chi  
 Osamor, Kate  
 Oswald, Kirsten  
 Owen, Albert  
 Paterson, Steven  
 Pearce, Teresa  
 Pennycook, Matthew  
 Perkins, Toby  
 Powell, Lucy  
 Qureshi, Yasmin  
 Rayner, Angela  
 Reed, Mr Jamie  
 Reed, Mr Steve  
 Rees, Christina  
 Reynolds, Jonathan  
 Rimmer, Marie  
 Ritchie, Ms Margaret  
 Robertson, rh Angus  
 Robinson, Gavin

Robinson, Mr Geoffrey  
 Rotheram, Steve  
 Ryan, rh Joan  
 Saville Roberts, Liz  
 Shah, Naz  
 Shannon, Jim  
 Sharma, Mr Virendra  
 Sheppard, Tommy  
 Sherriff, Paula  
 Siddiq, Tulip  
 Skinner, Mr Dennis  
 Slaughter, Andy  
 Smith, rh Mr Andrew  
 Smith, Angela  
 Smith, Cat  
 Smith, Nick  
 Smith, Owen  
 Smyth, Karin  
 Stevens, Jo  
 Stuart, rh Ms Gisela  
 Tami, Mark  
 Thewliss, Alison  
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick  
 Thompson, Owen  
 Thornberry, Emily  
 Timms, rh Stephen  
 Trickett, Jon  
 Turley, Anna  
 Twigg, Derek  
 Twigg, Stephen  
 Vaz, Valerie  
 Watson, Mr Tom  
 West, Catherine  
 Whiteford, Dr Eilidh  
 Whitehead, Dr Alan  
 Whitford, Dr Philippa  
 Wilson, Corri  
 Winterton, rh Dame Rosie  
 Woodcock, John  
 Wright, Mr Iain  
 Zeichner, Daniel

**Tellers for the Noes:**

**Jeff Smith and  
 Holly Lynch**

**PETITIONS**

*Ordered,*

That Kate Osamor be discharged from the Petitions Committee and Catherine McKinnell be added.—(*Bill Wiggin, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.*)

**PETITION**

**Appropriate Mental Health Treatment for  
 Matthew Garnett**

9.17 pm

**Helen Hayes** (Dulwich and West Norwood) (Lab): I rise to present a petition on behalf of my constituents Isabelle and Robin Garnett and their son Matthew Garnett. I draw the House's attention to the fact that Isabelle Garnett is sitting in the Public Gallery this evening.

The petition states:

The petition of Isabelle and Robin Garnett,

Declares that the petitioner's son, Matthew Garnett, has been detained under the Mental Health Act in an emergency transitional Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit for six months; further that he is not receiving appropriate care or treatment; further that he appears to be regressing which is causing enormous distress to his family; further that he has recently sustained a broken wrist; further that a specialist facility (Malcolm Arnold House, St Andrew's in Northampton) accepted his referral in August 2015; further that Matthew urgently needs to be admitted to this facility so that he can be properly assessed and treated; and notes that an online petition of the same nature has received 262,636 signatories.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to look urgently at this case and ensure that a bed can be made available for Matthew Garnett at Malcolm Arnold House as soon as possible, and to take action to address the wider issue of inpatient services for children and adolescents with mental health difficulties.

And the petitioners remain, etc.

[P001680]

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

## Commonwealth Day

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—(Guy Opperman.)

9.18 pm

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** It is a considerable honour and a real pleasure to address the House tonight because today is Commonwealth Day. I am afraid that it is drawing to a close, but it is a good time to hold this highly topical debate. I have just been told something I did not realise, which is that the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, my right hon. Friend the Member for East Devon (Mr Swire), is the longest-serving Commonwealth Minister, having served for four years. He has done extremely well, and it is lovely to have a Minister serve so long in one place. That has to be something of a record, so there is more than one celebration.

Our Commonwealth unites 2 billion people in 53 nations around the world. Today, we have celebrated the fact that even though we all come from different backgrounds, we are joined purposefully together for a single purpose. The Commonwealth charter declares that everyone is equal and deserves to be treated fairly, regardless of race, age, gender or belief and never mind whether we are poor or rich. Those are very fine principles, and I tell the House that it is well worth dwelling on them.

It is too easy to snipe at the concept of the Commonwealth. The fact that it is carrying on successfully after so many years is a constant puzzle to certain people. What is it for? What does it do? Why do we still need it? As my right hon. Friend the Member for Saffron Walden (Sir Alan Haselhurst), who held the chair of the executive committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association before me, would also say, that line of questioning can be annoying at all sorts of levels. Let me offer one gold-plated reason for cherishing the Commonwealth—the huge financial opportunities it can bring.

**Jim Shannon** (Strangford) (DUP): I thank the hon. Gentleman for bringing this subject to the House. Every Member who is in the Chamber is here because we support the Commonwealth. The world's fastest-growing economies and markets are in the Commonwealth. Does he agree that, now more than ever, we can reignite our bountiful relationship with our natural allies and friends throughout the whole Commonwealth?

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. The startling effect of the Commonwealth, through from the old empire to the Commonwealth as it is now, and what we have achieved in harmonisation, governance and friendship has been remarkable. I was going on to make exactly his point by saying that India is now one of the world's leading economies, which is a very good example.

It is no accident that countries that follow the Westminster model of democracy tend to have ambitions to grow and prosper. If we look at the best academic index of economic progress among African nations, we can see that Commonwealth members always emerge in front. That is why the City of London has for a very long time had a soft spot for the Commonwealth. Our business

and financial institutions have long had links throughout this family of nations. They need our expertise, and we can reap the benefits of the trade and prosperity that it brings to all our nations.

