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Scottish Parliament

Thursday 14 November 2019

[The Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 11:40]

General Question Time

Survival Sex

1. Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to reports of women, including single mothers, resorting to so-called survival sex because their universal credit payments do not cover the basic needs of daily living. (S5O-03761)

The Minister for Older People and Equalities (Christina McKelvie): It is absolutely disgraceful that women should have to resort to survival sex, as it is sometimes known—even the term makes my blood run cold—for their most basic needs such as food and shelter. It is a very complex issue; however, it is clear that already vulnerable women are being badly affected by universal credit's worst aspects, such as the five-week wait, punitive sanctions and the hated two-child limit.

We support the recommendations in the United Kingdom Parliament's Work and Pensions Committee's recent report on the issue. We have also repeatedly called on the UK Government to fix the problems with universal credit, to protect the most vulnerable in society, and to prevent more people being pushed into poverty, such as the women to whom Maureen Watt referred in her question.

Maureen Watt: I am sure that, like me, the minister was saddened and angered to hear that Community Food Initiatives North East, the Aberdeen-based community food bank—a great organisation that won an award in the Parliament this week—has been contacted by the local police to help women who are engaging in sex work as a result of this desperate situation. Does that not demonstrate how totally out of touch recent Tory Westminster Governments have been with the benefits system, and emphasise that all powers that relate to social security should be transferred to this Parliament as soon as possible?

Christina McKelvie: No-one in the chamber will be surprised to hear that I completely agree with Maureen Watt. [Interruption.]

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Order, please. The minister is answering a question.

Christina McKelvie: It would have been nice if Maurice Golden had actually been in the chamber for the first question and understood how serious the issue is, instead of sitting there laughing like a child. [Interruption.] He is still rattling on.

It is imperative that all powers that relate to social security are devolved to the Scottish Parliament immediately. In 2018-19, we invested £1.4 billion to support low-income households, which includes £100 million per year to mitigate the most damaging parts of universal credit and to try to prevent the very situations that Maureen Watt has highlighted. However, the sheer scale of the UK Government cuts makes mitigation by the Scottish Government unsustainable. In fact, Professor Philip Alston, the United Nations special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, said that

“mitigation comes at a price, and it is not sustainable.”

We agree with him. He also commented that Scotland is on “a very different trajectory” to England when it comes to the social protections of its population.

Clearly, mitigating aspects of universal credit does not address the fundamental flaws in the system—only full powers over the delivery of universal credit and the wider social security system being given to this Parliament will do that.

Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab): The Scottish Government's strategy, “Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls” defines commercial sexual exploitation, such as prostitution, lap dancing, stripping and pornography, as

“forms of violence against women and girls.”

Given that the strategy acknowledges that such behaviour

“stems from systemic, deep-rooted women's inequality”,

what steps is the Scottish Government taking to support women who are trying to leave prostitution and to prevent more women and girls from falling victim to violence in that way?

Christina McKelvie: The Scottish Government is absolutely committed to preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls. We are implementing equally safe, the Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities led strategy for preventing and eradicating such violence.

In November 2017, we published our plan, “Equally Safe: A Delivery Plan for Scotland's strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls”, which contains 118 actions over four priority areas to help us challenge harmful

stereotypes and attitudes, improve front-line services and hold perpetrators to account.

In November 2019, we will publish our second “Equally Safe” progress report, which will highlight key progress and outline some of the priorities for the year ahead.

The Scottish Government has committed to consult on challenging men’s demands for prostitution as well as seeking views on reducing harm and supporting women to exit prostitution.

The consultation is in its very early stages and we are working with key stakeholders to map what the consultation should include. The drivers for women entering into prostitution, including economic hardship, which, as the member highlighted, may be exacerbated by the role of universal credit, are being considered as part of the process.

Aluminium Cladding (Support for Affected Property Owners)

2. Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what support it can provide to the owners of properties, including in the Western Harbour development in Edinburgh, who are facing difficulties in trying to sell or remortgage because their homes have aluminium cladding. (S5O-03762)

The Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning (Kevin Stewart): We are aware of the difficulties being experienced by people across Scotland who are trying to obtain mortgage lending for properties with external cladding—and that applies to all external cladding. I know the anxiety that this will be causing home owners across the country.

Although responsibility for mortgage lending is reserved to the United Kingdom Government, we are doing what we can to push for a solution as soon as possible. Scottish Government officials held discussions with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors this week. Officials have also held discussions with the UK Government and UK Finance, most recently with the UK Government on Wednesday 6 November.

I wrote to the UK Government on 18 October and to UK Finance on 5 November seeking early action, with a further letter to the UK Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on Friday 8 November, to impress upon them the importance of a quick solution.

In doing so, I have offered Scottish Government assistance to support the industry’s development of a sensible way forward. We continue to push for a solution that takes account of Scotland’s legal system and particular requirements.

Jeremy Balfour: A constituent contacted me just yesterday to say that the sale of their flat had fallen through because the purchasers simply could not get a mortgage. As the minister just highlighted, this is an issue not only in Edinburgh but across Scotland.

As the minister pointed out, there are separate legal issues affecting us in Scotland because of Scots law. Will he work on clear guidelines with mortgage lenders to make sure that Scottish legal issues are dealt with separately from the issues in the rest of the UK?

Kevin Stewart: As I pointed out in my initial answer, I have already been in touch with the secretary of state on two occasions to try to find a resolution to this issue. We do not control mortgage lending here in Scotland; it is a UK reserved matter. I hope that Mr Balfour and the Conservatives will join me in pushing Mr Jenrick, the secretary of state, to respond, so that Mr Balfour’s constituents and other home owners who find themselves in difficult positions can be helped by a solution put forward by us in co-operation with the UK Government.

I wish that we had control of all these matters here; it would make life much easier. While that is not the case, I ask others in the chamber to support us in trying to get the UK Government to take action on this issue.

The Presiding Officer: Question 3 has been withdrawn.

Young People’s Employment Rights (Awareness)

4. David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to raise awareness among young people of their employment rights. (S5O-03764)

The Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy (Kate Forbes): Increasing understanding about employment rights and responsibilities is key to creating fairer workplaces.

Learning about the world of work forms a key part of the school curriculum and employment rights are a key part of career education for young people at school, particularly in their senior phase. We support the Scottish Trades Union Congress unions into schools programme, which helps young people to understand the importance of workers’ rights and the role played by trade unions in the modern workplace.

Bodies such as the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, Citizens Advice Scotland and trade unions can play an important role in advising young people on their rights at work.

David Torrance: Citizens Advice Scotland’s do the right thing campaign is currently raising

awareness among young people of their rights at work. CAS has found that one in 10 young people does not know that the minimum wage is a legal requirement and it sees numerous cases of young people being taken advantage of at work. The charity is also collecting examples online of poor employment practice to better understand the issues that young people face at work. Will the minister therefore encourage young people to submit any bad work experiences anonymously to CAS so that it can continue to campaign for a fair deal at work for young people?

Kate Forbes: I agree with David Torrance that it is an important campaign. I encourage young people to submit to the campaign any examples of where they feel that they have not been treated fairly at work, and to raise them with Citizens Advice Scotland, trade unions or ACAS, which has a statutory role to provide advice on employment matters. The campaign is important, and it is important that young people know their rights at work, and where to go for advice.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): Will the minister join me in giving her 100 per cent support to the McStrikers—the McDonald's workers who have this week walked out in protest at low pay and poor employment practices in one of the world's most profitable companies? Does the minister agree that a £10-an-hour living wage and a revolution in employment rights, as promised by the Labour manifesto, would be the best present that young workers could receive this year?

Kate Forbes: On the strikes and the points that Neil Findlay raised, I would support any individual who raises concerns about poor practice, particularly when their employers have a duty to ensure fair working practices. I would be happy to pass on Neil Findlay's question to the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, Jamie Hepburn.

On ensuring that workers across the country have a fair wage and fair practices, it is the SNP Government that has introduced—within the powers that we have—the fair employment practices that we see in this country.

The Presiding Officer: Although members may raise any question that they wish to, I remind them to try to keep direct political election campaigning out of their question or answer.

Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): Oh!

The Presiding Officer: Yes, Mr Lyle.

Question 5 has not been lodged.

Third Sector Mental Health Services (Support)

6. **Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to support the delivery of mental health

services delivered by third sector organisations. (S5O-03766)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Jeane Freeman): Local integration authorities are responsible for planning and commissioning services, and we expect them to engage third sector organisations as key delivery partners. In this financial year, integration authorities have received more than £6.4 billion to deliver that work. Additional investment, which will rise to £35 million in 2021-2022, is committed to the delivery of 800 additional mental health workers in key settings, which can include the third sector. That is additional to the provision of counsellors in schools and in further and higher education, and to the direct Scottish Government funding to third sector organisations for actions in delivering mental health services.

Brian Whittle: The cabinet secretary will be aware of organisations such as Ayrshire Cancer Support and Break the Silence, which deliver specialist mental health services in my area. I am sure that other members have similar organisations in their constituencies.

Given that the national health service routinely signposts patients to those organisations, does the cabinet secretary agree that the third sector is capable of shouldering some of the load that is piling up on child and adolescent mental health services, and that we urgently need to reassess the way in which we fund that sector?

Jeane Freeman: I certainly agree with Brian Whittle that the third sector plays a vital role across Scotland, including—as he referred to—in my constituency. I made the point that we have provided £6.4 billion to integration authorities to deliver those services. It is for the integration authorities to design, commission and plan for services that best meet their local needs, and we provide significant financial support for that.

Integration authorities, which involve local authorities, health boards and the third sector, should maximise local resource to ensure that services are delivered. I think that Brian Whittle would agree that it would ill behove the Government to centralise even further than the Conservatives already accuse us of doing by intervening in the matter directly. I expect integration authorities in Ayrshire to carefully consider how they use their third sector expertise.

Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab): Staff in mental health charities work selflessly to improve and treat the mental health of others. How can the Scottish Government support the mental health of the staff who deliver those mental health services?

Jeane Freeman: Mary Fee is absolutely right that all staff across mental health services—statutory or third sector—work extremely hard and

often selflessly, going beyond the expectations that are placed on them, and her question forms part of the work that we are undertaking post Sturrock. We have input from third sector organisations on how we create a positive working culture that very much focuses on the wellbeing of those who deliver those services.

As ministerial working group progresses its work into the new year, I will be happy, in due course, to ensure that members are updated on the initiatives that will be taken forward.

Scottish Welfare Fund (Crisis Grants)

7. Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how many people in the Stirling constituency have received a crisis grant through the Scottish Welfare Fund. (S5O-03767)

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government (Aileen Campbell): The most recent published statistics show that since April 2013, Stirling Council has awarded 11,880 crisis grants and 4,705 community care grants to 6,025 unique households. The total value of crisis grants awarded by Stirling Council in that period is more than £1 million.

Bruce Crawford: Those are startling figures. Does the minister agree that the 2019 Heriot-Watt University report "State of Hunger" is a damning indictment of the United Kingdom Government's welfare system? There are delays in universal credit payments, some people are being turned down for disability payments and others are receiving sanctions, cuts are being made to the value of payments and more and more people are being forced to use food banks. Does the minister also agree that any politician who has defended that system should hang their head in shame? The people of Stirling and Scotland deserve so much better.

Aileen Campbell: I absolutely agree. The research that Bruce Crawford mentions shows that income is a key driver of food bank use and points to the UK Government's welfare reforms and cuts.

Let us look at what a Conservative, or any other politician, might choose to defend. In addition to the list that Bruce Crawford read out, thousands of families are being pushed into poverty. For example, 86 per cent of universal credit claimants have seen a decrease in the amount that they can earn before they lose their entitlement and 91 per cent of Scottish households whose housing benefit has been capped contain children. If any Conservative or other politician chooses to defend that record, they should feel utterly ashamed of themselves.

We will continue to choose a different path and to protect our people and communities. We will

treat those folk who need most support with an approach that has dignity and fairness at its heart.

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): Acceptance rates for crisis grants have been falling steadily since the start of the scheme and, in the latest quarter, they have hit an all-time low of just 63 per cent in Stirling. Will the minister explain why only two thirds of applications are currently accepted and what the Government can do to reverse the falling trend?

Aileen Campbell: We will continue to work with local authorities and to fund the Scottish welfare fund because of its utter necessity to families who require such help. If we did not have that safety net for people, they would be destitute because of the severe and punitive impact of welfare reforms and cuts.

I will continue to work with Mark Ruskell if he wants to raise further issues. We will continue to support the welfare fund, because it is delivering for those who most need it.

Poverty and Inequality

8. Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how it is tackling poverty and inequality. (S5O-03768)

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government (Aileen Campbell): This Government is committed to tackling poverty and inequality. Last year, we invested £1.4 billion to support low-income households, including £100 million in welfare mitigation measures. We will further enhance that support with our Scottish child payment, which has been described as a "game changer" in tackling child poverty.

Estimated social security spend of £350 million this year, including on our best start grant, offers financial support across the early years to low-income parents.

We will almost double the amount of funded early learning and childcare to 1,140 hours by August 2020. We are helping people to work and earn more through fair start Scotland and a £22 million package of intensive support for parents.

Jenny Gilruth: Collydean community centre in my constituency is set to benefit from direct investment from the Scottish Government's communities fund. That is great news for Glenrothes. However, does the cabinet secretary share my anger that for every penny that goes into my community from the Scottish Government, pounds are stripped straight back out by cruel Tory benefit reforms, proving that what people in my community need more than anything is full welfare powers devolved to this Parliament and used in their best interest?

Aileen Campbell: I agree absolutely with Jenny Gilruth, and I am happy that Collydean community centre has benefited from the fund. She is right: the Tories have cruelly cut welfare since 2010, hitting the most vulnerable the hardest. We in this Government are left to mop up the United Kingdom Government's mess by mitigating and plugging the gaps, trying to do our best to support our communities.

The new social security agency provides a glimpse of what we can do with the powers that we have to build a social security system that is based on dignity, fairness and respect. Imagine what we could do with full powers over welfare to build a country that cares for its people, as opposed to what the Conservatives are pursuing, which are politically motivated, ideologically driven, callous, punitive cuts.

First Minister's Question Time

11:59

Referendums

1. **Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con):** The First Minister confirmed this week that she wants not just one referendum next year, but two. Given that she has ignored the result of the previous two, why would anyone believe that she would behave differently this time round? (S5F-03706)

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Well, I am rumbled, because I want the people of Scotland to be able to escape a Tory Brexit that will damage our economy, our society and the prospects of future generations. I want Scotland to be able to escape years and years of further Tory wrangling on Brexit and, yes, I want the people of Scotland to have the opportunity to choose a different future. I will seek to persuade the people of Scotland, in making that choice, to choose independence so that we can build the more prosperous, fairer and more equal Scotland that I believe we are capable of being. I cannot understand why anybody on any of the Opposition benches would not want exactly the same thing.

Jackson Carlaw: Interestingly, the one thing that the First Minister did not say was that she would behave any differently if she lost next time round. She is always confident that she is going to win a referendum, but her track record shows that she always loses.

I ask the question because I am just not sure that the First Minister has thought through her big double referendum promise. As she keeps telling us, she would ask Jeremy Corbyn for a referendum on independence and demand that it is held next year. We know, too, that she would support Mr Corbyn's plan for a second Brexit referendum, also to be held next year. Can the First Minister clarify for me a simple question on timetabling? When is all that supposed to happen? Would both referendums be on one day or on different days? Which vote would come first: indyref or Euroref?

The First Minister: I cannot believe that Jackson Carlaw has not actually cottoned on to this yet—he should maybe listen a bit more—because my priority is to give the people of Scotland the opportunity to choose independence next year and I look forward to delivering on that.

Jackson Carlaw is mistaken when it comes to past referendums, and he might also be conveniently forgetting this fact: in the 2016 Brexit referendum, I campaigned for remain—actually, memory tells me that so did Jackson Carlaw. Scotland voted to remain in the European Union

by 62 per cent to 38 per cent. That is the referendum result that I want to see honoured. The question for Jackson Carlaw is why he is so willing to ignore how people in Scotland voted on that question.

Jackson Carlaw: We heard it from the First Minister there: her priority used to be education, but now it is independence.

I am not surprised that the First Minister cannot answer the basic question, because, frankly, none of it makes sense. As well as supporting a second Brexit referendum, not only is Nicola Sturgeon going to demand that a second independence referendum be held next year, but she is also telling people that she is going to help form what she grandly describes as a “progressive alliance” with other parties across the United Kingdom. That is the same UK, if we follow her rightly, that she hopes to leave weeks later. I am intrigued. Can the First Minister explain how she can hope to form an alliance with the same people that she is planning to walk out on?

The First Minister: I think that Jackson Carlaw has probably confused himself as well as the rest of the population with that question.

First, Jackson Carlaw asked me what my priority was between different referendums and I made clear to him—I will do it again—that my priority is to give the people of Scotland the opportunity to choose independence. Secondly, perhaps Jackson Carlaw might reflect on this: if, as he says, referendums are so dreadful, why did David Cameron, the Tory Prime Minister at the time, foist a Brexit referendum on Scotland? Thirdly, yes, I would want to be part of a progressive alliance to lock Tories out of government in Westminster. Why? Because Tories wreak misery and havoc. It is a year today since Theresa May presented her Brexit deal to her Cabinet, unleashing a year of chaos and division at the hands of the Tories. Welfare cuts, austerity and pushing more and more children into poverty: no right-minded person in this country would want anything other than an alternative to that Tory misery.

Jackson Carlaw: I see that we are back to our shouty, megaphone-inclusive, speech-making First Minister.

All that is complete nonsense from the First Minister, but, helpfully, her colleague and close ally David Linden clarified matters last night. He revealed that, even if the UK stayed in the EU after a second vote, the Scottish National Party would come up with yet more reasons for a grievance rematch on independence anyway. So, after indyref 2, it would be indyref 3, then indyref 4—everyone knows that we would be doing the indyref for ever. All the grand talk of alliances is just a nationalist game. Unlike some in this

chamber, the Scottish Conservatives are not buying it. We will stand up for Scotland’s lifetime decision to stay in the UK. Is not the real question why she and Jeremy Corbyn are refusing to do so?

The First Minister: The Scottish Tories have never stood up for Scotland in their puff. We have seen ample evidence of that over the three and a half years since Scotland voted to remain in the European Union—that vote was ignored and has been ignored every single day by the Conservatives. I want to put Jackson Carlaw’s mind at rest on one thing: I believe that Scotland will vote for independence when it comes to indyref 2, so he will not have to worry about any further occasions.

I cannot believe that Jackson Carlaw or anybody else is in any doubt about this, but let me be absolutely candid: I support independence for Scotland. I want Scotland to escape a position where our future is imposed on us by Boris Johnson, who is now having his strings pulled by Nigel Farage. The Tory party is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Nigel Farage and the Brexit Party. I do not want that to be Scotland’s future; I want the people of Scotland to have the opportunity to choose their own future, and to choose independence, so that we can build the kind of Scotland that we know we are capable of becoming.

Education and Social Work Staff (Health and Wellbeing)

2. Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab): This week, new figures published by the charity Education Support revealed that more than a third of those working in education in Scotland have experienced mental health issues in the past 12 months and that more than half have considered leaving the sector due to pressures on their health and wellbeing over the past two years. After more than 12 years in office, Scotland’s schools have faced plummeting investment and a recruitment and workload crisis. The health of our teachers is being harmed, but our children’s education and life chances are being harmed, too. What does the Scottish Government intend to do to change that?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We value our teachers and the contribution that they make to the education of our young people, day in and day out. Investment in education is rising in Scotland, and rightly so. We have given teachers the best pay deal of any of the United Kingdom countries. As part of that, we have taken additional measures that are aimed at addressing issues relating to workload, wellbeing and teacher empowerment. We are taking action that is designed to ensure that our teachers have the

support that they need to deliver what they are required to deliver for our pupils.

All the evidence shows that attainment in our schools is rising, and much of that evidence is regularly cited in exchanges at First Minister's question time—I had an exchange with Jackson Carlaw about the issue last week. In the past couple of days, a professor of education at the University of Stirling who is not without criticisms of curriculum for excellence has published a blog in which he says that the evidence is that attainment in national 5s and highers is rising. The narrative that the Tories, aided and abetted, as usual, by Labour, want to put across about Scottish education simply is not borne out by the facts.

Richard Leonard: There are 3,000 fewer teachers now than when the Scottish National Party took office.

It is not just teachers who are considering leaving their profession. Today, Unison Scotland launched a new report based on a survey of social work teams in Scottish local authorities. It reports that 90 per cent of staff are considering walking out of their jobs. Is it any wonder? Here is just one social worker's experience:

"We are under pressure to hit saving targets. Many staff are stressed to the point of their own health being compromised resulting in higher risk of poor care ... Time spent with vulnerable adults is too short. So many are lonely and depressed. Many staff work extra hours without pay, just to get jobs done."

This morning, Unison told the BBC that the service is at "breaking point". What does the Scottish Government intend to do to change that?

The First Minister: First, to finish the subject of teachers, there are now 1,200 more teachers in our schools than there were when I became First Minister. We are putting more money into education and we are rewarding teachers for the job that they do.

In relation to social workers, I welcome the Unison report. It is always important to study such evidence carefully. However, since 2008, there has been a 5.4 per cent increase in the number of practising social workers. The workforce has increased. The latest official statistics that we have for the social services workforce show that, at the end of 2017, it was the largest that it has been since 2008. Over the past five years, we have provided more than £25 million to support the training of social workers. We are investing heavily in mental health support services.

To Richard Leonard, I say that we have been doing all that in the face of continued Tory austerity. Again, that begs the question—if, as I believe he is, Richard Leonard is concerned about the impacts of austerity, why does he want to keep

Scotland's future in the hands of Tory Governments at Westminster, rather than allow Scotland to take more of those decisions ourselves?

Richard Leonard: To state the obvious, I do not want to see the future in the hands of the Tories. I want to see the future in the hands of a Labour Government. I hope that the First Minister listens to the first-hand real-life experiences of the people who deliver those services. Those voices deserve to be listened to.

