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Scottish Parliament

Tuesday 25 September 2018

[The Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 14:00]

Time for Reflection

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Good afternoon. The first item of business is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader is the Rev David Coleman, who is the environmental chaplain for Eco-congregation Scotland in Edinburgh.

The Rev David Coleman (Environmental Chaplain, Eco-congregation Scotland): Greetings. Since I was first invited to offer this reflection, I have moved from being a grass-roots pastor in Greenock to taking on the national scope of being environmental chaplain for Eco-congregation Scotland, which is a charity that is supported by very diverse churches and the Scottish Government. In one way, that is a change of direction, but in another it is an intensification of the same calling.

A Christian minister's calling is never simply to speak what people want to hear—even when speaking to those who might think that they are paying the piper. The very diverse eco-congregation movement encourages people of faith—so far, they are Christians, although I look forward to working with Muslims and others—to enlist the treasures of their respective traditions in response to our shared global context of climate crisis.

This is my second Holyrood event in two weeks, as I was part of the mass climate lobby on 19 September. The Scottish churches parliamentary office will keep the conversation going.

The Parliament guidelines stipulate that speakers should avoid being political. That is easy. For at least 20 years, since our friends in Pacific islands churches began to realise that their homelands would not survive the rise in sea levels, the task that I have taken on is unambiguously spiritual, meaning that it touches on the deepest essence of who we are and our place in the created order. No party or faith group has a monopoly on the care of the planet.

Jesus encouraged his followers to read the “signs of the times” in the world around them. He pointed out that they were very well able to do that and act accordingly, if they so chose.

Today, in complementary prayer and action, we seek collaboration not competition, as we are overtaken by what we rather hoped was going to be the predicament of our grandchildren—I am not

yet a grandfather. I wish that organised religion as a whole was already setting people such as the members of the Scottish Parliament a positive and convincing example. In the meantime, we look to you.

I am here not to compete but to convince, which includes convincing myself and the congregations and communities of Scotland to read those signs. In the Bible, God points humanity to the rainbow—a pre-existent phenomenon of universal scientific laws—with a promise that rising waters will not bring an end to the world as we know it. That is nice. However, people like me are obliged to read more carefully and note that the promise comes in the context of our valuing and caring for every creature. Complacency is never an appropriate response to God's grace.

Topical Question Time

14:03

ScotRail Reliability

1. Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands)

(Con): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking in response to figures for the first quarter of 2018-19 that show ScotRail's reliability is at its worst for over two decades. (S5T-01231)

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson): I am aware that ScotRail is not performing as well as would be expected and demanded by the Scottish Government and customers. However, it is impossible to compare ScotRail's reliability today with that of 20 years ago, given the significant increase over the past two decades in passenger numbers, the additional seats that are now provided and the introduction of new stations and routes.

The Scottish Government continues to work closely with both partners of the ScotRail Alliance to ensure that the 20 recommendations in the performance improvement plan are delivered. Alongside that, Network Rail has increased resource levels to improve infrastructure reliability and resilience, with a focus on the Glasgow area, to meet the needs of the busiest rail network outwith London.

It should be noted that ScotRail's punctuality performance rate of 88.9 per cent, as reported in the Office of Rail and Road quarterly release, remains better than the Great Britain average of 86.9 per cent.

We should not lose sight of the transformational process that is under way on our railways, with the combination of record investment in infrastructure enhancements and new and fully refurbished rolling stock delivering faster and additional services. Passenger numbers continue to grow in response to that investment.

Edward Mountain: I thank the cabinet secretary for that long answer, and I agree with him that ScotRail has made many improvements to services. However, delays and cancellations mean that passengers cannot get to work, school, health appointments and the many other duties that people must carry out during the day. I think that passengers are realistic about delays when they occur—they are often due to challenging weather conditions—but satisfaction in how ScotRail handles delays decreased by 13 per cent in the past year. Will the cabinet secretary therefore say what pressure the Government is putting on ScotRail specifically to improve

communications with passengers when delays occur, whether or not the delays are avoidable?

Michael Matheson: The member raises an important issue in recognising some of the challenges that the network can face. It might be of interest to him that the public performance measure failures that were attributed to Network Rail increased by 51 per cent in the first quarter compared with the previous quarter, which demonstrates that infrastructure challenges can have a direct impact on rail service providers such as ScotRail.

That is all the more reason for ScotRail to work in partnership much more effectively to address issues. Some of the investment in infrastructure in the Glasgow area through Network Rail, which is being co-ordinated through the ScotRail Alliance, is to provide the greater resilience and reliability that is necessary.

It is also important to ensure that, when delays and cancellations occur, information is communicated effectively to the travelling public and support services are there to assist individuals when necessary. I have met the head of ScotRail Alliance and the new chief executive of Network Rail to impress on them specifically the need to ensure that there is greater focus on reliability and how they communicate with the public who make use of their services, with a clear understanding of the implications for travellers. The member can be assured that those issues have been raised with ScotRail Alliance and Network Rail, who I expect to continue to make significant progress as they take forward the improvement plan that they set out earlier this year.

Edward Mountain: I would like examples of how ScotRail will communicate with people who are delayed, but perhaps the cabinet secretary can provide those in a letter.

The most recent performance figures for train services to Aviemore are 20 percentage points worse than the figures for services to the best performing stations in Scotland. Given that trains are vital to the Highland economy, will the cabinet secretary say whether the Scottish Government is consulting ScotRail on its plans and action to improve the performance of services to the Highlands?

Michael Matheson: The member will be aware that we have made significant investment in improving the Highland line in recent years. Further investment in rail infrastructure is part of our plans in the strategic transport projects review. He will also be aware of the investment that we have just put into improving the line between Inverness and Aberdeen in order to increase the speed of trains. We are also investing in the high-speed train service and seven cities connections,

which will improve reliability, comfort and speed of services.

There is significant investment in rail. We have invested some £8 billion in our rail network over the past 10 years or so and we will continue to have an ambitious programme of investment.

On the member's first point, I am happy to give the member more details on how ScotRail intends to improve communication. If the member knows of specific instances in which constituents in his region feel as though they have not had proper communication, he should take those up specifically with ScotRail. If he is dissatisfied with ScotRail's response, he should raise that with me, and I am more than happy to get ScotRail to look at the matter in greater detail.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Five members wish to ask supplementary questions. We will see how many we get through, but I ask for succinct questions and answers please.

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): Last week, we learned that ScotRail's performance has plummeted over the past quarter, with reliability at a record low and punctuality the worst since 2005. This week, ScotRail's own figures show that its performance has deteriorated so badly that it has breached its franchise agreement. This is a failing franchise, operating within a failed franchising model. The Scottish Government has the power to end the franchise early and bring Scotland's trains into public ownership by 2022. Will the cabinet secretary use the franchise breach to bring Scotland's trains under public control, so that we have a railway system that puts passengers and not profits first?

Michael Matheson: I am at times quite confused by Labour's position on this issue. Labour often says that we should get rid of rail franchises, which we cannot do, because it is a reserved area. We sought to ensure that there was a level playing field for the public sector and the private sector in bidding for franchises—something that was repeatedly refused by the previous Labour Government. We have now agreed with the present United Kingdom Government that that can be taken forward.

I am also confused about the fact that the Welsh Government has just awarded a contract to two private sector companies to deliver the railways in Wales. That is despite the rhetoric that we hear from Labour spokespersons on the issue and all the hot air that we have had from the Labour conference over the past couple of days.

I will tell the member what we will do. We will focus on continuing to make significant investment in Scotland's railways: in modern rolling stock—rolling stock that is starting to be rolled out with the new class 385 trains that are coming into play,

which will provide more seats—and in the electrification programme, which is at a very advanced stage and which will provide faster services. We will continue to deliver improvements to our railways and leave the kid-on politics to the Labour Party.

Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): Will the cabinet secretary clarify how many trains arrived on time in the first quarter of 2018-19? What effect has recent bad weather had on punctuality? Can he confirm whether Network Rail's functions are devolved to Scotland?

Michael Matheson: In relation to the member's final point, there is no doubt that this Government should have responsibility for the rail network here in Scotland—something that is opposed by the Tory and Labour parties. The reason why that is absolutely necessary is that it would help us to align infrastructure investment in our railways with the services that we require in the Scottish rail network.

I find it quite surprising that the unionist parties in this Parliament oppose that approach. However, we will continue to work with Network Rail to try to get the best service that we can for the Scottish network. I will give the member some examples. As I mentioned earlier, the PPM—

The Presiding Officer: Cabinet secretary, there are three more questions. Will you give those examples in response to those questions?

Michael Matheson: I am trying to respond to the specific point that the member has raised.

The Presiding Officer: You can give the examples as a response to the further three questions.

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green): The cabinet secretary will be aware that one of the major factors contributing to low performance, particularly in the Highlands, is the preponderance of single track. He will know that there have recently been a number of breakdowns and that a single breakdown can bring the whole Highland main line to a halt. Will he commit to significant investment, beyond the modest investment that is already in place for control period 6—particularly when compared with the £3 billion expenditure on the road that runs beside the Highland main line—to address that issue?

Michael Matheson: I discussed that very matter with the member just last week. He will be aware of current investment in the Highland main line. The STPR will allow us to look at what further investment should be made, including how we can improve resilience on the existing line. Full details will be set out once we have completed the review work, but a key part of it will be about improving

journey times and resilience on the Highland main line.

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): The old adage says, “Fix the roof while the sun is shining,” but the problem is that, since March, the PPM has got worse at more than 60 stations in Scotland. Knowing that autumn to winter is traditionally a difficult period for train punctuality and reliability results, how confident is the cabinet secretary that the bad results over the summer will not be followed by even worse ones over the winter?

Michael Matheson: Within the ScotRail Alliance, Network Rail is looking at what additional infrastructure investment can be made to improve resilience. For example, it is putting some £5 million of additional infrastructure investment into the Glasgow area to improve the infrastructure there and its reliability. That includes looking at additional measures that can be taken to address situations at particular points in the year. An example of that is cutting back vegetation that might have an impact on the use of the lines at certain times of the year—in the autumn, in particular—to minimise the risks and the difficulties that can come about as a result. That is part of a wider package of around £34 million that is being spent in an effort to improve and enhance resilience in such areas.

I have discussed with the ScotRail Alliance the measures that it is putting in place this autumn and winter in addition to those that were put in place last year. As well as carrying out additional work, it has brought in some additional machinery to help to provide greater resilience on the network, so that issues can be dealt with as and when they arise.

There is no doubt that challenges will continue to be faced on our rail network during the course of autumn and winter, but I have been assured that lessons have been learned from last year and previous years, and that additional investments have been made that will help to address the issues that will be faced in autumn and winter. I hope that that will produce better results. Time will tell, but the ScotRail Alliance has made it clear to me that it is determined to do everything that it can to reduce the number of challenges that have been faced in the past.

The Presiding Officer: I apologise to Stuart McMillan, because there is no time for another question on that subject.

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer, in relation to the questions that have just been asked. It is understandable that you sought brevity in the minister’s answers, but I do not know how you could anticipate which questions would be asked subsequently. The minister was not able to give a

full answer because you anticipated that he would be able to follow up in answers to subsequent questions. How could you anticipate that questions that were yet to be asked would enable the minister to follow up in the way that you suggested?

The Presiding Officer: Mr Crawford has been in Parliament long enough to know the answer to that, which is that we must have brief questions from members. In the case to which he refers, Mr Lyle asked, I think, three questions. The minister answered the first one on Network Rail, but he was not able to get through his answer on the PPM. He had plenty of opportunity to give that information; he answered four other questions on the issue, which I think is a lot.

We are now running out of time, so we will move on to question 2.

Enhanced Flu Vaccination

2. Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what arrangements it is making for ordering the enhanced flu vaccination for the forthcoming immunisation programme. (S5T-01233)

The Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing (Joe FitzPatrick): In Scotland, as in the rest of the United Kingdom, we are advised on vaccination policy by the independent expert Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. The JCVI recommends which vaccination programmes should be offered, what the eligibility criteria should be and what kind of vaccine should be used in the programme. In November 2017, following a review of the seasonal flu vaccine, the JCVI advised the use of an adjuvanted trivalent flu vaccine—aTIV—in people over the age of 65. It agreed that the use of that vaccine should be a priority for people aged 75 and over who would derive the greatest benefit from it. The clinical evidence is clear that the vaccine that will be offered to 65 to 74-year-olds this winter will still provide protection to that group against flu.

I will stop there, given the Presiding Officer’s desire for brevity.

The Presiding Officer: The minister asked for extra time so that he could give a detailed answer.

Joe FitzPatrick: Is it okay for me to continue?

The Presiding Officer: You may.

Joe FitzPatrick: Our flu vaccination programme gets under way next week, and it is important that people understand that the vaccines that are offered offer them the best possible protection. I encourage anybody who is in one of the groups that I mentioned and who requires a vaccination to go and get one.

Every year, NHS National Services Scotland undertakes seasonal flu vaccine procurement on behalf of NHS Scotland. To ensure that it can acquire the volume of flu vaccines that is required for each season, it begins procurement in early autumn for the next flu season. That meant that the procurement exercise for this year's flu season had already concluded when the JCVI made its recommendations. Nonetheless, NSS continued to fully explore options to secure vaccine availability for everyone over 65.

The new aTIV vaccine is manufactured by only one supplier, which had to significantly ramp up its production for the whole of the UK very quickly. Unfortunately, it was unable to guarantee NHS Scotland sufficient supply of the vaccine for everyone over 65 in time for the start of this year's vaccination programme. With what was provided, we have ensured that we have a vaccination programme for the whole of Scotland.

Anas Sarwar: The minister will be aware that, across England and Wales, all individuals aged 65 and over are to be offered and are recommended to accept the enhanced flu vaccination as standard, potentially leading to tens of thousands fewer appointments with general practitioners and hospital stays and hundreds of fewer deaths. Will the minister explain why that life-saving flu vaccination is available only to those aged over 75 in Scotland while it is available to those aged over 65 in the rest of the UK?

Joe FitzPatrick: Procurement arrangements for the seasonal flu vaccination programme differ across the UK. We procure the seasonal flu vaccine centrally. In England and Wales, it is up to individual GPs to decide what vaccines should be ordered for patients. In the past, that has led to vaccine shortages and concerns about variations in access to the right flu vaccine. We do not face those problems in Scotland.

Although Mr Sarwar is to some extent correct, in that other parts of the UK have recommended that GPs provide that vaccine, clearly it is up to GPs which vaccines they order, and it is not clear whether, given the vaccine supply, GPs across the rest of the UK will be able to buy enough vaccine to be able to do that.

After seeking expert advice, it was clear that the safer approach for us to take would be to roll-out the new vaccine in 2018 and 2019 that guarantees a supply of the flu vaccine for everyone eligible.

Anas Sarwar: The fact is that, in the rest of the UK, the over-65s are being offered and recommended to accept the enhanced flu vaccine, while in Scotland it is being offered to those over 75.

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson): That is just not the case.

Anas Sarwar: That is factually the case. *[Interruption.]* This is so concerning because the number of flu deaths in Scotland rose from 71 in 2016-17 to more than 330 in 2017-18. As a result, the First Minister rightly ordered an urgent investigation into the matter, to learn lessons for this year. Did that investigation take place? If so, when did it report and what are its recommendations? It would be completely unacceptable for us to try to learn lessons for this year's immunisation programme from a review that has not been published yet.

Joe FitzPatrick: First of all, I make it clear that we take our advice on the best way to approach the matter from the experts.

I return to my answer to Mr Sarwar's first question. Although in other parts of the UK it is recommended that GPs provide that vaccine, it is not centrally procured, so it is not clear that the vaccine will be available to all those aged over 75, never mind those aged over 65. *[Interruption.]*

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): Will the minister outline how the childhood flu vaccination programme in Scotland compares with those in other parts of the UK? *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: I ask members to stop interrupting and talking across other members, please.

Joe FitzPatrick: That is an important question from Ms Harper. Although we have been talking about the flu vaccine for the over-65s, we have an additional programme through which we are offering the quadrivalent flu vaccine to healthcare workers, pregnant women and other vulnerable groups.

That vaccine contains an additional type B flu strain, which is more likely to affect the working-age population. The new vaccine will provide those groups with further protection against the flu.

Unlike in England, we have extended the programme to cover all schoolchildren. That will not only protect the children, but offer herd immunity, which means that, by getting vaccinated, they will be helping to protect their grandparents. We are a big step ahead of the rest of the UK on that important aspect.

Mental Health Strategy: 2018 Annual Report

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is a statement by Clare Haughey, the Minister for Mental Health, on the mental health strategy 2018 annual report. The minister will, of course, take questions at the end of the statement.

14:24

The Minister for Mental Health (Clare Haughey): Our 10-year mental health strategy, from 2017 to 2027, paints a clear picture of the kind of Scotland in which I want to live: a Scotland where people can get the right help at the right time, expect recovery and fully enjoy their rights, free from discrimination and stigma.

The strategy's guiding ambition is that we must prevent and treat mental health problems with the same commitment, passion and drive as we do physical health problems. I was honoured in June to be appointed as Minister for Mental Health to build on the work of my predecessor, Maureen Watt. Although I have been in post for only a short time, I know from my experience as a mental health nurse the commitment and dedication of the people who make a difference in mental health care every day across Scotland.

Today sees the publication of "Mental Health Strategy: 2017-2027—1st Progress Report". In the strategy's first period, many of its actions have already been implemented: of 40 actions in the strategy, 13 are complete or nearly complete, and 26 are in progress. Only one action remains, which is to carry out a progress review of the strategy in 2022, which for obvious reasons is yet to get under way.

I will single out for attention three actions in the strategy. Under action 16 of the strategy, we invested £175,000 to establish a perinatal mental health managed clinical network. Its expertise and diligent work has directly informed a commitment in our 2018 programme for Government to deliver a stronger network of care and support for the one in five new mothers who experiences mental health problems during and after pregnancy. That equates to 11,000 women per year. We will invest £50 million in perinatal and infant mental health over the next five years.

More than 1,000 people in Aberdeen, Lanarkshire, the Borders and the Highlands have already received distress brief interventions. The intervention programme is funded by £3.4 million from the Scottish Government in order to provide the offer of next-day contact with a trained worker from a third sector background to anyone who

presents in distress to accident and emergency departments, police and ambulance services and primary care. We announced in the programme for Government that the initiative will, in 2019, be rolled out to under-18s.

Last month, on 29 August, I had the pleasure of launching our new "Transition Care Planning—Action 21—Principles of Transition", which will help young people to move more smoothly from child and adolescent mental health services to adult mental health services. The transition care plans have been designed entirely by young people in dialogue with clinicians, and are a shining example of what can happen when we listen to the views of our young people and act accordingly.