**Ian Paisley** (North Antrim) (DUP): I thank the hon. Gentleman for raising the issue of the City of London. He will know that this week it celebrated Her Majesty's 90th birthday by inviting Commonwealth heads to the City, which, as with numerous events that have been organised, helps to promote the great links that the City has had since 1926. Does he agree that one country is missing from all this and that, to help in that friendship and fraternity, the Republic of Ireland should come back into the Commonwealth as the 54th country?

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** I would just say in response that Her Majesty's trip to the Republic of Ireland was one of the great diplomatic successes of the past few years. I believe that Her Majesty has been leader of the Commonwealth for about 48 years—[*Interruption.*]—63 years. I thank all hon. Members who said that from a sedentary position; it just shows that my public school upbringing did me no good. It is an enormously long time, and her Majesty has never put a foot wrong with the Commonwealth, which she has championed. She has absolutely been a brick, a rock and the person around whom all this has been built. Through times that have been very bad and times that have been very good, she has never wavered in her absolute understanding of the Commonwealth. I know that my right hon. Friend the Minister, who was in the Abbey to support Her Majesty during the service today, will say exactly the same. We wish her happy birthday, and long may she reign.

**Patrick Grady** (Glasgow North) (SNP): As the hon. Gentleman is taking bids for membership of the Commonwealth, this is an opportunity to put on the record that the White Paper on independence, which was published by the Scottish Government in advance of the 2014 referendum, stated that Scotland would be proud to be an independent member of the Commonwealth, with the Queen as the Head of State.

More appropriately for this debate, may I echo the sentiments that the hon. Gentleman has expressed about the value of the Commonwealth and the role that we can all play in that family of nations? I am expressing the Scottish National party's sentiments in that regard. I particularly take note of our relationship with Malawi as a Commonwealth member. It is very appropriate to mark the day with this debate.

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** We have now heard from Northern Ireland and Scotland. Ours is a group of nations just as the Commonwealth is a group of nations. That is the beauty of it. It is a family of people who are bound together by an historical anomaly that has now become a Commonwealth of trade, prosperity and understanding. The hon. Gentleman's point on Scotland's long history with Malawi is an example of that. Any nation can make friends with any other nation. We welcome it and will help it, and we will do everything we can to be part of it. It is important because we stride the entire compass of the world as a Commonwealth together. It makes it a smaller place.

**Richard Graham** (Gloucester) (Con): My hon. Friend is right to be generous on Commonwealth day. Debates on Commonwealth day were instigated some five years ago at the time when I became founder chairman of the all-party parliamentary group for the Commonwealth. He is right to highlight both the value of the Commonwealth across the world and the importance of the Head of the Commonwealth and the remarkable service she has given. Will he pay tribute to the outgoing secretary-general of the Commonwealth, Kamallesh Sharma, who has been a tireless advocate for the Commonwealth, and congratulate his successor, Patricia Scotland? It is an important role, and we should be proud that a Member of the House of Lords is taking up the position for the first time.

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** Baroness Scotland will be delighted to hear that and will take a keen interest in the debate. My hon. Friend is right. It is remiss of me not to mention that he set up the all-party parliamentary group, which is a wonderful organisation. For the past five years, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has been very ably chaired by my right hon. Friend the Member for Saffron Walden, who will probably intervene later. He did a remarkable job before I became chair, year in and year out, with the same agenda, and we should celebrate that remarkable achievement.

This week, the City of London is playing host to the Commonwealth high commissioners as a mark of Commonwealth day and a celebration of the Her Majesty's forthcoming 90th birthday. The City is a founding partner of the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council. Anyone who turns up at the Commonwealth Heads of Government conference will find the City of London there too. Frankly, if the City of London gives the Commonwealth its backing, I suspect the rest of us should do so.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association believes strongly that stable government and high parliamentary standards lead to confidence, investment, job creation and ultimately a better life for all the people. I can find no better advocate for the continuation of the Commonwealth than the very person who has sat at its head since her coronation. If I may, I will quote Her Majesty. She said that the Commonwealth

"has the power to enrich us all"

and

"in an uncertain world, it gives us a good reason to keep talking."

Amen to that.

Here at Westminster, we jolly well ought to appreciate the value of talking and sharing ideas. We have developed and nurtured parliamentary government over centuries. As the British empire slipped away and the Commonwealth was born, many independent nations appeared and chose to adopt the Westminster system. It is not surprising that Westminster, with all its little failings, has a great deal going for it. We have learned to respect other people's points of view. We have developed, over a very long time, effective systems for scrutinising laws and holding—dare I say it?—Governments and Ministers to account. Whatever our faults, we always try to make democracy work.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was established 105 years ago to link Parliaments throughout the Commonwealth and to share all the positive lessons of good governance. That is a splendid ambition, and rightly so, but it is a very tall order.

**Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods** (City of Durham) (Lab) *rose—*

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** I give way with great pleasure to the hon. Lady.

**Dr Blackman-Woods:** I am very grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way—I can call him my hon. Friend—and congratulate him on securing this important debate on Commonwealth day. Does he agree that the theme of the Commonwealth this year—inclusivity—is an important one? We obviously want to learn and share best practice across the Commonwealth. Does he also agree that this is an important year for Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians as we elect a new chair? Hopefully, they will take the organisation forward in securing better representation of women in Parliaments and Assemblies throughout the Commonwealth.