Two weeks ago, I raised with the First Minister the growing mental health crisis—stress and anxiety—among national health service workers. Today, the human cost to Scotland's education workers, social workers and social work teams is also plain to see. Is it not clear that those working people and the people who depend on the critical services that they provide are being let down because of decisions that this Government has taken?

Scotland's public services desperately need investment—investment that the First Minister has failed to deliver. A Labour Government will deliver it. Last night, the First Minister threatened to bring down a Labour Government. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Order.

Richard Leonard: Why does the First Minister not admit that Scotland needs a decade of investment under Labour, not the decade of cuts prescribed in her blueprint for an independent Scotland?

The First Minister: We can always tell when Scottish Labour members are desperate; they take themselves back to 1979. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: Order, please.

The First Minister: I will never support the Tories or put them in power, unlike Labour members, who prefer a Tory Government at Westminster to self-government for Scotland. That is inexplicable.

On the question of teachers, NHS workers and social workers, we take seriously the stresses and strains under which all those public service workers operate. They do a fantastic job and they deserve our support. That is why we are increasing the number of teachers, increasing their pay, putting more money into education, increasing the number of social workers and, with record funding for our national health service, increasing the number of people who work in our NHS. Instead of the empty rhetoric that, day after day, we get from Labour, we will continue to take those actions, which support public service workers across the country.

NHS Highland Orthopaedic Operation Delays

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands)

(Con): Last week, I asked the First Minister about the poor financial management of NHS Highland. In the past, I have asked her about the appalling bullying in NHS Highland. This time, I rise to ask about the 78-week delay for orthopaedic operations in NHS Highland. Only 54 per cent of patients get operations within the treatment time guarantee. What has the First Minister asked the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport to do in order to resolve those serious issues?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I hope that Edward Mountain is familiar with the actions that the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport is taking. The Sturrock report looked at the allegations of bullying in NHS Highland. We work closely with NHS Highland and other boards with regard to their financial management. We are putting record funding into the health service. An £850 million waiting times initiative is targeting national health service waits that are too long. Of course, although Audit Scotland had many important things to say in its most recent report, it also recognised that, in the face of rising demand, performance is improving against most of the waiting times targets.

Queen Elizabeth University Hospital

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): Something is seriously wrong at the Queen Elizabeth university hospital campus. Since its opening, there have been a series of scandals, but this one has broken me: information has been shared with me that shows that senior managers have been repeatedly alerted to the fact that a previous review failed to include cases of infection that were related to the water supply in 2017. Central to that whistleblowing evidence is that there were 26 infections at the children's cancer ward; in one case a child died as a result. To this day, the parents have never been told.

That is not just a scandal; it is a heartbreaking human tragedy. The First Minister and the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport are not being told the truth. I implore them, for the sake of the staff who have been put in this unforgivable situation, for the sake of all the patients who use the hospital, for the sake of public trust in our institutions, and, most of all, for the sake of the parents, particularly of the child who lost their life, will they personally intervene to seek answers, to get justice for the families and to take the necessary actions so that this never happens again?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): First, the health secretary is personally involved in all these issues and regularly keeps me apprised of developments.

I cannot even begin to imagine the pain of families who have lost loved ones. It is because of that that we are absolutely determined that these matters are fully investigated. The Government has been working closely with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and staff on infections in recent months, and that work will continue, to ensure that the health board is doing all that it needs to do to maintain a safe environment for patients.

Patient safety is paramount. That is exactly why the health secretary commissioned an independent review of the design, build, commissioning and maintenance of the Queen Elizabeth university hospital. It is also why, on 18 September, a public inquiry into the issues that have arisen at that hospital and the Royal hospital for children and young people in Edinburgh was announced.

We are determined to address the concerns of patients and families, and the health secretary has committed to return to the Parliament to set out the full details of the public inquiry as soon as possible.

Dementia Care (Borders)

Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP):

I have been contacted by distressed and angry constituents who have partners with dementia and advanced dementia who found themselves with no suitable care package in place when the Scottish Borders Council closed its day centres. Assessments were done only after the closures. Is there a role here for the Scottish Government, or are such matters to be left to the vagaries of the Scottish Borders Council?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): There are responsibilities here for the council and integrated health and social care partnerships, but I would be happy to ask the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport to look into the particular circumstances that the member raised, because it is of course the case—rightly so—that the Government takes a close interest in how patients are being dealt with and how delayed discharges are being tackled, to ensure that patients get the care that they need in place, in the setting that is most appropriate for their needs.

Violence in Schools (Fife)

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife)

(Con): Figures on aggressive confrontations reported by Fife education staff last year show a 63 per cent increase. Violence in any workplace should not be tolerated and the level of violence and aggression towards teaching staff is unacceptable. The Educational Institute of Scotland has recommended additional training for

teaching staff on how to deal with aggressive situations; what action will the First Minister take to ensure that that happens?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Any violence in any workplace, including schools, is completely unacceptable. That should be the clear message from all of us.

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills liaises and works closely with the EIS and will take seriously any suggestion that the EIS makes on training. I am sure that he will be happy to update the member on the issue that he raised.

Ferry Provision

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): The First Minister will be aware of the chaos that has been caused in the Western Isles and Argyll islands due to the breakdown of the MV Loch Seaforth and inadequate ferry provision. The problem has been exacerbated by the moving of boats to routes for which they are not suitable, which means that they cannot sail in poor weather. Earlier this week, 25 out of 28 services were affected. Will the First Minister listen to islanders and ensure that there are enough suitable boats to provide lifeline services?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We monitor very closely the performance of all the lifeline ferry service operators. Service disruption on Monday 11 November was mainly due to poor weather conditions. The decision to delay or cancel a sailing is never taken lightly by any operator.

We have been investing heavily in ferry services; despite the reductions in our budget, the Scottish Government has invested more than £2 billion on the Clyde and Hebrides ferry services, the northern isles ferry services and ferry infrastructure since 2007. We will continue to invest to ensure that our island communities have the lifeline services that they require.

Accident and Emergency Services (Waiting Times)

Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP): The First Minister will be aware that the latest four-month average waiting time figures for accident and emergency across Scotland, including Forth Valley Health Board, are over 90 per cent. That shows the pressures on the national health service and the achievements of NHS staff. Is she also aware of the figures released this morning that show an average of 83 per cent in England, which is the lowest figure on record? Does she believe—as I do—that one Government in the United Kingdom is committed

to doing the day job and that it is not the incompetent Tory UK Government? *[Interruption.]*

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I know why the Tories are getting a bit edgy about that question. It is a serious matter. Our A and E services are under pressure. Those who work in them do a fantastic job. Our A and E services have performed better than those in other parts of the UK for four and a half years now. That is to the credit of everyone who works in our NHS. The figures for England that were published today are a matter of concern. There are great pressures on the NHS in England, as there are in Scotland.

The Conservatives and Labour get a bit upset when we compare the performance of the Scottish NHS with that of the NHS in England and Wales. We do that because both of those parties claim that if they were in government in Scotland, the NHS would be performing better. It is reasonable to look at where the Tories are in government in England, where the NHS is doing worse, and where Labour is in government in Wales, where the NHS is also doing worse.

In accident and emergency services, the NHS in Scotland is the best-performing part of the whole of the UK. I know that Labour and the Tories do not like that, but patients across Scotland certainly do.

Court of Session Ruling (Lock-change Evictions)

3. **Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** I hope that the whole chamber shares my horror at yesterday's Court of Session ruling that Serco's despicable policy of lock-change eviction of asylum seekers is lawful. If it is lawful, we must still say that it is certainly not right. It effectively strips people of their human rights and puts them at immediate risk of street homelessness. That includes people such as Muhammad and Khadija, a married couple in their seventies, with severe health problems, who are among those facing being turfed out on to the streets, in the middle of winter.

Greens believe that we must treat people who arrive on our shores seeking refuge with dignity and compassion. I think that most people in Scotland share that view. The Scottish Government statement said:

"we will consider the implications of the judgment".

The situation is urgent. What immediate actions will the Scottish Government take in response to this humanitarian crisis?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We will liaise closely with Glasgow City Council. I agree with Patrick Harvie and I am horrified at the implications of the judgment. If lock-change

evictions are legal—issues under the Human Rights Act 1998 are reserved to Westminster—they are certainly not moral, which is the key issue.

Let us be clear: we have ended up in this position because of an inhumane and degrading UK Government asylum system that leaves people destitute and homeless in the country in which they have sought refuge. We should be giving refuge to people who are fleeing some of the worst circumstances that any of us can imagine.

First and foremost, we need a long-term sustainable solution to asylum so that we can put in place a humane system. In the meantime, the Scottish Government will do everything in its powers to ensure that we are providing the care and help that asylum seekers need. The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government will liaise closely with stakeholders to see how we can best support people who have been placed in that situation by an inhumane asylum system.

In the longer term—I hope that it is not too long term—we need control over immigration and asylum in the Scotland Parliament so that, just as we are doing right now with social security, we can build from scratch a system that has humanity, respect and dignity at its very heart.

Patrick Harvie: I agree that the UK Government's inhumane and degrading hostile environment is at the root of this tragedy. It is using destitution as a deliberate policy tool, which is morally indefensible. However, a long-term solution is not what people need in the here and now. We should be striving towards that, but in the here and now people need somewhere to stay. We cannot simply accept what the UK Government is doing to people: the Scottish Government can and must respond.

Last November, I asked about this situation because we knew that this crisis was coming. The First Minister told me that the Scottish Government would take the action necessary to prevent a humanitarian crisis, but adequate emergency accommodation is still not in place. We know that at least 150 people face imminent eviction and homelessness in the winter months ahead. We know who is to blame for the brutality of UK asylum policy, but those people do not need someone to blame; they need shelter, food, warmth, healthcare and support. This is an urgent crisis, which demands a rapid humanitarian response to ensure that those basic needs are met.

When will the First Minister be able to confirm that arrangements are in place, including emergency accommodation, for all those who need it now?

The First Minister: I say to Patrick Harvie in all sincerity that this is not simply about trying to apportion blame: this is about being clear about where, first, responsibility, and secondly, legal powers, lie. The Scottish Government's record on this speaks for itself. We will do everything that we possibly can to shield asylum seekers and those who have been subject to welfare cuts from the implications of policies that we consider to be inhumane and which we deeply disagree with.

Aileen Campbell will be happy to liaise with Patrick Harvie about what is possible, in a practical sense, working with Glasgow City Council. We will leave no stone unturned within the legal powers that we have, but I do not, and Patrick Harvie does not, do anybody any favours if we are not clear about the root of this problem; otherwise, we will not be providing the real solutions that people need.

In the short term, we will do everything we can; the member has my absolute assurance on that. However, if we are to solve this problem we need to get the powers over this area out of the hands of the Tory Government, which is leading to such situations, and into the hands of a Parliament that will build a system that does not have such inhumane consequences built into it right from the start.

Police (Mental Health)

4. **Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD):** The police staff survey helps us to understand the welfare of people across the force, but it is now three years late. The delay is making people suspicious that it is going to be bad news for the police—the last survey showed that only tiny numbers believed that the force cared about their welfare—so we have investigated it ourselves. We have found that the number of working days police officers lost to mental ill health has gone up 11 per cent in just two years. For police staff, the figure is 25 per cent. What do those shocking numbers say about the state of our police six years after centralisation?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I will be happy to write to Willie Rennie with details of exactly when the staff survey will happen. Overall, our police, like our NHS workers, social workers and teachers in our schools, clearly do jobs that are incredibly stressful. Police are receiving training to deliver brief stress interventions to others, but their own welfare is very important. That is exactly why we have maintained police numbers at a level that is well above the level that we inherited when we came into office, in contrast to what has happened elsewhere.

That is also why we are ensuring that our police officers are properly rewarded for the job that they do, through a pay increase that, again, is much

greater than increases elsewhere. We will continue to work closely with the Police Service of Scotland to make sure that it is equipped. We are protecting the revenue budget of the Police Service in real terms over this session. We will do all those things to make sure that our police officers, like our other public sector workers, have the support that they deserve from their Government.

Willie Rennie: I fear that that will be cold comfort to the staff who are off sick. The chief superintendent in charge of policing in Tayside said that mental health is,

“a huge amount of our demand”.

The Scottish Government promised that new mental health staff would be working alongside police, to help them to cope. In the past week, we have discovered that that adds up to a miserable seven and a half extra staff. Police staff will be lucky to have seen those extra staff in the canteen, let alone to have worked with them. We have police staff off sick and the police have massive demands on their time, but just seven and a half extra staff to help them. That is just not good enough.

Will the First Minister take time off from pontificating about other parties and her referendum, and take practical action to increase mental health support for our police?

The First Minister: Given that the matter is serious, I will resist the temptation to reflect on Willie Rennie and pontification, and will instead move on.

Those are important issues. That is why we are investing in the Police Service and in mental health support workers across a range of settings. We have made a commitment to do that during this session of Parliament and we are delivering it.

We have a higher number of police officers than when we came into Government, and we are maintaining numbers well above that level. We are investing in policing resources, we are making sure that our police officers are rewarded, and we are investing heavily in improving mental health services.

One of the things that we talk about in respect of the general population, and which is reflected in all public services, is people being more able to come forward and seek help if they are suffering from mental health difficulties. That is a good thing, but it means that we must continue to invest in and improve the services that are available. We are, every single day, focused on doing exactly that.

Rape Victims (Mobile Phone Charges)

James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab): I draw the First Minister's attention to reports in the *Sunday Post*

that rape victims whose mobile phones have been retained by Police Scotland for investigation purposes are still being charged by mobile phone companies. It is scandalous that women who are enduring an experience in which they are so vulnerable are being treated in such a hard-hearted manner. Mobile phone companies have rightly been criticised by Rape Crisis Scotland for profiteering from people who are enduring traumatic experiences.

Does the First Minister agree that mobile phone companies should immediately cease charging rape victims, in such circumstances? Will she ensure that Police Scotland reviews and updates its procedures in order properly to support rape victims in such situations?

The First Minister: I agree that the issue is important, and I certainly share Rape Crisis Scotland's concerns.

I will deal with the police and mobile phone companies separately, although I know that the issues are connected. First, investigation of any crime is a matter for the police, but I am very clear—as are senior officers—that a rape victim's phone should be withheld only for as long as it is required for evidential reasons.

Secondly, I think that it is unacceptable that mobile phone companies continue to charge people whose phones have been withheld in that way. I would expect companies to respond sympathetically and with care to individuals who have experienced the trauma of rape or sexual assault, and whose phones have been taken as evidence. It is not acceptable that they continue to be billed for a phone that they are not in possession of and are not able to use.

We will continue to do what we can. Obviously, we will work with the police while, of course, respecting their operational independence in investigating crime, and we will work with mobile phone companies. I am happy to ask the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to update James Kelly once we have had the opportunity to make progress.

United Kingdom Benefits System

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): Does the First Minister share my concern and disgust that the analysis of five years' worth of data shows that only one in two ill or disabled people who appealed against the denial of their rights to employment support allowance and disability benefits was successful? The system is morally bankrupt and broken. Is it time that the Tory United Kingdom Government started listening to the calls that have been made for many years from the Scottish Parliament, and to the concerns of the United Nation's special rapporteur, that

people in our society who are ill and disabled need to be treated with dignity and respect?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Clare Adamson is right to raise that issue. The number of appeals that the data shows are being upheld strongly suggests that the system is fundamentally broken and is working against the very people whom it should assist. That is the exact opposite of the approach that we are taking with Scotland's social security system

People have repeatedly told the UK Government that its welfare system causes stress and anxiety. Although employment and support allowance will remain reserved, I urge the UK Government to listen carefully and to pay close attention to the evidence.

From next year, the Scottish Government will start to deliver disability benefits. We have already committed to a number of improvements, including significant reduction of the requirement for face-to-face assessments and, when they are necessary, provision of a flexible service that works better for the people who rely on such benefits.

In addition, from the beginning of the application process the focus will be on gathering the right information to ensure that good decisions are made, so that we do not see a high number of appeals being overturned—which is, sadly, the hallmark of the current Department for Work and Pensions system.

I urge the UK Government to pay close attention to the data and—perhaps by learning from the approach that we are taking in Scotland—to take action to put its system right and, as has been done in the immigration system and other aspects of the welfare system, to start to put dignity, humanity and respect at its heart.

Youth Unemployment Figures

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): Last week, the First Minister rightly apologised to Tom Mason after she had misled Parliament. Earlier this week, the Scottish Government boasted that youth unemployment had fallen, only for a leading economist from the Fraser of Allander institute to point out that the figures were “misleading”. Will the First Minister take this opportunity to offer an apology for those further misleading statements?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): No. The stats that were published earlier this week, and which were referred to, were the most up-to-date ones, and are contained in the labour market study. Of course, the Government looks at other stats as well. I do not particularly want to get into what other people tweet, but the economist himself has tweeted the labour market stats on youth employment in past years.

All of us—especially Government ministers, given the rules on official statistics—have to be very careful about how we use statistics. The Scottish Government will always reflect on any comments or criticisms that are made of it. However, I repeat that those figures were published earlier this week, and the economist's tweet that Liam Kerr referred to simply quoted published statistics that were also official statistics.

Ayrshire Growth Deal

Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): Will the First Minister provide an update on progress on the Ayrshire growth deal, to which the Scottish Government is contributing some £100 million?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Since we announced our £103 million commitment to the Ayrshire growth deal in March, the Scottish Government and our enterprise and skills agencies have worked with Ayrshire partners to help them develop the business cases that are necessary for us to agree a final deal in partnership with the United Kingdom Government. We will continue to match the ambition of our Ayrshire partners, with the aim of agreeing a final deal as soon as possible. As part of the Ayrshire growth deal programme, we have already approved the business case for Kilmarnock's HALO project, which I know is in Willie Coffey's constituency. I am very pleased to note that work on the project has commenced, offering the prospect of hundreds of local jobs and a boost for businesses in the town.

Equal Pay

5. Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): To ask the First Minister what action the Scottish Government is taking to promote equal pay among men and women. (S5F-03716)

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): In March this year, the Scottish Government launched a gender pay gap action plan that was the first of its kind in the United Kingdom. It contains more than 50 actions to tackle the root causes of the gender pay gap.

Our refreshed Scottish business pledge has, as one of its three core elements, the taking of action to address the gender pay gap. This year, we are providing £800,000 to 22 projects under the workplace equality fund, more than £200,000 to Close the Gap and £159,000 to the Family Friendly Working Scotland partnership, all of which will help to make workplaces fairer and more flexible.

It is incumbent on us to tackle the issue further—and, indeed, to eradicate the gender pay gap, which is outrageous in this day and age. Of

course, it would help us to do so if all employment powers were to lie in the Scottish Parliament's hands.

Gillian Martin: Today is equal pay day—the day of the year on which, based on data and relative to the position of men, women stop earning. To mark the day, the Fawcett Society has launched a campaign to equip women with a legally enforceable right to know the basic pay information that they need to work out whether they are being discriminated against. As we approach the 50th anniversary of the passing of the Equal Pay Act 1970, does the First Minister welcome that campaign, and does she agree that women should not still be waiting for equal pay for equal work?

The First Minister: I agree with that. It is shameful that equal pay day occurs at this point in the year. I hesitate to say this, given that Gillian Martin has just said that it is approaching its 50th anniversary, but the Equal Pay Act 1970 was passed in the year that I was born. It is outrageous that, almost 50 years on, we still do not have equal pay in this country.

It is positive that the median gender pay gap has reduced by more than half over the 20 years of the life of this Parliament—it is at 7 per cent in Scotland, which is lower than the United Kingdom level—but there should be no gender pay gap at all. We cannot and will not have true gender equality as long as women are being paid less than men for the same work.

Therefore, it is incumbent on all of us, whether employers or Government, to tackle this deep unfairness. A clear action that can be taken is to improve the transparency and reporting regulations, and we have called on the UK Government to do that, because the relevant powers lie with it. We will continue to take action in our sphere of responsibility to end the scourge of the gender pay gap once and for all.

Diabetes, Heart Disease and Stroke (Over-65s)

6. Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): To ask the First Minister what action the Scottish Government is taking to reduce levels of diabetes, heart disease and stroke among over-65s. (S5F-03719)

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We continue to implement the diabetes, heart disease and stroke improvement plans, which set out our priorities and actions to deliver improved prevention, treatment and care. Those plans are making a difference: between 2008 and 2018, the mortality rate for coronary heart disease decreased by 37.2 per cent and the mortality rate for stroke decreased by 42.7 per cent.

We are also leading the way in the United Kingdom with innovative public health policies. Our diet and healthy weight delivery plan strives to make a significant impact on the prevention and remission of type 2 diabetes, and our tobacco action plan is delivering results, as the smoking rate for adults has continued to fall. Those policies strive to help people make healthier choices and support them to live healthier lives.

Brian Whittle: I know that the First Minister is aware of a recent report that asked for gastric band surgery for over-65s to be available on the national health service to address obesity-related diabetes, heart attacks and strokes. Does she agree that a better use of that resource would be to encourage and promote activities that help with people's physical and mental wellbeing, such as walking football and walking netball? Does she agree that that should be the first step to tackling obesity, long before such invasive surgery is promoted?

The First Minister: I thank Brian Whittle for raising those issues. As he will be aware, bariatric surgery, as it is called, is available on the NHS, but whether it is appropriate for a particular patient will be a clinical decision. If such surgery is clinically appropriate for a patient, it should be provided on the NHS. I agree with that.

I also agree that prevention is the key here and is what we should be principally focused on. That is why the public health work that I spoke about is so important, along with ensuring that there is early diagnosis of illness and good care and treatment. The strategy that I mentioned is focused on all those things. As we continue to take such action, I very much hope that we will continue to see the mortality rates for heart disease and stroke reducing.

Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): The First Minister will be aware that the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, has pledged that the Tories will cut overall immigration and end freedom of movement if Boris Johnson wins—

The Presiding Officer: I am sorry to stop you, Ms Watt, but I thought that you wanted to ask a supplementary to Mr Whittle's question. I am afraid that supplementaries have to follow the question, which, in this case, was on diabetes and healthcare.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): The First Minister will be well aware that today is world diabetes day. Does she share Diabetes Scotland's view that all people living with diabetes should receive the appropriate emotional, psychological and mental health support that they need to self-manage their condition, as people

with diabetes are twice as likely to experience depression?