Those are just three of the headline achievements that are summarised in the report. They are examples of specific actions in the strategy that are already making real and tangible differences to people's lives.

It is important to say that the 40 actions in the strategy will not in themselves completely deliver our central vision. They will act as valuable and necessary levers to create the changes that we want to see, but getting to our ultimate vision and achieving our ambitions will require work beyond that set of commitments. I want, therefore, to mention five pieces of work that are all fundamentally important.

Firstly, there is the children and young people's mental health task force, which is chaired by Dame Denise Coia and supported by £5 million of additional funding. Dame Denise Coia has dedicated her summer to talking with children and young people and their families, services, agencies and practitioners. Earlier this month, she published her initial "Children and Young People's Mental Health Task Force—Preliminary View and Recommendations from the Chair" on our whole-systems approach to mental health services, and her work will help to implement the recommendations in "Rejected Referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS): A Qualitative and Quantitative Audit" that was published earlier this year.

Dame Denise Coia has already started work on a blueprint for how services can better meet the rapidly changing need that we see across Scotland. The task force will convene its first meeting next month.

Secondly, there is the youth commission on mental health. Young people are spending 15 months on an in-depth investigation of child and adolescent mental health services. They will do their own research, identify issues that are important to them and speak to experts, policy makers and service providers about the solutions.

The youth commissioners have been invited by Dame Denise Coia to be co-chairs of the task force. That is an inspired move that will keep the voices of children and young people at the centre of that work.

Thirdly, there is “Scotland’s Suicide Prevention Action Plan: Every Life Matters”, which we published on 9 August. It sets an ambitious target of reducing suicides by 20 per cent over five years. It contains 10 actions, and is backed by an additional £3 million. We have already established the national suicide prevention leadership group, which is chaired by Rose Fitzpatrick. That group will meet for the first time, tomorrow.

Fourthly, there is the see me national campaign, which was launched on 18 September. It is the biggest conversation that we have ever had with young people in Scotland about what mental wellbeing means to them. It harnesses the power of music to help people across the country to talk about how they feel. I am sure that the results will be especially valuable to Dame Denise Coia’s task force.

Lastly, our 2018 programme for government has mental health at its very heart. It contains a package of measures to support positive mental health and prevent mental ill health. Those new actions will build on the mental health strategy and will be backed by a quarter of a billion pounds of additional investment, which has a clear focus on child and adolescent mental health services, including school counselling.

All that is reflected in the report, which demonstrates progress on the strategy’s 40 actions and towards achieving our central vision. The framework that is set by the strategy has, with the other work that I have mentioned, helped to create the current sense of purpose and momentum on mental health that we see across Scotland.

Across society, we see a constantly evolving understanding of good mental health, mental distress, mental ill health and mental wellbeing. In the past, many people were unwilling or unable to discuss their mental ill health and to seek appropriate support and treatment. I am thankful that that is changing, but I want to go further in working to overcome the stigma that can be associated with poor mental health.

We need to ensure that the public’s understanding and expectation of mental health services are accurate and appropriate. The services that are delivered must also better reflect need. We know that there is a gap between how services are currently configured and some of the overall needs of the population. There is often too great a focus on crisis and specialist services. For adults and children, new models of support are

needed that are less specialised, are available for more people, and are delivered across different settings and services.

We know that changing the location and nature of services and support requires development of the skills and capacity of the workforce who will deliver those services. That means giving staff across the health sector and other sectors the skills and confidence to ensure that they are sensitive and responsive to emerging need and ways of delivering services.

We also need to put in place preventative approaches, and to deliver early interventions where we can. That means ensuring that access to mental health professionals is straightforward and easy to navigate for the individual so that the right help is available at the right time.

On a related matter, we know that the workforce must grow. Through action 15 of the strategy, we are committing significant investment to delivering an additional 800 mental health professionals by 2021-22. We are doing that in partnership with integration authorities, health boards, local authorities and other key sectors, recognising the different services and settings in which people can present when they are in distress.

Finally, the role of data and information is another area in which there is significant scope for improvement. We need to move away from the current focus on waiting times and workforce statistics and instead to use evidence to identify areas for improvement—to identify what works and what has not worked. Measuring patient outcomes and experience will also be important. Action 38 of the strategy—the launch of a quality indicator profile and a mental health data framework—will be key to that.

As I said at the start of my statement, we have come a long way since March 2017, when the strategy was published. The report that has been laid before Parliament today summarises that progress, and does so by looking at what is happening across the whole system.

All of what the report describes is contributing to what will be a fundamental change. Ensuring parity of esteem between physical health and mental health, and meeting our vision for the strategy, will require us to work together to reduce stigma around mental health, to develop innovative and new ways of working and, in doing so, to ensure that Scotland’s mental health services are among the best in the world.

I commend the report to members and will be happy to take questions from them.

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con): I thank the minister for advance sight of her statement.

I welcomed the Scottish Government's commitments in its recent programme for government, because we all want mental health to receive the focus that it desperately needs. However, the statement misses the point somewhat. Since the strategy was introduced last year, CAMHS waiting times have been the worst on record; an audit into rejected referrals has highlighted a consistent rate of one in five children and young people being rejected for treatment; and an Audit Scotland report has described children's mental health services as "complex and fragmented".

We have heard many warm words—particularly about early intervention and prevention—but things do not seem to be moving in the right direction. When I have asked about additional mental health workers, community link workers, school counsellors and nurses, I have got nowhere fast. Detail seems to be lacking.

It is interesting that the minister said that we need to move away from the focus on waiting times and workforce statistics, but surely those figures are necessary to know that the strategy is heading in the right direction.

What does the minister suggest as an alternative measure of progress? When will we see the delivery plan for the recruitment of additional school nurses and counsellors? Does she truly believe that the commitments that were made in the programme for government will produce a step change, particularly in early intervention and prevention?

Clare Haughey: It is rather disappointing that Annie Wells could not welcome the progress that has been made in 18 months. Stakeholders that have been involved in ensuring that progress include national health service staff, social care workers and third sector organisations.

Annie Wells did not really listen to my statement. On CAMHS, she will be aware that we have set up a task force under Dame Denise Coia that has been working over the summer and will meet next month. The task force will look at wholesale changes in CAMHS.

Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab): I thank the minister for advance sight of her statement.

Everyone wants mental health to be on an equal footing with physical health. However, the reality is that the Scottish Government is nowhere near achieving that parity, regardless of its warm words. We welcome the appointment of Dame Denise Coia as the chair of the children and young people's mental health task force, but Audit Scotland's recently published report "Children and young people's mental health" told us that services for young people are "complex and fragmented".

CAMHS features heavily in the programme for government. Will the minister assure the Parliament that funding for mental health workers in our schools will not come from existing mental health or education budgets? Will she also assure us about how transition care plans will be monitored, given the existing problems with CAMHS?

We welcome the distress brief intervention treatment that 1,000 people have received in Aberdeen, Lanarkshire, the Borders and Highland. The programme tackles the mental health of drug and alcohol abusers. There have been cuts to alcohol and drug treatment in the past decade, so when will the distress brief intervention programme be rolled out across Scotland? Will funding be increased year on year to tackle areas with high levels of deprivation and poverty, which result in higher levels of drug and alcohol addiction?

Clare Haughey: I hope that I will be able to answer most of Mary Fee's questions. It was additional funding that was announced in the programme for government. I am pleased that she welcomes the transition care plans, which were launched last month. They were the result of a piece of work that young people did, with clinicians' support. At the launch of the plans, young people said that they were extremely proud of the work that they did. I have written to all health boards to express my expectation that they will use the plans in the transition period from CAMHS to adult mental health services, although the plans can be used at other transition points, too.

We will evaluate the distress brief intervention programme, which has been extremely warmly welcomed—my local police force has spoken to me several times about how well received the programme has been in Lanarkshire. As Mary Fee is aware, we will also roll out the programme to under-18s. More than 1,000 people have benefited from the interventions, and we have collected extremely positive feedback. Once the programme has been evaluated, we will look at how to take it forward.

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): I thank the minister for advance sight of her statement.

The minister spoke about the delivery of an additional 800 mental health professionals to support A and E departments, general practices, police station custody suites and prisons. However, have the number of training places been increased to allow for the further 430 counsellors that have now been committed to for schools, colleges and universities? Is the commitment to provide a further 250 school nurses also being reflected in the extension of the number of training places?

Clare Haughey: We have made a commitment to the additional mental health workers, and we are working with the chief officers of the integration authorities on developing that commitment. That work includes obtaining detailed workforce plans that will provide information on workforce allocation, the location of the workforce in 2018-19 and details of the trajectory towards the total of 800 additional mental health professionals by 2021-22. We expect to receive those plans for further analysis by the October recess.

The integration authorities have devolved responsibility for health and social care in their areas. Therefore, it is key that they play their part in the plans, taking into account local needs. We are working in collaboration with other relevant partners to ensure the best use of the workforce. Local plans need to be made to meet the needs of local populations, and we will work effectively with partners to ensure that the workers are in place.

We have increased the number of nurse training places. As part of a wider package of measures to accelerate the supply of newly qualified nurses and midwives, there will be an additional 2,600 nursing and midwifery training places over the next four years. We are focusing on priority areas, including mental health and maternal and child health, and on remote areas, particularly in the north of Scotland.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): I, too, am grateful for early sight of the minister's statement.

Liberal Democrats are grateful to see the 800 mental health workers begin to be recruited. Can the minister specify exactly what roles they will fulfil? Will they be talking therapists or will they signpost people to interventions? Will the minister also tell Parliament how she intends her Government to respond to the call by Sir Harry Burns, in his review of NHS targets, that we should routinely capture adverse childhood experiences, so that we can direct support to those children?

Clare Haughey: As I said in my answer to Alison Johnstone, we are working with the chief officers of the integration authorities in delivering our commitment. We are making detailed work plans that will include where the workforce will be. It is important that we work to local plans, because we are not taking a one-size-fits-all approach.

On adverse childhood experiences, the Government is investing in perinatal mental health services as well as infant mental health services in order to support families so that we reduce the risk to children. We have also rolled out the family nurse partnership, which works with vulnerable families to reduce the risk of ACEs.

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): I welcome the minister's statement. Can she give a commitment that the Scottish Government will continue to engage with organisations such as the national rural mental health forum and the Royal Scottish Agricultural Benevolent Institution to ensure that we can further explore the options to tackle social isolation and loneliness in rural parts of Scotland?

Clare Haughey: The national rural mental health forum has been established to help people in rural areas maintain good health and wellbeing. The forum will help to develop connections between communities across rural Scotland so that isolated people can receive support when and where they need it. The forum has been provided with £50,000 of funding in this financial year—funding that was jointly provided by the mental health and rural portfolios, which demonstrates the cross-cutting nature of the forum's work. Since 2016, membership of the forum has grown from 16 to 60.

The forum has agreed to deliver three outcomes: a much-improved understanding of the unmet need for mental health support in rural Scotland; evidence of how to better overcome barriers to accessing and seeking support, therefore enhancing people's mental wellbeing in rural Scotland; and better-informed rural and health policy due to specific evidence and support from forum members.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Recent figures show that, in the past year, over a fifth of CAMHS patients in the Highlands and Islands region have not been seen within the 18-week target. Given the issues with mental health provision in rural Scotland, what more can be done to improve on such dire statistics in that region?

Clare Haughey: As I said earlier, the Scottish Government recognises that it is not acceptable for people to wait for a long time to be seen by mental health services. That is why it took action to set up the task force that is chaired by Dame Denise Coia, whose initial recommendations were published last week. Her task force will meet next month, when it will look at how we might revise CAMHS provision so that people can more quickly access the services that they need, and so that those who need specialist services can be fast tracked to be seen by them.

Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP): This week, we have been given more stark reminders about the devastating impact that bullying—often of our young people—can have on lives, families and communities. Let us be clear: bullying in any form, whether in person or online, is not acceptable. Will the minister outline what support is being given to

schools to enable them to recognise and support young people whose mental health is being impacted by bullying?

Clare Haughey: I agree entirely with Fulton MacGregor that bullying of any kind is totally unacceptable and must be dealt with quickly, whenever and wherever it happens.

Education authorities and all those who work in our schools have a responsibility to identify issues and to support and develop the mental wellbeing of pupils, with decisions on how to provide such support being taken on the basis of local circumstances and need. Local authorities will use a range of approaches and resources to support children and young people in their mental and emotional wellbeing, in line with local needs and circumstances.

Since 2014, the Scottish Government has provided £6,000 per year to NHS Education Scotland to roll out to local authorities children and young people's mental health first-aid training. The aim is to train staff in secondary school communities in order to increase their confidence in approaching pupils who they think might be struggling with mental health problems. Such training will complement the range of mental health strategies that are already in place in local authorities.

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): Unbelievably, the Minister for Mental Health said in her statement that we need

“to move away from the current focus on waiting times and workforce statistics”.

That is in the face of the worst CAMHS waiting times on record, the highest suicide rate in the United Kingdom, a sky-high vacancy rate and a desperate need to recruit hundreds more staff. Does the minister not understand that the way to move that focus is to meet the standard, treat patients on time and employ more staff?

Clare Haughey: I recognise—as does the Government—that mental health services are not good enough for our young people. That is why we have set up a task force under Dame Denise Coia, as I have already said. The previous Minister for Mental Health met a number of NHS boards whose current delivery against standards continues to fall short. The latest statistics show that five of those boards show some signs of improvement, but we need to go further.

Our mental health strategy is investing £150 million in services over five years, and it sets out clearly how we can reshape service delivery to benefit patients. That figure includes £54 million to help boards to improve their performance against waiting time targets by investing in workforce development, recruitment and retention, and

service improvement support. We are already funding Health Improvement Scotland's work with boards on improvement, with Information Services Division analysts being embedded in the boards, and through NHS Education Scotland's programme of investment in workforce capacity building.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): Some people with mental health issues find it quite difficult to ask for support face to face with their general practitioner. Can the minister say whether there are other ways in which they can access such services?

Clare Haughey: There are various ways in which people can access services. Breathing space, for example, is a confidential phone line that is run by NHS 24. People can also access services online, and we have rolled out a computerised cognitive behavioural therapy programme to all NHS boards.

There are also a great many third sector organisations, such as Samaritans, through which people can access help if they feel that they are in mental health difficulties but do not feel able to approach their GP. However, I encourage anyone who feels like that to try to go to their GP because their GP is best placed to signpost them to local services.

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): I think, similar to the suicide prevention strategy, the Scottish Government seems to be focused on trying to deliver a service to people who are caught in a spiral of poor mental health. Vital though that is, does the minister recognise that the system will ultimately crash unless a whole-system approach to health is adopted, which looks at the root causes of poor mental health including poor nutrition, inactivity, chronic pain, obesity, isolation and alcohol and drug addiction, and which considers all the evidence from the Scottish Association for Mental Health?

Clare Haughey: It is interesting that Mr Whittle left poverty off that list, considering what the United Kingdom Tory Government is doing in rolling out universal credit and putting a lot of people into debt and poverty. People are having to access food via food banks. He chose not to mention poverty.

The mental health strategy looks at physical health—at smoking cessation, screening and physical activity levels. Programmes have been set up under the mental health strategy that are committed to improving physical health inequalities among people with mental health problems. On smoking cessation, for example, NHS Lothian has a tobacco control action plan that it launched on 20 June. The plan contains commitments to raise awareness among medical

professionals and healthcare staff of the significant impact that smoking can have on mental health medications.

Two projects are running on screening. The first is run by NHS Dumfries and Galloway and is to improve, through gaining an understanding of the barriers to uptake, the uptake of breast, cervical and bowel screening among people who are experiencing homelessness or who have mental health problems. NHS Lanarkshire is reviewing options to increase uptake of cervical, bowel, and breast screening services for the homeless population in Lanarkshire.

The active living becomes achievable—ALBA—project is a new and unique behaviour-change project that links in with existing physical activity provisions to enhance sustainable individual physical activity engagement through behaviour change. The aim is to increase physical activity levels for people living with mental and/or physical health conditions in order to improve their mental and physical health and wellbeing. The results of the ALBA intervention will be available in September 2019.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): Can the minister provide an update on action 33 of the mental health strategy, which relates to the needs of people with learning disabilities and autism?

Clare Haughey: Yes, I can. The review to consider

“whether the provisions of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 ... fulfil the needs of people with learning disabilities and autism,”

which is chaired by Andy Rome, is under way. There is a strong emphasis on reaching a broad range of stakeholders and seldom-heard groups so that the real issues can be fleshed out and considered. That will mean several stages of engagement, and provision of the right support for people so that a range of views and experiences can be recorded, thereby making the review truly accessible. It is crucial that the review is truly inclusive and that its work is open and transparent. We want people to see, understand and participate in the work of the review. The first of the three public engagement phases commences this month.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you very much. I apologise to Mr Stewart and Mr Lyle as we have no time to call more members.

UK Trade Arrangements: Scotland's Role

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-14059, in the name of Ivan McKee, on Scotland's role in the development of future United Kingdom trade arrangements. I invite all members who wish to ask a question of Mr McKee—*[Interruption.]* Sorry. I invite all members who wish to participate in the debate—they might also wish to ask Mr McKee a question—to press their request-to-speak buttons now.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): I advise members that we have no spare time in this debate so I ask everyone to adhere to the timing guidelines.

14:54

The Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation (Ivan McKee): Scotland is a trading nation. For centuries, our businesses have travelled the globe to find and develop new markets. This Scottish Government understands the importance of trade to the success of our economy, which is why we take seriously Scotland's role in trade negotiations.

I spend a large proportion of my time travelling the country, listening to businesses and business organisations and working with them to support their efforts to increase exports, and I hear their concerns about Brexit every day. They include the inability to plan due to uncertainty and potential disruption; the threat to livelihoods and jobs; the impact of tariff and non-tariff barriers on trade and on businesses' ability to attract workers with the right skills; the risk to inward investment; and there being no guarantees to prevent a United Kingdom Government that is desperate to make a deal from bargaining away vital protections for some of Scotland's most iconic products.

Those concerns are reflected in the recent Federation of Small Businesses poll of small businesses, which found that business confidence is decreasing as the threat of a no-deal Brexit grows. The concerns should be at the forefront of UK Government thinking in its exit planning. Instead, we hear UK ministers accusing businesses of using Brexit as an excuse. By contrast, the Scottish Government takes business seriously. That is why we need to address fears by ensuring that Scotland has a voice in our future trading environment.

The publication of our recent paper, “Scotland's Role in the Development of Future UK Trade Arrangements”, forms an important part of the Scottish Government's preparations for exit from

the European Union. It clearly makes the case that we need to ensure that Scotland's economic and social interests are protected and promoted, that the voices of Scotland's consumers, businesses and wider society are heard, and that the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government and others must have guaranteed roles in formulating and agreeing future trade deals.