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** I am going to have to embarrass the hon. Lady terribly. Without her input in championing women throughout the Commonwealth I do not think we would be where we are today. The hon. Lady, through various incarnations within the CPA, has done a remarkable job. Just this morning I shared a platform for young parliamentarians with the hon. Lady—who I will say is suffering from a slight snuffle. They are the future. She was asked, very poignantly, about women's issues and the way that women interface not just with our Parliament but many Parliaments. The hon. Lady gave a very robust and absolutely correct view of the challenges for younger people in empowering women, something we all face in this House and across the world. I cannot say more than that the hon. Lady has been a great colleague and a great friend to the CPA. She will continue to be so and I hope she gets better very soon from that ghastly cold.

We are talking about bringing together about 17,000 parliamentarians from 185 very different law-making bodies, some with traditions and practices all their own, and others relatively new and untested. In the past 10 years, for instance, more than 50 new Parliaments and law-making bodies have joined or re-joined the CPA. Fiji is now back in the fold after democratic elections a few years ago and Rwanda is the most recent new member. If I were to reel off the A to Z of membership it would start with Alderney, an island in the English channel just 10 miles off the French coast, and stretch all the way across the globe to Zambia in south Africa. In fact, I will be visiting Zambia in the next few days on another mission, but I will also speak to Commonwealth partners when I am there.

**Valerie Vaz** (Walsall South) (Lab): The hon. Gentleman is making an excellent speech. As someone who originates from Goa in India and was born in the British Protectorate of Aden, I am well aware of the importance of a club. Groucho Marx said that he would not want to belong to a club that would have him as a member, but we are part of a very important club. Does he not agree that we are the interface with the European Union, which places us in a very great position? And will he join me in thanking the staff of the CPA, who organise all these visits and help the rest of the world come to see what it is like to live under a rule of law in this country?

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** I thank the hon. Lady. Her background is proof that anybody from anywhere can be part of this marvellous family—India, Pakistan,

[Mr Liddell-Grainger]

Bangladesh or anywhere else. It is a wonderful family. She is absolutely right: the staff are remarkable. They do an incredible job. Today, they have literally gone from conferences to seminars to a drinks party and much else—it has been remarkable. There are not many weeks—I am sure we could count them—when there is not somebody coming to town to talk, be they a high commissioner, an ambassador or a group of parliamentarians. They always know our door is open, and we always love to have a conversation with our friends and our family.

The CPA's UK branch elected me chairman last year. I took on the responsibility with enthusiasm, but with some trepidation. It is one thing to glance at the CPA from the outside. It is quite another being inside and getting involved in the inner workings. Thanks to the knowledge and efficiency of a superb CPA team, I have—I hope—begun to get to grips with it. They deserve credit and so do the whole CPA committee, without whom the CPA would not operate. The work that goes on by Members from both this place and the other place is crucial to its fair running. I am very grateful to everybody. In fact, CPA UK has just been recognised by the Investors in People scheme for outstanding levels of people management. Well done. We happen to be the most active branch under the CPA umbrella. And what a big umbrella it is! The sheer number of Commonwealth nations demands a giant executive committee to manage it.

**Jim Shannon:** It is fair and important to have it recorded in *Hansard* that the Christian principles of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Commonwealth have taken Christianity to the many parts of the world where it exists today and is growing. We need to recognise the Christian principles that drove the Commonwealth forward.

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** Yes, that is an extremely good point. We have had a wonderful service in Westminster Abbey today. Unfortunately, I was chairing a conference, but my right hon. Friend the Minister was there. Her Majesty attended, too, as did His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. It is a wonderful get-together. The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right that it was based on a lot of British principles. In many ways, it was the missionaries who trail-blazed during the empire days and then under the Commonwealth. We can look back at some amazing people who went to places that nobody else would and took those Christian principles with them. We still see that today. We have to admit that there are tensions in certain parts of the world—we have to be honest about that—but we still talk. The Archbishop of Canterbury and many other churchmen work together to better people's lives, so that when we have a disagreement we can say, "Let's keep talking", as Her Majesty succinctly put it. His point, therefore, is pertinent and absolutely correct.

The day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that the CPA is steered on a steady course falls to the office of secretary-general. Since the start of this year, we have had a new man in this important post—someone with wide experience of governance and diplomacy; someone who already knows the CPA inside out and has been involved in the legal niceties of the organisation; somebody

with the enormous drive and vision to carry this international organisation forward. His name is Akbar Khan and his mission is to make the CPA fit for the 21st century. I strongly believe that we should wholeheartedly applaud this aspiration, and I hope that the House will join me in doing so.

It is a sobering fact that in my constituency many young people know little about the Commonwealth, let alone the CPA. I am sorry to say that there is a wide canyon of ignorance among young people today. I am told that a survey was recently conducted in Jamaica to discover whether young people knew who is in charge of the Commonwealth. Some 25% said it was Barack Obama. Perhaps it is a blessing they did not say Donald Trump. When the pollsters asked what the Commonwealth actually did, most young Jamaicans said its only task was running the Commonwealth games. We have a lot to do. Somehow the CPA has to spread the word far more effectively and seek to win the practical support of the young. Under-30s now represent a majority of all Commonwealth citizens, so we have to find ways of making our work visible and relevant to them.

I am pleased to say that things are beginning to move. The CPA has launched a popular roadshow designed to engage with schools and universities right across the Commonwealth. We are trying to prove that we are not just about motherhood and apple pie and highlighting parts of our work that could capture the imagination of young people. We are showing how we can help to tackle corruption by using the rule of law. There is a lot more to it than roadshows, of course, which is why the CPA is getting on top of the digital world, tweeting its message, gaining "likes" on Facebook and hosting its own YouTube channel.

