OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Meeting of the Parliament

Tuesday 28 January 2020

Session 5

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

Time for Reflection

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Good afternoon. Our first item of business today is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader is Mr Stephen Stone, the headteacher of St Roch's secondary school in Glasgow, which is part of the visions schools Scotland programme.

Mr Stephen Stone (Headteacher, St Roch's Secondary School, Glasgow): Holocaust memorial day takes place on 27 January every year to remember the millions lost in the Holocaust and in subsequent genocides. This year is especially poignant as it marks 25 years since the genocide in Bosnia and 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz.

Vision schools Scotland was launched in 2017 to accredit and support schools that demonstrate commitment and good practice in Holocaust education. Set up by the school of education and social sciences at the University of the West of Scotland, under Dr Paula Cowan, in partnership with the Holocaust Educational Trust, it provides free, high-quality training for teachers and advice on teaching the Holocaust. There are 15 vision schools across Scotland, with several more to receive the award this year.

As headteacher of St Roch's secondary school in Glasgow, I am proud to say that St Roch's became a vision school in 2018 and last year became a level 2 vision school. Holocaust education has been embedded in the school for many years, impacting parents, staff, the community and, above all, our young people. It has enabled pupils not only to become aware of the atrocities of the past and develop an understanding of their role in the world today but to become global citizens and young leaders.

Holocaust education has impacted significantly on attainment; for example, exam results in history have been consistently strong in the school and last session we had 100 per cent success for pupils sitting history at national 5 and higher. In particular, the programme has been good for our deaf pupils. We have almost 40 deaf pupils in the school and they were heavily involved in last year's Holocaust memorial day. The fact that deaf people were specifically persecuted under Nazi control has not been lost on our deaf pupils and their families.

My colleague Patrick McShane has led pupil trips to Auschwitz and Rwanda, and his good work has been recognised by vision schools Scotland and the Holocaust Educational Trust. St Roch's will never stand still in our quest to make Holocaust education as effective as possible. Accreditation by vision schools Scotland has sharpened our focus and affirmed our good practice. It has helped us reflect on connections between our teaching of the Holocaust and our school motto "Alios Adiuva", which means "Help Others". Through the vision schools Scotland programme, we will continue to share dialogue, ideas and good practice with other teachers and schools. That will be to the great benefit of our teachers, our communities and, above all, our young people. Thank you.

Topical Question Time

14:04

Coronavirus

1. **Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what preparations and provisions it is making in response to the coronavirus outbreak in China. (S5T-01973)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Jeane Freeman): We have made preparations and provisions in response to the coronavirus outbreak in China but, before I outline them, it is important for us to note that, to date, no positive cases have been identified in the United Kingdom and the risk to the population continues to be assessed as low.

We have activated our health resilience preparations including a dedicated incident management team. Our chief medical officer has CMO-level calls with all the other chief medical officers across the UK to ensure that there is a co-ordinated response and an emerging understanding of the nature of the virus, its properties and how we might anticipate its spread and impact. There are also daily calls between my officials and officials in the rest of the UK. On Friday, I participated in a COBRA call with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and ministers from both Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure that we have an agreed, co-ordinated response that has regard to who is in the lead for which areas, bearing in mind that health is devolved in Scotland. In addition, within the Scottish Government we are ensuring that other ministerial portfolios that may have a relevance for, or an interest in, this issue continue to be advised as we make progress.

Daniel Johnson: Scotland, and Edinburgh in particular, enjoys the presence of many international visitors and international students. What consideration is being given to the increased probability of cases of coronavirus that that might bring, and what steps are being taken in response?

Jeane Freeman: At a Scottish level, which replicates the work that is being done elsewhere in the UK, guidance has been issued to clinicians in both primary and secondary care. Additional guidance is being worked through with Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland and with the public health officers of our local authority partners.

At a UK level, as flights enter the UK from Hubei province in China, there is a protocol that has been agreed and is being followed, which includes providing information to passengers on those flights. That has now been extended to providing information to all passengers on all flights entering the UK from China, and the information includes what to do if passengers feel that they have any of the symptoms that may be associated with the virus. Of course, part of the issue is that some of those symptoms could be associated with normal flu or with a respiratory infection that is not connected to this virus. Nonetheless, where individuals have those symptoms and have been in contact with people in that province, they are encouraged to go to their local health practitioner to be checked.