As members know, the Scottish Government continues to believe that the best option for the future wellbeing of both Scotland and the UK as a whole is to remain in the EU. That position is consistent with the will of the people of Scotland, who overwhelmingly voted to remain. They did so for powerful social and economic reasons.

The benefits of EU membership to Scotland are crystal clear. The EU is the largest single market for Scotland's international exports. Six of Scotland's top 10 export destinations are in the EU, and a further two of the top 10 have trade agreements with the EU.

Rather than choose to put our faith in new, unquantified trade deals that have yet to be negotiated, we recognise the value of current trading relationships. That is why we will continue to take every opportunity to put forward a robust case for remaining in the EU, the single market and the customs union.

The UK Government's approach is chaotic and irresponsible. Its proposals have been exposed as being unworkable and unacceptable, and as taking us towards a no-deal Brexit. Analysis after analysis, including that by the UK Government, shows that continued membership of the European single market and customs union would be the least-damaging option for a UK outside the EU. Such membership would help to protect businesses, communities and individuals from some of the inevitable damage that Brexit will deliver. Even the most optimistic estimates of potential gains from new markets could not fully mitigate that damage, yet remaining in the single market and customs union is an option that the UK Government still refuses to consider.

The risks that we face are not of Scotland's making but, as a responsible Government, we need to make preparations for all possible scenarios, including leaving the EU, the single market and the customs union. In Mike Russell's recent statement to Parliament, he set out the Scottish Government's coherent, consistent and collaborative approach to preparing for those scenarios. Those preparations range from ensuring that we have a working statute book after exit to the practicalities of maintaining access to essential medicines and ensuring that we have the right staff in place to meet the challenges that Brexit will bring.

Scotland's exporters are among our most productive and innovative businesses. The global Scotland trade and investment strategy sets out the key actions and commitments that we and our partners are taking to boost export performance and attract inward investment. The measures that we have already taken to improve our trade performance are working, with Scotland's exports growing faster than those of the rest of the UK.

We have established a trade board and appointed trade envoys to champion export opportunities at home and overseas. We have expanded our global network of offices, doubled our Scottish Development International presence in Europe and, working with the Scottish Chambers of Commerce, funded the establishment of local export partnerships around Scotland.

Additional support is being delivered through our enterprise and skills agencies to help businesses prepare for the future with a programme that includes help to create a Brexit-focused action plan, project support, online learning and skills workshops. There is also our £20 million programme for government commitment to support Scotland's export drive, which will help the next wave of export-ready businesses and includes our peer-to-peer export mentor programme, which is being rolled out in conjunction with the Confederation of British Industry. Moreover, there is on-going work to develop our export plan, "A Trading Nation", which is rigorously data driven and takes input from business organisations, industry bodies, trade unions and others to pinpoint where we should focus resources to maximise Scotland's export growth potential.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):

The minister is more than five minutes into his speech, but we have yet to hear very much about the subject of the debate, which is future trade arrangements negotiated by the UK. Is it the Scottish Government's position that devolved Administrations should have a right of veto over future trade policy?

Ivan McKee: If Mr Fraser had read the motion, he would know that the first part of it talks about the importance of trade to Scotland's businesses, which is exactly what I have been talking about in the first part of my speech. If he listens to the rest of my speech, he will get the answer to his question. The short answer, however, is no.

Brexit might not be our choice, but we are working with businesses to give them the tools to best meet the challenges that it creates, and we are focused on the decision-making processes that should underpin how future trade deals—deals that will have profound consequences for our businesses and citizens—are made. Indeed,

that is the purpose of our recently published paper.

Outside the EU, the UK will become a third country. As such, it will become responsible for negotiating its own international trade deals with the EU and with others. It will lose the EU's substantial negotiating power, scrutiny and expertise. However, the arrangements that are currently in place in the UK for developing trade deals are already inadequate, out of date and in need of an urgent and radical overhaul. In affording such a minimal role to the UK Parliament, the devolved institutions and business and civic interests, existing arrangements have failed to keep pace with constitutional developments within the UK. That should be changed now. Even if the UK remains in the EU and the customs union, the UK Parliament, the devolved institutions and others must have a proper voice in the agreement of future trade deals.

Current arrangements have also failed to keep pace with global developments, including the nature of trade deals themselves. Earlier deals focused on tariffs and quotas; now their scope is much broader and potentially affects a wide range of devolved interests. Their effects are felt in all sectors of society and by our businesses and citizens, and democratic scrutiny of those arrangements and their enduring impact must be increased and improved to reflect that.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): By way, perhaps, of balancing Murdo Fraser's intervention, I wonder whether the minister, now that he is talking about the potential impact on devolved areas of future trade agreements, thinks that it is now clear that this Parliament and other devolved jurisdictions in these islands should have the ultimate say on whether those agreements impact on and curtail or constrain devolved competences.

Ivan McKee: Yes, indeed. Mr Harvie makes a very strong point, and he is absolutely correct.

The need for change, of course, becomes considerably more urgent and necessary if the UK leaves the EU, the single market and the customs union. As we know, Scotland often has very different trade priorities from other parts of the UK. Different sectors are important to Scotland's economy—indeed, only one of Scotland's top five EU export sectors appears in the equivalent UK list—and its key sectors need to be protected in the inevitable horse trading that will form a part of any trade negotiations. Scotland has specific protected geographical indications, and they are crucial to our export performance. When UK Government ministers are unable, even at this early stage, to commit themselves to ensuring that that protection remains in place in future deals,

Scotland's businesses have a right to be concerned.

How we trade tells us a lot about who we are as a society and the values that we have. In our approach to protecting our environment, our public services or workers' rights, Scotland's Parliament and Government have consistently shown a different set of priorities, reflecting wider Scottish public opinion. It would clearly be unacceptable for a UK Government to impose trade deals that, for example, opened up Scotland's national health service to private competition or our markets to chlorine-washed chicken or hormone-injected beef. Scotland needs a voice at the table to ensure that our priorities are not ignored.

The development, conduct and content of future trade deals will increasingly have very important implications for Scotland, but the UK Government is making no proposals to change existing out-of-date arrangements. That cannot be right.

So far, the UK Government's record on the issue is not a good one. Its approach to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, to the Trade Bill and to the imposition of common frameworks have all demonstrated its willingness to curtail devolved powers. The UK Government has talked a good game about giving the devolved institutions their proper place and about devising trade deals that work for the whole UK, but the reality is somewhat different. When put to the test, it struggles to treat Scotland and the other devolved nations as anything more than narrow sectoral interests. At best, we are merely offered the chance to comment on already well-developed proposals. Decision-making processes must recognise, respect and protect the economic and social interests of all four nations of the UK.

To ensure that Scotland's voice is heard and respected, and to protect and promote the interests and ambitions of our businesses and citizens, the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament must have a guaranteed role in all stages of the formulation, negotiation, agreement and implementation of future trade deals.

Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Will the minister confirm that it is still the Scottish Government's policy to have a differentiated approach to Europe that would hand back all trade powers to Brussels?

Ivan McKee: Of course it is our objective to have a different policy from that of the rest of the UK with regard to Europe, but that absolutely does not mean that what the member said will happen.

Our paper sets out in greater detail what that involvement might look like. It also—and this is crucial—proposes the establishment, in statute, of a new intergovernmental committee to consider and agree a range of trade issues. Such an

approach will be in everyone's interests. Domestically, it will ensure that the conduct of negotiations is based on a full understanding of the issues. Further afield, it will provide reassurance to the UK's current and future negotiating partners that there is consensus across the UK around potentially difficult and lengthy trade negotiations, and that once agreements are struck, they will endure.

Scotland wants to be a constructive partner to the other nations of the UK and a fair trading partner to countries around the world. The benefits of a more inclusive approach to the development of trading arrangements are widely recognised and welcomed internationally. The EU demonstrated the value that it placed on such an approach by ensuring that representatives from the Canadian provinces were fully involved in the comprehensive economic and trade agreement negotiations. Although we can learn much from such examples, the circumstances facing the UK are unique, as must be the response.

I close by emphasising that our paper seeks to open a discussion, recognising that others, including this Parliament, must have their say. I look forward to a wide-ranging and constructive debate this afternoon as the next stage in that discussion.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the importance of international trade to the Scottish economy and the serious impact that future trading arrangements with both the EU and the rest of the world will have on Scotland; notes the publication of *Scotland's Role in the Development of Future UK Trade Arrangements* and the intention of the Scottish Government to encourage a wide-ranging and urgent discussion about the best way to protect and enhance the interests of Scotland in the development of future trade deals, and calls on the UK Government to engage with the Scottish Government and the other devolved administrations to deliver a modern, inclusive process drawing on international best practice that ensures the interests and priorities of all parts of the UK are properly represented, protected and promoted.

15:07

Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Con): As members will know, I did not vote for Brexit, but I did think about it. Although I did not and still do not agree with everything that the Brexiteers said during the referendum campaign, they did have some powerful arguments on their side. The reduction of the influence over the UK's legal systems of the Europe Court of Justice is one of the welcome opportunities that Brexit should deliver. Another is the opportunity to take back control—as the slogan has it—of our international trading links.

Britain is and always has been a trading nation. Our economic prosperity is rooted in trade, in the modern economy in services as well as goods.

The UK has a long and proud history as a trading nation and global champion of free trade, because it benefits the UK economy and delivers benefits for businesses, workers and consumers alike. Trade is a key driver of growth and prosperity. It is linked directly to jobs. Free trade leads to higher wages, economic growth, business efficiency, higher productivity, knowledge exchange and innovation around the globe. At the same time, free trade ensures that more people can access a wider choice of goods at lower cost, making household incomes go further, especially for the poorest in society. To take back control of all that is perhaps the greatest opportunity that Brexit now affords.

I make those introductory—indeed, elementary—points because they need to be made. Today, we face not only a rising tide of protectionism in a number of the world's major economies but, closer to home, real antipathy, especially on the hard left, to the idea of free trade. In taking evidence on the UK Trade Bill, the Finance and Constitution Committee has heard from a number of individuals and organisations that international free trade is a threat, not a route map from poverty to prosperity, and should be resisted not welcomed. That theme was echoed in Patrick Harvie's amendment to the motion, albeit that his amendment was not selected for debate.

There are members of this Parliament who do not believe in growth and would seek to resist the role of free trade in delivering it. Those of us who are economic liberals, who believe in free trade, would be making a mistake if we assumed that the argument for it had been won and could be taken for granted.

Ivan McKee: If Adam Tomkins is so keen on extolling the virtues of free trade, with which I agree, why is he supportive of the largest single backward step that we have ever taken away from free trade, which is Brexit? Are we about to hear about a reconversion on his journey back to being a remainer?

Adam Tomkins: Absolutely not. Brexit delivers exactly the opportunity for Scotland and the UK as a whole to trade more freely with the whole of the rest of the world's economy, including all of the fastest-growing economies in the world, which are outside the EU. One would have hoped that a trade minister might know that.

It has always been—and continues to be—our firm belief that Brexit can and must be delivered compatibly with the United Kingdom's devolution arrangements. That means respecting what is properly devolved to us, but it also means respecting what is reserved to Westminster. Under schedule 5 to the Scotland Act 1998, international relations, including relations with the European Union, and the regulation of international trade are

all expressly reserved to Westminster. Those matters are not for us but for our parliamentary colleagues in the House of Commons. They are matters in respect of which Scotland is, of course, fully represented—not by the Scottish Government but by the 59 MPs that Scotland elects at every general election to serve in the House of Commons. Respecting all of that is part of what respecting devolution means. If that constitutional reality had been the foundation on which the Scottish Government's paper, "Scotland's Role in the Development of Future UK Trade Agreements", had been based, the paper would have commanded far greater support not only across the political parties here but in Westminster and Whitehall too.

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): Will the member take an intervention?

Adam Tomkins: I fear that I do not have time.

Of course, this is the paper of a Scottish National Party Government, so it does not respect the boundaries of devolved competence at all. Rather than being based on the division of powers and responsibilities that are set out in the Scotland Act 1998, it takes a wrecking ball to that piece of legislation.

For example, page 5 of the document says:

"The conduct and content of future trade policy, negotiations and agreements ... have very important implications for Scotland, and it is vital that the Scottish Government is fully involved in the process for determining them."

That is a nationalist power grab, asserting, as it does, that the Scottish Government must be fully involved in the processes for determining policy that is expressly reserved to Westminster. Worse, not merely content with trampling over reserved competence, the SNP is demanding a series of five vetoes over the exercise by UK ministers of their powers.

The Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations (Michael Russell): Will the member take an intervention?

Adam Tomkins: No, let me make this point.

According to the document, the agreement of the Scottish Government should be required—not merely sought, but required, which, I say to Mr Russell, is what a veto is—before any proposed trade deal is prepared, negotiated, ratified or signed.

The Scottish Government's motion for today calls on the Parliament to support international best practice in the negotiation of trade deals. However, what the Scottish Government proposes in its wrecking ball of a paper goes significantly further than international best practice, even that

in mature federal jurisdictions such as Canada. In Canada, the provinces are consulted by the federal Government about the federal competence of international trade and international relations; they do not have a veto. In contrast to that, the Scottish Government is proposing not merely one veto but a series of five vetoes on a matter that is not even devolved.

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Tomkins is in his last minute.

Adam Tomkins: We agree with the Scottish Government that international best practice should be observed as the United Kingdom unfolds its future trade partnerships. However, international best practice is not understood by this Scottish Government—indeed, in its paper, it has been misrepresented by the Scottish Government.

International best practice has been articulated to the Finance and Constitution Committee of this Parliament by UK Government ministers, such as the Minister of State for Trade Policy, George Hollingbery, who said that the clear intent of the Department for International Trade is to

"take the concerns of the Scottish Government and the other devolved authorities about trade policy extremely seriously."

He continued:

"There are very important industries in Scotland and very important issues to consider ... We will continue the contacts at official level, at as deep a level and for as long as we can, so that we can shape our overall trade policy such that it reflects the interests of the devolved authorities."—[*Official Report, Finance and Constitution Committee*, 5 September 2018; c 10.]

That is exactly what international best practice requires, it is exactly what the UK Government has agreed to and it is exactly what our amendment to today's motion calls for.

International trade will require effective and extensive collaborative working between all Parliaments, Assemblies and Governments in the United Kingdom. The UK Government has already signed up to that, and it would be nice if the Scottish Government could do so as well.

I move amendment S5M-14059.2, to leave out from "the intention" to the end and insert:

"notes that international relations, including relations with the EU and the regulation of international trade, are expressly reserved to the UK Parliament under the Scotland Act 1998; calls on all parliaments, assemblies and governments in the UK to ensure that the UK's withdrawal from the EU is delivered compatibly with the UK's devolution arrangements, respecting both that which is devolved and that which is reserved, and considers that this will require effective and extensive collaborative working between all parliaments, assemblies and governments in the UK."

15:15

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): The only word to describe the current Brexit negotiations is “shambolic”, and that is perhaps being too kind. We are witnessing a Prime Minister who is out of her depth in negotiations with the EU and whose Chequers proposals lie in tatters, while the prospect of no deal looks increasingly like becoming reality and members of her Tory Cabinet are more interested in fighting among themselves than in getting the best possible outcome for the country. The chaos and uncertainty are bad for business, for the economy and for the people of this country. With six months to go, the situation does not look like it is getting any better.

That chaos and uncertainty have manifested in the latest business confidence figures, which were published by the FSB and which the minister referred to. *[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me, Ms Baillie. Mr Fraser, would you please stop muttering? You may get a chance to speak later.

Jackie Baillie: I suspect that his muttering is better than his speech.

In the third quarter of 2018, business confidence has fallen in Scotland and the UK. In Scotland, it is down from 5.12 to -13.2, and most if not all of that fall is down to Brexit. When people hear that the Government is planning to stockpile medicines and foodstuffs, they begin to understand the severity of the consequences. Of course, none of those consequences was ever spelled out as a slogan on the side of a bus. We need to avoid rushing headlong into a disaster for our economy and for jobs, and one of the essential pieces of legislation to try to avoid that is the Trade Bill.

I say at the outset that the Scottish Labour Party is pro trade and investment. We want the Scottish economy to flourish and grow, and that means support for exporting and for inward investment to create jobs and economic growth. We know that trade is fundamental to economic growth and that an outward-looking economy will lead to future prosperity. However, we really need to do better now, never mind in the future. Only something like 70 companies account for about 50 per cent of our exporting, which is simply not good enough. Economists tell us that we do the most trade with our nearest neighbours, and we do some £12 billion of trade with the EU. We need to deepen and broaden that activity.

The Trade Bill should provide the framework for the way in which we do trade deals in future. A strong economy post-Brexit will depend on our having a robust and progressive trade policy that reflects the interests of the devolved Administrations as well as the UK Government.

Unfortunately, the Trade Bill falls short of that ambition.

I want to touch on two main issues, the first of which relates to openness and engagement. What the UK Government is proposing is akin to doing deals behind closed doors. In Scotland and across the UK, we have a wealth of talent and experience in non-governmental organisations, trade unions and businesses. They should be central and involved in the process. To be brutally honest, there is little capacity or experience in Whitehall to negotiate trade deals, because we have not had to do it for 40 years. CBI Scotland has called for the

“setting up of a formalised engagement architecture for the UK that uses trade expertise from Scotland and across the UK, especially from the private sector”.

I see nothing like that proposed in the Trade Bill.

The second substantial issue is about the impact on devolved competence. As a constitutional lawyer, Adam Tomkins will understand that it does not really help that the Trade Bill and the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 deviate from the Scotland Act 1998’s definition of devolved competence, as that creates confusion and uncertainty and, perhaps, more work for lawyers. Although competence for international trade agreements rests with the UK Government, we can all agree that the complexity and extent of modern agreements means that they will directly impact on devolved competence. Examples of that include food standards, animal welfare standards, access to fishing waters and regulatory and oversight bodies—the list goes on. It is essential and right that devolved parliaments are consulted and that consent is sought.

The Tory Government has singularly failed to make it clear that its powers do not allow for ministerial overreach and that UK ministers cannot amend laws that are a matter of devolved competence without consent. Instead, we see sweeping Henry VIII powers—I know that the SNP also likes those kinds of powers—to modify primary legislation.

I am very clear that the Tory Government must not be allowed to ride roughshod over devolved areas of responsibility and use its powers to undermine the devolution settlement. That said, I do not expect the Scottish Government to have a right of veto. The business community—indeed, the whole country—expects joint working, consultation and robust debate before and during the process so that we come to agreements about what is in the interests of Scotland and the whole of the United Kingdom.