The First Minister: Yes, I agree with that, and the Scottish Government will continue to work to achieve that aim.

I pay tribute to David Stewart, who I know has taken a long-standing interest in issues associated with diabetes; he showed that while I was health secretary. As a result, he will know about the work that the Scottish Government is doing not only to reduce the incidence of diabetes and to maximise the reversal of type 2 diabetes, but to make sure that the right support and services are there for people who are living with diabetes.

The Presiding Officer: Before we move on to the next item of business, we will have a short suspension to allow some visitors to come into the gallery and members to change seats.

12:44

Meeting suspended.

12:50

On resuming—

Day of the Imprisoned Writer

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): The next item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-19205, in the name of Ruth Maguire, on the day of the imprisoned writer. The debate will be concluded without any question being put. It is a very tight debate, as we already have seven members wanting to speak, so speeches should be very brief—four minutes, please—and everyone must keep to time.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament recognises 15 November as the Day of the Imprisoned Writer, a day to stand in solidarity with writers across the globe who have been persecuted, exiled, imprisoned and killed for expressing themselves; notes with grave concern the continued decline in free expression across the globe, as documented by organisations such as PEN International, Amnesty International, the Committee to Protect Journalists, ARTICLE 19 and Reporters without Borders; acknowledges what it sees as global efforts by state and non-state actors to attack and silence writers and journalists; recognises the impact of censorship on writers that restricts the free exchange of ideas and the unhampered transmission of thought; notes the importance of protecting the right to free expression for all, irrespective of background or identity; notes how a climate of impunity threatens both global free expression and trust in systems of justice; notes calls for governments around the world to guarantee justice for murdered, persecuted and imprisoned writers; supports initiatives to secure adequate protections for persecuted and imprisoned writers; commemorates writers who have been killed for exercising their right to freedom of expression, and finally, notes calls for the Day of the Imprisoned Writer to be officially recognised by the Parliament.

12:50

Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP): Every year, on 15 November, PEN International and PEN centres around the world mark the day of the imprisoned writer and stand in solidarity with at-risk and imprisoned writers around the globe. I welcome to the gallery representatives of PEN, and I thank them for all the work that they do on this matter.

The day of the imprisoned writer marks a moment to call for all imprisoned writers to be released and all at-risk writers to be protected. I thank members from all sides of the chamber for supporting my motion and the debate today. I hope that we can, as cross-party representatives from across Scotland, unite to call for all writers in prison to be released and for all threats and attacks to be defended against and investigated in line with the law and international standards, and, where individuals have been murdered, to demand full, transparent and robust investigations in order

to ensure that those behind such crimes are brought to justice.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right and is essential for society to function well. If we are to have good governance and democracy, intercultural dialogue and peace, we must have freedom of expression. I would ask anyone who might be inclined to shut down freedom of expression in the name of their cause or belief, no matter how benign or positive they feel that their views are, to reflect on where that leads and what it might mean in the long run.

The International Cities of Refuge Network states:

“A closed, censored society will soon become something like an autocracy with corruption and frightened servants instead of citizens.”

Whether people in power like it or not, critique, dialogue, different ideas, different opinions, robust challenge and scrutiny are essential in the long run, and writers everywhere provide those things. They inform the public, speak out for the marginalised, interrogate power, challenge censorship and speak words that others need to hear. When writers are censored, imprisoned, attacked or murdered, the world loses vital voices that strengthen democracy everywhere. Globally, far too many writers, journalists, novelists, poets, essayists, translators, publishers, editors, playwrights, cartoonists, bloggers and citizen journalists are jailed. Around the globe, laws about defamation, hate speech, national security and blasphemy are misused by oppressive regimes to silence dissenting voices.

There has never been a more dangerous time to be a journalist. According to Reporters without Borders, 80 journalists were killed worldwide in 2018. So far this year, 234 journalists, 136 citizen journalists and 17 media assistants have been imprisoned in the course of their duties. They have been imprisoned for doing their jobs, informing the public, speaking out for the marginalised, interrogating power, challenging censorship and speaking words that others need to hear. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, at least 1,354 journalists around the world have been killed between 1992 and 2019, and 31 journalists have lost their lives so far this year.

In addition to raising awareness of the plight of imprisoned writers in general, PEN uses the day of the imprisoned writer to direct attention to several specific persecuted or imprisoned writers and their individual circumstances. Colleagues on all sides of the chamber will, in their contributions, talk about the work of those individuals and the injustice around their situation that needs to be resolved. On the day of the imprisoned writer, we read the words that others have tried to silence.

Those who try to suppress people's work should hear loud and clear that censorship or imprisonment cannot silence the voices of writers. Today, in the Scottish Parliament, we stand together to protect at-risk writers and to stand up for free expression.

To close, I would like to share the words, a poem, of Behrouz Boochani, who is an Iranian-Kurdish journalist, associate professor, human rights defender, poet and film producer. This morning, Amnesty International shared the very good news that he had been freed. I am delighted that he will be appearing at WORD Christchurch, where he can read his own words.

In celebration of his freedom, and in solidarity with writers who are still imprisoned, I will share his poem, “The Black Kite”.

Over Manus Island,
a black kite flies.

A few youths-
still with energy
to bear the difficulties
of this prison camp-
made it.

The black kite flies,
a messenger of freedom
for us, the forgotten prisoners.

It circles
higher and higher
above the camp,
above the beautiful coconuts.

Our eyes follow its flight,
it seems to want to tear its rope.

It breaks free,
dances towards the ocean,
flies far and again farther
until no one can see it.

The youths stare into the empty sky
after their impossible dream.

12:56

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): I thank my colleague Ruth Maguire for bringing this important debate to the chamber.

Given that I am a former journalist, the debate is particularly close to my heart. Despite never having been in the line of danger myself, I believe that freedom of speech and freedom to write are the foundations of our democracy. Therefore, I thank PEN and all those involved who work so tirelessly to ensure that persecuted, imprisoned and murdered writers around the world are given a voice after being so unjustly silenced.

Those brave men and women continue to risk their lives and their freedom every day in pursuit of the truth. So far in 2019, 36 journalists have been killed and a further 341 are currently in prison. The numbers do not even take into account those who

have been imprisoned and released or who are currently in exile: that is horrific and shocking. Those heroes deserve to be celebrated, their cases deserve to be championed, and their stories deserve to be told. They should not be silenced.

That is why I welcome the opportunity that the Parliament has to stand in solidarity with at-risk or imprisoned writers. I am sure that I speak on behalf of everyone in the chamber when I say that the importance of the work that those writers do in pursuit of truth and justice cannot be understated, with each story being as important as the next.

In its briefing, Scottish PEN provided us with a shocking number of case studies, which represent just a fraction of the number of people who are being persecuted. I will take the opportunity to highlight the work and life of Lyra McKee, who was killed in April this year while covering a riot in Derry, Northern Ireland. A journalist and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activist, Lyra was born in north Belfast, where a quarter of all deaths from the conflict in Northern Ireland occurred. Her work focused on the forgotten victims of violence during the troubles, and she was of the generation that was promised better. Much like the very principle that is at the heart of the day of the imprisoned writer, Lyra strove to give a voice to the voiceless, and it is a cruel irony that she lost her life in the process.

Lyra recognised that the war in Northern Ireland continues to haunt individuals and families and that the first step to true peace for many families would be allowing their stories to be told. That is why it is such a profound tragedy that such a talented and caring rising star in the journalist community would be taken so abruptly and senselessly by the very violence on which she shone a light.

Nevertheless, Lyra's life and work serves as a testament to the risks that such writers throughout the world take and the importance of their taking those risks. Their courage exposes the truth, it allows us to learn and it leaves a legacy that will last for generations.

We must remember their stories, we must strive to do better ourselves and we must challenge persecution and abuses of human rights whenever we can.

12:59

Tom Mason (North East Scotland) (Con): I thank Ruth Maguire for this important members' business debate.

A free press speaks to the very core of the ideals that we hold dear. The ability to speak truth to power is essential in any functioning democratic system. Unfortunately, across the world, we have

seen the erosion of civil liberties and the rights of writers, activists and journalists to speak their minds without fear of reprisal.

It is with that in mind that we mark the 2019 day of the imprisoned writer. This year, PEN International has chosen to highlight the cases of five writers who have been persecuted in their home countries, to raise awareness of the risks that they and their colleagues are facing around the world. Whether it is Lydia Cacho, who has faced harassment, death threats and attacks due to her investigative journalism in Mexico, or news editor Nedim Türfent, who is serving eight and a half years in a Turkish prison on terrorism charges after a trial in which 19 witnesses said they had been tortured into testifying against him, their stories are simply harrowing. Sadly, they represent a global picture that is very troubling.

As colleagues may have seen, Reporters Without Borders does excellent work evaluating the trends in global press freedom. Compared with a few short years ago, we have real cause for concern. The 2019 world press freedom index indicates that only 9 per cent of the world's population live in countries where journalists can operate freely and independently. Even regions that have previously performed well have their issues. The demonisation of the media and debasement of public debate serve only to increase hostility against institutions that, at their best, give a voice to those without one and shine a light on the hidden challenges that the world faces.

Sadly, stories such as those are all too common. They are happening every day: arrests, assaults and even murder. They can come at the hands of state institutions as well as non-state actors. We all remember the stories of Marie Colvin, James Foley, Steven Sotloff, and, more recently, Jamal Khashoggi and Lyra McKee—each a tragedy.

The truth is that for each case we hear about, there is no telling how many others we do not hear about. Therefore, it is imperative that we take every opportunity to set out the absolute and indeed resolute belief that we all share in the right to freedom of speech and expression.

In 1787, Thomas Jefferson wrote:

“were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.”

A free society relies on freedom of expression and on the ability of ordinary citizens to question and to criticise those who hold political power. When writers and journalists are harassed, jailed or worse, simply for holding the powerful to account, we should stand against that at every turn.

As politicians, we might not like everything that is said about us. However, critical comment comes with the territory and that must always be the case. I welcome this opportunity to mark the day of the imprisoned writer and I hope that the year ahead sees vast improvement in the treatment of writers and journalists across the world, because—quite honestly—democracy depends on it.

13:03

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I thank Ruth Maguire for bringing this debate to Parliament ahead of tomorrow's day of the imprisoned writer. This is a welcome opportunity for us to voice our support for writers who are being persecuted, imprisoned and exiled across the globe.

We also have a responsibility as parliamentarians to consider what role we have to work with organisations such as PEN International, Amnesty International, Reporters Without Borders and others to continue to apply pressure on Governments to highlight and address the issues.

We live in a democracy and we have freedoms that many others do not. We have often fought hard to hold on to those rights and we are able to fight to protect them, whereas others cannot. The freedoms and legal protections that we have here are vital and we should not take them for granted. The day of the imprisoned writer serves as a reminder that many parts of the world do not have such commitments, and that in those places, people find themselves imprisoned, persecuted or executed for acting in a way that we would see as entirely normal. There are parts of the world where people are taking risks every day just by expressing their creativity or their views.

The importance of maintaining creativity and upholding its place in society is crucial, and we must all seek to do all that we can to ensure that people are not denied such freedom of expression. We must support those who make personal sacrifices to defend and uphold those human rights, and we must fight against any attempt to censor or otherwise restrict the exchange of ideas.

I thank Amnesty International UK for its briefing for the debate, and for its continued work in sharing the voices of writers who have seen their human rights compromised for exercising freedom of expression. The briefing highlights some of its current and recent cases and—alongside the PEN International case list—focuses attention beyond the numbers and tells us the stories of the individuals whom we are talking about today. Each individual case of a writer who is imprisoned,

exiled or executed is a story that is deserving of our attention. Each of those cases underlines the need for action, and I welcome the fact that some of those stories are being shared today.

In Uganda, Stella Nyanzi was sentenced to 18 months in prison following a Facebook post that insulted President Museveni. She founded a campaign to provide sanitary pads to schoolgirls—a similar campaign, about which we have had a debate, has been successful in Scotland. We should recognise that in another country, that campaign has led to a woman being imprisoned.

In Egypt, Galal El-Behairy was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for insulting the military and spreading false news, which were charges that related to a book of his poetry.

In other cases, it is not always legal or judicial action that is taken against writers. In Cuba, Francis Sánchez Rodríguez and Ileana Álvarez were sent into exile following persistent harassment and restrictions. They are husband and wife, and poets and independent journalists.

The freedom of the press, and of all writers, is an important part of our culture and society. We defend our right to speak and to write about our views, and the contribution of writers is something that we are able to celebrate. Each year, the Edinburgh international book festival is just one of the events at which we are able to do that. An important part of the festival is the imprisoned writers series, which is run by PEN and Amnesty International and shares writing by those who have had their freedom of expression denied or threatened. The contrast between the stories of those imprisoned for their writing, and a festival in Edinburgh that is about celebrating literature, is a stark reminder of the challenges that those authors face. The day of the imprisoned writer seeks to raise awareness of the situation of those individuals across the globe.

The power of the written word is vital in spreading messages, communicating ideas and connecting individuals and groups. However, it can also make writers a target for oppressive regimes and other actors who seek to prevent such activity. The freedom to speak as we choose, and for our words to be shared, must not depend on where a person lives or what they seek to write. Freedom of expression is central to creativity, communication and societies. We must do all that we can not only to highlight instances where it is prevented, but to protect it where it exists and promote change where it does not.

13:07

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): I also thank Ruth Maguire for bringing the debate to the chamber, as she does every year. I also thank

PEN International and Amnesty International for the briefings that they gave us.

I will talk about what can happen when a writer goes up against organised crime. Child sexual exploitation absolutely falls under that description, and it is the poor of this world who are most affected by it. The organised sexual slavery of children is even harder to tackle when you have Governments who turn a blind eye to it. Lack of action on tackling it is one thing, but dysfunctional criminal justice systems add to the problem and protect the perpetrators.

Through her journalism, Lydia Cacho Ribeiro has trained a spotlight on child prostitution cartels in Mexico. As a result of her investigative journalism, she has been subjected to assault, arrest, police detention, ill treatment during that detention, and defamation lawsuits that threatened to financially destroy her.

Lydia's first book on the subject of child pornography in Mexico, "The demons of Eden: the power that protects child pornography", which was published in 2005, drew attention from those who would wish to silence her. Her writing exposed several people in power, including Kamel Nacif Borge and Jean Succar Kuri, who ran a paedophile ring in Cancún. It also threatened to expose those men's clients, who were businessmen and men of power in Mexico—and the power behind pornography, it would seem, is significant.

Weeks after her book was published, Lydia was abducted by men in a van that pulled up outside her place of work. During the abduction, she was sexually assaulted, beaten and threatened with assassination if she did not stop writing about sex trafficking.

Soon after the incident, she was arrested. In 2007, after a two-year period of legal action following her arrest and detention, she was cleared of all charges. She has tried since then to get legal redress for her ill treatment, but to no avail.

Throughout the whole time, she has been the target of harassment and threats due to her investigative journalism. However, she has persevered. She has kept writing and she set up a shelter for women and girls who are victims of trafficking.

The intimidation continued. She says that, to date, she has received 27 death threats because of her work, but she was determined to stay in Mexico, run the shelter and keep writing about the organised crime of sexual exploitation and gender-based violence.

On 21 July 2019, someone invaded her home, killed her two dogs and stole reporting records by

way of her recorder, laptop and other equipment. This summer, Lydia reluctantly left Mexico to live in exile in London, because she knows that the justice system in Mexico will not protect her and she might be murdered if she stays.

In today's debate, we will hear a lot about persecution by the state, but the enabling by the state of violent crimes against journalists is arguably as bad. I offer solidarity to you, Lydia, as you use your voice to save women's and girls' lives. Mexico needs you—you need to go back, keep reporting and be protected as you do so.

13:11

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green):

I congratulate Ruth Maguire on bringing this important motion to the chamber for debate. My late mother used to say, "You only know what you know", but, actually, you only know what you are told. Key to that are the people who deliver information to us, such as writers, journalists and photojournalists.

Let me build on the good news that Ruth Maguire gave us earlier about Behrouz Boochani. Last year, my colleague Andy Wightman highlighted the case of Oleg Sentsov, the Ukrainian filmmaker who was jailed by the Russian authorities for 20 years. There is good news to report, as he was released on 9 September following a prisoner swap. In even better news, he will receive the Sakharov prize in the European Parliament on 26 November. We hear a lot of gloom, but it is important that we are positive, too.

The Reporters Without Borders website says:

"At the turn of the 21st century, nearly half of the world population still lacks access to free information."

We could spend a long time—I suspect that the Presiding Officer would not want us to—discussing what is meant by "free information". That is a debate in itself, and reporters and writers have an important role to play in it.

The website goes on to say:

"Deprived of knowledge that is essential for managing their lives, denied their very existence, they are prevented from living in pluralist political systems in which factual truth serves as the basis for individual and collective choices."

Like other members, I am grateful to PEN and Amnesty for all their work, including their briefings for the debate. I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests, as I am a member of Amnesty. Over the years, I have enjoyed participating in Amnesty's campaign to write to prisoners.

In countries such as Iran, China and South Sudan, which we often hear about, many people look to so-called progressive countries in the west,

but we have heard examples from the north of Ireland, and we have heard about the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia in Malta for exposing wrongdoing. Professor Clara Ponsati is presently in custody a short distance from here—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I just have to give you a wee alert about that. It is a live case, as you know, so mentioning it in passing is enough.

John Finnie: Thank you, Presiding Officer; I was simply mentioning it in passing.

I will move on to talk about the role that journalists have played in the evolving situation of protests in Catalonia, which was highlighted by the Committee to Protect Journalists. Journalists were there to cover the story and they very clearly identified themselves as such, yet they were targeted. On 19 and 20 October, 77 people were injured, including 38 journalists. We have to ask ourselves who would target them and why, and members have already talked about the role of the state in such matters. It is important that unfolding events are disclosed to citizens and that any wrong-doing is exposed; it is also important that those who expose it are protected.

No sanctions have been taken against the perpetrators of the violence in those instances, but there has been appeasement from the elites—they form, of course, the flawed fascist kingdom of Spain, and the role played by King Felipe VI in the situation is also a disgrace.

People will be aware that the state apparatus needs to support reporting and journalism. However, the World Economic Forum has reported that China ranks 46th, and Spain 58th, for judicial independence, which gives us a flavour of things.

On honest reporting, in Israel, the celebrated reporter Gideon Levy has been vilified for his accurate reporting on Gaza.

I finish with a quote from Win Tin, a Burmese journalist, who said:

“Freedom of information is the freedom that allows you to verify the existence of all the other freedoms.”

13:15

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): I congratulate Ruth Maguire on securing this important debate and thank Scottish PEN for taking the issue forward and its briefing for us today.

As someone who had worked as a journalist all my working life until coming into Parliament, I know what a great privilege it is to be able to write in a society where we have the freedom to do so. Ruth Maguire outlined the shocking statistics about hundreds of journalists being imprisoned

around the world, including citizen journalists. We must bear it in mind that many of the journalists who are persecuted are not just newspaper journalists but bloggers, for example.

Ruth Maguire mentioned the shocking figure of 1,354 journalists who have been killed around the world since 1992. One of those journalists was Jamal Khashoggi and one of the most shocking pieces of television that I have seen recently was the “Panorama” account of Mr Khashoggi’s death in the Saudi embassy in Istanbul. The United Nations rapporteur Agnes Kalamar and the Scottish barrister Helena Kennedy listened to the tapes that were recorded in the Istanbul embassy by the Turkish secret service of what happened to Mr Khashoggi, who was a very educated and confident man. Helena Kennedy described the rising anxiety in his voice as he realised that he was about to be killed—she said that they believed that they could hear him being suffocated. They then heard a discussion among the men present about cutting off Mr Khashoggi’s head with a surgical saw—absolutely horrific.

Mr Khashoggi was a well-connected man who wrote for the *Washington Post*, a major international paper that is based in America, which is a key ally of Saudi Arabia. Mr Khashoggi was quite a wealthy man from a well-connected family, but he was not protected and was murdered. If Mr Khashoggi can be murdered by the Saudi regime, what hope is there for the many other writers who are imprisoned by Saudi Arabia?

I am grateful to Scottish PEN for highlighting the plight of some of those writers, such as Raif Badawi, who was sentenced to 1,000 lashes—absolutely barbaric. There is also Ashraf Fayadh, a poet and artist, who was arrested by the religious police in Saudi in 2013 in a cafe following a complaint that he was cursing God and promoting atheism. His poetry was used in evidence against him and at one point he was threatened with execution—absolutely barbaric.

I also want to mention some writers who are not included in the extensive Scottish PEN briefing. Many feminists and women activists have been detained in Saudi Arabia since a crackdown in May 2018. Those women previously campaigned against the driving ban and guardianship laws. As we all know, women are treated as less than chattels in Saudi Arabia. I highlight the cases of two of those women: Loujain al-Hathloul, who is just 30, and Nouf Abdulaziz al Jerawi. We do not know where Nouf is at all, and Loujain, a well-known activist, was offered release but refused it because of the condition that she denied that she had been tortured. We know from many investigations that those women have been tortured and threatened with rape and death, and

that they have been held for an inordinate amount of time.

What is happening in Saudi Arabia is absolutely dreadful, all the more so because it is a key ally of the United Kingdom. Since 2017, Saudi Arabia has benefited from £790 million in UK licences for arms, despite its treatment of writers, including feminists, its human rights abuses in Yemen and the murder of Mr Khashoggi. It is absolutely appalling that the UK does business with Saudi Arabia, given its treatment of writers and other citizens of the country. I regard that as a great source of shame.

13:20

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): I thank Ruth Maguire for promoting the debate and for her recitation of “The Black Kite”. I thank members for their contributions, and I join them in supporting the day of the imprisoned writer. As Ruth Maguire did, I express my gratitude to Scottish PEN, Amnesty International and others for their efforts to raise awareness of the difficulties that many writers face today.