Clinicians will carry out a triage process when those symptoms present, on the basis of which they will determine whether further specific tests for the coronavirus should be undertaken. Those are the instances that we are talking about when we say that tests have been completed and to date there are no confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the UK.

Daniel Johnson: I thank the cabinet secretary for that clarification. I am sure that she will agree with me that it is important that we take a measured and considered response. I note that she has echoed the advice from the UK Secretary of State for Health and Social Care for those who have returned from Wuhan. Are there any measures or steps that the Scottish Government is advising the general population to take at this time?

Jeane Freeman: There is nothing specific for the general population to do at this time. Emerging work is being undertaken by experienced clinicians, epidemiologists and so on to understand the nature of the virus, the way in which it is transmitted and what the situation might be if people can be infected but display no symptoms. Part of what we have agreed at UK level is the various stages of response that may be triggered should there be a confirmed case, or should further data emerge from the scientists and clinicians who are working on the issue with the data coming from China that should advise us of additional preparations.

The overall advice to citizens in Scotland who have not been in Hubei province in China is that, when they have a respiratory infection, they should present themselves to their general practitioner in the normal course of action for that to be looked at. The general practitioner will then determine whether there is a need for further treatment. Of course, as always, my advice to all of those who are eligible for a flu vaccination is that they should take up that opportunity. It is not too late: at this point in January, the vaccine is still effective. I urge everyone who is eligible for the flu vaccination to get it as soon as they can.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): We have three further questions and I will try to get them all in.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): I repeat what the cabinet secretary has just said about the importance of the vaccination. There is concern in Scotland among people with multiple conditions.

I go back to the point that was raised earlier. Chinese new year means that there will be a lot of movement of Chinese students. Yesterday, Matt Hancock outlined the view that students who have returned from the province should self-isolate for two weeks, even if they have no symptoms. Is that the Scottish Government's position? What discussions are taking place with universities in Scotland, given the difficulties that that might cause?

Jeane Freeman: Mr Briggs is right to say that people who have had no contact with Hubei province in China, but who have multiple conditions, and who are experiencing respiratory problems, or fatigue that is out of the ordinary, should seek clinical assessment and guidance. Mr Johnson and Mr Briggs are both right to say that our response should be measured, considered and proportionate.

As Mr Briggs says, because of Chinese new year, some Chinese students may have been looking to go home to their families or be returning from visiting them. The advice that we are giving through and discussing with Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland is comparable to the UK advice. If someone has returned from that province in China or has been in contact with people who have been in that province, and they experience any of the coronavirus symptoms, they should immediately seek clinical advice to determine whether it is appropriate in their case to undertake the particular test for coronavirus. As I have said, the second clinical step, which is the triaging of the symptoms—given that the symptoms are often present in other conditions—is very important.

Universities are considering what more support and guidance they can offer their students. We have repeated the UK guidance on self-isolation. The best advice at the UK level is that the incubation period for this virus is 14 days. The situation is fluid and it is a new virus in many respects. We will continue to update the guidance as more information emerges.

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): The cabinet secretary mentioned that people who have not yet had the flu shot should seek it if they are eligible for it. Can the cabinet secretary reiterate the importance of getting the flu shot, given that the symptoms of coronavirus are the same as those of flu? That might at least allay some worries for people who think that they might have coronavirus.

Jeane Freeman: There is no reason for someone to think that they have contracted the virus if they have not been in that province of China recently or had any contact with anyone who has visited that province, including on business and so on.

Nonetheless, the flu vaccine is important for our population overall, but particularly for those who are vulnerable, including children, those with relevant conditions and older citizens. It is important for several reasons, including the individual's own health and the general health of the population. I encourage anyone who is eligible and who has not had the flu vaccination to contact their primary care provider to make early arrangements to get it.

I am pleased to report that, yesterday, I received information that shows that the level of vaccination among our healthcare workforce has increased over the past year—and we are not yet finished in that regard.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): One of the principal concerns that have been voiced by the considerable number of British citizens living in Wuhan city, in Hubei province, is their inability to leave it. What discussions has the cabinet secretary had with the United Kingdom Government about the repatriation of Scottish citizens or their safe transit out of the area?