To do that, we need Government machinery—perhaps a more robust version of the joint ministerial committee—through which agreement can be reached in the interests of the whole

country. Unless there is formal and agreed machinery and a statutory role for the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government in the UK Trade Bill, we will not agree to legislative consent.

15:21

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): We are three speeches in and I have already heard something from everyone that I can agree with: Jackie Baillie's excoriating demolition of the chaos of Brexit could not be more accurate; I could not agree more with the minister, who very clearly made the case for the devolved countries of these islands having meaningful input to future trade agreements; and Adam Tomkins expressed his regret that Parliament does not have the opportunity to debate my excellently worded amendment, which is something on which we agree.

We have political and ideological differences, from left to right of the spectrum and from a more to a less-concerned attitude about environmental and green issues, so consequently there are differences in the trade policies that we would like to pursue. There are those who have a free-trade mantra and assume that free trade is always a good thing in every aspect. Just as Greens often criticise a single-minded and myopic obsession with growth in gross domestic product, which measures only one thing and tells us nothing about the diversity of the impacts of economic activity, we also critique the idea that ever-growing volumes of ever-freer trade are an objective good. There are benefits that will come from such activity, but there will also be social and economic harm.

We would like a trade policy that recognises that our responsibility is not merely to achieve short-term economic benefit for our own citizens or a fair share of those benefits in the different countries of these islands. Rather, we would like a trade policy that recognises a mutual interest of people around the world, as well as the need to live within the limits that our ecosystem lays down for us.

That might mean increasing the value, rather than the volume, of trade. It might mean trading things that are different from things that we have traded in the past. It certainly means recognising the importance of trade justice, rather than merely the desire of those pursuing trade opportunities to benefit their own businesses. The need to achieve trade justice is about the relationship with those with whom we are trading, not merely the interests of those in our country who wish to increase their exports.

When we debate trade and the future of trade in our economy, there is a range of philosophical, political and ideological objectives. That difference

of views is exactly why the process of agreeing trading arrangements needs to be transparent and democratically accountable.

I want to make a contrast. I am not talking about the contrast between deciding trading arrangements in the future on a multilateral basis within these islands or merely deciding them at UK level; I am talking about the contrast between how such things are decided at EU level and how they might be decided in the future. There are people who are implacably hostile to everything that the European Union represents, but I do not think that such people are in the majority in this Parliament. When the transatlantic trade and investment partnership was being debated at European Union level, and when member states, including the UK, were supporting TTIP, a great wave of concern grew up in this country and many others across the EU about TTIP's impact and the lack of accountability in the legal decisions that would be made when, in essence, panels of corporate laws would decide, behind closed doors, on dispute mechanisms. There was a need to have such ideas challenged, and the European Parliament was able to do that. People were able to campaign and to take their concerns to political parties, to their domestic representatives and to their MEPs. On that occasion, the European Parliament won the case on behalf of the public interest.

Of course, that kind of public concern does not always win out, but it is, at least, a possibility. In the UK Government's proposals for the Trade Bill there was an absolute absence of that kind of democratic accountability mechanism, and the proposals have changed little—they have certainly not changed enough.

Adam Tomkins and others might make the case that trade policy is a reserved matter—end of story. That is not the end of the story: the making of trade agreements might well be a reserved matter, but the content of such agreements steps heavily into devolved areas of responsibility, which is why—as I think that Jackie Baillie said at the end of her speech—we need to ensure that there is not only dialogue between Governments but a formalised mechanism so that Parliaments can challenge the decisions that Governments make on these matters. That has to mean not just the Westminster Parliament but all Parliaments and Assemblies in these islands.

Let me finish by flagging up what some of the ardent Brexiteers are looking to do. In preparing for the visit of Liz Truss, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, to the Finance and Constitution Committee this week, I read a speech that she made recently at the far-right, libertarian Cato Institute. I had to choke back my incredulity at some of her absurd speech. The Cato Institute is deeply implicated with the people who made a

killing when they kicked off the climate denial industry and who have argued against sensible environmental measures to protect the public interest—the free-market ideologues who genuinely want a ripping up of regulations. Liz Truss's speech, in which she complained about a thicket of regulations—regulations that protect people—is an absolute dire warning of what some people want to do if we do not have an accountable, democratic means of debating trade policy in future.

15:28

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): Many speeches are being made in Blackpool today, but the speech that will probably lead the news tonight is the one that President Trump is making in New York at the General Assembly of the United Nations. My concern about the debate on trade—in Scotland and in the broader sense—is that we face yet another binary choice, as we do in so many areas of public policy; that is, the choice between economic nationalism and free trade. I suspect that there will not be much succour for Patrick Harvie or anyone else from Trump in New York this afternoon; it is trade his way or the high way, if I may use the phrase that seems to have emanated from Salzburg last week.

I wonder whether this debate is a little academic for most businesses that are out there in the real world, trying to make a living. I have been close to many businesses in oil and gas and other sectors in the past week, and I keep asking people what they expect of Government, wherever that Government might be, on trade policy and the imminent arrival of something on Brexit—I take Jackie Baillie's point about what we might face. What businesses ask for is clarity, and if they cannot have clarity they would at least like to know that their Governments are planning on their behalf for whatever the eventualities might be.

I have dug through some of the UK Government's EU exit notes. Interestingly, there is no exit note on fisheries, despite that being an important industry in many parts of Scotland. However, there is one on trade, and in particular on freight. The Freight Transport Association said on the "Today" programme this morning that if there is a no-deal Brexit, British truck drivers will no longer have automatic access to European countries, which will affect between 95 per cent and 97 per cent of the trucks that currently leave all parts of the UK and cross the border into Europe. There is no certainty on bilateral agreements. A business that exports fish from Lerwick or from Mike Russell's constituency on the west coast of Scotland does not have a Scooby Doo what will happen next March. The vision of

the whole of Kent becoming a lorry park is looking more and more serious.

I would ask our Government here in Scotland to spend considerable time planning what the Scottish response will be to those eventualities. It is all very well producing policy papers on a trade bill—I will come to that in a minute—but the hard reality for the export businesses that the minister mentioned in his opening remarks is what the devil will happen under the different scenarios that this country now faces. That is where Government attention should concentrate.

My second point is on intergovernmental machinery—a topic a number of us in the Devolution (Further Powers) Committee, under Bruce Crawford's chairmanship, in the previous session of Parliament, spent all too much time on. There is nothing much in the Government's policy document on that, and I would encourage the Government to do rather more. The document does not mention any kind of dispute resolution mechanism. Such mechanisms are a feature of most countries with federal or quasi-federal structures, and having such a mechanism was the advice that was given to the Devolution (Further Powers) Committee over many weeks in the previous session. That is the crux of the issue and, had the Liberal Democrat amendment been selected by the Presiding Officer, I would have talked to that in more depth. Any normal functioning country—we are not that at the moment—looks closely at dispute resolution mechanisms and constantly refines them for Governments in its different parts. It is not about vetoes; it is about dispute resolution. That is the experience of international affairs. The Canadian example is clear on that in relation to the role of the provinces and the way in which the federal structure ultimately decides policy. That issue of intergovernmental machinery is the issue that I wish the Government would take away from the debate.

My last point is on where we are with the Brexit negotiations. Why does that matter? It matters because of those businesses that seek the clarity that has never existed. No matter how long this goes on, and no matter what the meaningful vote is in the House of Commons later this year, the job of Government here in Scotland, in the context of trade policy, is to ensure that Scottish business has as much clarity as possible. That clarity certainly does not exist at the moment.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes the opening speeches. We move to the open debate and I ask for contributions of six minutes please. We are very pushed for time, so I give due warning that I may have to give less time to later speakers.

15:33

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): In just six short months, and against her will, Scotland will, in all likelihood, be leaving the European Union. My constituency, Stirling, voted by more than two thirds to remain in the EU. People right across my constituency face being greatly affected by the economic uncertainty and hardship that anything but full access to the single market and the customs union will bring. As we all know, analyses by the UK and Scottish Governments agree—which in itself is unusual—that in any circumstances, exiting the EU will have a negative impact on Scotland's economy.

In the face of that evidence and the rhetoric from the Prime Minister, is it any wonder that the notion of a no-deal exit from the EU is causing huge concern? The current political impasse could easily lead us to feel deeply pessimistic about Scotland's future relationship with the rest of the world.

I concede that I have moments of great despondency—not for myself, but for my children and my grandchildren—about the future that we face. How will I explain to my grandchildren, when they are old enough to comprehend it, why the UK chose to turn its back on an organisation that was brought into being in order to avoid future conflict and war in Europe?

I had a few of those moments of despondency during the Finance and Constitution Committee's visit to Brussels last week—in particular, when some Bavarian elected members whom we met showed deep concern and were equally emotional about the prospect of the UK leaving the EU. It was a timely reminder for me that there are many millions of people across the EU who will, if the UK departs, feel a deep sense of loss as keenly as many of us will feel it.

It was during the same visit that I came to realise that it is time for me to face up to the potential reality of our leaving the EU and to do all that I can to help to ensure that Scotland has a positive and constructive voice in helping to shape future trade deals. We all need to begin to work as constructively as we can to have a different dialogue, to build trust and to create a framework within these islands on how we can in the future deal positively with matters of trade.

It is in that light that I sincerely ask Opposition members to view the contribution of the Scottish Government's discussion paper, "Scotland's Role in the Development of Future UK Trade Arrangements", which was published over the summer. The paper describes four models that enable sub-states to have a role in the development, negotiation and ratification of trading treaties, including international trade deals.

Rightly, the Scottish Government has not indicated a preference for any one model, thereby giving all parties that have an interest in the debate an opportunity to discuss what is right for Scotland.

Whatever members' views might be, it is time for us to begin a real debate on how Scotland can best be involved in developing the tools to make better decisions for the Scottish economy. For my part, I learned a huge amount from representatives from Germany, Switzerland, Norway and Canada whom we met during the committee's visit to Brussels, about how to create more positive and sustainable working relationships. I am sure that my colleagues who took part in the visit would testify to having had the same positive experience.

It is interesting that in Canada, the provinces are involved in international trade negotiations: there is an opt-in process for them. That is a different prospect from imposition.

The most significant lesson for me, though, and which was a common theme across all the countries, was about the deep level of engagement of sub-states and regions in the development of their state Governments' positions. It is clear that early and continual engagement and participation in the development of a state's position are prerequisites to avoiding conflict and the need for the dispute resolution mechanisms that Tavish Scott rightly touched on. That inevitably meant investing more time in discussion and in exploring the areas of potential consensus.

Consensus and an agreed way forward are the normal outcomes, because they avoid the need to be involved in time-consuming and costly dispute mechanisms or court proceedings. I have no doubt that the facts that the structures for seeking agreement are normally formally laid down in statute, and that they recognise the distinctive roles and responsibilities of state and sub-state, have helped in obtaining successful outcomes. Imposition on sub-states of the state's position is glaringly missing from the arrangements. Such are the confidence and trust that are created through regular meetings and discussion that, in some cases, the sub-states were involved in the negotiations, either as leaders or as observers.

I believe passionately in Scotland being responsible for its own decisions, as an independent country. Others will believe that devolution should be enhanced to give Scotland a much greater role in trade arrangements, while some will be content to accept the status quo. Whatever shape Scotland's future constitutional arrangements take, we need to press the reset button on our relationship with the rest of the UK. We can begin that journey today by agreeing that it is time to engage in a positive debate about

building a new landscape for future relations to enable mutual respect and trust to be built. That is crucial for the future. We owe it to future generations—my grandchildren and everybody else’s—to at least try.

15:40

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):

The starting point for this debate is that we are in new territory as far as the negotiation of future trade deals is considered. For more than 40 years, as a member of the EU, we have had no capacity to negotiate separate trade deals as part of the UK. As we leave the EU, that new possibility comes into play, and gives far greater opportunity for Scotland, its people and this Parliament to be involved in the negotiation process than was ever the case while we were members of the EU.

The UK plans for all future trade deals to go through extensive public consultation, including with the devolved Administrations, before then needing Parliament’s approval in order for them to be ratified. In case there is any doubt, that means that the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government will have a say in the approach to negotiations throughout the consultation period and the entire negotiation process.

That said, it is important to stress that there are few distinct interests for Scotland in trade policy from those of the rest of the UK. The international trade interests of Scottish farmers will be very similar to the interests of farmers in East Anglia; the interests of Scottish manufacturers will be the same as those of manufacturers in other parts of the UK, such as the midlands of England; and the interests of exporters of food and drink or anything else in Scotland, will be very similar to those of exporters in Wales or Northern Ireland.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):

Does the member accept that, although the interests in a sector may be similar, the size of sectors is different, and that a sector that is important in Scotland might not be so important in England?

Murdo Fraser: I am not sure that size matters. More important is a Government that is aware of the importance of trade and is aware that sectoral interests are reflected across the whole United Kingdom: regardless of size, they must have their interests protected. I think that that is exactly the approach that the UK Government will take.

It is also worth making the point that our economy in Scotland is closely aligned with the economy of the rest of the UK, and that the UK’s domestic market accounts for 61 per cent of Scottish exports. Nothing should be done that disrupts that internal market place.

Different countries approach negotiations to trade in different ways, and according to their constitutional arrangements. Bruce Crawford mentioned last week’s visit to Brussels with the Finance and Constitution Committee. Members who met the Norway representatives heard that the negotiation of trade is a matter for the Norwegian Government, as part of the European Free Trade Association. There is no regional input in that process, but the Norwegian Parliament has a vote on whether to ratify trade agreements.

We also heard from the German Länder that although they have a consultative role in trade policy, trade negotiations are ultimately a federal matter, and it is the federal Government that takes the final decisions.

As Adam Tomkins said—

Bruce Crawford: Will the member give way?

Murdo Fraser: No, I need to make some progress. I hope that Mr Crawford will forgive me.

In terms of our UK devolution settlement, it is quite clear that trade policy is a reserved matter. However, that does not mean that there should not be consultation of the devolved Administrations. As the Minister of State for Trade Policy, George Hollingbery, said when he came to the Finance and Constitution Committee, the UK Government is committed to engaging with the Scottish Government and will listen to and take extremely seriously what it and the other devolved authorities have to say about trade policy. His stated aim in doing that is

“so that we can shape our overall trade policy such that it reflects the interests of the devolved authorities.”—[*Official Report, Finance and Constitution Committee*, 5 September 2018; c 10.]

There are, of course, two ways in which the Scottish interest in future trade policy can be represented. First, we have Scottish members of Parliament at Westminster who are fully engaged in the process. They have a direct route into the UK Government; ultimately, it will be the Westminster Parliament that must ratify any trade deal that is agreed.

Secondly, as we have heard, there will be consultation of this Parliament and the Scottish Government on trade policy. However, it is clear from the UK Government’s approach that although there will be a consultative role for the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government, and for the other devolved Administrations, there will not be a right of veto over trade policy. That would not be in line with our constitutional settlement; that would not respect the devolution process.

Consultation should not stop at Government or Parliament level: we must consider the interests of

business, especially those of exporters who want to see frictionless trade around the world.

There is also the consumer interest; there has been extensive engagement from civic Scotland in the UK Trade Bill process. We should be wary of the scare stories about international trade agreements. It is not the case, for example, that future trade arrangements will see us force-feeding our children chlorinated chicken or selling off the NHS to the highest bidder from among US corporate interests. George Hollingbery was very specific on both those points when I put them to him at his recent visit to the Finance and Constitution Committee. UK trade policy is not going to allow either of those things to happen. The minister would be taken more seriously on the issues if he stopped the scaremongering and stopped scaring people, as he has been doing, and started to look at the opportunities in future trade.

Ivan McKee: Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Fraser is closing.

Murdo Fraser: The negotiation of international trade arrangements is a great opportunity for the UK and Scottish economies. Giving evidence to the House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee on 10 September, James Withers, the chief executive of Scotland Food and Drink, said that trade outside the EU is

“a game-changing opportunity for international exports.”

Similar views have been expressed by the Scotch Whisky Association and a range of other sectoral interests. Those are the views and approaches that we should champion in this Parliament, through seeing international trade as a real benefit to be promoted.

15:46

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): It is now more than 18 months since Parliament’s Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee published its report, “Determining Scotland’s future relationship with the European Union”.

What strikes me, in listening to today’s contributions, is how little progress has been made since our report warned about Scotland’s vulnerability in post-Brexit trade policy. The committee explored future trading relationships as part of the inquiry, taking into consideration written evidence from more than 150 organisations and individuals, and oral evidence from key stakeholders and expert witnesses. It recognised at a very early stage the need for Scotland to be involved in negotiating trade deals after the UK

leaves the EU. The report reached this unanimous conclusion:

“We recommend that a means is found to involve the Scottish Government in bilateral and quadrilateral discussions on future trade deals”.

It went on to suggest a joint ministerial committee on international trade, although since then it has become clear that the JMC that was set up has not respected the devolved Administrations and that, to be effective, an intergovernmental committee on trade must treat us as an equal partner in the UK.

The committee spent time examining the Canadian approach, under which every province sits around the table to negotiate the comprehensive economic and trade agreement with the EU. Christos Sirros, the former agent-general of the Québec Government Office in London, told us:

“even before the negotiations with the EU on CETA, there has been an ongoing permanent mechanism called C-commerce—Canada commerce—that brings together officials from the various provinces on the issues that are being negotiated by Canada.”—[*Official Report, European and External Relations Committee*, 22 September 2016; c 21.]

We also studied the situation in Belgium, where regional Parliaments conclude international treaties in respect of their exclusive devolved competences. Flanders, for example, is a partner to more than 600 treaties and other agreements.

The UK Government appears to be taking the opposite approach—a centralised approach. Earlier this year, the British Chambers of Commerce, the CBI, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Institute of Export and International Trade called for the involvement of the devolved Administrations and legislatures throughout the Brexit process, including their full involvement in mandate preparation, oversight and—critically—approval of trade deals.

That view is shared by the 27 organisations that make up the trade justice Scotland coalition. In a briefing for today’s debate, they say that, as it stands, the UK Trade Bill contains nothing that would give the Scottish Government or the Scottish Parliament the right to scrutinise or amend trade deals. In other words, Scotland will have no role in ratification of those deals, as things stand. The UK Government has argued that there is no need for that, and insists that the preferential trading agreements that the EU has negotiated with 60 third-party countries will remain in place after Brexit. That position is either extremely naive, arrogant or deeply mendacious. Expert trade witnesses who appeared before the committee told us that the rollover of existing trading relationships is by no means certain.

For example, Dr Matias Margulis of the University of Stirling emphasised that

“what we are talking about in the short to medium term is a renegotiation of the market access that the UK currently enjoys, not additional free-trade deals.”