It is essential that we continue to stand in solidarity with imprisoned writers around the world and that we add our voices to calls for freedom and justice. The role of the state is not always about imprisonment; in some cases, it is about condoning other persecution. Gillian Martin highlighted effectively what a Mexican writer has had to face in challenging criminality and child exploitation.

As John Finnie set out, writers and journalists play a critical role in upholding democracy and freedom and, whenever they come under attack, the liberties that we enjoy across society are put at risk. As Rona Mackay said, the freedom to write is the foundation of our democracy. Tom Mason said that free society needs freedom of expression.

Reporters Without Borders estimates that, in 2019 alone, 234 journalists and 136 citizen journalists have been imprisoned and that 31 journalists have lost their lives. The brutal reality is that hundreds of people have lost their liberty simply because they are committed to writing in the public interest. On average, every month, three people are murdered because they dare to speak truth to power, and that scandalous state of affairs is repeated month after month, year after year.

In 2017, the world was shocked by the murders of several prominent journalists and campaigners. They included Gauri Lankesh, who campaigned for women’s rights and spoke out against right-wing religious extremism in India, and Daphne Caruana Galizia, who was murdered for her work

exposing corruption in Malta. In 2018, Ján Kuciak, who was investigating high-level fraud and corruption, was assassinated in Slovakia. In 2019, the Committee to Protect Journalists records that five journalists have been murdered in Mexico alone. Let us also remember, as Rona Mackay did, Lyra McKee, who was shot dead by paramilitaries in Northern Ireland in April. Their stories serve as a sobering reminder of the true price of liberty and the democratic values on which this Parliament is founded.

The day of the imprisoned writer is a time not just to remember and pay tribute; it is a time to stand up and be counted. It is a time for us to call for justice for those who are imprisoned and for the callous and cowardly murders that have been committed to be fully investigated so that all those responsible, however powerful and influential they may be, are held to account. The bitter truth is that only 10 per cent of the 930 killings of journalists between 2012 and 2016 have been resolved and seen genuine justice.

Nor should we forget the low-level intimidation and attacks to which writers and journalists are increasingly subject, or the dangers that are posed by surveillance and our collective loss of privacy in a digital age. We should not assume that the absence of the most extreme abuses of human rights means that there is no threat. Members of the Scottish Parliament have voiced their concerns about the increasingly toxic nature of public discourse and political debate in Britain. Whatever our politics, we must be united by our collective commitment to the constructive and respectful exchange of views. Looking to the future, we must ensure that human rights safeguards are built into innovations in digital technology—the technology that has given rise to the bloggers and citizen journalists to whom Joan McAlpine referred.

Erosion of freedom can happen in subtle and insidious ways. It can happen over time—sometimes with the best of intentions, but sometimes, unfortunately, with the worst. One of the most important jobs of writers and journalists is to investigate and make transparent the nature of such emerging potential threats.

Right now, more than 341 journalists are in prison worldwide. Claire Baker set out a number of those important cases. The biggest jailer of writers is Turkey. Yesterday, I was shocked and disappointed to hear that Turkish novelist Ahmet Altan has again been arrested. After three years in jail, Ahmet was released from prison only on 4 November. Among his best-known work is a deeply personal account of the harsh reality of unjust imprisonment:

“Never again would I be able to kiss the woman I love, embrace my kids, meet with my friends, walk the streets ... I would not be able to watch the sunrise.”

Amnesty International and PEN International have rightly condemned as a scandal and a disgrace the continued persecution of Ahmet Altan. Ahmet has committed no crime. His only offence has been to stand up to injustice and refuse to be silenced. His case reminds us that freedom of expression is one of the most basic human rights. It is central to our ability to function as individuals and members of wider society. That freedom must be prized and protected.

It is important that we do not just express solidarity with those who take a stand for human rights. Where we can, we must offer practical support. One such initiative is the Scottish human rights defender fellowship. This year, one of the fellows on the programme is from Russia—a country that is ranked 149th in the world press freedom index. As the fellowship continues to grow, I hope that there will be further opportunities to celebrate and support the role of writers and journalists as human rights defenders.

As we mark the day of the imprisoned writer, the individuals who we have heard about remind us how indispensable human rights are, and of the undeniable danger of neglecting them.

As a Parliament, we are collectively determined to take the words of international human rights law and make them a tangible reality.

Andy Wightman (Lothian) (Green): Will the member take an intervention?

Fiona Hyslop: I am about to close.

As Scotland's national Government, we are happy to embrace that duty. We acknowledge our duty to stand with those who are brave enough to raise their voices, to do everything in our power to maintain freedom of expression throughout the world and to call for justice for victims, no matter where they are.

13:27

Meeting suspended.

14:30

On resuming—

Portfolio Question Time

Government Business and Constitutional Relations

Policy Advice (Records Retention)

1. **Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government how long it keeps electronic and written records of policy advice to ministers. (S5O-03753)

The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey): Confirmation of the retention and disposal schedules that are applied to Scottish Government information is provided in our records management plan, which is available on the Scottish Government website.

In the interests of being helpful to my friend Mr Mountain, I advise him that the time for which information on the Government's electronic records system remains open, before it is closed and the file is destroyed, archived or reviewed, is a defined number of years, according to the nature of the file. In relation to policy advice, I understand that the period is up to 15 years.

Edward Mountain: Will the minister confirm for how long the Scottish Government keeps electronic and written records of ministers' notes? Is it for the same period of time?

Graeme Dey: Mr Mountain and the Conservatives have, misguidedly, been focusing on that issue over the past few days, so perhaps it would be useful for me to explain, once and for all, how the system works. The policy that is used for handling notes in ministerial offices predates this Government. It was introduced in 2004-05 by the Scottish Executive, not by the current First Minister. There has been no change in the handling of hand-written notes under the First Minister, with the practice remaining the same as it was under her predecessors.

It was agreed that, from 2004-05 onwards, responses from ministers are to be relayed by ministerial offices to the relevant policy teams that are responsible for maintaining the official record. It is not the responsibility of ministerial offices to keep the official record. The Scottish Government is confident that we comply with all records management requirements.

European Structural Funds (Replacement)

2. **David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with the United Kingdom

Government about the replacement of European structural funds support after Brexit. (S5O-03754)

The Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations (Michael Russell): The UK Government has committed to rolling out a successor programme to the European structural funds, post-European Union exit, called the UK shared prosperity fund. Following initial discussions in late 2018 and early 2019, the UK Government failed to provide any clarity on the details of the fund. That is still the case. The Scottish Government will continue to press the UK Government on the matter.

Against that background of uncertainty, this Government is undertaking a consultation to ensure that stakeholders are empowered to shape the development of the Scottish approach to any potential replacement.

David Stewart: In any future negotiations, what guarantees can be given that the Highlands and Islands will continue to have geographic disparities recognised—specifically, remoteness, scarcity and the islands dimension?

Michael Russell: The member will be aware of my commitment to those issues, particularly given the constituency that I represent. However, there have been no such commitments from the UK Government. The UK Government, in its only statement on the fund, indicated that it would endeavour to use the moneys to support the UK industrial strategy. To me, that does not sound as though the UK Government will be responsive to the needs of rural Scotland.

Yesterday, I met the Scottish Cities Alliance, and the convener of Highland Council phoned in to the meeting. There was the view that there needs to be a strong Scottish dimension, and that the flexibility that existed in the structural funds programme should continue to exist. Of course, the Scottish Government has made it clear that the devolved settlement must be recognised in any new system of distributing the funds.

The Scottish Government looks forward to hearing views through the consultation that we are undertaking. I would welcome David Stewart's participation in the consultation, so that he can give his views. We will bring forward our own proposals. However, as with many things with Brexit, in the end, it will depend on the UK Government's decision. So far, it appears to be mired in confusion and without any ability to say what it wants to achieve or how it will achieve it.

Referendums (Scotland) Bill

3. Bill Bowman (North East Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the progress of the Referendums (Scotland) Bill. (S5O-03755)

The Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations (Michael Russell): I am pleased to say that the Referendums (Scotland) Bill was backed by members following the stage 1 debate last week and will now continue to stage 2.

Bill Bowman: I thank the cabinet secretary for that very to-the-point response.

In September, the Scottish National Party Government announced plans for 13 bills, but now those have been moved aside in favour of one that was not announced—the indyref 2 bill—which the SNP Government is trying to push through before the end of this year. When did the SNP decide that legislation on animal welfare, rural support, hate crime and warm homes is less important than its indyref 2 obsession?

Michael Russell: I can only presume that the member is misinformed, because I am quite sure that he would not wish to say to Parliament something that is not true. The legislative programme remains as it was announced in the programme for government. That is, and will continue to be, the situation. The pressure on the legislative programme does not come from decisions of the Scottish Government on additional bills; it comes from the utter chaos at Westminster. I believe that I am right in saying that not a single bill has been brought forward at Westminster for matters other than Brexit in the past six months; there might have been one or two minor aspects of legislation on such matters. Westminster is in utter chaos with Brexit.

The right thing for Mr Bowman to do would be to reflect on the complete failure of the Tories in government in the United Kingdom. It is not time to cast aspersions on the Scottish Government, which is delivering its legislative programme precisely as it promised to do.

General Election (Effect on Scottish Government Business)

4. Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what impact the United Kingdom general election will have on the business of the Scottish Government. (S5O-03756)

The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey): During the period leading up to the UK general election, by long-standing convention, the Scottish Government will normally avoid making any announcements that could influence, or might reasonably be perceived to influence, the UK election campaign.

However, the Scottish Government continues to proceed with business that is necessary to ensure the proper and effective functioning of government and public services. The Scottish ministers

continue to carry out their functions, supported by the civil service, in the usual way.

The same principles apply to the UK Government during the period prior to any Scottish Parliament election.

Bill Kidd: The public and parliamentarians are well aware of the extensive drain on public resources that is being caused by Brexit. Does the minister agree that the UK Government's delayed budget, which is a consequence of the upcoming Brexit-focused election, will exacerbate those pressures and negatively affect this devolved Administration?

Graeme Dey: The Scottish Government is working extensively to prepare for the potential consequences of a European Union exit. As of March 2019, around 500 full-time-equivalent staff in the Scottish Government were engaged in EU exit-related work. The Scottish Government is prioritising activity in areas that will be heavily impacted by Brexit, most notably the economy, transport, food and drink, medicines, agriculture and the rural economy.

The 2019-20 budget had been prepared on the assumption that the UK would leave the EU with a deal and that there would be an orderly transition. Very difficult decisions on prioritisation would need to be taken in the event that we left without a deal.

Legislative Priorities (Advice)

5. Tom Mason (North East Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what advice it has received from the permanent secretary regarding its legislative priorities for the remainder of the parliamentary session. (S5O-03757)

The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey): With the support of the civil service, the Scottish Government continuously assesses its future legislative priorities. Subject to the risk of an unwelcome diversion of resources caused by Brexit, we remain committed to bringing before Parliament the ambitious legislative programme that was set out by the First Minister in this year's programme for government.

Tom Mason: Papers obtained by the Scottish Conservatives show that civil servants have deprioritised policy areas to work on the Scottish National Party's indyref 2 plans. When will the SNP Government put schools, hospitals and policing ahead of its indyref 2 obsession and stop blaming all its problems on the Westminster Government?

Graeme Dey: No Scottish Government bills have had to be reprioritised as a result of work on issues relating to independence. By contrast, five bills and 38 Scottish statutory instruments had to

be deferred earlier this year because of the disruption that was caused by the need to make preparations for a no-deal Brexit.

Brexit (No-deal Planning)

6. Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on its no-deal Brexit planning. (S5O-03758)

The Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations (Michael Russell): The Scottish Government undertook extensive preparation for a potential no-deal exit from the EU on 31 October, as set out in our "Scottish Government overview of 'no deal' Brexit preparations" document, which was published on 8 October.

Although an extension to article 50 has been agreed, as a responsible Government, we will continue to do everything that we can do to prepare until the threat of a no-deal Brexit is ruled out, and we will continue to keep Parliament updated. However, it simply will not be possible to mitigate all the impacts of leaving the EU without a deal, should that transpire.

Keith Brown: As the cabinet secretary will be aware, Tory Government ministers are on the record as ruling out extending the transition period past 2020. Under the terms of Boris Johnson's deal, if no free-trade agreement is reached by the end of 2020 and no extension is in place, we will, in effect, again face the cliff edge of a hugely disastrous no-deal Brexit, with all the damage to jobs and livelihoods that it will cause.

Does the cabinet secretary agree that the only way to guarantee that a no-deal Brexit is permanently taken off the table is for Scotland to become an equal and independent member of the European Union?

Michael Russell: Unsurprisingly, I agree wholeheartedly with Keith Brown. As he said, that is the only way that we can move on from constant uncertainty to a position of certainty about the future. [*Interruption.*]

A Conservative voice is making noises on the other side of the chamber. Conservatives make noises about this issue because they know the inevitability—

Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Because they are right.

Michael Russell: The Conservatives may try to talk me down, but I will continue to assert the inevitability of the democratic right to allow the people of Scotland to choose their future. That is absolutely unanswerable, in terms of democracy.

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con): You ignore referendums.

Michael Russell: The Tories can shout and argue as much as they want, but they are not democrats if they do not accept that.

I will make another point with regard to the EU position. An interesting contribution has been made in the past 24 hours by Phil Hogan, who is about to become the European Union trade commissioner, with responsibility for the trade negotiations with the UK. He has been clear about the timescale and what is expected. On the timescale, he has said that a deal could be done within 12 months, but that that can happen only if there is absolutely complete and permanent acceptance by the United Kingdom of the level playing field. However, as we know, there is a huge reluctance on the part of the UK to sign up to that and, now that the Tory party is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Brexit Party, there will be absolute refusal to do so.

I have to say that we are in for a very rocky ride indeed. That is another reason why Scotland should choose independence.

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): Can the Scottish Government provide me with an update on its planning in relation to potential medicines shortages that might result from a catastrophic no-deal exit from our European neighbours?

Michael Russell: There are great concerns regarding medicine supplies, which we must take extremely seriously. A lot of work has been done by the Scottish Government to ensure continuity of supply. However, nothing can ever be completely guaranteed, so in the circumstances we will have to ensure that we keep under review all the issues related to stockpiling of medicines, all the issues that relate to ensuring that priority goods are given priority, and all the considerations that exist in respect of a range of other issues, as we did in our no-deal preparations.

It is utterly irresponsible of any Government to create circumstances in which people who are vulnerable and who suffer from illnesses are nervous about provision of the core medicines that they require. That is unforgivable, and the UK Government stands condemned in that regard. Any UK minister or Scottish Tory who supported that should hang their head in shame.

Brexit (Care Services Staffing)

7. **Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government how it plans to mitigate the impact that difficulties in recruiting European Union citizens as a result of Brexit will have on the staffing of care services. (S5O-03759)

The Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations (Michael Russell): EU citizens play a vital role across our public services, including social care. That is why we have launched the stay in Scotland campaign, and why we will continue to argue for free movement of people.

Retaining and attracting the right people into the social services sector and raising the status of social care as a profession are key to delivery of quality sustainable services. We have taken action to protect our social care services, including paying the real living wage to adult care workers.

Under our “National Health and Social Care Workforce Plan: part two”, which has been co-published with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, we are working with partners, including care providers and COSLA, to support recruitment and retention in the social care workforce. That includes work that is in progress to deliver a national recruitment campaign in early 2020, which will promote adult social care as a meaningful, valued and rewarding career choice. The campaign will link to the Scottish Social Services Council’s new careers website, which was launched in September this year, and which contains inspirational case studies and tools to help staff to build careers in the sector.

Sarah Boyack: I thank the minister for sharing my concerns about the impacts on EU citizens who work in the care sector—uncertainty and worries about their loss of rights. He acknowledged that work is being done, but I ask him to redouble those efforts. We need a specific plan to ensure that we retain those staff, given the demographic pressures that the Local Government and Communities Committee highlighted only last month in our budget representations, and the important role that EU citizens play in delivering those services.

Today’s worrying survey results from Unison show that 90 per cent of social workers are considering leaving their jobs. We face a potential crisis across health and social care, which requires that everybody step up to ensure that there is support for those staff, and that we look at issues such as the real living wage and much more beyond.

Michael Russell: Sarah Boyack raises important issues. She and I do not entirely agree about independence, I am sure, but even the devolution of migration policy would be a step forward, in the circumstances, because it would allow us to do things that we cannot currently do.

We are very aware that a number of factors are bearing down on the EU workforce in Scotland. The loss of rights is certainly one of them, and the value of the pound is another—sometimes the

major—factor. There are also worries about the long-term sustainability of employment and about the welcome that people might receive.

A variety of things can be, and are being, done. I commend my colleague Jeane Freeman for working to offer reassurance to the health and social care workforce, and Ben Macpherson for his work with EU nationals, which takes place across Government.

We will continue to undertake such work to ensure that the workforce from other EU countries is valued. We encourage people to stay and contribute in the care sector, and we will do our very best to ensure that that happens. However, having control over migration would give us an easier and more effective tool, in that respect.

Brexit (Scotland's Economy)

8. Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what analysis it has undertaken of the impact of the United Kingdom Government's Brexit deal on Scotland's economy. (S5O-03760)

The Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations (Michael Russell): On 30 October 2019, the Scottish Government published our assessment of the revised withdrawal agreement and the political declaration. It sets out that it is estimated that, with a free trade agreement of the type that the UK Government wants to negotiate, Scottish gross domestic product would be 6.1 per cent lower by 2030 than would be the situation under continued European Union membership. That equates to a cost to each person in Scotland of £1,600. Further details can be found on the Scottish Government's website.

Fulton MacGregor: The Brexit deal will be devastating for Scotland—not least, in my constituency, which receives tens of millions of pounds in EU funding to help small businesses to grow, to support people who are in poverty and to tackle unemployment. Does the cabinet secretary agree that any replacement of that vital funding must have input from people in Scotland? How is the Government facilitating that to ensure that those voices are heard, with regard to such important resources?

Michael Russell: I agree. In answer to David Stewart, I indicated that the shared prosperity fund is a considerable worry to the Scottish Government. The fund was announced in the 2017 Tory party manifesto; I first discussed it with James Brokenshire when he was Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government—which was not yesterday. Nothing has happened since then, and there has been no indication of how the fund might move forward.

We have five very important red lines. Scotland should not lose out financially in comparison with the level of funding that it currently receives. The devolution settlement must be respected and the UK Government must not attempt to take back powers that the Scottish Government has rightfully executed in this area to date. The Scottish Government must be an equal partner in development of the shared prosperity fund, and the current level of flexibility and allocation of funds should not be reduced. Last, the replacement scheme should be operational in time for it to be implemented in early 2021 so that stakeholders do not suffer difficulties as a result of funding gaps.

In all those areas, we know little more than we knew two years ago. We are taking the same position as the Government in Wales. I am increasingly worried about the timescale, more than anything else, because it looks almost impossible to meet. After the election, the UK Government—if it is still in power; let us profoundly hope that it is not—will, in the circumstances, have to pay attention to the matter, because many organisations and individuals in Scotland will feel a severe draught if the funding is not moving forward.

Scottish Products (United States Tariffs)

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-19851, in the name of Ivan McKee, on implications of the imposition of US tariffs on Scottish products.

14:50

The Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation (Ivan McKee): This year, we should be celebrating 25 years of tariff-free spirits trade between Europe and the US. Instead, we are facing 25 per cent US tariffs on a range of Scottish products.

The US is the world's largest export market for Scotch whisky, and for more than a century, Scotch and US whisky industries have been closely entwined. Despite that history, today, a 2019-release Scotch whisky that has spent the past 25 years ageing in US bourbon barrels, ready for tariff-free access to US markets, finds new and unwelcome obstacles in its way.

Scotland is proud to be a trading nation with a plan to increase our exports to 25 per cent of our gross domestic product in the next 10 years, thereby growing exports by £25 billion. However, delivering that plan requires a supportive trading environment. The US tariffs directly damage Scottish business. I will detail the specific impacts shortly.

The effects of barriers to trade are also a stark warning of the greater impact that is to come from the loss of tariff-free access to the European Union, particularly in the case of a no-deal Brexit. It demonstrates why Scotland's interests must be taken into account in the development of all future United Kingdom trade arrangements.

Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): If the minister is so concerned about a no-deal Brexit, why has the Scottish National Party voted on four separate occasions against a deal, including the latest withdrawal deal? The Scotch Whisky Association said that that deal

"stands up well against the priorities of the Scotch Whisky industry."

Ivan McKee: Dean Lockhart knows fine well—he should know—that any Brexit is bad for Scotland. The people of Scotland did not vote for Brexit and, in stark contrast to the behaviour of the Conservative Party, the Scottish Government and the SNP will not support anything that damages Scotland's economy.

On 18 October, the US applied 25 per cent tariffs to a range of products from EU countries, including the UK, in accordance with World Trade

Organization rules. The imposition of those tariffs is the latest development in the long-running Airbus and Boeing saga—a dispute between the US and the EU about subsidies to the aviation industry. Next year, the EU expects the outcome of a WTO decision on tariffs that the EU can apply to US products: tit for tat.

Trade disputes may seem far removed from most people's day-to-day lives, but the impact of the tariffs on Scottish businesses, and potentially on people's jobs, is immediate and real. The tariffs target single malt Scotch whisky, cheese, butter, cashmere and sweet biscuits, including shortbread. That is profoundly worrying for Scottish producers who export, or are planning to export, to the US. It jeopardises the industry's own target to double its value to £30 billion by 2030, as set out in "Ambition 2030", the national food and drink strategy.

I spend much of my time talking to businesses and business associations to understand how Government can best support them. I know that the impacts of the tariffs are being felt across Scotland, from the villages of Speyside to the west coast island distilleries and the textile manufacturers of the Borders.

The USA is Scotland's single biggest export market for whisky. Many single malt distilleries are located in remote and rural areas, particularly in island communities, and they are often small businesses. The Scotch Whisky Association has highlighted to me that its industry is paying 62 per cent of the UK's tariff bill in a dispute that has nothing to do with it.

There is also a disproportionate impact on rural areas, especially Moray, which is home to distilleries, food producers and cashmere manufacturers.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): Does the minister share my view that one of the targets of the 25 per cent tariff is the small distilleries that mostly do single malt and which do not have the flexibility to move into blended whisky? Those distilleries are going to be highly at risk, particularly in the Highlands and Islands.