Jeane Freeman: As of today, my understanding is that the UK is making arrangements to ensure that a plane goes to Hubei province and that British citizens who want to return home will be assisted to do so. That aircraft will have a health team on board. We have asked the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to advise us whether there are any Scotland-domiciled individuals who will board that plane, and I am confident that it will let us have that information as soon as it knows, so that we are able to make appropriate arrangements for those people.

Scottish Visa

2. **Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how a new Scottish visa could address depopulation and skills shortages. (S5T-01981)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): Scotland has distinct demographic and geographical needs, and it is clear that the current immigration system is not meeting the needs of our communities and employers. Countries such as Canada and Australia have successfully used regional migration schemes to attract and retain people

with the skills that are needed to benefit local communities. A Scottish visa would allow the Scottish ministers, who are accountable to the Scottish Parliament, to develop a tailored policy within the United Kingdom immigration system to meet the needs of Scotland.

Our proposals for a tailored migration policy are supported by local authorities, employers and universities across Scotland. The UK Government should engage positively and work with us to develop a system that meets our distinct needs.

Stewart Stevenson: Is the cabinet secretary aware that some 70 per cent of people who are employed in the north-east of Scotland's fish processing industry are non-UK nationals? With the number of vacancies already rising, how would a Scotland-specific scheme assist that vital industry, which is worth some £650 million a year to the Scottish economy?

Fiona Hyslop: Stewart Stevenson raises a critical point in relation to the future success of that sector. The policy proposals for a Scottish visa are designed to be inherently flexible, to meet Scotland's varied labour needs, and we want to consult the industry and employers in developing the Scottish visa to meet those needs.

Similarly, we have made the case for a place-based route for migration to rural areas and, today, the UK Migration Advisory Committee has again recommended a pilot of a visa that could cater for industries in rural areas, such as the fish-processing industry in the north-east. We will work with the committee, and we are planning to commission the independent expert advisory group on migration and population to research the specifics of rural pilots and the operation of a place-based immigration route.

Stewart Stevenson: Has the Scottish Government looked at the experience of the devolved Government in Alberta, Canada, which has, through its immigrant nominee programme, a local scheme that operates within the country-wide immigration scheme, which is delivering different immigration criteria, and the benefits that Alberta derives from having its own scheme?

Fiona Hyslop: We have, indeed. People may not have had the opportunity to read the paper on migration that was launched yesterday by the Scottish Government, along with the proposal for the Scottish visa, but it contains analysis of a number of different countries that have such a scheme—Canada is one of them. Pages 78 to 80 set out the proposals and how they work in other countries.

It is interesting that, in Alberta, the retention rate is as high as 82 per cent after five to eight years of residence. The paper that we put forward provides international examples of how such a scheme works in other countries. It is perfectly possible, and it is perfectly reasonable—all that we are asking for is a reasonable response from the UK Government to take it forward.

The Presiding Officer: There is a huge amount of interest in this topic. Six members wish to ask supplementary questions, but I am afraid that we will not have time for them all.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con): The Scottish Conservatives believe in a UK-wide immigration system that also works for Scotland, which is why we previously argued for a system that reflects the needs of places that need migration—in particular, remote and rural communities and sectors that are reliant on migrant labour in places where there is no domestic workforce available.

Does the cabinet secretary agree with the Scottish Government's 2014 white paper on independence that a points-based system is one of the best mechanisms to achieve that?

Fiona Hyslop: The member might not have had the chance to read the paper that was launched yesterday, which is about how prosperity for Scotland can be achieved through migration, but, if he takes the opportunity to do so, he will see in it our proposal for a points-based system, which is internationally recognised as a way forward.

It is interesting that the MAC's proposals, which came out today, do not contradict at all what the Scottish Government is proposing. They also recognise the importance of having the flexibility of a regional approach.

We think that the issues for Scotland are not just sectoral but national. Our population issues are quite different. If there is to be a 50 per cent reduction in the number of EU migrants coming to this country, as has been suggested by the UK Government in previous debates, that would see a working-age increase for the UK of 4.9 per cent over the next 25 years but a reduction for Scotland of 1.9 per cent.

We want to support rural and remote areas. Fourteen of our local authorities are facing depopulation. Although we want to have pilots in distinct geographical areas in Scotland, this is an all-Scotland issue that needs an all-Scotland solution.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I welcome the publication of the Scottish Government's report. I thought that the Conservative Government's response was very disappointing, because, although I support immigration being reserved, I believe that there is room for workable flexibility in the current system.