He thought then that it will

“take years if not decades ... just for the UK to achieve the market access that it currently enjoys”.—[*Official Report, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee*, 3 November 2016; c 4.]

Two years on from those evidence sessions, our expert trade witnesses have been proved to have been correct. Earlier this month, in response to a freedom of information request, the UK Government confirmed that, even at this late stage, it has no clear agreement to roll over any deals that third countries currently enjoy with the EU and, crucially, no set date for asking those countries whether they are willing to do that.

We face complete chaos, even if a bad deal is cobbled together at the last minute. The clock is ticking: it is ticking for Scotland’s exports to the EU and around the world, and for our NHS, which could be served up to private medical companies in a free-trade deal with the US. You don’t know what you’ve got till it’s gone.

As others have pointed out, the European Parliament offers some protection against the most exploitative trade deals. For example, currently it must sign off trade deals that have been negotiated by the European Commission, and it has robust scrutiny arrangements whereby individual MEPs are able to look at confidential trade documents that will potentially impact on their constituents. During the transatlantic trade and investment partnership negotiations with the USA, 14 committees of the European Parliament scrutinised the proposed deal in detail. As a result of that forensic scrutiny, TTIP was shelved. Who will perform that forensic scrutiny after Brexit? Without the protection of Europe—the European Parliament in particular—who can we trust?

The Scottish social attitudes survey that was published this year said that 61 per cent of people in Scotland trust the Scottish Government to work in Scotland’s best interests, compared with 20 per cent for the UK Government. That is why it is absolutely crucial that every single member of the Scottish Parliament gets the chance to scrutinise future trade deals, and that the Scottish Government, which represents us, gets the chance to scrutinise their impact on the citizens of Scotland. We are elected to protect our constituents. That includes protecting them against secret international deals that could destroy their livelihoods, their public services and even their health.

15:52

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): We are six months from the Brexit deadline in March next year, and we are not much clearer about the manner in which the UK will leave the European Union, nor do we have a detailed model for trade policy to replace the structures of the European Union. The Chequers deal appears to be dead in the water, no matter what I think about it. At the concluding summit in Salzburg last week, Donald Tusk said bluntly that the economic aspect of May’s Chequers blueprint for Brexit “will not work”. We are only now beginning to realise the full range of the implications of leaving the European Union. In the main, they look bleak to me.

Trade arrangements—the rules and agreements for business to operate across the world—are, of course, at the heart of any deal. They have major implications for domestic policy, and they are probably a central issue for the Scottish Parliament.

The Trade Bill is unacceptable in its current form, and it should be unacceptable to most democrats. The extensive use of ministerial powers without justification means that it is an undemocratic bill. It is certainly not transparent, and it is subject only to minimal scrutiny. We are asked to respect the result of the referendum, but I cannot respect the way in which the UK Government has chosen to take us out of Europe so far. There must be respect on all sides.

The Brexit plan must give businesses clarity and transparency, but it must also be transparent to elected members, who are expected to scrutinise it on behalf of the general public, whom they represent. The Trade Bill is set to replace all the EU’s existing trade agreements, so there must be dialogue with all the devolved Administrations. It is a new trade policy arrangement, and it will impact on all the UK’s Parliaments. It would be against the interests of the United Kingdom, which I believe in, not to properly involve and include nations, regions and Assemblies across the United Kingdom.

For that reason, I think that the Tory amendment is way off the mark. It asks the Parliament to respect the fact that trade and international issues are reserved, but the UK Government did not respect our debates on the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill and this Parliament’s right to sovereignty over its devolved powers.

There is nothing in the amendment that would allow this Parliament even a say in matters that affect distinctly Scottish interests, which is an issue that I thought we might be able to agree on. I do not argue for a veto, but I am deeply concerned that the devolution settlement, and the United Kingdom, will be totally undermined if the Tories

do not recognise that it will be really important for the new arrangements to redefine what being part of the United Kingdom means and to give this Parliament its say in the creation of new trade agreements. Without such an approach, it is difficult to respect the outcome of the referendum, because we have had virtually no say in the construction of the new arrangements.

It is hard for ordinary people to follow how the process is playing out. According to *The Times* this week, Philip Hammond and Greg Clark called for businesses to be given more help to adapt to a new immigration system. They argued—rightly—against a cliff-edge policy, but they appear to have lost the argument. They were not backed by other remainers in the Cabinet and they have stopped speaking up for the many businesses that are deeply concerned about a new immigration policy that will not address their needs.

It is no secret that Scotland has a rapidly ageing population. We have many industries that rely on a lower level of skills. The pensioner population is expected to rise by 20 per cent over the next 25 years, which is in marked contrast to the size of the working population. The Scottish nation has different characteristics from those in the rest of the United Kingdom. That must be addressed in future arrangements.

Last week, a report that the Home Office commissioned from the Migration Advisory Committee said that Scotland's economic situation is not sufficiently different from that of the rest of the UK to justify a different policy. That is not true. The report proposed blocking almost all workers from coming to the UK, with a new immigration system that is focused on attracting highly skilled staff.

Matthew Fell, who is CBI UK's policy director, said that the plans that were outlined for low-skilled workers were

"inadequate, and risk damaging labour shortages".

That is an important point for our Tory colleagues to get across to the UK Government. Jane Gratton of the British Chambers of Commerce said:

"Any sudden cutoff of"

European Economic Area

"skills and labour would be concerning, if not disastrous, for firms across a wide range of regions and sectors."

Brian Berry, who is the chief executive of the Federation of Master Builders, criticised the ideas and suggested that they could devastate

"tens of thousands of small construction firms"

that rely on labourers from the EU. There is a long way to go before the new immigration system is fit for purpose and fit for our country.

The trade unions have had an important role—I declare my interest as a member of the GMB—in asking which industries might be under threat. The trade remedies authority, which is to be set up under the Trade Bill, will deal with crucial sectors for the Scottish and British economies. Steel and aluminium are already subject to tariffs from the United States, and the same is true of ceramics and tableware, for which high tariffs have been announced. We need a close relationship with EU trade policy; it is clear that the US will not give us preferential treatment in those areas.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): I am sorry, but you must conclude, as there is not a second in hand.

Pauline McNeill: I conclude, Presiding Officer.

15:58

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): Scotland wants to be a constructive partner to other nations of the UK and a constructive and fair trading partner to countries around the world. The UK Government's approach, which seems to place the devolved nations' interests and involvement on a par with sectoral interests, must change.

The UK Government has talked about trade deals that work for the whole UK, but in some negotiations, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland could have very different interests from those of the rest of the UK. It would be best to address those differences before reaching the negotiating table.

The way in which trade arrangements are developed in the UK cannot remain the same. The development, conduct and content of future trade policy and agreements will have important implications for Scotland, because future trade agreements will almost certainly involve devolved issues.

For the reasons that I have outlined, it is clear that the chamber needs to send the UK Government the strongest message possible that there needs to be a guaranteed role for the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament in the development of trade agreements. That would benefit Scottish producers, exporters, consumers and our constituents and communities.

It is clear that the best future for Scotland and the UK lies in remaining in the European Union or—at the very least—in the single market and customs union. However, we must do everything that we possibly can to protect Scotland's interests in future trade deals under all possible outcomes.

It is clear that the Scottish Government still has significant concerns about some aspects of the UK Trade Bill, and that it will continue to try to amend

it. We have already heard some quotes from the UK Minister of State for Trade Policy, George Hollingbery, when he appeared before the Finance and Constitution Committee. He also spoke to the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, where he stated:

“We are absolutely clear that there should be deep and meaningful consultation with the Scottish Government and that we should be open to modifying our proposals on the basis of the information that we receive. I am absolutely committed to that.

It seems to me that we will get much improved and much more deliverable free trade agreements if we can all agree on exactly what they should end up proposing and on how we should negotiate them. The fine detail of what form that mechanism will take is yet to be resolved, but I give the committee a political commitment that I believe that it is absolutely right that the devolved Administrations should have a real input”.

He also stated:

“I am absolutely determined—as is the secretary of state—that the consultations that we hold will be meaningful, wide and deep. We will take into account the interests of all interested parties, which certainly includes the devolved authorities. We are not yet set on exactly how we will involve the devolved authorities”.—[*Official Report, Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee*, 5 September 2018; c 5-6, 18.]

That tells me a few things. First, here is a UK minister who understands one aspect of the issue. It is not about a veto, which Mr Tomkins talked about; it is about having an agreement with the devolved Administrations. I will read part of the quote again, in case Mr Tomkins did not look at that part of the *Official Report*. Mr Hollingbery said that we can get improved free trade agreements

“if we can all agree on exactly what they should end up proposing and on how we should negotiate them.”

That is not about a veto; it is about two Governments working together to try to get the best possible outcome.

I would never expect any Scottish Government minister to claim that the UK Government should listen to everything that they propose. However, a UK Government that is rife with internal division should attempt to work with the devolved Administrations. The Scottish Government has been willing to negotiate, discuss and have meaningful dialogue with the UK Government for the past two years. As the Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation stated, the UK Government has “talked a good game”, but its actions have been somewhat different.

We have heard a lot about aspects of previous trade negotiations. We have heard about TTIP, chlorinated chicken, the selling-off of the NHS to the highest bidder, reduced food standards and a power grab, and about other negative aspects of the situation that we face. Bearing in mind that we have had trade arrangements via the EU for the

past 40 years, and given that any future trade arrangements will clearly affect Scotland, our economy and devolved issues, surely the common-sense approach would have been for the UK Government to genuinely work with the devolved Administrations and Parliaments in order to have a stronger negotiating position in future trade negotiations.

The UK’s wrecking-ball approach needs to stop. There needs to be a reboot of the intergovernmental arrangements, as Tavish Scott said, to build trust and common ground in taking forward international trade discussions. If the UK Government does not take that approach, our constituents, our communities and our economy will not benefit.

16:04

Gordon Lindhurst (Lothian) (Con): “On the Quay at Leith” is a 19th century painting depicting the important role that the port once played as the main trading route into and out of Scotland. That included the exportation of bottles—one million a week from the Leith glass works at its peak in 1770, according to figures that I have received. I have not researched the figures, nor was I around at the time to verify them, but the picture is one of a hive of activity, with ships being loaded and waiting to sail across the world. Indeed, until the building of the Kiel canal in 1895, for centuries there had been regular direct trade between Scotland and the coasts and islands of the Baltic Sea, including trade in Scottish herring by one of my own ancestors.

Let us fast forward to today. Leith may have changed dramatically, but the importance of building and maintaining trading relationships has not. Scotland now has a fantastic opportunity to play a key role in a more ambitious UK trade policy as we leave the EU. We are an outward-looking country with a distinct culture, providing products and services that are desired around the globe. The beauty of the sort of open and free trade that, as a member of the EU, the UK has always been in the driving seat of is that our businesses have the chance to export and show off their products around the world. More than that, our consumers are offered a wider range of products at more competitive prices, and jobs can be created as a result of investment in this country. We look forward to much more of that in the coming years.

On paper, of course, the EU negotiating position is formidable, with 500 million citizens and one market. However, with 28 different member states having their own interests, negotiations can be made very cumbersome indeed. Just ask the Canadian Government, which struggled on for seven long years before the EU eventually agreed

to a deal that was in place, provisionally, for one year, only for Italy's new Government this summer to threaten not to ratify it, which was enough to bring the deal crashing down around all member states.

Scotland's voice will be stronger as part of a more agile United Kingdom of closely aligned economies that can mould trading relationships around interests closer to home.

John Mason: Gordon Lindhurst argues that the UK might get a better trade deal, but would he not accept that there is at least a risk that the UK will get a poorer trade deal than the EU can manage?

Gordon Lindhurst: As a result of leaving the EU, we will be able to have a more ambitious trade drive—we have already made clear our intention in that regard. That will free us up to negotiate proper deals. Consultations are already under way that give all Scots the chance to comment on what they want to see from proposed deals with the USA, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific countries. We have not had such opportunities for some 40 years now as a result of being locked into the EU.

Although the Scotland Act 1998 categorises international trade as a reserved matter, Scottish Government officials regularly engage with officials from the UK Government's Department for International Trade. They can offer devolved expertise on a range of issues that the UK Government might find valuable in its own positioning. That could be hugely important, in light of the potential negotiations in front of us, with vast untapped potential for broadening our horizons—not least because the International Monetary Fund predicts that 90 per cent of growth in the next 10 years will be outside the EU. There are also significant gaps where the EU has failed to deliver free trade and investment deals—for example, the lack of a comprehensive trade deal with India, with its marketplace of 1.3 billion people.

Michael Russell: Will the member give way?

Gordon Lindhurst: Not at the minute. I am seeking to make progress.

The position regarding India's marketplace of 1.3 billion people, with which the EU has failed to make a comprehensive deal, is exemplified in the export statistics. Scottish exports to India sit at only £235 million, compared with those to the small country of Luxembourg at £370 million, which tells us that there is much more to be done on the world stage. Negotiating trade and investment deals after Brexit could therefore be a game-changing opportunity for international exports, as the chief executive of Scotland Food & Drink has said recently.

However, as well as looking to the future, more can be done now, as the Parliament's Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee found recently. Internationalisation is one of the Government's four key priorities, as set out in its 2015 economic strategy, yet in its report, "Scotland's Economic Performance", the committee found that Scotland needs 5,000 more companies to start exporting before it can move into the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development upper quartile.

Scottish Development International's own evaluation of international activities noted improvement in Scotland's trade performance but a shortage of exporting firms compared with other parts of the UK. Our report summarised the position: although the theory and principles of Scotland's trade and investment strategy are sound, it lacks Government commitment and financial backing.

The Scottish National Party likes to talk about constitutional minutiae, but it should instead concentrate on how Scotland can commit to helping businesses export while working with others to make us the great trading nation that we know we can be.

16:10

Angela Constance (Almond Valley) (SNP): The point has been made repeatedly throughout today's debate that trade agreements are not just about how many goods at what price. In today's world, trade agreements reach far and wide. They encroach on public policy and impact deeply on our day-to-day lives, cutting across both reserved and devolved competencies.

If we believe in inclusive growth that values fairness and competitiveness, recognising that growing our economy and addressing inequality are not mutually exclusive but two sides of the same coin, the calls for an ethical, transparent and democratic framework to scrutinise and agree on future trade agreements should be heeded; indeed, they are timely.

If we believe in a modern, participative democracy, now is the time to be clear about how the UK Government, the Scottish Government and other devolved Administrations will work meaningfully together, in partnership, to pursue and protect our collective and individual interests, because—like it or not—the world around us is changing. The Scottish Government discussion paper is quite simply making the case that we now need better arrangements within the UK to pursue those interests.

We all know what is reserved and what is devolved—it is written in black and white. However, life—unlike the print on pages of a law

book—is not two-dimensional. Making decisions is not a two-dimensional process. I know from experience that two sets of ministers in two different Governments reading out a list of what is reserved and what is devolved does not get us very far and delivers nothing for citizens. In the real world, reserved and devolved powers interact with each other—sometimes in competing ways. Although I have a simple solution to that conundrum, I will stick to the terms of today's debate.

I was really struck by the findings of the House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee when it said in July this year:

“we are concerned that so much work still needs to be done 20 years on from the establishment of devolution in 1998. It is clear from the evidence to this inquiry that Whitehall ... operates ... on the basis of a structure and culture which take little account of the realities of devolution in the UK. This is inimical to the principles of devolution and good governance”

in the UK.

That says to me that it is in everyone's interests for Whitehall to get with the devolution programme and that the biggest barrier is that the UK Government still does not really get devolution; it needs to understand devolution to respect it.

I was not a member of the Finance and Constitution Committee when George Hollingbery, the UK Minister of State for Trade Policy, gave evidence a few weeks ago, but I read his evidence with great interest and I found some of his language illuminating. As an aside, I was rather wickedly amused that Mr Hollingbery got Mr McKee and Mr Mackay mixed up; I thought that that happened only to women.

There were lots of warm words about a “commitment to engage”, but there was precious little on details, other than the references that were made to current engagement at official level, in which Scottish Government officials share their views and expertise “upstream”, which is an interesting word to use. Deep dives on technical matters, the role of Scotland's 59 MPs and “territorial secretaries of state” were discussed, too. However, all that is a given and it was a poor deflection from the need to change how we currently work.

When Willie Coffey asked the minister to give an example of how a devolved Administration had shaped policy, a civil servant answered:

“I am sure that we could find some such examples.”—*[Official Report, Finance and Constitution Committee, 5 September 2018; c 7.]*

She could not identify an example.

What is needed is a respectful and mature process in which devolved Administrations are

guaranteed a meaningful role in policy formulation, negotiation, agreement and implementation. There are clear arguments why respecting what we have in common and our differing needs is in the interest of the UK as a whole and not just Scotland. We heard from Joan McAlpine that the British and Scottish Chambers of Commerce, the CBI and the Federation of Small Businesses support the involvement of devolved Administrations in matters such as mandate preparations, oversight and approval.

The minister has outlined today a desire to be a constructive partner. We need a structure or system, whether that is an intergovernmental committee or another arrangement, that enables different spheres of Government to move on and to be able to work together on the substantive issues of the day, as opposed to constantly fighting about processes.

Issues of trust and integrity are of central importance, too. It is utterly unbecoming and despicable of Theresa May, as the Prime Minister of the entire UK—whether I like it or not, and I do not like it—to brief in Europe against Scotland and the Scottish Government.

There are many international examples to learn from. Many of the countries that we seek to learn from have different constitutional arrangements, such as written constitutions. Although we cannot cherry-pick or shift and lift carte blanche from other countries, we can look hard and apply learning from others and adapt it to our own experience, guided by clear principles and transparency. Now is the time to do that.

16:17

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab): As we know, trade agreements are the rules that govern our economic relationships with the rest of the world. For more than 40 years, those rules have been shaped by our place in Europe and for more than 40 years, as a willing member state, we have shaped those rules.

Exiting the European Union will inevitably change our relationship with the rest of Europe and the rest of the world. However, the extent of that change remains unclear because, even now, with six months to go until exit day, no agreement has been reached on a Brexit deal or on the rules that will come to govern our relationship with the EU. As Jackie Baillie said, the Prime Minister's Chequers deal is dead, the Cabinet has been in open revolt and no deal looks more and more likely.

However, today's Scottish Government motion is not about the wisdom of leaving the EU or the options that will have to be decided on. It is about trying to build something constructive when it

comes to international trade agreements and surely, all around the chamber, we can agree on that. I welcome the tone and the content of the motion.

The intention of the UK Government is, from March 2019 onwards, to negotiate a series of bilateral deals. However, until we know what the nature of the UK's relationship with the EU will be, we will not know the extent to which there can be an independent UK trade policy post-Brexit, and we will not know the full impact that it will have on the economy.