Ivan McKee: That is indeed the case. As the member knows, the tariff is a target on malt, so even within the whisky industry, there is a disproportionate impact.

It is not just about whisky: biscuit and shortbread manufacturers are also badly affected. One major manufacturer exports approximately 5,000 tonnes of shortbread a year to the USA, supporting 200 jobs.

I know from my experience in business that margins, particularly for small businesses, can be tight. Any changes in the trading environment that

make a product less competitive or reduce margins can have a big impact on profitability and jobs. This is a situation in which there are no winners. When I was in Washington last month, I met representatives of the US spirits industry. They also stressed the impact of the tariffs on their businesses, including potential job losses in the US.

Scottish ministers and officials have taken what steps we can to encourage a resolution to the dispute. I know that the EU is working towards a negotiated settlement with the US, and we support the EU in that approach.

The First Minister recently wrote to the Prime Minister highlighting the threat to the Scotch whisky industry. I also raised the issue with the UK trade minister, Conor Burns, in October. We have urged the UK Government to work with the EU to find a solution.

Also in October, I raised the impact of the tariffs on Scottish exports with the assistant US trade representative in Washington DC, the US consul general in Edinburgh and the US embassy in London.

This year, we should be celebrating 25 years of tariff-free trade in spirits between Europe and the US. Last year, we celebrated a tariff-free trade arrangement that is twice as long, with the 50th anniversary of the EU customs union. For most of that time, Scotland has had tariff-free access to the EU market.

The impact on Scotland of the targeted US tariffs on specific sectors is a stark warning of the far greater challenges that await Scotland if we lose tariff-free access to the EU across a wider range of sectors.

As members know, the Scottish Government believes that the best option for the future wellbeing of Scotland is to remain in the EU. That position is consistent with the will of the people of Scotland, who overwhelmingly voted to remain. The benefits of EU membership to Scotland are clear. The EU is the largest single market for Scotland's international exports. Estimates show that EU trade barriers could cost the UK between 4 and 7 per cent in lost GDP growth by 2030, while the UK Treasury's own figures show that, taken together, signing free trade agreements with all the English-speaking countries, including the US, and with all the emerging economies of the BRICS countries—Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa—would increase GDP by only a maximum of 0.4 per cent.

Any form of Brexit will cause significant harm to Scotland's economy and result in lower household incomes. However, a no-deal Brexit could push the economy into recession in 2020. That stark conclusion is set out in the Scottish Government's

report, "No-deal Brexit: economic implications for Scotland". Unemployment figures could rise by up to 100,000 and exports could fall by up to 20 per cent.

If we Brexit with no deal, the EU will have no choice but to impose the same tariffs on us as it imposes on other third countries. The UK Government has conceded that that could mean an annual loss of almost £2 billion to the UK's food and drink sector alone.

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I totally understand the arguments that the minister has made about tariffs. What I cannot understand is how he can say that it would be a complete disaster to leave the EU and have to face tariffs when 60 per cent of our trade is with the rest of the UK and there is a real danger of a hard border and tariffs if we go down his road of separation.

Ivan McKee: The member will be well aware that the Scottish Government's position is that there should be no tariffs between Scotland and the rest of the UK, or indeed with the EU, because we intend to maintain membership as a full member of the EU after independence. If he is saying that the UK position is that it would erect tariff barriers between the UK and the EU, that speaks more to the UK's attitude to international trade than to Scotland's attitude of seeking to do what we can to protect business, rather than putting barriers in the way.

There are those who argue that the US tariffs are an EU issue and will be solved by Brexit. However, that displays a deep misunderstanding of the situation. Leaving the EU will not remove the UK's current US tariff liabilities, which are related to UK subsidies for Airbus. Instead, it clearly demonstrates two things.

First, a so-called clean break, no-deal, WTO Brexit is a fallacy. The dispute shows that the free trading UK of Brexiteers' dreams would still be subject to a supranational rules-based body—one with teeth, as the dispute has demonstrated. That body will just be based in Geneva, rather than Brussels.

Secondly, the dispute demonstrates the difficulties that the UK will face in negotiating a free trade agreement with the US—a country that is unpredictable at best, and one that drives a very hard bargain. The Airbus WTO tariffs give the US a strong card to start with, and one that they will not give away through a love of the UK, but will seek to exchange for who knows what—perhaps food standards, or access to our national health service. In that situation, the UK could find itself without even the counterweight of a WTO Boeing ruling in the EU's favour to balance the scales.

The imposition of US tariffs indicates why Scotland's economic and other interests and

priorities must be taken into account in the development of future trade arrangements. Although there are similarities, there are also differences in what, and where, Scotland trades compared with the rest of the UK. Scotland has valuable protected geographical indications, such as Scotch whisky, Scottish farmed salmon and Scotch beef, which are crucial to our export performance and growth. Our approach to trade also differs from that of the UK as a whole, with a specific set of values that reflect the priority that we give to protecting the environment, our public services and workers' rights.

One year ago, the Scottish Government published "Scotland's role in the development of future UK trade arrangements", which strongly made the case that the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government must have guaranteed roles in formulating and agreeing future trade deals. One year on, those issues are as relevant, if not more so, with the UK Government talking up the benefits of a US trade deal. This Parliament has previously called on the UK Government to engage in a process with the Scottish Government and the other devolved Administrations that ensures that the interests and priorities of all parts of the UK are represented. I reiterate that call today.

These US tariffs have seen Scotland caught up in a trade dispute that is not of our making. They have a direct impact on Scottish businesses, and post-Brexit tariffs with the EU would multiply the scale of that impact on the Scottish economy. Our healthy current trade with the US shows that we do not need to leave the EU to trade successfully with the US; what we need is a trading environment that allows our businesses to thrive and which is supportive of what, and how, Scotland trades. We can increase our exports to 25 per cent of our GDP in the next 10 years, but Scotland's voice must be heard, and our interests must be represented, in future trade deals.

I move,

That the Parliament regrets the recent imposition of United States tariffs on a range of Scottish goods, including single malt Scotch whisky, liqueurs, cheese, butter, biscuits and woollen and cashmere products, and their impact on Scottish businesses; welcomes the efforts of the EU to reach a negotiated settlement with the United States to bring the Airbus/Boeing dispute to an end, and recognises the damage that any form of Brexit will inflict on Scottish businesses that trade with EU member countries and, in particular, the price that will be paid by businesses and employees of a no-deal Brexit.

15:02

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

This is a very important debate. Everyone across this chamber will recognise the importance of the Scotch whisky sector and the other sectors that

are affected by US tariffs arising from a trade dispute between the EU and the US.

I will first deal with the Scotch whisky industry and the significant contribution that it makes to Scotland's economy and trade, and the huge tax revenues that it generates to support public services in Scotland. Scotch whisky accounts for more than £4 billion in international sales, making it one of the largest exporting sectors in the UK. It employs more than 11,000 people across Scotland, and many more indirectly through supply chains, the majority of which jobs are in rural Scotland.

On 18 October this year, an import tariff of 25 per cent was imposed on all single malt Scotch whisky and Scotch whisky liqueurs entering the US market. Those tariffs are the latest chapter in a 15-year trade dispute between the US and the EU over subsidies for Airbus and Boeing, and they follow a related decision of the European Commission to impose tariffs on US whiskey last year.

All of that means that Scotch whisky, and some of our other vital sectors, have become collateral damage in a much wider EU-US trade dispute. In the words of the Scotch Whisky Association,

"Scotch is now caught up in a multidimensional trade dispute between the EU and the US. A 25% EU tariff has applied to US whiskeys since July 2018 despite our vocal opposition and calls for this to be removed. This will have contributed to the US decision."

The US tariffs will affect single malt exports going into the US that are worth more than \$500 million. The SWA has said that exports of single malt to the US could decline by some 20 per cent over the next year if these tariffs continue, which would amount to a decline of more than \$100 million a year in exports. Clearly, this is an important issue for all of us to address.

In response to the imposition of US tariffs, the Scotch whisky industry has made a number of reasonable requests of the UK and Scottish Governments. First, it has called for them to work together to encourage the EU and US authorities to reach a negotiated settlement to the dispute. To that end, I welcome the action that has been taken by the Prime Minister, who has raised the issue directly with the US President a number of times. The UK Government has also approached the WTO to confirm that the UK has been fully compliant with rulings on Airbus tariffs and, therefore, should not be subject to those tariffs.

Pending a resolution to the trade dispute, the Scotch whisky sector has proposed a number of targeted measures that can be taken to support the industry, which include reducing the tax burden on spirits and reforming excise duty to minimise the competitive disadvantage to Scotch

whisky. That is a reserved matter, and I am pleased to report that, last week, the UK Government announced that it will review alcohol duty to ensure that the UK tax system provides much-needed support to the UK drinks industry. That follows last year's UK budget, in which spirits duty was frozen at the request of Scottish Conservative MPs in Westminster.

The whisky sector has also called for the exclusion of glass from the Scottish Government's deposit return scheme, to reduce the regulatory burden on whisky producers. I ask the minister whether he will listen to the Scotch whisky sector and, today, rule out the inclusion of glass in the DRS.

The sector has highlighted problems arising from the painfully slow roll-out of superfast broadband in rural areas, which affects countless distilleries. I ask the minister to explain to the sector today why his Government is failing to meet targets for the roll-out of superfast broadband and what steps he is taking to address that issue.

The Scotch whisky and other sectors that are impacted by the tariffs are too important to get caught up in politics, which is why our motion calls on the Scottish Government to work closely with the UK Government to address the issues.

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): Will Dean Lockhart give way?

Dean Lockhart: I will give way to Bruce Crawford if he can explain what steps his party is taking to address the issues raised by the SWA.

Bruce Crawford: What I will do is ask Dean Lockhart how much of the £600 million of Government money that has been put into the roll-out of improved broadband in Scotland has come from the UK Government. The answer is zero.

Dean Lockhart: As Bruce Crawford knows, the responsibility for implementing the roll-out is the Scottish Government's. He wants to talk about funding and, as the convener of the Finance and Constitution Committee, he will be well aware of the extra £2 billion that will be coming to the Scottish Government as a result of an increase in the UK block grant.

I turn to the Scottish Government motion and its reference to Brexit.

Ivan McKee: Will Dean Lockhart take an intervention?

Dean Lockhart: I will give way in a second—let me just make a bit of progress.

By mentioning Brexit in the context of US tariffs being imposed on Scotch whisky, the minister undermines his own policy on Brexit. The only reason that Scotch whisky and other sectors are being hit by US tariffs is that we are still a member

of the EU and, in this trade dispute, the EU has prioritised the interests of European aerospace, French champagne and other sectors at the expense of Scotch whisky. After Brexit, we will be free to negotiate our own free trade agreements with the rest of the world. We can then prioritise the interests of Scotland's whisky, fishing, agriculture and other vital sectors.

I remind the minister that SNP policy is to take Scotland back into the common fisheries policy, which will damage fishing communities; to take us back into the common agricultural policy, which will damage Scottish farmers; and to take us back into EU-wide free trade agreements, which, as we can now see, prioritise European exports at the expense of Scotch whisky.

If I have a bit more time, I will give way to Ivan McKee.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): You can, if you wish.

Ivan McKee: I am really struggling to know where to start with that catalogue of distractions.

On co-operation with the UK Government, the Scottish Government has produced document after document and tried to sit down and talk with the UK Government about future trading arrangements, but it is not talking to us about that, which is a problem.

On the prioritisation of sectors, Dean Lockhart should be aware that the UK is also specifically named in the ruling on the US tariffs because of the UK's support for Airbus. If the UK was not a member of the EU, it would still be liable for those tariffs. That is the reality—I have had those conversations with the US trade representative and the US embassy in London—so that would be part of the trade negotiations with the US. Pretending that exiting the EU would solve the problem is completely incorrect. [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Hold on just a minute. I am in control here. Please, stand up Mr Lockhart. We had time to allow that intervention and you have time to respond to it. I remind all members that the terms of the motion and the amendments in the *Business Bulletin* really should be adhered to. Mr Lockhart.

Dean Lockhart: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

In the motion, the Scottish Government highlights its concerns about a no-deal Brexit. If the SNP is so concerned about a no-deal Brexit, why has it voted four times against a deal, which the SWA has said

"stands up well against the priorities of the Scotch Whisky industry"?

The SNP is the party of no deal.

The minister should have come to the chamber today with a series of measures to help the Scotch whisky sector and other sectors that are affected by the tariffs. Instead, he has come to the chamber with nothing to offer those sectors and just a list of political points to make. The Scotch whisky, cashmere and other sectors that are affected by the tariffs deserve better from the Scottish Government. At least they can still rely on the UK Government, which has taken urgent and effective measures to support their businesses.

Ivan McKee *rose—*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Lockhart is just closing.

Dean Lockhart: I move amendment S5M-19851.1, to leave out from “, and recognises” and insert:

“; welcomes the efforts of the UK Government in continuing to press the United States administration and the EU to remove these tariffs, which are a result of an ongoing EU-United States trade dispute; further welcomes the commitment by the UK Government to deliver a multi-year plan for the future of alcohol duty in order to give the drinks sector certainty; acknowledges the requests from industry bodies such as the Scotch Whisky Association to assist the sector following the imposition of tariffs; calls on the Scottish Government to respond urgently and in full to these requests; recognises that, following the UK’s departure from the EU, the UK will be able to enter into free trade agreements that prioritise the interests of vital sectors of the Scottish economy, such as single malt Scotch whisky, liqueurs, cheese, butter, biscuits and woollen and cashmere products, and calls on the Scottish Government to work with the UK Government for an urgent resolution of these issues.”

15:11

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): It is deeply disappointing that the US has decided to inflict tariffs on iconic Scottish produce. However, that should not surprise us, as we have seen across the globe how the US uses its might and disproportionately large market to inflict its will on other nations. What is frightening is that we might well depend on the US market in the near future. It does not augur well that the World Trade Organization allowed the tariffs to happen. At 25 per cent, their size is not only punitive but deeply damaging for our produce.

The malt whisky industry has been drawn into the dispute. We have seen a resurgence in the Scotch whisky sector in recent years that has provided jobs and an economic boost. On the back of that, we have also had created a new market for gin. While new distilleries wait for their whisky to mature, they produce gin, which provides a steady income for those fledgling distilleries because it does not have to be aged. The US is the largest market for Scotch whisky and it was worth £1 billion last year, but the tariffs could cost the Scotch whisky industry 20 per cent

of its sales of malt whisky at a value of \$103 million.

The tariffs have implications for food sales as well, with meat, cheese and biscuits among the foods that are affected. Walkers, which is famous for its shortbread, exports 10 per cent of its products to the US, and that is concentrated around the festive season. Should the tariffs continue into the new year, they will affect Walkers’s annual sales.

Cashmere and wool and other high-quality products have also been hit. Sadly, most of those products come from the Highlands and Islands, a region that struggles economically. The attack on those sectors will have a disproportionate impact if it is not addressed quickly. If the current situation continues, the size of the tariff will make it impossible for it to be absorbed by businesses for any length of time. It could lead to falls in sales and, ultimately, job losses.

Brexit has led to discussions about new markets and how we need to expand our trade base. President Trump has made it clear that he is keen to do business. Unfortunately, the tariffs show the manner in which he does business. With the EU, we have a voice at the table and a veto, and we are equal partners with other member states. We have no such deal with America. The US has shown that it is not reasonable, and our economy will be subject to its whim if we become too dependent on trade with the US. Therefore, should Brexit happen, we will need to maintain very close trading relationships with the EU. We will not have the same voice, but we will need to ensure that we are not too dependent on one market.

Despite all that, we are still rolling out the red carpet for Trump, but not just around his development at the Menie estate. Earlier this year, it was discovered that the state-owned Glasgow Prestwick Airport Ltd had been waiving service fees for inbound US military aircraft. Despite that, we are penalised. It is therefore foolish to reject our close trading partnerships with those who show us loyalty.

That said, the biggest market for Scottish produce is the rest of the United Kingdom. As we discuss these damaging tariffs and how they affect our trading relationship with the US going forward, we are also discussing the implications of Brexit for our trade with Europe. It makes no sense at all for the Scottish Government to continue to talk about separating from the rest of the UK, which is our largest market. Doing that would leave us even more at the whim of other countries and their trade deals.

If Brexit has taught us anything, it is surely that we damage our country and create division by constitutional wrangling. The uncertainty damages

the economy, regardless of the outcome, and we alienate our closest friends. We have had enough of that already.

Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): The United Kingdom is, regrettably, hell-bent on leaving the European Union, and, if that happens, the UK will have its own policy on trade. Can the member explain, based on the experience of recent years, exactly what influence Scotland can expect to have on such a trade policy and why it would not be better to have one of our own?

Rhoda Grant: I think that the member is trying to say that, as part of the European Union, we would have a greater say on trade policy than we would have as part of the United Kingdom. That makes no sense to me at all. We would have the same or greater influence on UK trade policy as we would have on EU trade policy, simply because of the numbers game. The number of MEPs that we send to Europe is a lot less than the number of MPs that we send to the UK Parliament. That argument makes no sense.

Ivan McKee: I just want to check that the member understands that an independent Scotland, as a full member of the EU, would also have a place at the European Council and would have a commissioner.

Rhoda Grant: That would be as part of a union along with 27 other countries, rather than as a family of nations of four countries. That still makes no sense. There is also the fact that there is no guarantee that we would be in the EU. As the minister knows, to join the EU, we would need to join the euro, which the SNP has decided against. There are no guarantees in what the minister has put forward. We would be much better served by remaining part of the UK and, indeed, part of Europe.

I move amendment S5M-19851.2, to insert at end:

“; notes past failures of the Scottish Government to stand up to President Trump, and recognises that independence will also have a detrimental effect for Scottish businesses that trade with the rest of the UK as it is Scotland’s largest trading partner, accounting for 60% of exports.”

15:17

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD): The Liberal Democrats believe that the motion rightly makes it clear that any Brexit will be damaging to our economy, and particularly our food and drink industry. The motion also highlights the fact that a no-deal Brexit would be even more damaging. A no-deal Brexit is simply the worst of all worlds. Even the most benign Brexit imaginable will cost our economy 2 to 8 per cent of growth over the next decade, according to the UK Government’s own figures.

That is why I am genuinely astonished by Dean Lockhart’s contribution on behalf of the Conservatives. As far as I understand it, the Conservatives used to pride themselves on being sound on the economy, but their amendment would remove the motion’s reference to the economic damage that any kind of Brexit will do to the British economy. The Conservative UK Government recognises that damage, but the amendment would remove that reference. How the Conservatives—certainly in this chamber—have changed! I do not know about elsewhere, but the Conservatives in this chamber have changed dramatically, and not for the better.

Businesses cannot simply uproot decades of trade and investment with our partners in the EU and suddenly find new buyers and markets that did not exist before. It takes years of investment and development for a business to break into new markets, particularly in the US market, which has so many local competitors. Despite the current US President’s warm words about Brexit, his actions, aggressive nationalism and protectionism tell a completely different story. We do not share his values. Everyone loses from escalating trade wars.

Are we about to do a great beneficial deal with Mr Trump? I think not. Trade tariffs on whisky, wool clothing and blankets, biscuits, books, cheese, meat, butter, seafood and fruit will be a bitter blow to our rural economy and will be deeply damaging to people’s jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

However, it is clear that it is an example of the type of behaviour that we will face if Brexit forces us into the hands of a US trade deal wished for by Mr Trump.

Thankfully, the EU remains the largest export region for Scottish whisky and, rather than turning our back on it, we must maintain as much frictionless trade as possible. Brexit will create barriers with our largest export partner. A different trade deal with the US will be no substitute for what we already have as part of the EU.

It is in no one’s interests to resort to tariff barriers. As long as standards are maintained—that is important—low tariffs and free trade underpin prosperity and jobs in the UK and globally.

Other EU leaders have been clear in their condemnation of US trade tariffs but, because of Brexit, the UK Government is living in fear of jeopardising any future trade talks.

The whisky industry alone estimates that there could be a loss of £228 million in revenue and that 3,000 jobs, mainly in rural Scotland, could be affected by those US tariffs. The impact on the

wool and whisky industries in Scotland might also have a detrimental impact on our tourism industry.

The European Union is the biggest market for Scottish products, including—at 30 per cent by value and 36 per cent by volume—whisky. However, the fact that, as we have heard, single malts are being targeted, is damaging for smaller producers, who stand to be the hardest hit.

I find the current UK Government soundbite—“Let’s get Brexit done”—reprehensible. It is a fraud. If it happens by 31 January, one thing is sure—Brexit will not be “done”. There will be years of wrangling with the EU over future trading arrangements and years of wrangling—*[Interruption.]*

Oliver Mundell is shouting at me. If he wants to make an intervention, I am happy to give way.

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con): I thank the member for giving way and I apologise for shouting across the chamber.

I said that, if the Brexit deal goes through the House of Commons, we will have left the EU, which is what the people of the United Kingdom voted for.

Mike Rumbles: The people of the United Kingdom voted for that, but I stand by the principles on which I was elected to this Parliament. I would have hoped that other members, who shared that view, would also have stood by their principles. I do not refer to Mr Mundell, because he took a different view from me on that.

I am trying not to refer to the general election, but in response to that intervention, I must say that, yes, we had a referendum three years ago. The UK is facing a general election. It is up to the people of the UK to decide what they want to do in that general election. The general election is important; it trumps a referendum. It is up to the people of the UK to decide their future direction. My party and I hope that we do not leave the EU on 31 January. However, that is up to the British people.

Brexit cannot be “done”.

Oliver Mundell: Will the member take an intervention?

Mike Rumbles: I am afraid that I am in my last minute.

If people believe that soundbite, there will be many more disillusioned people after 31 January, when they see that Brexit cannot be just “done”.

The Liberal Democrats are clear that the best deal for the UK, including for Scottish food and drink, is for us to stay in the EU. The only way to end the Brexit madness is to stop it in its tracks.

We will soon see whether the British people take the opportunity to do just that.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members that they should stick to the terms of the motion and amendments. I do not mind quick points in response to anything that has already been said, but please remember the terms of this afternoon’s debate. Speeches should be no longer than six minutes. I have some leeway with regard to time.