In its statement yesterday, the Scottish Government recognised the importance of reaching agreement with the UK Government

"on the need for a tailored policy".

What future steps does the Scottish Government plan to take to reach that, and is there room for Parliament to have a greater involvement in those discussions?

Fiona Hyslop: I am keen to continue the positive cross-party engagement that we have had in Parliament so far, and to continue the positive engagement with the wider sector. So many of our businesses are small businesses. Yesterday, Andrew McRae, the Scotland policy chair of the Federation of Small Businesses Scotland, said:

"The new paper from the Scottish Government is a timely and evidence-based intervention. It sets out a pathway towards a UK system that can flex for Scotland's distinct demographic and economic needs, without creating additional burdens for smaller businesses ... The UK Government should acknowledge that it is possible and desirable to enable its immigration system to respond to different regions and nations, as well as maintain strict border controls and a user-friendly system."

I do not think that anybody in this chamber would disagree with that statement. The problem is that yesterday, in a knee-jerk response, the UK Government dismissed our proposals. I am urging it strongly to rethink that position. The response was that the immigration system

"will remain a reserved matter."

The proposals in our paper would take place within a UK system. Ideally, we would retain freedom of movement, but this is a very practical proposal for an additional system that would allow flexibility in Scotland. We will persist, and the more cross-party support that we have in this chamber, perhaps through debates and motions, the more we can try to engage the UK Government.

We are proposing something that has widespread support. We, in Scotland, would be best placed to implement pilots in some of these areas. The solution is one that we should pursue on a cross-party basis, and I thank Claire Baker for her interest to date.

Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP): The UK Government's own Migration Advisory Committee acknowledged the need for regional variation with its recommendation for rural pilot schemes. Does the cabinet secretary agree that Scotland should host those pilots, to ensure that our rural areas can benefit from changes and not be further damaged by the Tories' hostile immigration environment?

Fiona Hyslop: Yes, indeed. The Migration Advisory Committee took evidence from us and responded by saying that that should happen with those rural pilots. I have met a number of leaders of local authorities in Scotland who are keen, willing and able to take forward those pilots. I mentioned that we will commission the Scottish Government's independent expert advisory group on migration and population to look at the best examples of that, and we are taking that forward.

We need something very flexible to meet Scotland's needs, and that is what we will continue to pursue.

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): The Scottish Government's proposals have been welcomed across the board by business organisations, universities and industry bodies. Even former Tory MP Stephen Kerr supports them, but the UK Government has dismissed them in record time. Does the cabinet secretary agree that that ill-informed response demonstrates that the UK Government is out of touch with the needs of the Scottish people and economy?

Fiona Hyslop: I thought that the response was deeply regrettable. It was a knee-jerk response that was given perhaps without reflection and certainly without consideration of the report's content. To be generous, I want to give the UK time to consider and study the actual proposals in the report and to continue to engage with it.

The UK Government's response represents a serious warning. If it cannot engage on something as reasonable as a flexible system that has support from different organisations, industries, universities, trade unions and other sectors in Scotland, how on earth can anybody think that its approach can ever be responsive to Scotland? We have set out the visa proposals in good faith. They are practical and doable, and they are supported in many respects by the previous conclusions of the Migration Advisory Committee.

The political writing is on the wall. Let us try to be as practical as possible in serving the people of Scotland. If the UK Government does not respond positively on this matter, the results will be of its own making.

The Presiding Officer: I apologise to Stuart McMillan and Emma Harper, but there is no time for more questions.

Queen Elizabeth University Hospital Oversight Board

14:25

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is a statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, Jeane Freeman, giving an update on the Queen Elizabeth university hospital oversight board. The cabinet secretary will take questions following her statement. I encourage all members who wish to ask a question to press their request-to-speak buttons.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Jeane Freeman): The people who are served by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde deserve to have confidence that their local health board is improving its performance. The staff of our health service deserve the assurance that, should they have concerns about care of patients, they will be listened to and supported.

The families of children who have been treated at the Queen Elizabeth hospital campus deserve to have answers to their questions, and they deserve as safe an environment as possible for the care of their children. The actions that I have taken in recent times in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde aim to deliver in respect of their concerns.