The Scottish Government publication on future UK trade arrangements sets out in detail the significance of trade to the UK and Scotland. Paragraph 23 of the report spells out in sobering terms what leaving the single market and customs union could mean. It says that a World Trade Organization rules scenario would lead to loss of 8.5 per cent GDP in Scotland by 2030 and that a free-trade agreement relationship would lead to GDP being "6.1% lower by 2030". For all those reasons, the Brexit deal matters. We need to get it right, but we should also be prepared for all eventualities.

Promising a "transparent and inclusive" independent trade policy in July, the International Trade Secretary, Liam Fox, said:

"To develop and deliver a UK trade policy that benefits business, workers and consumers across the whole of the UK we need to reflect the needs and individual circumstances of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland."

One of Labour's six tests for any Brexit deal that the Government might come forward with is whether it delivers for all the nations and regions of the UK. We must apply that same test to any future trade agreement to which we sign up post-Brexit.

As we know, all the UK's international trade deals are negotiated through the EU but, as the report points out:

"Losing the EU's negotiating power, scrutiny and expertise will require a massive step change in the way the UK conducts its affairs in relation to international matters."

Jackie Baillie and other members have said that that is a key challenge for us all—for decision makers, trade negotiators, regulators, Governments and leaders across party lines. We have to achieve a "massive step change" while ensuring that any trade arrangements are transparent, inclusive and meet the needs of the nations and regions of the UK.

Brexit is testing political conventions and orthodoxies in this country to destruction. It is time for new ways of thinking and working to emerge. We need a new mindset around how the Governments of these islands work together. It

requires goodwill and co-operation. It challenges us to learn from good practice elsewhere, as well as introducing new and innovative practices of our own.

In evidence to the Finance and Constitution Committee in April, Kathleen Walker Shaw of the GMB—I declare an interest as I am a member of the GMB—outlined concerns about existing global and EU-level trade agreements:

"predominantly because of their lack of democracy, transparency and inclusiveness of stakeholders."—[*Official Report, Finance and Constitution Committee*, 25 April 2018; c 3.]

We can better engage with stakeholders by giving our devolved Parliament a meaningful say, and by the UK Government accepting that the devolved Administrations are not its competitors or opponents but partners in an endeavour the like of which none of us have ever had to engage with before. To do that, we need a formal structure, clear and binding agreements, mutual respect and understanding, and parity of esteem. As Kathleen Walker Shaw also said,

"the Scottish Parliament and other devolved Administrations must have a formal and substantial say on why we are having any trade agreement, what its aims, objectives and scope are and what its mandate is."—[*Official Report, Finance and Constitution Committee*, 25 April 2018; c 6.]

As Bruce Crawford said earlier, the Finance and Constitution Committee has been taking evidence on trade, and I agree with him that it has been useful for us to hear about the experience of officials and representatives of different countries. I am struck by the fact that other countries, especially those with federal or devolved structures, deliver complex trade deals that are acceptable to their nations and regions when they have a robust agreed process that is underpinned by a genuine spirit of co-operation. That could mean central Government and devolved Government agreeing a common negotiating position before entering formal trade talks. It could mean observer status for the devolved Administrations. It could even mean proper recognition for local government as a sphere of government—not just a tier—with a significant interest in our future trading relationships.

There are no easy answers. What works well in one agreement with one country will not necessarily work well in others, but surely a new framework of co-operation and understanding is a sound and legitimate basis on which to proceed. Governments and devolved Administrations will not always get everything they want. Kathleen Walker Shaw again pointed out, in relation to the Canadian provinces:

"I know that whether the provinces were able to get where they wanted to be on CETA is an open question. A lot of compromises were made ... There is no perfect

model.”—[*Official Report, Finance and Constitution Committee*, 25 April 2018; c 10.]

Even if we do not always get what we want, let us put in place the framework that allows us to try. Let us make a complex process more transparent and inclusive, and let us make sure that it reflects the needs of our economy.

We are entering uncharted and turbulent waters. I hope that the UK Government responds positively to the motion lodged by the Scottish Government.

16:23

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): I have become increasingly pessimistic as I prepared for today’s speech and looked through the discussion paper, which goes through various scenarios. Given the mood music from Westminster, it is not a hopeful picture.

To start with some general comments, I certainly feel as though I can trust the European Union more than I can trust the UK. The EU has ideals but it can also be pragmatic. Westminster does not seem to have very much in the way of ideals, nor does it seem to be living in the real, practical world. The EU has negotiating power, scrutiny, expertise, and the fear is that the UK has none of those. The UK has been behaving like a spoiled brat. The Chequers agreement was meant to be an opening offer for negotiations not a “take it or leave it” final offer. It should also have come much earlier in the process.

There is probably a majority in the House of Commons for a soft Brexit that keeps us in the single market and the customs union. However, it seems that Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn are putting their parties before the country, rather than standing up to the ardent Brexiteers in both parties.

Labour seems to be saying that we need a federal system. I seem to remember that Gordon Brown said that quite a while ago. However, that would require a written constitution for the whole of the UK. Can we really expect that any time soon, even if Labour were to win a Westminster election? A federal system could be an improvement, as it would make it much clearer who had the power to do what, whereas devolution always leaves the real power at the centre.

I have to say, also, that part of me feels sorry for Theresa May, because she cannot possibly square all the circles that she finds herself in.

There is a lot of good material in the discussion paper. Paragraphs 10 and 11 in the introduction make a useful point about the amount by which we would need to increase trade with other countries

to compensate for lost trade with the European Union. For example, tripling services trade with China would still not equal one fifth of the UK’s current services exports to the single market.

Chapter 1 talks about some of the key differences between Scotland and the UK with regard to trade. Chart 3 on page 17 makes the point that the food and drink sector is much more important to Scotland than it is to England and Wales, and the fear is that UK negotiators will be less concerned about sectors that are relatively important to Scotland but relatively unimportant to the rest of the UK—that is the point that I was trying to make earlier to Murdo Fraser.

On page 18, paragraph 36 talks about the fact that, of the 92,000 tonnes of salmon, worth £600 million, that are exported from the UK each year, 99 per cent are from Scotland. How seriously will the UK negotiators take that sector, which is extremely important to Scotland?

Similarly, chart 4 on page 19 talks about the differences between the service sectors, and notes that professional, scientific and technical and real estate services are much more important, relatively, to Scotland, where they make up 45 per cent of the service sector, than they are to the rest of the UK, where they make up only 30 per cent.

The fear is that, when negotiations take place with the EU or other countries, if there are no checks on the UK negotiators they will inevitably do what they think best for the biggest part—that is, England, and potentially, the south-east of England—whereas the other parts, such as Northern Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, Cumbria and so on, not to mention Scotland, will scarcely be on the radar.

That chapter concludes by looking at imports and argues that global production chains can mean that products and their components cross multiple borders, which means that tariffs can become burdensome for producers and consumers.

I accept that there are challenges in relation to getting the balance right in this area. It seems that, under EU regulation, we have been largely unable to favour local suppliers over cheaper imports, and many of us have not always been comfortable with that. We have been allowed to have arrangements in relation to fair trade products, which has effectively enabled Scottish, UK and EU consumers to choose to pay a premium to ensure that farmers and others in the developing world get paid a decent wage. On that point, I disagree with Adam Tomkins, because, sometimes, free trade drives down wages in the developing world.

I would like the Fairtrade model to be developed so that not only individuals, but local authorities, or a whole country, could choose to allow only

imports that meet certain human rights or, perhaps, animal welfare standards. The hope would be that such possibilities could be built into future trade agreements in an even better way than the EU has managed, and that is what the Conservatives seem to be arguing. However, the fear has to be that the UK will be smaller and weaker than the EU and will fail to achieve even the present standards.

I thank the trade justice Scotland coalition for its briefing. I agree with a number of the principles that are laid out there, such as the suggestion that trade should be based on ethical principles. However, I caution against being too idealistic and cutting off our noses to spite our faces. I fear that, if we dealt only with countries and companies that are above reproach, we would not be doing very much trade at all. Again, a reasonable balance must be struck.

Paragraph 56 in the report talks about the length of time for trade deals. It says that the quickest deal that the EU has managed took three years to arrange, so the question is, how long will one with the UK take?

The ball is very much in the UK Government's court. It has taken far too long to get to where we are. It must be willing to negotiate, not just make demands of the EU, in the way that we might expect a colonial power to do.

I appeal to the London leadership of the Tories to please consider what is best for the country, not just who will win the next election.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Rachael Hamilton, who will be followed by Willie Coffey. You have both had your speeches cut to five minutes to allow the debate to continue properly—I thank you for that.

16:30

Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): For more than 40 years, the negotiation of trade agreements has been the exclusive competence of the EU. We know that, when we exit the EU, we will have far more involvement in our future UK trade agreements than we currently have in trade deals. As my colleagues have mentioned, our amendment seeks to amend the motion to highlight the significance of co-operation and collaboration between all parts of the UK as we move forward with Brexit. The UK Government has repeatedly committed to work closely with Scotland to deliver a future trade policy that works for the whole of the United Kingdom, yet the SNP continues to sound aggrieved about that and will not work collaboratively with the UK Government to help forge those future trade deals so that we can

reach the best outcome for Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Our amendment is unequivocal. We are calling on

“all parliaments, assemblies and governments in the UK to ensure that the UK's withdrawal from the EU is delivered compatibly with the UK's devolution arrangements, respecting both that which is devolved and that which is reserved”.

Joan McAlpine: If, as the member says, the UK Government is so focused on securing trade deals, why has it not set a date for agreeing the rollover of current preferential trade agreements that the EU has negotiated on the UK's behalf?

Rachael Hamilton: We need to focus on the engagement and consultation process that will take us forward with free-trade agreements in a way that involves Scotland and the other devolved Administrations.

Any future trade deal will have massive potential for Scotland. The Fraser of Allander institute has stated that Brexit will

“encourage companies to consider trade on a much more international scale and over a longer time frame.”

The opportunity to take Scotland global and really showcase our products abroad could be positive for our economy. At the moment, Scotland exports £370 million to Luxembourg but just £235 million to India, and we trade 80 per cent more with Ireland than we do with China. Only three of the top 10 countries in the world by size of population appear in the top 20 for Scotland's exports. I see Mike Russell putting his hands on his head. I think that there is huge potential, but clearly he cannot see that. With Brexit, we have the chance to change the current situation, and I just wish that Mike Russell was slightly more optimistic for Scotland.

Scotland punches well above its weight in producing many fine quality products for export. For example, take food and drink, which many members have mentioned. The IMF predicts that 90 per cent of growth in the coming years will be outside the EU, and James Withers of Scotland Food & Drink has said today that he sees that as a major opportunity. Martin Bell, the deputy director for trade at the Scotch Whisky Association has welcomed Scotland's future trade possibilities and has said:

“the Scotch Whisky industry welcomes the opportunity to share our priorities for future UK trade negotiations with these key trading partners.”

Many Scottish companies do not export internationally, perhaps because of a lack of finance, awareness of opportunities or international savvy. That is despite the fact that many companies trade with England and other

parts of the UK, which already requires packaging and logistics.

Shanker Singham, director of the international trade and competition unit at free-trade think tank the Institute of Economic Affairs, has said that the UK's

“narrower range of offensive interests”

makes it more likely to succeed where the EU had failed to negotiate access for Scotch in growth markets.

Ivan McKee: Will the member take an intervention?

Rachael Hamilton: I am sorry, but I have limited time, as my time has been cut.

I believe that the Scottish and UK Governments have a vital role in ensuring that companies have the necessary tools to promote their products for exports. The role of Government is not only to provide financial support but to increase awareness of the support that is already available and provide easily accessible advice on internationalisation.

The UK Government has made it clear that, as we leave the EU, our high standards for consumers, employees, the environment and, in particular, animal welfare will be maintained. Healthcare and food standards will not be compromised in future trade deals. George Hollingbery, who has already been quoted today, has said:

“The UK is absolutely clear that we will not be dropping our phytosanitary or food standards and that these are things that we will not be negotiating away in any free-trade deal.”—[*Official Report, Finance and Constitution Committee*, 5 September 2018; c 16.]

Let me make it clear that Mr Hollingbery went on to say that the UK will not sign agreements that allow the national health service to be challenged by foreign investors.

Food issues can also be dealt with in agreements. We have made clear commitments about how we will deal with such issues.

We must never forget that Scotland exports nearly four times as much to the UK as it exports to the EU. That is a fact that SNP members completely disregard, and—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Sorry, but you must conclude. Thank you.

16:35

Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): When I visited Brussels last week with colleagues from the Finance and Constitution Committee, I learned that, whether we are talking about the German Länder or the Swiss cantons,

colleagues in Europe embrace a process whereby federal Governments fully involve their devolved Administrations and proceed on matters only when agreement is reached. The Länder have full responsibility for education and culture policy, and the federal Government must get consent from the Länder on certain matters or it cannot proceed.

We met representatives from three Länder: Bavaria, which is the biggest Land, Thuringia, which is one of the smallest, and Brandenburg, which is in the former East Germany. Despite the differences in size and scale and the challenges that Germany faced when the east came into the EU overnight in 1990, the common threads that hold everything together are the basic law and the Lindau agreement, which provides that if an international treaty contains any provision that affects state competencies, the federal Government must obtain the consent of the Länder; in return, the Länder can conclude treaties with foreign states, with the consent of the federal Government. That system has been in place for many years now and has served Germany well.

I remember the surprise on the face of the Swiss ambassador to the EU, Mr Bucher, when we asked him how disputes are resolved. He and his colleagues looked at one another and said, “We do not have disputes.” That is because they engage in detailed discussions with colleagues and all interested parties—they also hold public referenda from time to time.

The Swiss cantons all retain a high degree of autonomy. They enjoy fiscal autonomy, have their own constitutions and control everything that is not specifically reserved to the federation, including healthcare, education and domestic security. The division of responsibility between the cantons and the federal state is respected and cannot be overturned by central Government interference.

The point is that those countries work hard at getting agreement in advance and benefit from doing so, because they avoid disputes and all talk of veto.

Let us contrast such an approach with the position here in Scotland. Our Government, Parliament and citizens are not to be part of the process. There is to be no engagement, participation or scrutiny, and we are to have no right to reject any proposal that might cut across our responsibilities.

We asked Mr Hollingbery, the UK trade policy minister, whether his Government is planning to include anyone from the devolved Administrations in the new trade remedies authority, which will try to resolve issues that arise. The answer, basically, was no. Therefore, we could have a situation in which the authority is dealing with an issue that clearly cuts across the devolved powers of all the

Parliaments and Assemblies despite there being no one serving on the authority who has any knowledge of devolved powers. Surely trade agreements must be supported by all the devolved Administrations; they must not simply be foisted on us.

Members described possible scenarios in relation to our prized Scottish produce such as Scotch beef and salmon, not to mention whisky and one of my local Ayrshire products, the wonderful Dunlop cheese, which enjoys protected geographical indication status. The strength of the European Union in protecting our PGI products—and even our NHS—should not be underestimated. The UK must never diminish or trade away the protected status of our brands simply to get a trade deal that it is seeking.

Scotland must have a clear role to play in the process and the UK Government, rather than oppose such a role at every step of the way, should rethink its position and embrace an approach that fully involves the devolved Administrations. The UK Government has to trust us and we have to trust it if we are to get the best deal all round—I think that that is the point that Bruce Crawford made. That will come about only if the UK agrees to the same level of involvement for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that we see elsewhere in Europe and that was explained to us so graphically last week in Brussels.

The UK Government seems to want to be the boss here—we have to take whatever it wants to dish out, because trade is reserved and that is that. That arrogance flies in the face of the approach taken in Europe that I have just described and is a recipe for disaster—as if we needed another one on top of the current Brexit chaos. Those in charge of the UK really need to move into the 21st-century and stop behaving like the colonial governors whom they once were. Surely we can move forward, embrace the modern thinking that we heard about in Europe last week and ensure that trade agreements are in the best interests of all of our nations.

16:40

James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab): There have been three important themes in the debate: trade, the role of devolved institutions and dispute resolution. Our trading relationship with the EU is critical and will remain so, even post-Brexit. Our trade with the rest of the EU is worth £12 billion, and Brexit will have drastic consequences for the country. I do not know how Adam Tomkins can talk about the importance of supporting economic growth when a no-deal Brexit would mean that we would not have rules, regulations and policies that were consistent with those of the rest of the EU. That would undermine some of that £12 billion

trading block and reduce economic growth. Under the new budget arrangements, that would affect the tax coming into the country and ultimately result in public spending cuts.

Jackie Baillie was right to point out that the Tories are in tatters over this. They seem to have spent most of the time since June 2016 putting together an agreement that will bring together the Tory party, without considering what the other 27 EU countries think, and were then surprised when the EU did not agree with their first stab at it.

Pauline McNeill was right to point out that the drafting of the Trade Bill restricts the powers of the devolved Administrations, which means that we could end up with a lack of scrutiny of trade deals and deals being done behind closed doors. Any lack of involvement of the devolved Administrations would not be good for the overall prospects of trade deals. As Neil Bibby pointed out, if we are going to get proper and robust trade deals that contribute to Scotland's economy and that of the UK as a whole, transparent and inclusive arrangements are required.

On the role of the devolved Administrations, Patrick Harvie was right to emphasise the importance of a proper process that sets out clear rules and mechanisms. Within that, it is important that, where appropriate, the devolved Administrations are able to negotiate variations from UK trade deals.

For example, more than 400,000 people in Scotland are not paid the living wage. In a previous session of Parliament, I tried to mandate that public bodies must pay the living wage. That proposal was voted down by the SNP on the basis—wrongly, I felt—that it was against EU law. If, under new trade arrangements post-Brexit, the devolved Administrations are able to derogate on issues such as the living wage when a trade agreement affects public bodies, it will be possible to fix that problem. That is an important aspect.

The other important point that has emerged is about how disputes can be resolved. Tavish Scott made some vital points on that, and I regret the fact that the Liberal Democrats' amendment was not selected for debate. The way forward is not for the House of Commons or the Scottish Parliament to have the power of veto. In that regard, Bruce Crawford made a substantive contribution, in which he reflected on the Finance and Constitution Committee's trip to Brussels last week.

Stuart McMillan: I am sure that Mr Kelly will agree that intergovernmental relations is a long-standing issue that has not just arisen because of Brexit.

James Kelly: Intergovernmental relations are vital. On last week's trip to Brussels, we learned about the importance of co-operation, clear rules

and a mechanism for discussions at an early stage. Ultimately, all parties need to try to reach an agreement, even if they start out from a position of disagreement. From that point of view, there is a lesson for all of us to learn. We cannot have a situation in which the UK Government simply shouts down the Scottish Government and tries to put it in its place. Equally, the Scottish Government needs to move to a footing on which it is prepared to work and come to an arrangement with the UK Government, if that is feasible. People ought to reflect on that.