15:24

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): I am pleased to speak in today’s debate. The motion states that

“the Parliament regrets the recent imposition”

of tariffs by the United States

“on a range of Scottish goods”.

Those include

“single malt Scotch whisky, liqueurs, cheese, butter, biscuits”,

which means our shortbread,

“and woollen and cashmere products”.

That list has already been mentioned.

I represent the South Scotland region, and I feel that it is important to speak up for businesses that will potentially be affected by these terrible, Trump-imposed tariffs, such as Spirit AeroSystems, which operates out of Prestwick airport and has a contract with Airbus.

The sooner a resolution is found, the better. No one benefits from trade wars and no one benefits from these trade tariffs. We must urge the United States and the EU negotiators to find a solution to the Airbus and Boeing dispute, which is having a knock-on effect on our Scottish businesses.

As we consider the motion that is before us, it is important that we understand how we ended up in this situation. The issue has arisen because of a dispute about the EU’s provision of subsidies to aerospace giants, due to their manufacturing of assets in France, Germany, Spain and the UK. It is important to restate that the dispute is not new; it is the latest chapter in a 15-year battle between the US and the EU over perceived illegal subsidies for aeroplane manufacturers Airbus and Boeing.

The US first filed a case against the EU with the World Trade Organization in 2004, arguing that European loans to support Airbus amounted to illegal state subsidies. The EU, and subsequently the Council of the European Union and, by extension, member states, voted to fight the case. The legal battle came to a head this year, after the World Trade Organization ruled in favour of the

US Government, which left the EU, UK and Scotland with no choice other than to accept the unwanted and damaging imposition of £6.1 billion of tariffs.

The dispute began with aeroplanes, but the Scottish produce that is now affected has nothing to do with aviation. The punitive tariffs are a risk to jobs and investment.

The US is the world's largest export market for Scotch whisky. As members said, the industry employs 11,000 people, with 7,000 jobs in rural areas. We even have two distilleries in Dumfries and Galloway, Bladnoch and Annandale, which are potentially affected.

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): The member mentioned rural areas. Small distilleries such as Glen Garioch, in my constituency, are deeply worried about the tariffs. In addition, the industry as a whole is concerned about US power over trade deals. People are concerned that, post-Brexit, the US Government will want to flood the Scottish market with cheap American whiskey. Is that not also a great threat to Scottish whisky and the Scottish drinks industry in general?

Emma Harper: I thank Gillian Martin for raising that issue. When I was a member of the Finance and Constitution Committee, we heard worrying evidence that trade negotiators in America are eyeing up the Scotch market, with a view to branding their three-year-old grain whiskey as malt. We need to be concerned about that.

Some 137 million bottles of Scotch were exported in 2018—that is four bottles every second. I know that folk in the USA like their Scotch. My husband still has close links with US whiskey folks, who take great pride in sourcing, obtaining and sharing popular and rare brand malts from US distributors.

It is worth noting what Karen Betts, the chief executive of the Scotch Whisky Association, said about the impact of the imposed tariffs. She said:

"The tariff will undoubtedly damage the Scotch Whisky sector ... We expect to see a negative impact on investment and job creation in Scotland, and longer term impacts on productivity and growth across the industry and our supply chain."

Those words come from the whisky industry leadership. The disruption to the industry is dangerous and it is the last thing that we all need right now, in the current chaos of another snap general election and Boris's Brexit boorach.

I am keen to highlight the part of the Conservative amendment that says:

"the UK will be able to enter into free trade agreements that prioritise the interests of vital sectors of the Scottish economy".

Currently, the EU is a large trading block and a powerful voice in trade negotiations with our transatlantic partners. If we want the US to take brand Scotland, we will have to take brands from the US. We will have to accept US foodstuffs. I am curious as to how strong the UK voice will be.

I draw members' attention to the US Food and Drug Administration's "Food Defect Levels Handbook". The FDA approves certain levels of what it terms "defects" in food, spices and crop-based products. One defect is "Mammalian excreta"—or simply, rat poo. On page 15, the handbook notes that the acceptable defect level for cocoa beans is an

"Average of 10 mg or more mammalian excreta per pound".

Here is another acceptable defect on page 12. The acceptable level of defect in ground paprika is "75 insect fragments per 25 grams".

That is what US trade negotiations open us up to.

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ms Harper is in her final minute.

Emma Harper: UK negotiators negotiate on behalf of Scotland; we do not have a voice in trade negotiations. There is no EU, UK or Scottish acceptable defect levels equivalent. I had the Scottish Parliament information centre check that for me. I am therefore interested to know whether the Conservative members think that it is worth accepting those defects—rat poo, rat hair and insect carcasses—and a host of other defects. That is what I am worried about.

I again ask the Scottish Government to do all that it can to put pressure on the UK Government, if we get a new one, and the EU to address these issues as soon as possible to ensure that we continue to fight against yet further issues because of Scotland being forced out of the EU.

15:30

Peter Chapman (North East Scotland) (Con): Thank you, Deputy Presiding Officer. I will try to stick to the subject of the motion, unlike the last speech that we heard.

I welcome the opportunity to speak about the implications of the imposition of US tariffs on Scottish products. As we know, on 18 October, the US Government applied a 25 per cent tariff on some British food and drink exports.

Bruce Crawford: On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

Will you confirm that, during the contribution by Emma Harper, she did indeed stick to the terms of the amendments and the motion?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That is not a point of order, although I have to say that I found nothing at all wrong with Ms Harper's contribution.

Peter Chapman: President Trump has stated that EU support for Airbus impacts on American jobs, and the US trade representative has defended the President's actions and accused Europe of

"providing massive subsidies to Airbus that have seriously injured the U.S. aerospace industry and our workers."

Following the ruling, the WTO allowed the US to impose tariffs on £7.5 billion of goods that it imports from the EU. The UK expects to be hardest hit by Trump's latest tariffs, with an annual loss of \$1.4 billion. Moreover, the latest figures reveal that the whisky industry is now bearing 62 per cent of the UK's tariff liabilities. With the inclusion of cashmere and shortbread in the tariffs, it is clear that Scottish products will be disproportionately affected. Whisky distillers and shortbread producers having to pay the price for disagreements over aeroplane subsidies is categorically unjust and unfair.

Last year's whisky exports to America were worth \$1.3 billion, which translates into about 137 million bottles. After the EU imposed a 25 per cent tariff on the import of bourbon last year, imports of US whiskey fell by about 20 per cent. The industry on this side of the Atlantic expects a similar decline in the next year, as the tariff inevitably means that Scotch will become less competitive in the US market.

That is a calamity for North East Scotland: a huge proportion of our whisky industry is there. It must also be recognised that shortbread producers Walkers and Dean's, which are also based in the north-east, will also be unjustly affected. Last year, Walkers alone exported 5,000 tonnes of shortbread, which is more than a tenth of its total production, to America.

Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP): Is the member not in favour of Brexit any more then?

Peter Chapman: Pardon?

Johnstons of Elgin, which is the largest manufacturer of knitwear in the UK, will also be adversely affected by the imposition of a 25 per cent tariff. The US is its third largest market, and its chief executive, Simon Cotton, has said:

"This is going to hit consumers in the US, their cashmere will be more expensive. That in turn means we will be able to export less, grow less and we will have to downscale our plans."

The situation will hit businesses and rural communities in the north-east unfairly, and we must do everything in our power to mitigate its effects.

The Prime Minister is in constant contact with the EU and the US, including Donald Trump, and will continue his efforts to get the tariffs dropped. The Conservative Government has frozen the rate of tax on spirits for the past two years, thereby supporting Scotland's national drink. The Prime Minister has announced a major review of alcohol duty, and has signalled that the industry could be in line for a tax break, if he wins the general election. That has been greatly welcomed by the industry, as it is, I am sure, by all of us. It is in stark contrast to the complete and utter silence from the SNP and the Scottish Government. It seems as though the party that claims to speak for Scotland does nothing to support its national drink.

The fact that the tariffs have been imposed because of a disagreement between the US and the EU surely gives us even more reason to get Brexit done, so that we can strike better and more positive trade deals. The decisions to subsidise Airbus unfairly and to impose a 25 per cent tariff on—to name but two products—US bourbon and orange juice, were made by politicians in Brussels, not by politicians in the UK.

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD): Will the member say when he believes Brexit will be done?

Peter Chapman: Brexit will be done before the end of next January.

Scotland, and the north-east in particular, will be hugely adversely affected by decisions that are made in Brussels rather than here in the UK.

The UK's single largest trading nation is the United States, accounting for 16 per cent of all UK exports. We must fully grasp the opportunity of a trade deal with the US post-Brexit, maximise the potential opportunities for Scottish industries, and open up new markets for our high-quality exports.

No one wins in a trade war, so we must do all that we can to protect the communities and industries that are affected by the tariffs. The efforts of the Prime Minister to deal directly with Donald Trump, to freeze the duty on spirits and to review alcohol duty will no doubt help to mitigate the impacts. What has the SNP done? As we have heard today, it has done precisely nothing.

Furthermore, we must note the opportunity that Brexit presents us with to negotiate new trade deals around the world, and to open up new markets for Scotch whisky, shortbread and other world-renowned Scottish products. There is a great prize to be won.

15:37

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): Little did we know, when Donald Trump took up residence in the White House three years ago, that the special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom would be so severely strained. We need look no further for evidence of that strain than the dispute over subsidies to Airbus and the predatory response on international trade that has been pursued by the Trump Government, which has resulted in \$7.5 billion-worth of tariffs being proposed for European goods.

On 18 October, as others have said, a new tariff of 25 per cent on single malt Scotch whisky and Scotch whisky liqueurs entering the US came into effect. The US is the single largest market for single malt Scotch whisky, with the value of exports to the US in 2018 being about \$516 million.

There are examples of whisky producers in my Stirling constituency who, as Dean Lockhart put it, will be the “collateral damage” of the trade dispute. Deanston and Glengoyne distilleries are shining examples of very high-quality Scotch whisky producers, which are also major economic contributors and employers locally.

As we have heard, another commodity that is proposed for tariffs is biscuits. Callander is home to the oldest bakery business in Scotland: Campbells Shortbread is a successful company that exports worldwide, including to the US. Biscuit products such as those that are made by Campbells also face a 25 per cent tariff. The price of such punitive tariffs will land at the door of fantastic businesses like Campbells and their employees.

The new list of tariffs also includes dairy products—in particular, cheese. That could have a big impact on the many dairy farmers in the Stirling area who rely on cheese producers, especially cheddar producers, to buy their milk. Dairy farmers are finding trading conditions tough enough without the imposition of such tariffs.

Tariffs will also apply to some woollen garments, including wool and cashmere sweaters, pullovers, sweatshirts and waistcoats, as well as men’s and boys’ suits. Sheep farmers across Scotland and in the Stirling constituency could see a knock-on effect from disruption to trade in those products with companies in the United States.

I recently wrote to Ivan McKee, the trade minister, on the matter, because it is causing real concern in my constituency. In his response, he pointed out that the First Minister has written directly to the Prime Minister on the subject, and that he has, as he told Parliament today, raised it directly with the UK Department for International Trade, as well as with the US Government. All that

is being done with the aim of urging the parties involved to work towards settlement of the overall dispute. As the Scottish Government does, I support the European Commission’s efforts to reach a negotiated settlement on behalf of all the affected member states of the European Union.

Right now, the whole UK is facing a range of significant economic challenges that are being brought about by the threat of Brexit in any form. We have seen, across these islands since the Brexit vote, companies leaving the UK, downsizing their operations, collapsing entirely or halting investment decisions. I mention that in a debate about US tariffs because the tariffs are being imposed on an economically weakened UK.

It will not have escaped people’s notice that the attack on a number of UK products by the US Government comes from the very Trump Administration that Boris Johnson boasts we will have a post-Brexit trade deal with. President Trump himself has indicated that that will be possible only with a no-deal Brexit, which would mean that the UK Government would be negotiating a trade deal while in a state of huge economic turmoil.

The “Please, sir, I want some more” approach that the UK would be forced to take would no doubt also put at risk our NHS and wider public services, and would hold our industries to ransom to the protectionist agenda of Donald Trump. It would not be contrary to the nature of the sitting President were he to change his tune at an opportune moment and drive forward damaging clauses, tariffs and restrictions to a US-UK trade deal the moment the UK leaves the EU.

God forbid that it ever happens. I actually loudly applauded the speech by Mike Rumbles. That has not happened often in this chamber, but he did a grand job today, so I wish that he were here to hear me say that.

The US is not an equal trading partner with the UK, neither does it behave like one. Anyone who thinks so is deluding themselves. This entire episode should be a warning to us all of the dangers of post-Brexit trade negotiation with the Trump Administration. I echo the calls of the Scottish Government to the UK and US Governments, as well as to the EU, to continue to work to reach a settlement that will benefit farmers and producers, including those in my constituency.

All the turmoil has made crystal clear the benefit of negotiating international trade as a partner in the European Union. We need only look at the value of Scotch whisky exports to the US—which grew from £280 million in 1994 to more than £1 billion last year—to see the benefit of being a member of the European Union when exporting to the US. To kid on that some sort of independent

trade deal between the UK and the US would do better than that record is, frankly, to live in a fantasy land.

The election is just four weeks away: I urge voters to vote to stop Brexit and to call an end to the unholy alliance between Donald Trump and Boris Johnson.

15:44

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):

I welcome the Scottish Government's debate, but as a Highlands and Islands member, I am seriously concerned that US tariffs will be a major red flag for and a clear and present danger to quality Scottish exports such as whisky from the Scapa distillery in Orkney, shortbread from Walkers of Aberlour and cashmere sweaters from Johnstons of Elgin. I shall focus my remarks on the effect of the new tariffs on the whisky industry, particularly single malts, although I will start with the bigger picture.

The sanction of US tariffs was not some random Trump-inspired maverick initiative—although, of course, we have seen our fair share of those over the past three years. It was a WTO-arbitrated decision, based on, as we have heard, allegedly unfair EU Airbus subsidies.

Some Brexit supporters have claimed that the WTO provides a safety net for the UK. In his recent book, "Brexit: What the Hell Happens Now?", Ian Dunt wrote:

"They portray the WTO as a virile, regulation-free wonderland just waiting for Britain to take its place as one of the world's leading trading nations."

The reality is different. Ian Dunt said:

"The WTO is a potential regulatory nightmare, where each and every member can trigger a trade dispute against you."

With remarkable insight, Dunt, who wrote his book in 2016, predicted the current US tariffs on Scottish products. He said:

"ministers should not be under any illusions about sentimentality, even from the likes of the US or Australia. The UK is dealing with professional trade negotiators. These people squeeze you. It's what they do. Trade negotiations are not the place for a group hug."

As an aside, Scottish exporters also benefit from the EU's protected geographical indication system, which is really important. For example, champagne must come from the Champagne region of France, parmesan must come from one of five areas across northern Italy, and Stornoway black pudding—members have guessed it—must come from Stornoway. The US is not a fan of that system and prefers trademarks to PGIs. Will the system be protected in a post-Brexit Britain? What will be the effects on whisky exports?

From last month, there has been an *ad valorem*—a tax based on the value of the transactions—import tariff of 25 per cent on single malt Scotch whisky and liquors that enter the US. As many other members have said, that is extremely serious for the industry. The US is the single largest market for single malt, and the value of US imports is about \$516 million. The Scotch Whisky Association has expressed concern that the tariffs could impact on investment and job creation in Scotland. As I said in my intervention on the minister—I appreciate that he accepted it—the key concern is that smaller distillers will be hit disproportionately, given that the majority do not produce blended whisky, which is not affected by the tariff.

What about the future? We would need the predictive powers of the Brahan Seer to work out the next steps in the Brexit saga. Although a post-Brexit Britain could negotiate a new trade deal with the US, the UK would need to make concessions in order to get rid of the 25 per cent tariff, which would take whisky exports back only to the status quo. What would those concessions be? Would it be access to our NHS, for example?

In Scotland, the tariff disproportionately affects my region, the Highlands and Islands, where the bulk of the distillers are located. Action is needed, first of all, to de-escalate the trade dispute. EU-US trade issues are nothing to do with the Scotch whisky sector, yet the small distillers in my region will pay the price for them.

How can the Scottish Government help the sector now? We all know that the export of Scotch whisky to the US market has been a success: 137 million bottles are exported to the US, which is four bottles per second, as Emma Harper said. The key reason for that success is tariff-free trade between the EU and the US. As the minister pointed out in his opening speech, since 1994, there has been a zero-for-zero agreement, and the US-EU bilateral trade in spirits has grown dramatically to become the largest and most valuable single market, worth more than £1 billion. It is a key industry.

The other key point is that there has been integration of the US and UK industries for more than a century. The Scottish industry spends about £70 million on importing US bourbon barrels, which are used to mature Scotch. Sixty per cent of those casks come from the US, because the US has a single-use policy for bourbon casks in order to protect its local industry.

The success of whisky exports to the US has helped the industry to put more than £500 million of investment into industrial sites in the past five years. Let me give a regional example. Speyside Distillers is reconsidering plans to increase exports

to the US. Its managing director, Patricia Dillon, said:

“Because of the 25% tariffs that have been implemented in the US, this is something that we can’t possibly absorb into our business”.

Whisky is an incredibly important export for Scotland in general and for the Highlands and Islands in particular. The industry has 11,000 employees, of whom 7,000 are in rural areas. The Scotch Whisky Association estimates that one fifth of single malt exports to the US could be lost in 12 months. The Scotch whisky industry is bearing 62 per cent of the UK’s tariff liabilities in a dispute that has nothing to do with it.

We need to de-escalate the dispute, because no one wins a tariff war—it is a race to the bottom. We need to support the industry now and protect our vital rural and urban jobs.

I end by quoting Humphrey Bogart’s famous last words, which were allegedly, “I should never have switched from Scotch to martinis.”

15:50

Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP): Cheese, olives, jumpers and whisky—that is not my Christmas list, but the items that are now being targeted by the United States, thanks to new trade tariffs. Those tariffs are targeting Scottish products, Scottish businesses and the livelihoods of many of our constituents as a result. As we know, a 15-year running battle between the European Union and the United States led to the ruling from the World Trade Organization that allowed the tariffs to come in. Since last month, US trade tariffs have been set at a 10 per cent rate on aircraft and at a 25 per cent rate on agricultural and other items.

I hope that we can all agree that trade wars are in no one’s interests, so it is important that we focus on finding a resolution to avoid being drawn into the politics of hitting back, which seems to be the driving mission of the current US Administration. As the American President tweeted in 2018,

“trade wars are good, and easy to win.”

America is playing politics with the livelihoods of the people who work for some of Scotland’s largest employers, but bully-boy tactics are the last thing that we need in an era of political flux.

Ahead of today’s debate, my office spoke to Ian Palmer, the managing director of InchDairnie Distillery, which is just outside Glenrothes. InchDairnie began life back in 2014 but, as whisky fans will understand, it has not yet produced its first bottle, because of the nature of the distillation process. Until its single malt has matured for at least a decade, InchDairnie will provide fillings for

MacDuff International’s blends, which include Grand Macnish, Lauder’s and Islay Mist.

Ian Palmer told me:

“A significant proportion of what we produce is traded within the industry, primarily for blended whisky. So the impact the tariffs will have will be indirect and long term ... The issue will be the long term effect of the loss of sales in an important market and the ripple effect it will have on the industry in the wider sense. The tariffs will have an effect on changing the market so that when the tariffs are removed the market will have changed and the product will have to build up to the position it had prior to the imposition of the tariffs. If there is a slowdown in production at some malt distilleries this will have an effect on our trading position in the blended whisky market.”

The value of Scotch whisky exports to the US grew from £280 million in 1994 to more than £1 billion last year, and the American market accounted for 22 per cent of the global value, and 10.7 per cent of global volumes, of Scotch whisky exports in 2018. Scotch Whisky Association figures from last year tell us that 137 million bottles were exported to America, which is the equivalent of around four bottles a second.

That is really important to those who represent constituencies like mine. One of the largest employers in my constituency is Diageo. From Leven, Diageo packages more than 38 million cases of spirits a year, with a workforce of more than 1,000 people. Workers in my constituency send whisky all over the world. Earlier this year, the Leven site was named as Diageo’s top supply chain site, which is the company’s top global manufacturing award. In August, I was delighted to welcome the Scottish Government’s trade minister, Ivan McKee, to present the award to staff at the Leven plant. Diageo is investing in and recognising the hard work of its workforce, but it is doing so in the teeth of adversity.

The American and Scottish whisky industries have been intertwined for more than 100 years—since before Donald Trump’s mum left Stornoway—as we heard from the minister. The SWA points to the £70 million that is spent every year on importing US bourbon barrels, which are used in the maturation process. Imagine hundreds of those barrels, stacked to the rafters, American bourbon brands stamped on their side, all in a storehouse at the back of a field outside the new town of Glenrothes. Our trade is global, whether Donald Trump likes it or not. The American industry depends on us, just as we depend on it.

Therefore, we need a solution for the tariffs, which are unfairly harming key Scottish industries. I know that the Scottish Government is focused on playing its part and doing all that it can. The crunch point for today’s debate is that, under the current constitutional arrangements, any progress on moving us forward depends on Donald Trump and Boris Johnson. I do not accept that either of

those individuals has the best interests of the industry or my constituents' livelihoods at heart.

The Government's motion makes direct reference to Brexit and, when it comes to trade, we must not ignore the elephant in the room, as the Tory amendment has done. I remind members about InchDairnie Distillery, which is 38 miles from here. Its creation would not have been possible without the European Union, a grant from which of more than £1.4 million allowed it to begin life back in 2014.

How will Brexit hurt folk in Fife? As managing director Ian Palmer told me,

"other markets will see the impact tariffs have and when we leave the EU this will be a lever that they can pull in the myriad of trade negotiations which will have to happen".