We are also doing a great deal to promote gender equality—I pay tribute again to my friend the hon. Member for City of Durham (Dr Blackman-Woods). It is work that desperately needs doing because women are still badly under-represented in Parliaments across the Commonwealth. The CPA has an effective and influential chairwoman, Shirin Chaudhury, Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh, who has been an incredible champion for women, the CPA and everybody else. I hope she is smiling at the moment, because she has a lot to smile about. She is a remarkable person. In addition, the CPA keenly promotes female involvement through the Commonwealth women's parliamentary group. It is also very positive news that a woman has been appointed as the new secretary-general of the Commonwealth itself.

Slowly but surely, the shape of the CPA is changing for the better. A glance at my CPA diary for this week alone is enough to prove that we are not sitting back and letting the world go by—and nor will we ever. The UK branch is hosting a delegation from the new Canadian Parliament and is also running a unique international conference on sustainability.

**Dr Blackman-Woods:** I just want to pay tribute to the hon. Gentleman for all the work he has done in supporting Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and its international chairperson. That is really important because she is bringing about enormous changes in the CPA, as is the new secretary-general, Akbar Khan, who I also think we should welcome to his post. We expect great things from them both.

I pay tribute to the right hon. Member for Saffron Walden. Both he and the hon. Member for Bridgwater and West Somerset have led and are leading the CPA to some very good things. We look forward to seeing enormous progress being made across a whole range of areas to do with enhancing our systems of governance and accountability, as well as tackling corruption throughout the Commonwealth.

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** I could not work out the waving, so I apologise again, but it is very nice to be waved at. I thank the hon. Lady once again, but I think we all know that this is a huge team effort. I know that our secretary-general and many others take a keen interest in what we do as a body. It is important that we support each other. The work that has been done, even since he has been here, has been truly remarkable. I pay tribute to Andrew Tuggey and the entire team in the CPA. Without them, we would not be able to do what we do today. Andrew stands in for me. I made of a mess of something earlier and he had to step in and save me—and I am very grateful for being saved by him on a regular basis.

The hon. Member for City of Durham (Dr Blackman-Woods) is right that there is a lot of work to do so far as women and many other issues are concerned. We are realistic about the challenges; we know what they are; we know what we have to do to change things; we will continue always to strive for that because that is our ethos—gender balance and gender understanding. I pay tribute to the hon. Lady for the work she has done in this area, and I am very grateful to her.

**Richard Graham:** The critical issue, as my hon. Friend rightly highlighted earlier, is the way in which the younger generation of people in the Commonwealth around the world can be excited, motivated and inspired by an ideal that inspired an earlier generation. Will my hon. Friend provide some examples of things he believes we can all do in the Commonwealth to help that process along?

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** I hesitate to go on all night, but that is a lovely, pertinent question. What is the Commonwealth? It is about understanding, tolerance, governance, law, order, non-corruption and standing up for your fellow man or woman—it does not matter what someone's creed, colour, background or religion is; they do not make any difference. We are a family of nations that are bound together by one common cause, which is working together to make sure we achieve the ideals that were set out all those years ago. It is also about bringing the very best of human nature to bear at all stages. That is what it is all about. I meet the most remarkable and incredible people, and I know we all do. We have had our ups and downs, but at the end of the day all parliamentarians are interesting, and none more than those of the Commonwealth—and that is to be celebrated.

**Patrick Grady:** Mention was made of the Commonwealth games, the most recent of which were held in my great city of Glasgow. As well as being a celebration of sporting endeavour and peaceful competition between nations, the games bring people from all over the world, and particularly from all over the Commonwealth to share their cultures in one place. The Commonwealth games are very much a manifestation of the practical implications and benefits of the Commonwealth and

should be recognised as such. Scotland is a member of the CPA, if not yet a fully fledged member of the Commonwealth.

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** The very first Commonwealth games I ever went to as a boy many years ago were in Edinburgh. The Glasgow Commonwealth games were exemplary. They were handled beautifully. It was the family enjoying itself in many ways. The sport was incredible and remarkable—there were no Sepp Blatters or anything like that in sight. A very good organisation runs it. It is always a credit. Glasgow did an incredible job, and nobody can ever take it away from the city. I am most grateful for all it did. It showed the Commonwealth at its very best, as a group of nations that are very good at what they do. What other organisation could arrange a games free from all the other things we see so many sports tainted with?

**Richard Graham:** My hon. Friend is quite right to highlight the success of the Commonwealth games in Glasgow and, indeed, in many other cities of different countries. How about a Commonwealth music festival? We know that sports and music are the two things that most powerfully involve the younger generation.

**Pauline Latham** (Mid Derbyshire) (Con): And football.

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** I think the entire world plays football, but I think music from across the Commonwealth would be absolutely incredible. So many times we have been on conferences where we have been entertained beautifully by local bands—sometimes tribes, even—that are quite incredible. The richness of music crosses all boundaries. It does not matter whether we can understand the words; it is the beat and the rhythm, and all the rest of it, so that is a wonderful idea. I hesitate to say to Andrew Tuggey, “Perhaps tomorrow we should arrange a music conference for the whole of the Commonwealth”—he would probably have a heart attack—but it is a lovely idea. I think the rules of football were set in this country—I may be wrong about that, but I think they were—and, again, it is a great leveller.

Last week we were involved in celebrating International Women's Day, and Mr Speaker very kindly let us have his apartments for a drinks party to end it. We are so grateful for that: it was so well attended and so fascinating. Again, it was a lovely day, and next week there is so much in the pipeline. We are helping out in one of Latin America's poorest countries, Guyana. The aim is to assist the new multi-racial coalition Government to build effective democratic systems. We are also working alongside the Home Office to develop a legal framework to combat modern slavery. The idea is to enable parliamentary clerks from Commonwealth countries to come on secondment to Westminster and learn how to adapt slavery legislation for use back home. We are also trying to get some innovative new projects off the ground, such as an international parliamentary seminar on electoral reform and a cyber-security workshop for Commonwealth Ministers. There is even a project to open our doors outside the Commonwealth and allow representatives from target countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan to attend our seminars.