The way forward is to have clear rules, to try to reach agreement and to seek consensus.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Dean Lockhart to close for the Conservatives.

16:46

Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):

As we have heard, a number of concerns have been expressed by members from across the chamber about the future prospects for Scotland's trade. I rarely find myself on the optimistic side of a debate, but I would like to address some of those concerns by taking a look at Scotland's current trading position.

Of our trade, 61 per cent is with the rest of the UK and 17 per cent is with the EU single market. In fact, the value of our exports to the EU has declined since 2010. Meanwhile, our exports to the rest of the world have been increasing in recent years and now represent 23 per cent of our trade. Given that 90 per cent of the world's economic growth in the next 10 years will take place outside Europe, it is vital that we help Scottish business to gain more access to those fast-growing markets.

To explore how we can take advantage of those trading opportunities, I want to deal briefly with continuity of trading arrangements, before I move on to future trading agreements. At the moment, more than 5 per cent of our total trade is governed by existing EU free-trade agreements with third countries. One of the key objectives of the UK Trade Bill is to roll over those existing EU deals as smoothly and quickly as possible. To address some of the concerns that James Kelly raised, I point out that the UK Government's Minister of State for Trade Policy, George Hollingbery, made it clear in his evidence to the Finance and Constitution Committee that there is a need to ensure that those trade agreements continue to be in place on the day on which we leave the EU. He said that it is the UK Government's

"intention to alter the arrangements as little as possible."—
[*Official Report, Finance and Constitution Committee*, 5 September 2018; c 4.]

He went on to say that continuity was all about giving certainty to business, consumers and our trading partners, and that speed would be "of the essence".

My colleagues have made it clear that the proposals that are contained in the SNP's trade paper would undermine those objectives. Requiring the agreement of the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament to roll over existing EU trade deals is incompatible with the devolution settlement and would delay the process. It would defeat the commercial necessity for continuity, certainty and speed in rolling over the existing trade deals.

Ivan McKee: How does Dean Lockhart expect the UK Government to roll over those deals when we are heading towards a no-deal Brexit?

Dean Lockhart: The UK will replace the EU with third countries using the trade agreements that are in place. That is how it would work. [*Interruption.*] Yes, it would.

I want to turn to how future trading agreements will be negotiated, agreed and implemented. A number of members, including Gordon Lindhurst and Rachael Hamilton, highlighted that withdrawing from the EU will give us the opportunity to shape our own trade and expand it with some of the fastest-growing economies in the world, including China and India. Our current exports to those markets are marginal: for example, less than 2 per cent of our exports go to China and less than 1 per cent go to India.

When it comes to the question of how Scotland should approach free-trade agreements, the countless policy papers that the SNP has issued have painted a confusing picture. On the one hand, in the trade paper that we are debating today the SNP argues that the needs of Scotland's economy must be fully reflected in future deals that are negotiated by the UK Government. For that reason, it proposes a veto at every stage of the preparation, negotiation and ratification of any UK free-trade agreement.

On the other hand, the SNP's policy of a differentiated approach to Europe and remaining in the single market would hand significant powers over trade agreements back to Brussels, which would mean that all trade agreements for Scotland would have to reflect the widely conflicting interests of the 27 other EU member states, with the needs of Scotland's economy being marginalised and diluted and there being no veto rights for the Scottish Government or this Parliament.

The SNP's position on Scotland's future trading arrangements is contradictory, confusing and lacks credibility. Our approach is to get the best

trade deals for Scotland, as an integral part of the UK economy.

Stuart McMillan: Will the member give way?

Dean Lockhart: I need to make progress.

As Murdo Fraser made clear, the needs of Scotland's key economic sectors are closely aligned with those of the rest of the UK, whether that is the financial services in Edinburgh and London, manufacturing in Glasgow and the Midlands or fisheries in the north-east and Cornwall. The best way to secure those needs is for the Scottish Government to work closely with the UK Government to ensure that Scotland's interests are reflected in future deals.

There is work to be done in that area, but the Finance and Constitution Committee has heard many examples of how Scotland's trading interests can be fully reflected in future UK-wide deals. Those include the Scotland Office's involvement in developing trade policy, Scotland's 59 MPs representing the interests of our trade policy in the UK Parliament and the monthly policy round tables that are held at senior official level to discuss trade policy.

There is scope for consultation, there is scope for scrutiny and there is scope for amendments to trade policy, but there should be no veto.

Scotland's trading future can be positive, if the Scottish Government works together with the UK Government to enter new trade deals with fast-growing economies globally, and does so only in a manner that is compatible with the existing United Kingdom's devolution arrangements.

I support Adam Tomkins's amendment.

16:52

The Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations (Michael Russell): I would have accepted the Green and Lib Dem amendments had they been selected for debate, because they are compatible with the consensual debate that we have had this afternoon. I am grateful to all members—apart from Tory members—for understanding that “Scotland's Role in the Development of Future UK Trade Arrangements” is a consultative paper that was designed to start the process of discussion. I am very glad that the consultation has been successful. In that regard, the debate has been positive.

Bruce Crawford made a significant contribution, and a number of members mentioned his speech. He said that the normal approach—which is clearly what the Finance and Constitution Committee members heard about when they were in Brussels—would be to seek consensus and to

have robust formal structures on which to rely. I think that every party in the chamber has raised the issue of formal structures—the subject was mentioned by Jackie Baillie, Tavish Scott, Neil Bibby and a range of others. Of course, at the British-Irish Council, the Taoiseach very successfully addressed how formal structures underpin trust; I have cited the Taoiseach before in the chamber. When talking about trust in the EU, he said that it works because there are formal structures that can be relied on.

All that the Scottish Government's paper seeks to achieve is a normal approach to modern trade arrangements. A number of members have made that point. Trade arrangements have changed over the past 40 or 50 years. It is important that citizens are consulted. They expect high environmental and welfare standards to be reflected in trade agreements, which is a point that Patrick Harvie made well.

The only people who have stood against normality in the debate are the Conservatives. They see it as unacceptable that we should have any involvement of the type that is suggested in our trade paper; indeed, they consider it to be unacceptable even to discuss it. It is what might be called the “Eat your cereal” approach. They have given up debating what needs to change.

What we heard from the Tories this afternoon was fascinating and showed what is now happening in the Brexit debate. For example, the position that the Tories have taken with regard to the single market is abnormal, even in terms of Tory history. I will quote a Lancaster House speech—not the Lancaster house speech—from 18 April 1988.

“Just think for a moment what a prospect that is. A single market without barriers—visible or invisible—giving you direct and unhindered access to the purchasing power of over 300 million of the world's wealthiest and most prosperous people. Bigger than Japan. Bigger than the United States. On your doorstep. And with the Channel Tunnel to give you direct access to it. It's not a dream. It's not a vision. It's not some bureaucrat's plan. It's for real.”

That was Margaret Thatcher, and it is the first and only time that I shall ever quote her with approval in the chamber. It shows that the Tories have turned their backs not just on the modern world but on their own recent history—they have turned their backs on the Iron Lady.

The Tories have even turned their backs on the positions that they held a matter of weeks or months ago. Groupthink has taken over in the Tory party. On 28 June 2016, Adam Tomkins told the chamber:

“leave should mean that we”

remain in

“the EU’s single market.”—[*Official Report*, 28 June 2016; c 26.]

That was Adam Tomkins’s view several days after the referendum. However, as Brexit sinks into the swamp, along with the Prime Minister, Tory members are the last defenders of Brexit—they are the born-again Brexiteers. Adam Tomkins said today, trying to curry favour with the Brexiteers, that he “did think about” voting for Brexit. If members read the *Official Report*, they will see that that is what he said. He wants to

“take back control ... of our international trading links”.

When the obvious questions were asked—Who would they be with? On what terms?—Gordon Lindhurst, who would not take an intervention on that point, argued that the country in question is India. Let us look for a second at the reality of the Indian trade agreement with the EU, which has not been finalised for two reasons that are widely admitted. They are: because India wants to continue tariffs on Scotch whisky, and because the UK would not accept the demand for access and migration—a point that was made by the Indian ambassador to the UK when he said that they are “in no rush” to do the deal.

That is the reality; it is a chimera to say that all those countries are waiting to do a deal. Some time ago, Dean Lockhart was David Cameron’s favourite Tory candidate, but he now argues that we are about to hand back control to Brussels. That comes from a man who voted and campaigned to remain. We are debating collaborative work by sovereign states, but we have knee-jerk Brexiteers on the Tory benches.

What is taking place is shocking because it is damaging to Scotland and to Scottish interests. The people of Scotland know that they cannot look to the Conservatives to defend them because they have sold the Brexit pass completely by misrepresenting the issues. There is no veto mentioned in our paper; there is consultation. There is no ban on consensus; there is a requirement for consensus.

Brexit preparations for business are going ahead apace and, as Jackie Baillie pointed out with regard to the UK Trade Bill, legislative consent that will be refused because of the Sewell issue should also be refused because of the unbending approach on not listening to the Welsh and Scottish Governments on such issues as membership of the trade remedies authority.

We have a serious paper for serious discussion. I am grateful to members of all the parties—except the Conservatives—who have taken that point and who wish to support the debate. We now see what Brexit has done to the Scottish Conservatives: it has removed the word “Scottish”. They are simply “Conservatives”, defending the Conservative

status quo and the most incompetent, ruinous and disastrous Government that any of us can remember—a Government that is now in its final days, one hopes. Let us hope that it does not drag the rest of us down with it.

The Tories sneer, but I remind them of the words of Margaret Thatcher that I quoted. There was a time when trading was seen as important. Now, nothing is important except the survival of the Conservative Party.

Business Motion

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-14085, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a revised business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees to the following revision to the programme of business for Thursday 27 September 2018—

delete

2.30 pm Scottish Government Debate: Scottish Government Support for Veterans and the Armed Forces Community in Scotland

and insert

2.30 pm Ministerial Statement: Paediatric Services at St John's Hospital

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Scottish Government Support for Veterans and the Armed Forces Community in Scotland—[*Graeme Dey.*]

Motion agreed to.

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): We now turn to decision time. Members should ensure that they have their new cards inserted correctly.

The first question is, that amendment S5M-14059.2, in the name of Adam Tomkins, which seeks to amend motion S5M-14059, in the name of Ivan McKee, on Scotland's role in the development of future United Kingdom trade arrangements, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)

Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 29, Against 84, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The second question is, that motion S5M-14059, in the name of Ivan McKee, on Scotland's role in the development of future United Kingdom trade arrangements, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)

Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Abstentions

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 84, Against 0, Abstentions 29.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament recognises the importance of international trade to the Scottish economy and the serious

impact that future trading arrangements with both the EU and the rest of the world will have on Scotland; notes the publication of *Scotland's Role in the Development of Future UK Trade Arrangements* and the intention of the Scottish Government to encourage a wide-ranging and urgent discussion about the best way to protect and enhance the interests of Scotland in the development of future trade deals, and calls on the UK Government to engage with the Scottish Government and the other devolved administrations to deliver a modern, inclusive process drawing on international best practice that ensures the interests and priorities of all parts of the UK are properly represented, protected and promoted.

Eye Health Week 2018

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-13553, in the name of Stuart McMillan, on eye health week 2018. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament notes that Eye Health Week takes place between 24 and 30 September 2018; welcomes the progress that has been made with eye health and the hugely important eye examinations; notes that, in the last financial year, 1,923,926 over 16s and 288,258 under 16s received a free eye test, which is the highest annual level on record; commends all organisations involved in promoting eye health and care, and notes the calls for the public to get their eyes tested on a regular basis by utilising the free eye examination.

17:04

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): I am delighted to lead the debate and grateful to all the members who signed the motion and who will speak today. I thank all the organisations that provided briefings for the debate.

I hosted a Royal National Institute of Blind People Scotland stall in the Parliament last week, and I appreciate the time that members took to visit it. The team who staffed the stall were delighted by the number of MSPs who visited it to learn about eye health, the services that RNIB Scotland offers and the many and varied conditions that exist. I thank everyone very much.

Since 2011, I have chaired the cross-party group on visual impairment; I became a member of the CPG after being elected in 2007. I am always keen to raise awareness of eye health week, as I recognise that we must continue to highlight the importance of eye health, the progress that has been made and the challenges that still exist.

I celebrate the success of the free eye test policy in Scotland. Since 2007, the policy has been backed by £775 million of funding, following its introduction by the previous Labour-Liberal Democrat Executive in 2006. In the initiative's first year, 1,349,979 people obtained free eye tests. In the most recent full year—2017-18—the figure rose to almost 2 million people. I am sure that those who were ministers pre-2007 will be delighted with the growth in the number of people obtaining free eye tests; I am also sure that every health minister since 2007 will be delighted with the continued annual increase. Overall, more than 21 million tests have been conducted since the policy came into effect.

The national average for uptake of sight tests across all health boards sits just below one in three people, at 31.8 per cent, but I am pleased that my health board—NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde—is bucking the trend with uptake of 33.1 per cent. By comparison, NHS Orkney has the lowest rate at 24.1 per cent. That emphasises that more work needs to be done to encourage everyone in Scotland to access free eye health checks.

Like many conditions, sight loss can affect anyone, which is why it is important to realise that eye tests do not just test sight but can detect symptoms of serious health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke and cancer. If an eye health check identifies changes in the eyes before vision is affected, the condition can be treated before it reaches an advanced stage. That is in the best interests of patients and our national health service, as it is cost effective and more efficient than meeting the medical and social costs that arise if people lose their vision or suffer ill health unnecessarily.

Every survey shows that sight is the sense that people fear losing most, yet we can be surprisingly negligent about our eye health. We tend to think of eye tests as being only for people who need contact lenses or glasses, but we should all get our eyes checked every two years or so to keep healthy.

Last year, alongside Cate Vallis from RNIB Scotland, I was on a stall outside Specsavers in the Oak Mall in Greenock, making shoppers aware of free eye tests. It certainly was a hard shift; I will not lie—I have had easier shifts distributing political material. I accept that that might have been because a politician was trying to give something out, but the issue has been raised before in the cross-party group and I have discussed it with others.

At the cross-party group meeting in May, Dr Alexandros Zangelidis from the University of Aberdeen gave a presentation entitled "Eye Care Services in Scotland: Did the Scots Get It Right?", in which he discussed his research into the introduction of the free eye examination. His analysis concluded that, overall, the policy has been a success and is to be welcomed. However, when it comes to looking after our eyes, he highlighted challenges that face communities such as mine that have areas of poverty and deprivation.

Although more people are getting their eyes tested, there is a small but growing gap between the less well-off and the more affluent in society. There are various theories as to why those from more deprived Scottish index of multiple deprivation areas are less inclined than others to get their eyes tested. One theory is that people

worry that, if an eye test indicates that they need glasses, they will not be able to afford them. That could lead to the gap increasing, even though—I stress this—more people are getting their eyes tested.

Dr Zangelidis's research also refers to people's lack of understanding about eye health, which could explain the hard shift that Cate Vallis and I faced last year in trying to make people aware of the free eye tests.

How do we fix that? I would like the Scottish Government to consider a few actions. I would like a refreshed public information campaign to make people aware of the free eye examination, with a targeted approach to communities with economic challenges. I would be quite content for parts of my Greenock and Inverclyde constituency to be used in any such pilot scheme.

Four of the most common causes of sight loss are age-related macular degeneration, cataracts, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy, which is now the single biggest cause of sight loss among Scots of working age. Some of my constituents live with those conditions. Earlier this year, I visited the Jenny's Well facility in Paisley, which is one of only two specialist residential care homes in Scotland for visually impaired older people and which is run by Royal Blind. I went across the road to Scottish War Blinded's Hawkhead centre, which provides free support to ex-service personnel who are living with sight loss. Although some of my constituents use those services, many more people could benefit from them. That is why I am keen to highlight such facilities at every opportunity.

It is not just older people or veterans who are affected by visual impairment. As the Scottish Government's school census figures indicate, the number of pupils with visual impairment has more than doubled since 2010. When we consider that more than 180,000 people live with sight loss in Scotland, that the figure is expected to double over the next 20 years, and that 50 per cent of sight loss is preventable, it is evident that free eye health checks are an important measure to help keep our nation healthy and that they can make a real difference to people's lives.

In its briefing, Optometry Scotland highlights the National Health Service (General Ophthalmic Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2006, which have revolutionised the delivery of community eye care in Scotland. Most notably, they have led to a shift in the balance of care away from general practitioners and hospitals, which has freed up vital resources. In 2016-17, optometry services indicated that the regulations saved the NHS £71 million, with community optometry preventing more than 370,000 people from having to attend hospital for eye issues every year. Further, more

than 80 per cent of acute eye conditions are now managed by optometrists, up from 25 per cent before the introduction of the GOS regulations 12 years ago.

Although Scottish optometry is leading the world in the design and delivery of community eye care, Optometry Scotland states that a concerted focus on forward planning for an increasing older population is needed, along with a Scottish Government-supported strategy to encourage people to consider a career in the optical sector. In Scotland, the number of registered blind and partially sighted people is around 34,500, and every seven minutes someone in the United Kingdom will be diagnosed with macular disease, which is the biggest cause of blindness in the UK.

It is pertinent that, to increase the number of people who benefit from the policy, we as MSPs do all that we can to make our constituents aware of free eye tests in Scotland. That should mean that the rate of preventable sight loss will decrease and that as many people as possible can live life seeing the full picture.

17:13

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): I congratulate Stuart McMillan on securing this important debate. I welcome the opportunity to pay tribute to our eye health professionals and the organisations that are involved with promoting eye health and care. National eye health week gives us an important opportunity to increase understanding of eye health and to educate people on the importance of eye examinations in identifying sight loss and other health conditions.

As has been said, since April 2006, all people residing in Scotland have been entitled to free NHS eye examinations every two years. The aim of the policy change was to increase demand for eye examinations and, as a result, improve the visual health of Scotland's population through the early detection of eye health issues.

I am looking at the figures for the past financial year. As Stuart McMillan said, nearly 2 million over-16s and nearly 300,000 under-16s received a free eye test—the highest annual level on record. It is clear that uptake is increasing, which is extremely encouraging. However, there is still scope to do more. The number of Scottish people with sight loss is still projected to double to almost 400,000 by 2030, so we must continue to encourage and promote greater utilisation of existing eye care services.