US trade tariffs are exactly that: a lever to bring about economic uncertainty and exploit Scottish businesses. Further, thanks to the Tories and their obsession with Brexit—which, of course, Labour could have stopped, but did not—that exploitation will be even worse, because the real impact of tariffs, much like Brexit, will be felt by those who can least afford it: the people who work in our distilleries, the shelf packers, the sales assistants and others like them. Labour used to stick up for those folk, but now it rides both leave and remain horses. It is all things to all people. It would rather enable a Tory Government than allow this country to take a decision for itself and choose its own path.

The Scottish Government and this Parliament must have a meaningful role in any future trade arrangements in order to ensure that Scotland's interests are protected. We cannot leave it to Trump and Trump Jr. Scotland has an escape route, so let us seize it.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I inform members that we still have a little time in hand.

15:55

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Let us be clear: I believe that tariffs are just another barrier to trade, and the Scottish Conservatives, therefore, oppose tariffs, because we want to encourage free trade.

There is seldom a winner in a trade war, and the current one between the European Union and the USA is not in the best interests of the UK economy. That is why we support the efforts of the UK Government to lobby the EU and the US to remove the tariffs, which will hurt industries across the United Kingdom and particularly some in Scotland. Let us not forget that, as others have said, these tariffs came about because the EU and the US were subsidising aircraft manufacture in a way that distorted free trade. As we know, that

resulted in the US imposing tariffs on the EU, which might still respond in its own right. Let me be clear: I believe that they are both in the wrong.

As a result of the tariffs, one of Scotland's greatest export success stories, Scotch whisky, is under threat. Tariffs of 25 per cent imposed on single malt whisky will hit the industry hard. The new tariffs could mean that sales of Scotch whisky in the US drop by 20 per cent in the first year, and it is expected that those losses in sales will get worse as long as the punishing tariffs remain in place. A drop in exports will, in turn, affect investment, productivity and, ultimately, employment in relation to the UK's most valuable drink export. That is bad news for the industry and bad news for the economy, because we know that the Scotch whisky industry directly employs about 11,000 people in Scotland and many more through the supply chain. More than 7,000 of those jobs are in rural areas of Scotland, and many are in the Highlands and Islands.

Of course, it is not just Scotch whisky that is affected. Other high-quality goods that are produced in Scotland, such as cashmere and shortbread, will be affected as well. That is a real concern for people in the Highlands and Islands. Walkers Shortbread and Johnstons of Elgin, both situated just down the road from me, are big names and big employers in the north, and the Highlands will end up paying for this spat if we do not get it sorted out.

It is not only those companies that I worry about. I am also concerned about what the impact will be on the many small Highland businesses that supply the businesses that are facing tariffs. I declare at this stage that, as a farmer, I produce barley that goes into Scotch whisky. All those businesses operate on tight margins and, therefore, any tariffs will be damaging to their future success. If we are to grow our food and drink industry so that it is worth £30 billion by 2030, which is our aspiration, we need to work with the industry to mitigate the damage that will be caused by the tariffs.

I welcome the UK Government's decision to freeze spirit duties for the past two years, and I am delighted to hear that the UK Government plans to review alcohol duty rates to ensure that we have a competitive tax system so that our Scotch producers can be competitive across the world. Making those changes will provide certainty and will encourage business investment, despite the tariffs. However, more should be done, especially by the Scottish Government.

Only this week, I received a letter from a whisky producer in the Highlands who asked for more help to mitigate the effects of the potential trade war. One of their main requests was for better broadband, which is a major issue for them. The

Scottish Government's roll-out of superfast broadband has been so painfully slow that some distilleries can wait no longer and have taken it upon themselves, at a high cost, to secure better internet connections.

Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP): I would not have thought that the Tory Government's failures on broadband would be within the scope of the motion.

With regard to the motion, the member will have heard Peter Chapman say that the blame for the current situation lies with the EU because of the sanctions that it imposed in the first place. The UK is a member of the EU and was party to those decisions. Does the member agree with the UK position in that regard?

Edward Mountain: To start with, let us deal with the issue of broadband.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me, Mr Mountain—I spoke earlier about members sticking to the motion. There is no mention of broadband in the motion or in either of the amendments.

Edward Mountain: I mentioned broadband because I received a letter this week from a distillery, which is seeking more help from the Scottish Government to mitigate the effects of the EU tariffs. It asked me to raise the matter, and I think that it is a valuable point to raise.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You have raised the matter, then, but I do not think that it is particularly relevant to the motion or to the amendments, and it should not have been the main thrust of some of the contributions that we have heard.

Edward Mountain: Presiding Officer, you are of course always right. I will have to curtail my speech about the need to do more to counteract the EU tariffs. However, it is really important that the Scottish Government, along with the UK Government, does all that it can to help to mitigate the costs of those potentially damaging tariffs, which are limiting free trade, and which I think members all round the chamber would agree are wrong.

I believe that our food and drink industries and our cashmere producers want us to end this tit-for-tat trade war, and I wholly support them on that. We need to return to the zero-tariff conditions that have been enjoyed for the past 25 years, and I am pleased that the UK Government is pressing for the return of that free trade and doing its bit by freezing spirit duties and reviewing alcohol rates. I believe that the Scottish Government could do more instead of complaining, and I wish that it would.

16:02

Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): Scotland rightly values its trading relationship with the US. A number of members have rightly pointed out the damaging nature of the tariffs that are being imposed by the US Government. I have no doubt that every member in the chamber has numerous examples from their constituency—we have heard examples such as whisky, biscuits and cashmere. I will start with a specific example from my constituency that exemplifies the importance of whisky and the futility of other people's trade wars from Scotland's point of view.

In 2015, the Isle of Harris Distillery Ltd opened in my constituency of Na h-Eileanan an Iar. It is already well known for its award-winning gin, and it also distils whisky, although that is still to see the market as the first batches are still being matured—in American bourbon barrels, it should be said—until they reach the optimum age. The distillery started with 10 employees and now provides jobs for nearly 40 people in Harris, which—as members know—is a fragile island economy with a total population of under 2,000 people. I have little doubt that the distillery in Harris will withstand whatever the US authorities choose to throw at it, but there is no doubt that a 25 per cent US tariff on whisky from Harris, or indeed from anywhere else in Scotland, is unhelpful to individual distilleries and to the wider industry.

I am sure that I do not need to elaborate on the risks that the whisky industry faces from those tariffs. After all, Harris is just one example among more than 120 active whisky distilleries across Scotland, stretching from Orkney to the Borders. The significance of the tariffs is considerable when it is viewed in that context. Last year, £1 billion of Scotch whisky was exported to the United States—a rise of nearly 400 per cent from 1994. We do not want to see that growth held back in the future if Scotch whisky producers' prices increase in comparison with those of our counterparts, or competitors, around the world.

The value of Scotch whisky exports to the US has grown from £280 million in 1994 to more than £1 billion last year. A third of last year's exports were single malts, with a value of £344 million. As a number of members have pointed out, the US market in single malts is particularly important. The US market accounts for 10.7 per cent of global volumes of Scotch whisky exports, with 137 million bottles of whisky being exported to America in 2018. The fact that the new tariff applies specifically to single malt whisky hits a growing and increasingly important sector of the industry.

In the words of both the First Minister and the UK Government's little-seen Secretary of State for

Scotland, tariffs “are in nobody’s interest”. However, tariffs there are, and whisky is not the only Scottish industry that is affected by them. Other Scottish products, such as biscuits, shortbread and cashmere, are also hit by the aggressive tariff. Although it does not seem that the world-famous Harris Tweed from my constituency will face any new tariffs per se, as it is a cloth, my understanding is that the picture is somewhat less clear when it comes to garments that are made from the tweed or other woollen materials.

I could quote examples from the cashmere industry, too, but the point is that the United States tariffs have a disproportionate impact on Scotland’s economy. As we have heard, Scotland is home to the largest exporter of shortbread and the largest producer of cashmere knitwear and, by definition, it is home to all Scotch whisky production. There is therefore no doubt that Scotland is disproportionately affected by the tariffs in comparison with the rest of the United Kingdom.

Short of delving into matters of presidential ancestry, as one or two members have done, it is difficult to see exactly what Scotland, or my constituency, has done to deserve any of this. As the Scotch Whisky Association made very clear in its briefing, the tariffs mean

“that Scotch Whisky is now paying for over 60% of the UK’s tariff bill for the subsidies it provided to Airbus, eight times more than the next most valuable UK product on the tariff list.”

The whole sorry episode shows just how unhelpful Scotland’s political association with Westminster can prove to be. In this case, Scottish businesses are paying the price for that association. That is before we even consider where the UK Government might be taking us in terms of tariffs on its European adventure that lies ahead.

The Scottish Government has made every effort to engage with UK ministers on the question of tariffs, but the UK Government’s attention seems to be elsewhere, if it is anywhere at all. The trade dispute once again highlights the need for Scotland to have some say over those questions, as of course we would have as an independent country, whatever the more miserable of the amendments that are before us today may say about the issue.

Scotland values its trade with the US. Indeed, we value it too much to trust an unelected Tory Government to negotiate a trade deal with the United States for us. The tariffs make me wonder what a post-Brexit trading environment would look like for Scotland: bad for Scottish businesses, bad for Scottish jobs, bad for the Scottish economy and bad for Scotland. More widely, in the long

term, it should make anyone ask whether protectionism and trade wars work for anyone, which is a question that both the White House and Downing Street would do well to consider.

16:08

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): Many members in today’s debate have been quite rightly critical of Donald Trump and his willingness to use trade and tariffs as a weapon of attack against any country that crosses him or does not fall into line with the world in the eyes of Trump.

One might say that trade, and the ability to trade, are what make the world go round, yet trade is not a subject that is much talked about around the dinner table or even down the pub. Indeed, trade was not an issue of widespread discussion during the Brexit referendum, but it was the right-wing Tory Party’s main goal and the main driver in its desire to get out of Europe.

The dispute that we are debating today has its roots in an argument about aircraft subsidies and is indirectly connected to steel and aluminium imports. To many observers, it is also a symptom of the protectionist, “America first” philosophy of the Trump Administration. The Office of the US Trade Representative announced the imposition of tariffs on a wide variety of imported goods from EU nations—10 per cent on large civil aircraft and 25 per cent on agricultural and other products, including single malt Scotch whisky and single malt whiskey from Northern Ireland. The tariffs are the result of a WTO judgment—the largest in its history—that the US should be allowed to impose tariffs worth just under US\$7.5 billion a year against EU nations, which is linked to a trade dispute that goes back 15 years.

The 25 per cent tariff has the potential to seriously damage the Scotch whisky industry and the wider Scottish economy. Some key points are that Scotland had 280 distilling-related local business units in 2019; 23 out of Scotland’s 32 local authorities have distilling businesses present in their areas, including many wonderful distilleries across Mid Scotland and Fife.

The spirits industry contributes approximately 1.4 per cent of total Scottish GDP and the industry employs around 10,000 people. Scotland is home to 133 malt and grain distilleries, which is the greatest concentration of whisky producers anywhere in the world. That is why the UK and Scottish Governments must do everything within their power to de-escalate the situation and find a solution. Scotland’s economy and labour market are fragile enough without imposing more tariffs that could close down the country’s distillery business, forcing people into unemployment and leaving communities worse off.

This latest episode demonstrates just how fragile the global economy can be and is. The US has argued that the UK, France, Germany and Spain breached the WTO laws by providing launching aid to the European aircraft maker Airbus—hence the tariffs that are now being imposed on us. It is also the case that the EU imposed a 25 per cent tariff on imports of US whiskey in retaliation for Trump’s tariffs on steel and aluminium from China and Europe. The Scotch Whisky Association has noted that EU imports of US whiskey then fell by about 20 per cent as a result of those tariffs.

The risks for our economy are therefore very real, not to mention the risks to the production of shortbread and cashmere knitwear, which are also included in the latest tariffs that are being imposed by the US, threatening further thousands of jobs here in Scotland. As many have said, these punitive tariffs have the potential to seriously damage the Scotch whisky industry and food and textiles industries across Scotland, imposing a wider economic risk to our country as a whole. The future of companies, jobs and communities across Scotland will be put at risk by the tariffs. The average turnover for Scottish distilleries is approximately £5.3 million and the industry employs around 10,000 people; Scotland’s fragile economy and labour market simply cannot afford to lose such lucrative businesses.

Our amendment also points to the fact that the SNP has a history of supporting Trump’s approach to business. Just ask the people of Aberdeenshire, where every credible environmental group in the land was objecting to the Trump development, warning that it would destroy a protected site of special scientific interest. The SNP might not like that fact, but it is nevertheless a fact.

Finally, how can it be that the SNP is desperate to separate from our largest market, the rest of the UK, at a time when 60 per cent of our trade goes there and at a time when we are feeling directly the impact of Trump’s trade wars around the world? It makes no sense. This is an example, and Brexit is another, of why we need to be taking down walls, not building them, and breaking down borders, not building them.

16:15

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): It is the distillery employee, the artisan cheese maker, the textile worker and other vulnerable employees and businesses that will pay the price of this on-going trade war. As the 15-year long Airbus-Boeing saga rumbles on, businesses around Europe are reeling from the new WTO-sanctioned tariffs that were imposed by the US.

The textile industry is important for the south of Scotland—indeed, for Scotland as a whole—and it is particularly affected. There are 550 textile companies in Scotland, with 22,000 employees, and the sector accounts for 7 per cent of our exports. Of course, textiles are a hugely important sector for the economy of the Borders in my South Scotland constituency, which includes the town of Hawick, where this trade war has caused grave concern.

The Borders are a byword for luxury when it comes to cashmere and wool. Chanel, Pringle of Scotland and Lyle & Scott knitwear products are in high demand around the world, and garments from the likes of Hawick Cashmere, Hawick Knitwear, Holland & Sherry, House of Cheviot, Johnstons of Elgin, Lochcarron, Shorts of Hawick and Hawico are highly valued in many foreign countries.

I understand that David Sanderson from Hawico has been pressing hard against the tariffs at all levels of Government. However, as others have said, this is a game of hardball. The chief executive officer of the UK Fashion and Textile Association, Adam Mansell, said recently:

“Waiting for the outcome of a potential free trade agreement with the US isn’t enough. We need the government to take direct action now to support our manufacturing industry”.

Whether operating within WTO rules or not, the object of a trade tariff is to frustrate international trade and make it more difficult for exporters to send and sell abroad. The US choice of an opportunistic and relatively high 25 per cent tariff says a lot—“Play by our rules or we will hit you hard.” Consumers in the US must pay inflated prices for those goods or buy local. Of course, in the US, you cannot buy local for Scotch whisky—yet.

Although tariffs are bad news for all the businesses that are dragged into this trade war, Scotch whisky feels especially vulnerable, and it is not just a Speyside or a Highlands and Islands product. In Dumfries and Galloway, for example—which is in my South Scotland constituency—we have Bladnoch whisky in Wigtown and the Annandale distillery. Its two single malts, Man O’Sword and Man O’Words, are produced just a few miles north of the border at Gretna, and have been important for the transformation of the town of Annan, which is near to where the distillery is situated.

Scotch is unique; it is sold without peer in 180 markets around the world and US sales were worth £1.04 billion in 2018. A third of that was single malt sales, which are now subject to the 25 per cent tariff. Before Brexit was a dangerous ripple in the Tory party consciousness, in 1992, the EU introduced protected geographical indications to protect goods. As others have said,

there are 18 Scottish products among the 86 protected UK food names, and a GI gives a competitive advantage and adds value. It stands for quality and authenticity, and it prohibits imitation. Of course, Scotch whisky has GI status, but for how long?

The US has long had its eye on Scotch whisky in terms of competition with its own now burgeoning whiskey market. Whiskey sales—that is, bourbon sales—are second only to those of vodka in the States. At around one seventh of the sales of Scotch whisky, US whiskey sales are enjoying a renaissance, growing by almost 9 per cent between 2017 and 2018. According to experts in the industry, sales will rise further, and bourbons and craft whiskies from around the globe are rising in popularity, too. Given this growth market, together with the trade war and the 25 per cent tariff that was imposed on US whiskey in 2018 by Europe and its trading partners, it is no coincidence that more single malts are feeling the pressure.

The Scotch Whisky Association is of the view that the new tariffs will undoubtedly damage the sector. A 21 per cent drop in single malt exports to the US would mean a drop in income from £344 million to £272 million. A lot depends on whether distillers, importers or consumers absorb extra costs, which might happen in the short term in respect of high-quality, much-loved brands. Distillers say that the smaller players will suffer, as they work with smaller US importers who do not have the financial muscle to absorb extra costs. There is a clear threat to the 11,000 Scotch whisky jobs in Scotland, particularly the 7,000 jobs in rural communities, where the impact of tariffs might be felt most.

Scotch whisky and all Scottish sectors on the tariff list face a double threat from Brexit and the trade war, which has already been running for 15 years. We will and should keep trading successfully with the US, which is what Scottish employees and businesses want. The US is the destination of 17 per cent of our global trade and exports are growing fast.

This is a bitter taster of how vicious trade wars can become. We know, as things stand, that the UK Government will not publish texts of proposed trade agreements prior to ratification, that Scotland's consent will not be sought in UK trade negotiations after Brexit, and that Scottish parliamentary scrutiny of and power to consent to free trade deals will be denied. The Scottish Government is right to keep up the pressure on UK Government ministers regarding post-Brexit trade arrangements and ending the trade war. Ordinary Scots are under threat from Brexit and the vagaries of a Trump Administration that is intent only on putting America first.

16:21

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in today's important debate.

We are aware of the background to the debate. Basically, the EU and the US have claimed that Airbus, in the case of the EU, and Boeing, in the case of the US, have been unfairly subsidised by each side. It is worth noting that Airbus is owned jointly by Germany, France, Spain and BAE Systems in the UK.

Subsequent to the accusations, the WTO has upheld the claims of both sides. It has ruled that the US can impose tariffs on EU goods and, as has already been said, it is expected to rule that the EU can impose similar tariffs on the import of US goods into the EU.

The Scottish Government's motion that we are debating is a bit of a puzzle. Quite how the Scottish Government managed to shoehorn Brexit into a debate on an EU-US trade dispute will be beyond all but the SNP's most ardent supporters. Most people will recognise that, for the SNP, the debate is about blatant politicking, rather than tackling the serious issues that the dispute raises and finding solutions for businesses in our constituencies.

No matter how the SNP tries to manufacture a grievance, Brexit has absolutely nothing to do with the trade dispute, and it is shameful that SNP members try to misinform the public and leverage their narrow independence agenda into every debate.

I listened to Emma Harper's "rat poo" speech. We need some reality here. There is not a chance—

Emma Harper: The reality is in the FDA's handbook .

Brian Whittle: Yes, the reality is in there, but that does not mean that we have to accept those standards. To trade with us, any trading partner will have to conform to UK standards, so we will not have to accept them. I tell you this—

Emma Harper rose—

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): Excuse me a wee minute. Sit down, the two of you. This should not be a wee conversation between the two of you, delightful though that might be. I am not sitting here as a passive observer, so please speak through the chair and make interventions. You may continue, Mr Whittle.

Brian Whittle: I apologise, Presiding Officer.

As I said, we do not have to accept any trading partner that does not conform to UK standards.

I say to Mike Rumbles of the undemocratic Liberal Democrats that we are on the side of democracy. If there is a vote and the majority of people vote a certain way, it is incumbent on us to accept the result of the public vote and go with the intention of the people.

Dr Allan: What about Scotland?

Brian Whittle: If you want to intervene, Dr Allan, please jump up.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There is a little convention in here—please address it properly. Are you taking an intervention, Mr Whittle?

Brian Whittle: I will take an intervention.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you. Dr Allan.

Dr Allan: I will merely say what I said from a sedentary position: what about Scotland? Brian Whittle talks about the majority that was achieved for Brexit in the European Union referendum, without even considering the possibility that Scotland might have a view.

Brian Whittle: I thank the member for that, because it gives me the opportunity to explain to him that neither Scotland, England, Northern Ireland nor Wales is a member of the EU—the UK is a member of the EU. The vote of every person in the UK was equal and the UK voted to leave the EU. That was not what I and the member campaigned for, but that, sir, is democracy.

As I have mentioned, the Scottish goods on which the 25 per cent tariff has been imposed include whisky and woollen goods. Members might be interested to know that every piece of knitted Harry Potter merchandise in the world is manufactured exclusively in Stewarton by Lochaven International of Scotland. I inform any Scottish families trailing around Universal Studios in Florida or any similar parks that the Gryffindor scarf that they are purchasing began life probably not too far from their house. I have visited Lochaven International a few times, as it is in my area and right next door to where I hold a surgery from time to time, and it is quite remarkable and well worth a visit.

When the current trade dispute began, the managing director of Lochaven, Colin Leishman, contacted me to flag up how it would affect him and to ask whether I would help. Business will always find a way, so Lochaven is exploring the option of registering an office in the US in order to minimise import tariffs. That is not ideal and not without a cost, but it is a solution nonetheless. I was aware that John Lamont—the MP about to retain his Borders seat—would have similar issues in his Borders constituency, so I contacted him to see what he was able to do to help bring my

constituent's concern into discussions about the dispute.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Did you just whistle past me a bit of electioneering for someone?

Brian Whittle: I would never do that, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I think that you tried, but you did not succeed. Do not do it again.

Brian Whittle: Sorry, Presiding Officer.

John Lamont shared with me a letter that he had received from the Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss, Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade. In that response, the international secretary made it clear that resorting to tariffs is not in the interests of the UK, the EU or the US and that the UK Government is working closely with our European partners to secure a negotiated settlement to the dispute and avoid tariffs before they really bite. Additionally, she stated that the UK Government seeks confirmation from the WTO that the UK has fully complied with the WTO rulings regarding support to Airbus and that it should not be subject to additional tariffs.

Ivan McKee: Will the member take an intervention?

Brian Whittle: I will in two seconds.

The international secretary further stated that the issue of tariffs has already been raised at the highest levels of the US Administration. Ms Truss has been in discussions with US Trade Representative Lighthizer, Secretary of Commerce Ross and Vice President Pence. The Chancellor of the Exchequer raised the issue of Airbus tariffs with US Secretary of the Treasury Mnuchin and the Prime Minister raised the issue with President Trump during his state visit in June.