**Dr Blackman-Woods:** I am so grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way; he is being most generous. The list he is reading out is quite extraordinary and

[*Dr Blackman-Woods*]

shows the huge diversity of issues that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is trying to tackle and to get serious discussion and sharing of good practice on. I would like to use this opportunity to thank Andrew Tuggey and all his staff, because they have been extremely busy putting all these important programmes together, hopefully with good outcomes in improving our governance.

**Mr Liddell-Grainger:** I can echo that. In some cases the staff had very few days to put the bids together. They have done a remarkable job. We have superb staff and they are so willing. If anybody has a chance and wants to go into the CPA room, it is worth looking at just how many people are there and the work they do. It is truly remarkable. That is the future: taking workshops and encouraging people to do things, and if we do it, others will follow. We want to make sure that people understand that we are proactive in the 21st century and leading the charge of proactive democracy throughout the world. That is something we can only aspire to, so I thank to the hon. Lady for her intervention. She is absolutely right.

We are going to help to boost and change the Commonwealth and the new outcrops of democracy outside it. As ever, we rely on patience and an awful lot of dialogue, but that is what the Commonwealth is really all about. As Her Majesty puts it,

“through dialogue we protect ourselves against the dangers that can so easily arise from a failure to talk or to see the other person’s point of view.”

9.48 pm

**Sir Alan Haselhurst** (Saffron Walden) (Con): I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the debate on the Commonwealth. I am delighted that my hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater and West Somerset (Mr Liddell-Grainger) has been able to secure a slot on the Floor of the House and has been blessed with the good fortune of an extended debate, beyond the half-hour that it might otherwise have been, which has given other hon. Friends and colleagues an opportunity to take part.

I think it is a pity that there is not an annual debate on a Commonwealth theme in Government time, to demonstrate symbolically that we are taking the Commonwealth seriously. It would be an opportunity for all Members of the House to make a contribution on some particular aspect of Commonwealth matters that are of concern to them. However, I was grateful in my time to the Backbench Business Committee for giving us such opportunities, and my hon. Friend has also managed to ensure that the flame continues to burn.

One of the messages I tried to put across was that in every part of the Commonwealth we should have a debate about the Commonwealth, from whatever angle, in each Parliament. That is the way to give prominence to the fact that we are all members of that association, and that we believe in it.

Today I received a message from Commonwealth Youth New Zealand. I do not know whether I was alone in that, but the message was addressed to me. It said:

“Today in Wellington, 60 young people from around New Zealand will take part in the Common Leaders Day programme. This will bring together a range of inspiring young leaders in

community, government, national and international fields and shows senior high school students that everyday people can become outstanding leaders. This is also an opportunity to promote understanding on global issues, international co-operation and, most importantly, the values embodied in the Commonwealth Charter that we all seek to uphold.”

I should like to think that 60 young people in every part of the Commonwealth were being encouraged to come together with that purpose in mind. We should be talking about the values of the Commonwealth, and continuing to put the message across.

As my hon. Friend said, one of the fundamental roles of the CPA is to encourage parliamentary strengthening. Our Parliament was a place to which people believed they could come for the airing of grievances. When we look around the world now, we see that a great many young people in the Commonwealth countries—and 60% of the Commonwealth’s population are under the age of 30—have grievances, which often stem from dire poverty. How can those young people be expected to continue to believe in the democratic system unless there is advancement—unless they have confidence in the Governments whom they elect and the work that they do? My point is not just that our Parliament is a fount of wisdom. All Parliaments in the Commonwealth should come together regularly, learn from each other, and identify common interests and practices that help to strengthen government. That will help to give young people confidence, in the future, that the Commonwealth itself has a meaning, and that they have hope within their own countries.

**Jim Shannon:** The right hon. Gentleman kindly mentioned New Zealand. Obviously, many of us in the home countries, particularly Northern Ireland, have a special relationship with New Zealand, to which our ancestors emigrated from Northern Ireland. Indeed, there is a special relationship between the United Kingdom and New Zealand. Does the right hon. Gentleman agree with me that we should have more such relationships in the Commonwealth?

**Sir Alan Haselhurst:** None of the other countries in the Commonwealth thought to send me a message, which is why I quoted from the one from New Zealand. However, I think that we should be more conscious—day by day, week by week, month by month—of our membership of the Commonwealth, and be more willing to stretch out the hand of friendship and encourage the development of more links between us. That happens in all sorts of different ways outside the parliamentary sphere—about 90 organisations are brought together to discuss a range of matters because of the Commonwealth link—but we need to do more at the political and parliamentary level, and the key to that is involving more young people. At least a Commonwealth Youth Parliament is now established annually. However, whether we call it an assembly, a council or a Parliament, I should like to see young people being persuaded to come together to do something very much like what those 60 young New Zealanders were doing today.

I agree with much of what has been said in the debate, but I should add that, in the next few weeks, we will at last achieve connectivity with one of the smallest branches of the CPA, that of St Helena. The then Member of Parliament for Birmingham, Northfield and I recommended that an airstrip should be built

after we visited the island in 1972. It is very encouraging that, clearly, so powerful was our oratory that that is to happen at last, after 46 years. It will mean that we can bind St Helena closer to us and welcome its people much more actively, in the hope that they will gain benefit and that we will too gain benefit from an understanding of their way of life on that remote island.

I again congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater and West Somerset on initiating the debate. Let us keep on beating the drum for the Commonwealth, and bear in mind that there is much more to do. We look to our colleagues, as well as our staff, to continue to contribute in the magnificent way that they do now.