Last week, I escalated the health board to level 4 for all aspects of its performance. That action included bringing in an operational turnaround director who is working directly to resolve issues in a number of areas, including out-of-hours services and waiting times.

However, today I will focus on actions that have been taken since I updated Parliament in December about the health board's escalation to level 4 for infection control and for family engagement around the Queen Elizabeth university hospital.

Scotland's chief nurse, Professor Fiona McQueen, chairs the oversight board that has identified the steps that are needed. The first is a review of the care of children who had bloodstream infections from 2015 to date. The second step is improvement in the quality of governance of infection prevention and control. The third is the establishment of a technical group to ensure that associated building, water and ventilation works are being progressed, and the fourth is to sustain far better communication and engagement with patients and families.

My clear priority is to ensure that families are given the answers that they need about their children's time in the hospital—in particular, about infections that might have caused harm or, in the worst cases, been the cause of death. A review of patients is looking at relevant cases in the paediatric haemato-oncology ward since the hospital opened in 2015.

Since December, a team of Scottish experts from outside NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has been assembled to undertake the review. It is led by Professor Marion Bain, whom I have appointed to take over responsibility for infection prevention and control at the hospital.

To ensure rigour and robustness, the case reviews will utilise two approaches. One is an epidemiological review that is validated by microbiologists and epidemiologists and uses international infection definitions to identify Gram-negative infections in the selected group. The epidemiology review will define the frequency of infections and their distribution by person, place, and time. Health Protection Scotland will lead that part of the work.

The paediatric trigger tool review is an internationally validated approach that will help clinicians to understand the effects that infection might have had on children, and will help in assessment of the wider quality of care. Infection prevention and control measures, and their use and effectiveness, will also be assessed in relation to the outputs of the case reviews.

Dr Peter Lachman is a paediatrician and chief executive of the International Society for Quality in Health Care, and is one of the authors of the paediatric trigger tool, has provided us with guidance on its use for this purpose, and on the augmentation that is required for patients.

Because the review will cover a significant time and a number of cases and complexities, a segmented approach will be taken. The first group of case reviews will concentrate on patients who received care in 2017. I think that that is appropriate, given the long period of worry and distress that their families have endured. The first set of reviews will be completed during February. The review team considers that it is likely that there will be about 80 cases to be examined overall, but they will continue to keep that assessment under review.

The whole approach—use of the trigger tool and the other steps that I have outlined—will be discussed with the parent representatives who are working with us. The review must also answer the questions that are posed by parents. Professor Craig White will liaise with parents to ensure that that happens, and that they are kept informed of progress. As the review of each case is completed, families will be offered an individual face-to-face report by one of the reviewing clinicians.

I consider it imperative to the restoration of confidence that no-one in the process is marking their own homework—not NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and not NHS Scotland. All must be subject to expert and independent external scrutiny; the work of the review team will be advised and subjected to scrutiny by experts from outside Scotland. Professor Mike Stevens, who is an emeritus professor of haemato-oncology from the University of Bristol, and Gaynor Evans, who is clinical lead for the Gram-negative bloodstream infection programme at NHS Improvement England, will advise the review team and report directly to the chief nursing officer.

Parliament will recall that, in 2018, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde considered it necessary to close wards 2A and 2B at the Royal hospital for children, and to relocate patients to ward 6A in the Queen Elizabeth hospital. The move was worrying and unsettling for children and their families, and the length of time has been longer than expected. Changes have been made in ward 6A to make space available for parents to have a rest and some time to themselves. Extra measures have been taken to enhance air filtering, alongside thorough and regular cleaning. Additional steps have been taken to bring to ward 6A aspects of the play and therapeutic environment of wards 2A and 2B.

Welcome though those enhancements are, it is obviously necessary that children return to the wards that were specifically designed for them. Wards 2A and 2B are being refurbished to make good the problems that were identified in 2018, and to bring the wards up to the highest standards. I am informed by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde that its plan now is that work will be completed this summer. Progress towards reopening is being monitored by the oversight board's technical subgroup, and by Professor McQueen. Patients will move back to wards 2A and 2B when they are fully ready and meet all required standards.

Professor Marion Bain is now in post, and is leading the case review that I have described. Working with the staff who have raised concerns, and making sure that their insight and experience are woven into the on-going work of infection prevention and control in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, she is reviewing all aspects of working practice and governance, including how the board assesses, reports and manages incidents and outbreaks.