Ivan McKee: This is the second time that I have noted a kind of sleight of hand whereby Conservative members imply, by indicating that somebody is having a conversation about the issue, that somehow the UK is not liable to pay the tariffs. The reality is—the member should know this, and he should go and check it if he does not—that along with the rest of the EU members, the UK is liable for the tariffs that the US has imposed. It was the US that decided which countries and products it would place tariffs on, which was done precisely because those countries are involved in the Airbus subsidies.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We have time in hand, Mr Whittle, so you will be able to make up your time.

Brian Whittle: I would have thought that the minister would understand that the UK is

compliant with WTO rules and the other EU countries are non-compliant, but we are being lumped together. That is a fact. I would have thought that the minister would know that.

Throughout the current trade dispute, I have been able to keep my constituent apprised of the action that is being taken to address his serious concerns. That is how we work effectively and collaborate with colleagues to leverage solutions.

Whether we are in or out of the European Union, the issue remains the same. This debate is an absolutely shameful attempt by the ineffective Scottish Government to shift attention away from its failings in this parliamentary session. What happened to its commitments to education, health and justice? As was said only last week, where are the Government debates on those issues? Week in, week out, by its own actions, the Government is showing its true colours, because no matter what the issue, it seems that independence is the only solution. The SNP hides behind that mantra to avoid scrutiny and responsibility. The Scottish Conservatives will continue to seek a viable solution with our colleagues in Westminster for the sake of all our Scottish industries affected by the current trade dispute. That is what standing up for Scotland's interests really looks like.

16:29

Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP): I remind members that I am the co-convenor of the cross-party group on Scotch whisky.

Whisky is worth nearly £5 billion in annual exports and accounts for 70 per cent of Scotland's food and drink exports and 21 per cent of Britain's. The US is the largest single market, with more than £1 billion of whisky exported there last year, including £344 million of single malt whisky. As others have said, our whisky industry faces US tariffs of 25 per cent as a result of the World Trade Organization dispute between the EU and the US that began in 2004 and relates to aircraft subsidies paid by EU countries, including Britain. The WTO issued its final ruling last month, stating that the US can be authorised to apply tariffs worth \$7.5 billion annually on the EU countries that subsidise Airbus, which are the UK, France, Germany and Spain.

Scotland's whisky industry, which has been exporting tariff free to the United States since 1994, is being caught up in a dispute that has nothing to do with it. Not only that, but Scotland's whisky industry is paying more than 60 per cent of the UK's tariff bill for the subsidies that it provided to Airbus and, as Alasdair Allan said, the bill for

whisky is eight times more than that for the next most valuable UK product on the tariff list.

That comes at the same time as the industry is facing potential access barriers or tariffs in the EU as a result of the Tory Brexit shambles, which has created the biggest threat to the economy of Scotland and the UK. It is taking us out of the single market, which is eight times the size of the UK market. The EU region has 500 million people who currently purchase £1.4 billion-worth of our whisky. The result of our removal from the single market and the imposition of US tariffs is a double whammy for the whisky industry. Access to two of its biggest markets are being undermined by decisions of the previous Tory Government.

So concerned is the spirit sector over US tariffs that 15 beverage alcohol trade associations from across the world, including the American Distilled Spirits Association and the Wines and Spirits Wholesalers of America, signed a letter that was sent to the EU Commission and the Executive Office of the President condemning the imposition of tariffs on Scotch whisky. Those associations warned:

"As a result, these new US tariffs on EU spirits and wines could result in the loss of 8,000 good-paying jobs across the US beverage alcohol sector, from importers, distributors, wholesalers, to the hospitality sector."

If that is the potential impact in the US, we need urgent action, whenever the new UK Government is formed, to protect our rural economies. The letter continues:

"This open access to each other's markets has significantly benefitted EU and US distillers, vintners, farmers, and the hospitality industry on both sides of the Atlantic, resulting in increased jobs, community investment and consumer choice."

Scotland has benefited from increased investment to try to meet the demand for whisky, with seven new distilleries starting production in 2017, another four opening in 2018 and a further five beginning production this year, with many more in the pipeline for next year. Will that level of investment continue, given the impact of American tariffs and Tory Brexit? Will we lose market share? Who knows?

However, we know that the major owners of Scotch whisky are already investing elsewhere. Ireland is excluded from the new US tariff rules and has in recent years been increasing its whiskey output. In 2013, there were only four operational distilleries there, but this year, the 24th operational Irish whiskey distillery—the Killowen distillery in County Down—was opened. Sales of Irish whiskey increased by 39 per cent between 2013 and 2017 and, in 2018, the value of spirits exports from Ireland exceeded €1 billion for the first time.

Who is funding that expansion in Ireland? Diageo, which is the world's biggest whisky producer, with malt whisky distilleries across Scotland producing Glenkinchie, Cragganmore and Talisker, to name but a few, is to launch a new premium whiskey distillery at St James's Gate in Ireland. With 10 distilleries, including anchor brands Glenlivet and Aberlour, Pernod Ricard is the second largest Scotch whisky producer in the world. It recently announced that over the next two years, it will invest more than €150 million in Irish Distillers' Midleton distillery in Cork and a bottling plant in Dublin.

The Scotch Whisky Association said in its press release:

"We ... expect to see a negative impact on investment ... in Scotland, and longer term impacts on productivity and growth across the industry and our supply chain."

Bearing it in mind that it has taken 15 years to get to this point, we need to find a solution to the trade dispute over Airbus as quickly as possible. Our market share is under threat from other countries.

The US trade representative is legally obliged to review the retaliation list after 120 days and, thereafter, every 180 days. That presents an opportunity for the tariffs on the affected products to be lifted.

The previous Tory Government proved to be unable to protect a vital Scottish export industry. Therefore, to ensure that Scotland's interests are protected and promoted, the Scottish Government and Parliament must have a meaningful role in the development and agreement of any future trade arrangements.

16:36

Rhoda Grant: If there is a bright side to the debate, it is that it has given members a platform to advertise the excellent products that come from their constituencies. Almost every member who contributed spoke about their area and its products. However, the downside was that the debate has showed starkly how much of Scotland is impacted by the tariffs. If everyone in the debate was speaking about companies that are impacted, that shows the degree of difficulty that we face.

The importance of de-escalating the situation was highlighted by Alex Rowley and many others in the debate, including Gordon MacDonald, who just made that case. Escalating the situation hurts us all, so we need to find a way of de-escalating it and getting the tariffs removed.

Whisky bears the brunt of the tariffs, so it is not surprising that most members talked about it. David Stewart made the point that the tariffs disproportionately impact small distilleries,

because they produce malt whisky rather than blended whisky, which is not affected by the tariffs.

Many small distilleries are springing up all around Scotland. As I said in my opening speech, they produce gin at the moment, but they will produce malt whisky. They are creating jobs in many small communities. Alasdair Allan talked about one that is close to my heart, Isle of Harris Distillers Ltd, which is producing wonderful gin at the moment, and will go on to produce wonderful whisky. It employs 40 people, which in a small place is a huge number of high-quality jobs. As Alex Rowley pointed out, 10,000 people in Scotland are employed in the whisky industry. It is wrong that the industry is bearing the brunt of the UK's liability. Peter Chapman pointed out that 62 per cent of the liability for the whole of the UK is borne by Scottish whisky.

A number of members made the point that malt whisky is matured in bourbon barrels, which are bought directly from the US. That illustrates how strange the tariffs are. They will directly impact bourbon producers in the US, because they will lose some of the market for their barrels. The point was also made that the EU has placed tariffs on bourbon, which was highlighted by the Scotch Whisky Association in its briefing for the debate. The SWA has continually campaigned against the tariffs and has sought their removal, so it is unfair for the association to be caught up in that. That point has been made in the debate.

Dean Lockhart and Edward Mountain talked about the Conservative Party's plan to review taxes on whisky. I have a number of questions about that. How would what is planned for whisky interact with the sale of other spirits? What is the policy's purpose? Is it to help producers to gain or increase market share, or is it to help them to make their product more affordable, so that people drink more whisky? Malt whisky is a luxury good, so lowering its cost relative to the cost of other spirits could damage its reputation. We do not want to encourage people to drink more alcohol and we do not want to damage malt whisky's reputation as a luxury good. I look forward to hearing how the Conservatives' plan would work. It makes for a good soundbite, but I am not sure that the issue is so simple.

Members talked about other support that should be available to whisky distillers, some of which could have an impact in areas that are not affected by the tariffs. I am thinking about improved broadband. I also make a plea for improved ferry services, especially to places such as Islay, which has a huge number of distilleries and depends on ferries.

The tariffs have an impact on not just whisky but biscuits, foodstuffs, wood products and even Harry Potter scarves. Companies that produce all those

things might not be impacted to the degree that whisky is impacted, but their businesses will be damaged.

The Labour amendment mentions Trump. Alex Rowley talked about the Menie estate business, which should have warned us about how Trump operates. The Scottish Government should have been really wary of doing business with him, instead of rolling out the red carpet.

Bruce Crawford pointed out that Trump will negotiate with the UK only if we have a no-deal Brexit, which would be a dangerous situation for us to be in. Jenny Gilruth quoted Trump as saying that trade wars are “easy to win”. Of course they are easy to win, for the largest market. That should warn us very much about doing business with Trump, given how he operates.

The debate was about trade tariffs, but Brexit came up often. There is no doubt that Brexit will damage our trade. Uncertainty is already having an economic impact. Brexit will not be done by 31 January—there is no way that it will be done by then. There will be years of negotiations to dig ourselves out of the EU and to develop a new relationship with it.

It will be important to develop trading relationships. As David Stewart pointed out, we will need to negotiate trade deals with countries that are expert in negotiating their own trade deals; we have depended on the EU to negotiate for us. It is not going to be as easy as people think, especially as we know that WTO rules are no safety net.

The whole Brexit saga should sound a warning to those who seek to break up the UK. How on earth can the SNP not see that?

The debate has taught us about the importance of trade and about the need to be able to trade as freely as possible while maintaining the standard of the products that we take in.

Emma Harper: Will the member take an intervention?

Ivan McKee: Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The member is in her final 30 seconds.

Rhoda Grant: That is why we need to keep all our trading partners close—in Europe and, more important, in the rest of the United Kingdom. As Alex Rowley said, we need to break down borders, not build them.

16:43

Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Most members can find common

cause on tariffs, if not on all the issues that have been raised in the debate. When it comes to international trade, I think that most of us can see that the imposition of tariffs, quotas and countertariffs on goods benefits no one.

The United Kingdom has long been a champion of free trade on the global stage. The ability to trade freely has not only created jobs and built prosperity, but has aided the creation of a truly international marketplace for ideas, collaboration and progress.

The dispute about support for Airbus and Boeing long predates the current US Administration and the current British Government. It has its origins in the first half of the 2000s.

We are extremely disappointed by the US approach to the issue. On the European side, the UK Government has been sincere in its attempts to bring support for industry into a state of compliance with WTO rules. Our European partners and the United States should all be working to achieve compliance and to ensure that trade continues to flow.

The WTO is expected to make a ruling in a few months. In the meantime, we should avoid escalating the dispute. That goal has been the subject of high levels of engagement between our Government and the American Administration, including the Prime Minister and the US President. Their predecessors were involved in similar discussions about the dispute.

The tariff that was discussed most today was the one on Scotch whisky, which is understandable given the position of the sector in Scotland. Scotch whisky has been a great Scottish success story, alongside our wider Scottish and UK food and drink sector. My region, the Highlands and Islands, produces many of Scotland’s finest malts, including those from Speyside and the islands.

Exports of whisky to the United States are worth around £1 billion, and single malts represent a significant proportion of that figure. The US currently accounts for more than one fifth of all Scotch whisky exports from this country. The industry can ill afford high tariffs; its model largely relies on small and medium-sized businesses operating distilleries. However, it employs about 11,000 people and the knock-on benefits of the industry to Scotland are even greater.

We have also heard about the impact that tariffs will have on goods including shortbread—which is produced, notably, by Walkers in my region—Scotland’s cashmere exports, which are another noted Highland export, our cheeses and other goods.

Of course, the main point of dispute, which is the aerospace industry, will also be affected in the UK. That matters. For too long, there has been a lack of internationalisation of Scotland's businesses, with too few being supported to export and many finding barriers to becoming significant exporters. In Scotland, we should be seeing greater co-operation between business, our enterprise bodies, and the Department for International Trade, in order to ensure that exporting is as simple a process as possible.

Dean Lockhart spoke about some of the issues that have been raised in the cross-party group on the USA. He also acknowledged the Scotch Whisky Association's figure that exports of single malt to the US could fall by 20 per cent a year if the tariffs continue to operate. That would be a considerable cost to the sector. He also touched on a number of practical steps that the UK Government and Scottish Government could take to mitigate some of the pressure on the Scotch whisky industry, if tariffs are not removed.

Rhoda Grant highlighted the potential impact on our Highlands and Islands region, and David Stewart rather bravely wandered into the age-old Orkney debate about Scapa or Highland Park. All I will say is that they are both excellent when drunk in moderation.

Peter Chapman spoke about the impact of the tariffs on the north-east, and the UK Government's freeze on spirit duty. Edward Mountain, my fellow Highlands and Islands member, also touched on that and on measures that have been taken to support the Scotch whisky industry, which is so important to our region. Many of those measures could and should have been taken already. Unfortunately, whisky suffers from many of the problems that are faced by other businesses in remote and rural areas of Scotland. Serious investment in infrastructure must be made, including in rural broadband, to help businesses to operate globally, and to drive down production costs.

Edward Mountain also examined some of the areas in which the UK Government has been actively promoting and supporting Scotch whisky in recent years. The Prime Minister has announced a review of alcohol duty rates. That was a key ask from the Scotch Whisky Association, so the review has been welcomed. The United Kingdom Government also hopes to provide more certainty with a multiyear plan for the future of alcohol duty as we leave the EU.

Alex Rowley highlighted the SNP's rather uncomfortable relationship with the businessman Donald Trump before he became the President of the United States.

Mike Rumbles spoke about his opposition to Brexit. I believe that he is genuine and I accept his position, but he must remember that the referendum on our membership of the EU was Liberal Democrat policy for a long time, and the Liberal Democrats voted for the referendum bill.

Brian Whittle spoke about his area, the home of much Harry Potter merchandise, and nailed his colours to team Gryffindor, which I thought was brave.

Mike Rumbles: Will the member accept that it was the UK Government that put a leaflet through everybody's letterbox that said that it would implement the result of the referendum, but the bill that went through Parliament was advisory, so Parliament was not committed to it, obviously?

Jamie Halcro Johnston: Most people knew what the referendum was going to do. As I said—Mike Rumbles cannot take this away—it was Liberal Democrat policy: the Liberal Democrats supported the referendum. The only thing that they have not supported is honouring the result.

Mike Rumbles: It was an advisory referendum.

Jamie Halcro Johnston: I will move on.

The tariff situation highlights the importance of a clear and open approach being taken to international trade. Tariffs and quotas are in nobody's interests. Breaking down barriers to trade benefits us all.

We must not find ourselves drawn into disputes that are seen as zero-sum games, with one nation raising tariffs and others countering them with their own tariffs. That harms all parties, which should be foremost in our minds as Britain sets out to create new trade agreements around the world.

That is why the SNP has tacked a sentence attacking Brexit on to today's motion. That was rather crass and opportunistic, and it belittles an issue of real importance to businesses across Scotland. The dispute is between the United States and the European Union, but it is one in which the United Kingdom and Scotland have been caught. We do not want a battle over trade; we want to work together to resolve the dispute that has given rise to the tariffs, and we want the tariffs to be consigned to the dustbin as soon as possible.

16:51

The Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy (Fergus Ewing): I welcome the support shown by most members across the chamber for companies affected by these tariffs. The main substance of this debate was well expressed by various members who pointed out the extremely serious impacts that these tariffs will have. They

were right to do so. David Stewart did so at length; Dr Allan did so; Bruce Crawford did so; and Ed Mountain in the first part of his speech chose to do so—and that is quite right because this is a very serious situation.

I am pleased that we have had the opportunity to debate it, because I know from my discussions with companies, which I will come on to shortly, that this is a very serious threat to many businesses, mostly in the rural economy in Scotland. Those cover, as members have said, some of the most iconic and important sectors of our economy and touch just about every part of Scotland: the distilleries and bakeries of Moray; the rural cheese makers and island distilleries; the bottling plants and warehouses in Glasgow; and the textile workshops in the Borders.

I am particularly concerned about the impact of the tariffs in remote and rural communities. That concern was expressed across the chamber and we heard how many products found on shelves all over the world are manufactured in towns and villages across rural Scotland. So, it behoves us all to emphasise just how important the issues that we are debating are to our people, our businesses, our society and the communities in our rural and island Scotland.

It is also worth stressing something that was perhaps not mentioned as much as I thought it might be—just how important our trade relations are with the USA. We have had a long history in our relationship with the USA, between citizens and between businesses, with trade, exports and imports. Mr Crawford pointed out that the expansion of exports of Scotch whisky to the USA has been a dazzling success and a tribute to all those involved. So, too, have been our salmon exports and aquaculture. With £5.5 billion overall of exports in 2017, the US is our number 1 market for export growth.

Links between Scotland and the US could not be stronger in terms of trade and business. Morgan Stanley employs 1,100 people in Glasgow. Hewlett-Packard has been in Erskine for 25 years. GE/BakerHughes recently created a new centre of excellence in Montrose with 100 new jobs. I recently revisited LifeScan in Inverness for the umpteenth time—David Stewart has a connection with it, too, and he and I both know how important it has been as possibly the largest private sector employer in the Highlands. I know from my discussions with US managers and owners of some of these companies how much they value doing business in Scotland. Scotland is a great place to do business. Therefore, I thought it sensible to place on the record a sentiment that I hope is shared across the chamber—that although there is a very difficult and dangerous dispute,

behind it is a much stronger connection, which will and should persist.

I did a little research on my own, and I found that Mike Pence, vice-president of the United States, said:

“America wins when we trade and export and import.”

Therefore, I hope that, in the resolution of this dispute, that longer view will prevail. I understand from my officials that litigation is on-going, so there is an opportunity for there to be prompt resolution. Obviously, we all wish that the negotiations about that are conducted as quickly as possible.

This debate is about trade tariffs imposed by the USA. It is also perfectly legitimately about trade tariffs that would result from a no-deal Brexit, so it is right that we look at EU tariffs. The impact of the EU’s tariffs would be considerable—they would be about 65 per cent on fresh boneless beef and 53 per cent on fresh boneless lamb, for example.

The UK’s proposal to remove import tariffs on eggs coming from the Ukraine, for example, would wipe out the sector in one fell swoop. I recently had extensive discussions with British egg producers’ representatives about the issue. That situation would leave egg producers here—who produce to higher welfare standards—vulnerable to cheaper imports, which could lead to consumers unwittingly eating eggs and egg products that are produced to lower welfare standards. That real fear was expressed by Emma Harper in her speech, which was absolutely relevant. I was pleased that the Presiding Officer confirmed that it was relevant, contrary to another member’s assertion.

Emma Harper: The USA has massive negotiating powers. Given the debate that we have just had about tariffs, does the cabinet secretary share my concerns about food standards? We need to be cognisant of the food and drink standards that will be coming our way following future trade deals with the USA.

Fergus Ewing: The member is absolutely right. Just in case any members think that I am describing inaccurately the position of the US on those matters, I will read from the US’s published negotiating objectives for a no deal. It wants to

“Establish a mechanism to remove expeditiously unwarranted barriers that block the export of U.S. food and agricultural products”.

That is US policy. That is exactly what Emma Harper warned us about. I submit that that negotiating objective could not be more telling.

Brian Whittle: I accept that that is the USA’s position, but we do not have to accept it. I have a farmer sitting next to me. We will stand against any reduction in food standards.

The Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning (Kevin Stewart): Like you stood against Brexit?

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Let us hear from the member, minister.

Brian Whittle: We do not have to accept any standards that the US tries to impose on us; it is up to us to decide what those are.

Fergus Ewing: I heard what Brian Whittle said with great interest. Earlier, reference was made by one of his front-bench colleagues to Liz Truss, who has ministerial responsibility in the UK Government for international trade. She is on record saying that she wishes to remove regulatory impediments and move towards the kind of trade that would not do what Mr Whittle wants—indeed, it would do exactly the opposite of what he said. The issue is a matter of open public dispute between UK Government ministers, at least according to newspaper reports.

Our position is very clear. The matter is of growing importance, and farmers, particularly in Scotland, are becoming concerned. One of their main concerns is that we will be flooded with meat imports from countries that have little in the way of provenance and scant regard to animal welfare.

I have seen no evidence at all that the UK Government has done anything to prevent that from happening.

I welcome the opportunity to highlight the predicament that faces people such as Jim Walker, who is the managing director of Walkers, and those in the whisky industry and our cashmere sector, in standing against the unwarranted tariffs that have been imposed by the USA. I congratulate Mr McKee on his unstinting efforts to raise Scotland's case in America, in London and here, and I wish him success in those efforts.

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The first question is, that amendment S5M-19851.1, in the name of Dean Lockhart, which seeks to amend motion S5M-19851, in the name of Ivan McKee, on the implications of the imposition of US tariffs on Scottish products, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (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)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 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)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (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)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)

Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 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)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 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)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 16, Against 74, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-19851.2, in the name of Rhoda Grant, which seeks to amend the motion in the name of Ivan McKee, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)

Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 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)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)

Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 16, Against 74, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S5M-19851, in the name of Ivan McKee, on the implications of the imposition of US tariffs on Scottish products, 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, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinrossshire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (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)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)

Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 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)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 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)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Against

Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (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)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 74, Against 16, Abstentions 0.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament regrets the recent imposition of United States tariffs on a range of Scottish goods, including single malt Scotch whisky, liqueurs, cheese, butter, biscuits and woollen and cashmere products, and their impact on Scottish businesses; welcomes the efforts of the EU to reach a negotiated settlement with the United States to bring the Airbus/Boeing dispute to an end, and recognises the damage that any form of Brexit will inflict on Scottish businesses that trade with EU member countries and, in particular, the price that will be paid by businesses and employees of a no-deal Brexit.

Meeting closed at 17:03.

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