9.54 pm

**The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr Hugo Swire):** I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater and West Somerset (Mr Liddell-Grainger) on securing this evening's debate and on his relatively new role as chairman of the UK branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, following in the distinguished footsteps of my right hon. Friend the Member for Saffron Walden (Sir Alan Haselhurst), from whom we have just heard. I also thank other Members across the House for their contributions to the debate.

I should like to begin by paying a warm tribute on this Commonwealth day to Her Majesty the Queen, who has helped to shape the Commonwealth not for 30, 40 or 55 years—in this auction—but for almost 65 years. As head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty has given tireless support and played a leading role in creating a family of nations that spans every continent, all major religions and almost a third of the world's population. It was particularly gratifying and appropriate at this afternoon's service at Westminster Abbey to witness Her Majesty, in her 90th year, being loyally supported as usual by His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, as well as by Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, His Royal Highness Prince Harry and His Royal Highness the Duke of York.

Like the hon. Member for Walsall South (Valerie Vaz), I should like to pay tribute to the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and of Andrew Tuggey—who, for all we know, might even be following this debate tonight—and his colleagues who have done so much to promote and strengthen the institution of Parliament and the commitment to the rule of law. I shall say more about them later.

I should also like to join in the tributes and thanks for the work of Kamallesh Sharma as he steps down as secretary-general after eight years. I joined my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister at No. 10 last week to thank Mr Sharma personally for his efforts. He has helped to guide the Commonwealth through a period of significant challenges and he can be rightly proud of the important developments that have taken place under his leadership, such as the introduction of the Commonwealth charter. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta last November, we welcomed the appointment of his successor, the noble and learned Lady, the Baroness Scotland. We wish her every success as she takes up this position on 1 April. We believe that she will ensure that the Commonwealth has a strong voice and makes a greater impact, and that

its members will show greater unity and purpose in upholding the Commonwealth's values. In answer to the point made by the hon. Member for City of Durham (Dr Blackman-Woods), it is right and appropriate—and good news, says the father of two daughters—that the Commonwealth is headed by a woman, that the secretariat is to be headed by a woman and that the international chairman of the CPA is a woman. That is a pretty good start.

This Government recognise the great potential of the Commonwealth. In 2010, the then Foreign Secretary, my right hon. Friend Lord Hague of Richmond, said that he wanted to put the C back into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and I believe that we have done that. This Government remain determined to ensure that the Commonwealth is re-energised and we support all its members in delivering greater prosperity and security to their citizens. For that reason, in May last year, we made a manifesto commitment to strengthen the Commonwealth's focus on promoting democratic values and development. In November, the Prime Minister led a strong UK delegation to the CHOGM in Malta.

Our ambition for the Commonwealth is clear. Through the programme of initiatives we announced in Malta, we aim to strengthen efforts to counter extremism and radicalisation and to help small island developing states to develop their economies and boost resilience to climate change. These initiatives will strengthen the contribution of the Commonwealth and its member states in tackling global challenges. By positioning itself squarely in the international arena, the Commonwealth yet again demonstrates its relevance in helping to address these important issues that confront us all.

**Ian Paisley:** The Minister has put his finger on some important issues relating to climate change and addressing global terrorism, and he raised such matters with the President of the Maldives on a recent visit to the country. While there may be some difficulties with the Maldives, which interprets some things differently, talking about such issues, as mentioned by the hon. Member for Bridgwater and West Somerset (Mr Liddell-Grainger), is positive and helps to better understand each other.

10 pm

*Motion lapsed (Standing Order No. 9(3)).*

*Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(Guy Opperman.)*

**Mr Swire:** In answer to the hon. Gentleman's point about the Maldives, the secretary-general is sending his own representatives. We want the Maldives to stay a committed member of the Commonwealth and to adhere to Commonwealth values, meaning transparency, accountability, democracy—all the things that we accept as the norm. We want the people of the Maldives to be served by a Government that adheres to those principles, so I welcome the work of the Commonwealth secretariat and the Commonwealth ministerial action group.

We will continue to take initiatives forward through to CHOGM, which will be hosted here in the UK in the spring of 2018. We will work with our Commonwealth partners, wider Commonwealth organisations and with the Commonwealth secretariat under Patricia Scotland's leadership. Hosting the next meeting presents us with the opportunity to build on the progress made in Malta

[Mr Swire]

to make the Commonwealth more relevant and more effective and to increase its stock and standing in the world.

The Commonwealth's shared values of tolerance, respect and understanding are central to this year's theme, "An Inclusive Commonwealth", as we look to strengthen the partnership of nations, people and societies right across the Commonwealth. Earlier today, I had the pleasure of experiencing some of the diversity and energy of the Commonwealth in the performances at the multi-faith service at Westminster Abbey. This annual event is an opportunity, like this debate, to celebrate all that is good about the Commonwealth. The presence of Her Majesty and a significant number of dignitaries from across the Commonwealth, including the Prime Minister of Malta, who is the chair-in-office, and Kofi Annan, who spoke so eloquently, showed the warmth and high regard in which the organisation is held. The diversity of those who spoke at the event reflects the Commonwealth's dynamic population of over 2 billion people.

As chairman of the executive committee of the UK branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, my hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater and West Somerset plays a significant role, as did his predecessor, in supporting work to foster co-operation and understanding between Parliaments, to promote good governance and to advance parliamentary democracy. We welcome the work of the association and its secretariat based here in London. Established in 1911, it has made a significant contribution in helping Commonwealth members to uphold democratic values, and its annual international parliamentary conferences offer an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest. This week's visit of parliamentarians from Canada, which I recently visited, is another positive example of the strong relationships across the association. I very much enjoyed meeting members of the Canadian Commonwealth Parliamentary Association during my recent visit to Ottawa, and I welcome their commitment to share values and understanding.