Eye examinations ensure that people receive early support or treatment for vision impairment, but they also identify other health conditions such as high blood pressure, arteriosclerosis, tumours and diabetes. Those aged under 16 or over 60,

individuals with glaucoma, those aged over 40 with a close family history of glaucoma, and patients with ocular hypertension or diabetes are entitled to free examinations each year rather than the standard two-year period. As co-convenor of the cross-party group on diabetes, I say that such checks are important for the 290,000 people in Scotland who currently live with diabetes, as they are vital in picking up early signs of diabetic retinopathy, which is a complication of diabetes caused by high blood sugar levels damaging the back of the eye. Diabetic retinopathy is now the single biggest cause of sight loss among working-age adults in Scotland and can cause blindness if left undiagnosed and untreated. It is estimated that nearly all people with type 1 diabetes will have diabetic eye disease 20 years after diagnosis, and that as many as 60 per cent of those with type 2 diabetes will show signs of the condition. A comprehensive eye exam once a year ensures that if diabetic retinopathy is detected it can be treated before it reaches an advanced stage and significantly damages sight. The importance of such checks cannot be emphasised enough.

Eye health week is also vital in raising awareness of what people can do to reduce their risk of developing a condition that leads to vision impairment. While paying particular attention to type 2 diabetes, which is suffered by about 87 per cent of diabetics in Scotland, we must address lifestyle factors such as obesity, low levels of physical activity, excessive alcohol intake, poor diet and smoking. Research has shown that smoking in particular not only makes people 30 to 40 per cent more likely to develop type 2 diabetes, but doubles the probability of sight loss. Repeated exposure to tobacco smoke speeds up the body's natural ageing process, including that of the eyes, and increases the risk of developing cataracts and complications that are linked to diabetes.

Worryingly, of the 21 per cent of people in Scotland who smoke, 56 per cent are unaware of the link between smoking and eye disease. I therefore commend ASH Scotland for teaming up with RNIB Scotland, the Association of Optometrists and NHS inform to design a stop smoking advice card that communicates the implications that smoking can have for sight. I hope that we can make further progress in informing people of such dangers. According to RNIB Scotland, by 2050, nearly 4 million people in the UK will be living with significant sight loss, despite more than 50 per cent of that it being avoidable.

It would be remiss of me not to take the opportunity to say, once again, that when we talk about tackling eye health we are talking about health in general. By encouraging an active, healthy lifestyle we can have an impact on the health of our eyes just as much as we can have an

impact on the health of our hearts, lungs or any other organ. Preventing people from losing their sight unnecessarily must be a key priority. I welcome the platform that the debate gives us not only to educate people about the importance of eye health but to raise the necessary awareness of how to reduce the risk of sight-threatening conditions.

17:18

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): I am pleased to speak in this afternoon's debate, and I congratulate my colleague Stuart McMillan on securing it. He covered very well the facts and stats about eye health conditions that are highlighted by this week's being national eye health week, and I agree with what he explained.

However, I would like to pick up on the related point about eye examinations. I note that Stuart McMillan's motion

"calls for the public to get their eyes tested on a regular basis by utilising the free eye examination".

As a nurse, I have been able to use my experience to inform myself for the debate; I learned that a vision test during a visit to the optometrist is not just a way to check whether one's eyesight needs help with a corrective prescription. While the main purpose of such an examination is to detect and diagnose vision problems, as has been described, it can also help to detect signs of other health issues that may affect other parts of the body. When I spoke in the debate during last year's eye health week, the focus was on diabetic retinopathy.

According to Diabetes UK, about 750,000 people across the UK have undiagnosed diabetes. This week, I had a discussion with an ophthalmic nurse specialist, who happens to be my wee sister, Buffy. She conveyed that many diagnoses of type 2 diabetes are made when an eye examination is performed—when people describe their symptoms and when retinal photographs are taken.

Many people dismiss their symptoms of gradual visual impairment as part of growing old, or even put the symptoms down to tiredness. However, the high blood-glucose levels that are associated with poorly controlled type 2 diabetes can mean that the tiny wee blood vessels in the eye can be damaged by high levels of blood glucose, which can lead to diabetic eye disease—retinopathy. If type 2 diabetes is picked up, diagnosed and treated early, visual impairment complications can be detected and treated, and the person's sight can be protected.

High blood pressure has been mentioned. It is a disease that has far-reaching complications not just for the eyes, because blood flow affects every

part of the body. Fortunately, high blood pressure is another example of a health condition that may be detected during an eye examination.

One disease that has not been mentioned is rheumatoid arthritis. Most people do not know that rheumatoid arthritis, which is an inflammatory process, can affect the eyes as well as the joints. I was quite surprised to learn that. If rheumatoid arthritis is affecting a person's eyes, they may have dry eyes, eye pain and other vision problems. The news is that early treatment can prevent permanent vision damage.

I would like to thank Royal Blind for its briefing ahead of the debate. We need to highlight the importance of vision testing, as Royal Blind has said, and we must seek to get the message out that most people should have a sight test once every two years, and identified groups should have one every year.

The symptoms that an eye health professional might detect include spots in the retina, bleeding in the back of the eye and constricted blood vessels, among others. Again, having one or more of those symptoms does not necessarily mean that a person has high blood pressure, but they might need further consultation to determine what is causing the symptoms.

My sister also told me that a young 30-year-old woman showed up in her clinic one day with a sudden visual impairment, which led to a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis.

It is really important to raise awareness, and to remind people that they should schedule eye examinations and follow the advice of healthcare professionals and doctors on recommendations for suitable follow-up tests and treatments.

I echo Stuart McMillan's call for the Government to support and promote a refreshed national eye check campaign. Following an eye exam, glasses might not be the only thing that is required; other medical issues can be assessed, diagnosed and treated ahead of complications developing.

17:23

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): I congratulate Stuart McMillan on securing this important debate. I pay tribute to the RNIB and Royal Blind—to all their staff and, in particular, to all their volunteers, for the amazing work that they do all year round, and not just during eye health week. They are not just lobbying parliamentarians but, as Stuart McMillan outlined, are out there on the streets campaigning to give people better support.

I want to touch on something briefly before I speak about eye tests. I had the great pleasure of speaking at an event a couple of weeks ago in this Parliament—"The Sound of Vision" event, which

was organised by the RNIB and was kindly sponsored by our own Presiding Officer. That event taught me—genuinely taught me—about many of the additional challenges for people who have problems with their sight. It is not just about access to services; it is also about employability. People want to go on living normal lives. It is about the impact on them, their families, their friends, their relationships and their daily interactions, including the simple things such as going to the shops, going to post a letter in a letter box, working out what is on the television and what shows they might watch or how they might socialise with their friends.

The stark reality of all those issues was brought home at the event in some of the fantastic contributions that we heard from people who were blind or partially sighted, and who had got support from the Glasgow Speakers Club to learn about public speaking to help to build their confidence. I can honestly say that the speeches that were made by those really inspiring individuals were better than those that we hear most of the time in the Scottish Parliament, excluding the speeches that we have heard in this debate, and I think that there were some future parliamentarians in that group. I congratulate the Presiding Officer on allowing the group to have the event here in Parliament. I also congratulate the project funders—in particular, Steven Sutherland, who is the driving force behind the project. He is an inspiring young man who we might see in the Parliament at some point in the future.

Why is this debate so important? We have talked about the 170,000 people in Scotland who have significant sight loss and about the impact on their families. There has been praise—rightly—for the policy on entitlement to a free eye test every two years. I will make a confession: I cannot remember the last time I went for an eye check, but given that I now sit closer and closer to the television and that I have to bring my notes closer and closer to my eyes, I must be due an eye test very soon. I am very happy to support a public information campaign, as suggested by Stuart McMillan, and I hope that the minister will give a positive response to that.

It is welcome that almost one third of people in Scotland take advantage of the free eye check every two years, but we can drive up the figure for testing rates, particularly in the most vulnerable communities and among people who are more likely to experience health inequalities. We can spend to save so that future issues for our national health service are addressed. We have already heard that eye checks can pick up conditions or problems that do not yet affect the vision, including blood pressure issues, refractive errors, kidney problems, brain tumours and problems in blood

vessels in the eyes. Early checks can help to pick up all those things.

I thank, in particular, all the charities that are involved in the fantastic work and I thank Stuart McMillan for securing this important debate. To the chair of the RNIB, who spent two days last week sitting in Parliament and lobbying parliamentarians, I apologise that members did not all go to his stand instantly, but I hope that he had a positive interaction with parliamentarians.

Eye health is an issue on which our Parliament can unite and make a significant intervention that will have an impact for generations to come.

17:27

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): I am delighted to speak in this debate to mark eye health week, and I thank Stuart McMillan for bringing it to the chamber.

Eye health affects us all. Most of us, at some point in our lives, will wear glasses or contact lenses, or have laser eye treatment, but what if glasses are not enough and our eyesight starts failing so badly that our lives are irrevocably changed? That why it is important to go for regular eye tests to detect early if problems are looming. As Stuart McMillan's motion says, great progress has been made with eye health and we have the highest annual level of people receiving eye tests on record. It is also important that eye examinations are free in Scotland, which is a huge boost for public health.

There are things that we can do to preserve our eye health, such as taking regular screen breaks, reading in the correct light and, most important, not smoking. We all know that smoking is harmful to general health, but ASH Scotland tells us that there are particular implications for eyesight. Tobacco smoke is composed of thousands of active chemicals, most of which are toxic. As a result, smoking greatly increases the chances of losing sight. As many as one in five cases of age-related macular degeneration are caused by smoking, which is also linked to cataract development.

I am extremely fortunate to have the wonderful organisation Deafblind Scotland in my constituency and, earlier this month, I hosted an event in Parliament to highlight the fantastic and progressive work that it does. Stuart McMillan was present at the event, so he can back me up on that. It was not about what they could not do, but about what they could do, which included trekking in the Himalayas, climbing Kilimanjaro, playing the taiko drums and much more. One young man—Ryan—who has Usher syndrome, which is a condition that affects both hearing and vision, gave an inspirational speech that told of how he

had not let that terrible condition hold him back. He was incredible.

Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent up to 98 per cent of severe sight loss and, as for most health conditions, the earlier the treatment, the more likely it is to be effective. National eye health week seeks to get the message across that most people should have a sight test once every two years. We know that a sight test can also detect high blood pressure, diabetes and other serious health conditions.

There are around 188,000 people with significant sight loss living in Scotland today, and the number of people with sight loss is projected to double over the next two decades in Scotland to almost 400,000 by 2030. The number of registered blind and partially-sighted people in Scotland now stands at around 34,500, but research indicates that as few as 23 to 38 per cent of eligible people are actually registered blind and partially sighted.

Civic society and local authorities have a large part to play in helping people who have sight loss. In Kirkintilloch in my constituency, the local authority introduced a shared space scheme, which has proved to be disastrous for people living with visual impairment or sight loss. They are simply unable to access their own town centre—which raises huge issues of equality—because of the removal of traffic signals, kerbs that guide dogs recognise, and thundering lorries and buses clogging up a busy junction. It is simply not safe. I urge local authorities and developers to think carefully about the effect that such streetscapes can have on the less able.

We should all remember that eye health is precious, go for regular free eye tests and detect problems early. We owe it to ourselves and our families.

17:30

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con): The importance of eye health and the need for regular tests must not be underestimated. According to leading bodies, sight is the sense that we most fear losing and, for many, simple lifestyle changes can be the key to ensuring long-term eye health.

Eye health week is about promoting such changes and encouraging everyone to get their eyes tested regularly. In doing so, we can reinforce the message that vision really matters.

As many members have already done, I commend the work that has been done so far in promoting eye health and care.

Many of us are risking future sight loss by failing to look after our eyes. Routine eye appointments are recommended every two years, even if our eyesight has always been healthy, so that an

optometrist can check that we are seeing clearly and spot signs of common eye problems.

Poor eyesight can affect anyone at any age. A seven-year-old might be struggling to read the board at school. A 45-year-old might not be able to see the ball during the Friday night five-a-side game. A 67-year-old might be finding it difficult to carry out daily tasks, such as making a cup of tea.

Eye health week seeks to reinforce the message that, regardless of circumstance, it is best to get our eyes checked regularly. As Stuart McMillan said, huge progress has been made in raising the number of those who are getting tested regularly. As Brian Whittle stated, almost 2 million over 16s and 300,000 under 16s received their free eye tests in the past year. Campaigns such as eye health week will no doubt contribute to the rising figures, and I commend all the organisations involved.

Last year's campaign to raise awareness saw collaboration between Eye Health UK, RNIB and Channel 4 to create a special ad break giving viewers the chance to watch TV as if through the eyes of somebody who is living with sight loss. The Royal Mail also teamed up with Eye Health UK to promote the importance of good eye health by placing a special national eye health week postmark on all stamped mail.

Every year, national eye health week teams up with the Central Optical Fund to publish *Vista*, a lifestyle magazine that is available online, and is designed to raise awareness of how lifestyle choices can affect eye health. Raising awareness is about more than promoting regular eye tests. Certain lifestyle choices make poor eye health more likely and thus preventable. For example, smokers are four times more likely to suffer from age-related macular degeneration, which is the UK's leading cause of blindness. Despite that, in surveys, more than half of smokers indicate that they are unaware of the link between smoking and sight loss, equating to half a million people in Scotland.

Obesity and the links it has with diabetes, also doubles the risk of AMD and increases the chances of developing cataracts. Over-exposure to the sun can also increase the chances of cataracts. Eye-friendly nutrients can be found in many fruits, vegetables and cold-water fish such as sardines and tuna and they can protect against AMD.

To be perfectly honest, although I knew vaguely about the links between certain lifestyle choices and eye health, it was only when I read around the topic prior to today's debate that I came to understand just how strong the link is. I am pleased that I am now 11 weeks off the cigarettes;

that is me cutting my risk even more. It is just about losing the weight now.

I had no idea that eye tests can indicate other health conditions, such as hypertension and raised cholesterol, so they can help to prevent more serious health problems such as heart disease and stroke. If eye health week can improve my knowledge of eye health and the factors that contribute towards greater risk, it is imperative that we politicians give it further weight and promote awareness.

I thank Stuart McMillan for bringing the debate to the chamber. We can all agree how important it is to raise awareness of and promote eye health and care.

17:35

The Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing (Joe FitzPatrick): This has been a really good debate, and I, too, thank Stuart McMillan for giving us this opportunity to mark eye health week and discuss eye care in Scotland.

I know that, across the chamber, we agree that general ophthalmic services represent one of the many NHS success stories in Scotland. The introduction in 2006 of free NHS-funded eye examinations set Scotland apart from the rest of the United Kingdom. This Parliament has been able to come together to continue to support that, despite changes in Government, which shows the strength of the policy. For the first time, everyone in Scotland, regardless of their personal situation, had access to an eye examination free of charge.

A routine primary eye examination provides a full health check of the patient's eye as well as a normal sight test, helping to detect eye diseases early. A number of members mentioned particular health issues that an eye examination can identify. Rona Mackay mentioned high blood pressure; Emma Harper mentioned rheumatoid arthritis, which I confess that I did know could be detected through an eye test; and Brian Whittle and a number of other members mentioned diabetes. Brian Whittle also mentioned that an active lifestyle is an important tool for improving our overall health—we cannot make that point often enough. Annie Wells talked about the importance of a healthy diet. All those are good points to make. Anas Sarwar mentioned a number of health issues, but the list was so long that I was not able to keep up. The point that he, like others, made is that eye examinations are important for people's health in general, not just their eye health.

The uptake of free NHS-funded eye examinations has increased by 43 per cent since they were introduced in 2006. As someone mentioned, in 2017, more than 2.2 million people

had their eyes examined, which is the highest number ever.

To pick up on the points that were raised by Stuart McMillan, Anas Sarwar, Emma Harper and others, we are not complacent. As well as continuing to raise awareness among the general population through initiatives such as NHS 24's campaign, know who to turn to, we plan to run targeted awareness-raising campaigns for specific patient groups among whom take-up of free eye examinations is lower, including those living in more disadvantaged communities.

The Scottish Government remains committed to ensuring that the best community eye care is accessible to everyone. That is why we commissioned a review of community eye care services in Scotland in 2016, 10 years on from the introduction of free eye tests in 2006.

Before I talk about the review, I want to take the opportunity to mention the current eye care services that are provided in the community. In Scotland, the optometrist is the first port of call for any eye problem. It can be frightening when something happens to our vision, but this support, in the community, close to where people live, provides the high-quality care that people need. Emergency eye presentations can often be managed and treated in the community. Evidence shows that more patients now know to go directly to an optometrist if they have any problem with their eyes, rather than to their GP. Clearly, community optometrists have increasingly been taking on that extended role for some time, demonstrating the growing capacity, capability and competency of the profession. They are doing more work in the community, which reduces the burden on secondary care and general practitioners and ensures that patients remain in a primary care setting.

The service is enhanced by those optometrists who have undergone training on independent prescribing of medicines, which is facilitated by NHS Education for Scotland. More than 250 community optometrists have become fully trained independent prescribers, which amounts to one third of all such fully trained prescribers across the UK. However, we think that more can be done and that the service should grow.

Optometrists and ophthalmologists work together when patients need referral to secondary care. The eye care integration programme that is under way seeks, among other things, to increase the number of optometrists who send patient referrals to secondary care electronically. As well as being much quicker, that means that the optometrist can attach pictures and scans of the patient's eye, which allows the ophthalmologist to assess and triage the referral with an appropriate appointment. Really good progress has been

made on that, and we will continue to work with health boards to reach a position in the near future where all referrals are submitted electronically.

We are also in the early stages of commissioning our once for Scotland ophthalmology electronic patient record, which will be a real game changer for the delivery of eye care services in Scotland. It will mean that ophthalmologists can provide meaningful feedback to optometrists, which will reduce the number of unnecessary referrals to secondary care.

As I mentioned, in 2016, the Government announced a review of community eye care services. Representatives of the Scottish Council on Visual Impairment and Optometry Scotland were members of the review group, and patients were involved to ensure that their views were captured. The review published its report in April 2017 and highlighted the successes of the service as well as identifying areas for improvement. Since then, the Government has been working with a range of stakeholders, including Optometry Scotland and NHS boards, to deliver on the report's recommendations.

As a result of that work, a number of significant and positive changes will be made to general ophthalmic services from 1 October. Among other things, the changes include further support for community optometry as the first port of call for all eye health problems in Scotland and revised arrangements for tests and procedures. All general ophthalmic services practitioners will be required to complete mandatory annual training provided by NHS Education for Scotland, which will further upskill the optometry profession and provide a baseline standard of education and care. To pick up on a point that Emma Harper made, patients who are sight impaired or severely sight impaired will, for the first time, be entitled to an annual primary eye examination rather than one every two years, as at present.

This has been a really good debate, and I am pleased to have been involved in it. I am sure that the Parliament will continue to support eye health work in the years to come.

Meeting closed at 17:43.

This is the final edition of the *Official Report* for this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

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