My hon. Friend raised the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's conference on sustainability, energy and development. Events such as that are vital if we are to take forward the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting mandate of implementing the UN sustainable development goals. We welcome the recent appointment of Akbar Khan as secretary-general of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. He has an important role to play in taking forward the organisation's agenda. In particular, I welcome his vision of a strong parliamentary arm of the Commonwealth, working within and across the Commonwealth family. By delivering programmes to Commonwealth parliamentarians that underpin respect for Commonwealth political values, the association aims to strengthen democratic governance of our legislatures and Parliaments.

The hon. Member for Glasgow North (Patrick Grady) referred to the success of the Commonwealth games in Glasgow. I was privileged to have been there myself. I saw David Grevenberg, CEO of the Commonwealth Games Federation, today. He was recounting how a survey has been done in Glasgow on the success of the games and whether people felt they were worth while,

and the almost universal feedback was that if they could host it all over again, they would, as it was such good news for Glasgow. The games will go to Australia next, where I am sure they will be a success. Hon. Members made a good point about having music as well as sport. At the Glasgow games, the Commonwealth youth orchestra and choir launched the Commonwealth music competition, so we look forward to that again.

Trade is an area where the Commonwealth must have greater ambition, and this must be one of our top priorities for the 2018 Heads of Government meeting. Between now and then we will be developing a broad range of policies relating to the Commonwealth and trade. We are working extremely closely with the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council, which is doing a magnificent job, and we had a good trade meeting in Valetta, which was attended by more than 2,000 delegates. We are going to build on that, and we are also working to bring trade Ministers from across the Commonwealth together more regularly to increase trade between member states.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater and West Somerset raised the idea of a possible project to inform parliamentarians across the Commonwealth of legislation, including things such as the Modern Slavery Act 2015, and we are also looking at that. Hon. Members also talked about rights and the Commonwealth charter. It is worth saying that despite this being set out clearly in the Commonwealth charter—the outgoing secretary-general can be justifiably proud of that, as I have said—respect for rights and values is not consistent across the Commonwealth, and we have to accept that that is the case. The issue of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights is a particular challenge. At CHOGM, the Prime Minister was clear about the need for the Commonwealth to seek to narrow its divisions on LGBT issues. In their statement, Commonwealth leaders agreed on the economic potential that can be unlocked by tackling discrimination and exclusion. I accept that these are difficult issues for some Commonwealth countries, but those same countries did sign the Commonwealth charter. Speaking at the Human Rights Council in Geneva last week, the outgoing secretary-general, Kamallesh Sharma, acknowledged that the Commonwealth cannot be truly inclusive if the criminalisation of homosexuality is not addressed.

That remains one of our biggest human rights challenges. We will continue to work with member states to end discrimination of all kinds, to promote tolerance and to build inclusive governance and opportunity for all. Those are all central to creating a truly inclusive Commonwealth and critical to developing stronger, more secure and prosperous societies. I say that because there is huge potential in the Commonwealth. A recent report has highlighted that, on current trends, the value of intra-Commonwealth trade will reach \$1 trillion by 2020.

As the Minister responsible for our relationship with the Commonwealth since 2012, I have visited a good number of Commonwealth countries. From Canada to Australia, India to Papua New Guinea, and Sri Lanka to the Solomon Islands, it is clear that there remains a genuine desire across the 53 member states to see the Commonwealth progress on important areas affecting them and the wider world today. The challenges have never been greater, but the rewards could be greater



still. It will be up to all of us within the Commonwealth family to ensure that action is taken on the most pressing global issues.

I therefore thank my hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater and West Somerset and other right hon. and hon. Members for this opportunity to debate this important issue today. We are getting towards the end of Commonwealth day, but this does not end there, as there are more Commonwealth celebrations tomorrow. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is beefing up the Commonwealth team to make sure that, when we are hosts in the spring of 2018, it will be a memorable event. I look forward to any suggestions from those interested in the Commonwealth as to how we can make the agenda relevant and how we can make the whole Commonwealth conference exciting.

**Ian Paisley** *rose*—

**Mr Swire:** The hon. Gentleman already has a suggestion.

**Ian Paisley:** I refer the House to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests in terms of my membership of the CPA and of some of the visits that I have taken part in. In looking forward to 2018, will the Minister ensure that the devolved Assemblies are involved in this and are used to help spread the message of the Commonwealth? When the Northern Ireland Assembly was established in 1998, one of the most unifying things that it did was to create the Commonwealth Room. I know that he chuckled earlier

when I made the point about Ireland coming into the Commonwealth, but the fact that the Assembly did that sends a message of hope.

**Mr Swire:** Let me make it clear that it is not up to me or the British Government who becomes a member of the Commonwealth. There is a perfectly straightforward application process. A country has to fulfil certain criteria. It is not up to the United Kingdom who comes in; it is up to the secretariat and other members, and that is as it should be. Incidentally, there are a significant number of countries that aspire to join the Commonwealth. Talking of clubs, the hon. Member for Walsall South quoted Groucho Marx when she said that she would not want to join a club that wanted her as a member. The truth of the matter is that one can judge a club by those who want to become members, and there are some significant countries that want to join the Commonwealth. That in itself is a validation of the Commonwealth as being a relevant institution.

In terms of the devolved Administrations having a greater sight of what we are going to discuss at CHOGM, the United Kingdom is the member of the Commonwealth, but I have some sympathy with what the hon. Gentleman says. We do not want the schoolchildren of Ballymena and of West Belfast thinking that Barack Obama is in charge of the Commonwealth.

*Question put and agreed to.*

10.11 pm

*House adjourned.*



# Written Statements

Monday 14 March 2016

## BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

### Labour Market and the Economy

#### **The Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills and President of the Board of Trade (Sajid Javid):**

Today I am announcing the Government's response to the Low Pay Commission's 2016 report and recommendations on the National Minimum Wage.

The main recommendations put forward by the Low Pay Commission are about the rates of the National Minimum Wage from October 2016.

The Commission has recommended that the adult hourly rate of the National Minimum Wage (for 21-24 year olds) should increase from £6.70 to £6.95. The Commission has recommended increasing the youth development rate, which covers workers aged 18 to 20 years old, from £5.30 to £5.55 and increasing the rate for 16 to 17-year-olds from £3.87 to £4.00. It recommends that the apprentice rate should increase from £3.30 to £3.40. The Commission recommend that all of these changes take place from 1 October 2016.

The Commission has also recommended that the accommodation offset increases from the current £5.35 to £6.00 from 1 October 2016.

The Government accept all of the rate recommendations.

On the subject of compliance and enforcement of the National Minimum Wage, the Low Pay Commission's report recommends that the Government consider introducing a requirement on employers that the payslips of hourly-paid staff include a clear statement of hours being paid for, and that the Government introduce a formal, public protocol for HM Revenue & Customs to handle third-party whistleblowing on breaches of the National Minimum Wage.

The Government are committed to the effective enforcement of the National Minimum Wage. As suggested by the Low Pay Commission, we will consider these options in full.

A copy of the Government's response will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

I am also pleased to announce that the Government have today written to the Low Pay Commission setting out the remit for their 2016/17 report. The Commission is asked to recommend the National Minimum Wage rates and the National Living Wage rate that will apply from April 2017 as well as an indicative rate for the National Living Wage for April 2018.

[HCWS617]

## DEFENCE

### Single Source Contracts

**The Secretary of State for Defence (Michael Fallon):** I am today announcing that I have set the baseline profit rate for single source defence contracts at 8.95% in line

with the rate recommended by the Single Source Regulations Office (SSRO). I am asking the SSRO further to develop the methodology used to calculate the baseline profit rate over the next year.

I am also announcing revised capital servicing rates as recommended by the SSRO at Table 1 below. These rates will come into effect from 1 April 2016.

Table 1: SSRO's Recommended Rates agreed by the Secretary of State for Defence

Element	2015 Rates	2016 Rates
Baseline Profit Rate (BPR) (% on contract cost)	10.6%	8.95%
Fixed Capital Servicing Rate (% on Fixed Capital employment)	5.94%	5.08%
Working Capital Servicing Rate (% on positive Working Capital employment)	1.72%	1.40%
Working Capital Servicing Rate (% on negative Working Capital)	1.03%	0.74%

Taxpayers can be confident that we are getting value for money for single source defence contracts as we deliver our £178 billion equipment programme. This profit rate provides a fair return to industry while delivering savings that will be reinvested in defence.

[HCWS618]

## JUSTICE

### Commercial Governance

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice (Andrew Selous):** Yesterday the press reported allegations that former employees of the Ministry of Justice have behaved improperly and that knowledge they may have acquired while working for the Department has been used to gain a competitive advantage.

We take all allegations of impropriety extremely seriously. We have launched an immediate investigation to ascertain the facts, which the Cabinet Office's Proprietary and Ethics team will support.

The rules around former civil servants taking up employment in the private sector are made very clear when they leave. Under no circumstance should they exploit privileged access to Government contracts or sensitive information which could be used to influence the outcome of commercial competitions.

Let me also add, that over the last six months, we have improved our commercial capability, more than doubling the senior commercial experts monitoring work with the private sector. But we know there is still more to do.

I will update the House once our investigation has been completed.

[HCWS619]

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

**The Minister for Employment (Priti Patel):** The Employment & Social Affairs (EPSCO) Council met in Brussels on 7 March. Shan Morgan, Deputy Permanent Representative, represented the UK.

The Council discussed the implementation of country specific recommendations (CSRs) as part of the European semester. Member states, including the UK, agreed that CSRs should be specific but should take into account the national context, aiming for outcomes not outputs.

As part of the European semester process, Ministers adopted the 2016 Joint Employment report and Council conclusions on the 2016 Annual Growth Survey Council also reached general agreement on the 2016 employment guidelines but the UK maintained a parliamentary scrutiny reservation.

The Commission provided an update on progress following the launch of the New Start for Social Dialogue in March 2015 and the Dutch presidency confirmed that the Tripartite Social summit on 16 March would focus on job creation and inclusive growth.

The Council endorsed the Employment Committee's key messages on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

On the labour mobility package, the Commission confirmed that it would publish its proposal for a revision of the 1996 Posting of Workers directive on 8 March. Proposals on changes to social security co-ordination (regulation 883/04) would not be published until after the UK referendum.

Ministers also had an orientation debate to inform the European Commission's proposed new agenda for skills.

The presidency presented draft Council conclusions on gender and LGBT equality as a package. Despite strong support from many member states, including the UK Council was unable to reach agreement on the conclusions. The Commission confirmed that it would launch its consultation on a European pillar of social rights on 8 March. The pillar would be targeted at the Eurozone but it would be open to all member states to join voluntarily.

Finally, under any other business, the Commission presented briefly to the Council the energy union, the Istanbul convention and gave an update on the state of play on European social fund and youth employment initiative implementation. The chairs of the Employment and Social Protection Committees also presented their work programmes for 2016.

[HCWS616]

# ORAL ANSWERS

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