The policies of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde are being considered, as is the detail of spikes in infection that were experienced in the hospital, and how the board responded, both in its operations and corporately. I expect the oversight board to receive a report from the subgroup about those matters by the Easter recess. Alongside that, the chief nursing officer has instructed a peer review of how the infection prevention and control team approaches and escalates infection incidents. That review will report during February to Professor Bain.

Professor Craig White is following up on the feedback that has been received from parents through surveys and individual meetings, and which is informing the work of the communications group of the oversight board. I am grateful to the parent representatives who are working with us on that.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's website now has an improved section that offers answers to general questions that parents have asked about the hospital and the safety and care of their children.

We will ensure that families are involved in preparations to reopen wards 2A and 2B, with answers to their questions, and taking into account ideas that they might have for the operation of the wards.

Lastly, I want to update Parliament on progress on establishment of the public inquiry that I announced in September last year. The drafting of the remit and terms of reference are at an advanced stage, and are being considered by Lord Brodie. Lord Brodie and I are committed to ensuring that the inquiry addresses the concerns of patients and families, and to offering them an opportunity to comment on the terms of reference before they are finalised. I expect that the remit and the terms of reference will be shared with families during February. I will meet thereafter with party spokespeople, as I have committed to doing.

In the month since I escalated Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS to level 4, significant work has been under way to address the legitimate concerns that have been raised by members on behalf of families and staff. The work is on-going, under the scrutiny of external experts. It is detailed and will take time, but families, children and staff deserve to see it being done properly and thoroughly. I will update Parliament further as progress is made.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): I thank the cabinet secretary for the advance copy of her statement. The last time that we had a statement, I asked how many cases had been identified. Today, the cabinet secretary said that it is likely that about 80 cases will be examined. Has the cabinet secretary personally instructed Professor McQueen to make contact with those families? Secondly, looking at wider issues in the health board and given the concerns that were raised regarding the Vale of Leven, Queen Elizabeth and Gartnavel hospitals—we know many of them—

why has it taken until now for the cabinet secretary to act?

Jeane Freeman: I am grateful to Mr Briggs for his questions. Regarding contact with families, the first thing that is being done is that representatives of families are being talked though the approach to the review of cases so that they understand why it is a twin approach. They are being talked through the process that will then be involved, and why the first segment of cases out of the 80 have been identified as the first to be looked at. That information will be shared widely with all the families. Professor White will ensure that that happens, as well as making sure that families have a copy of the statement that I have made today, as he did in December.

Families will then be asked individually how they want to be involved. At the very least, they will have a face-to-face talk-through of the result of their own specific case with a member of the clinical team that has undertaken the review. Families may wish to have other involvement. They may wish to look at the information that is being reviewed. They may have additions that they want to make to that information. The approach will be bespoke for each family and for what they want. In some instances the patients themselves may be involved, because we are not talking only about young children but about young adults.

I do not understand Mr Briggs's second question about why it has taken so long to act. We have acted appropriately at the right time in terms of infection prevention and control. Members will know from my previous statements about my engagement with the families and my involvement very early on, from the time of my appointment, in terms of the streptococcus infection and the action that was taken then.

Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS has not responded to those actions and to that support as I would expect it to do. That is why, in terms of infection prevention and control, it has not only been elevated to level 4, which is a serious level for a board to be at; prior to that elevation I also instructed the independent review, which should report in the spring, and the public inquiry into some of the wider and deeper issues around infrastructure build. That inquiry will report on the Queen Elizabeth university hospital and the Royal hospital for children in Glasgow and on the new NHS Lothian Royal hospital for sick children at Little France.

I think that we have taken the appropriate steps, allowing boards to exercise the responsibility that they have for the job that they are there to do, but acting where they are not taking that responsibility as seriously, or as effectively, as I require them to.

The Presiding Officer: I encourage you to give slightly more concise answers, cabinet secretary, as we still have 12 members who want to ask questions.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab): I thank the cabinet secretary for advance sight of her statement. This remains a worrying time for many families and patients. We welcome many of the actions that have been outlined and agree that no one who is involved in this scandal should be marking their own homework. However, it appears that that has been the case for too long. Families and staff whistleblowers have feared a cover-up of the many complaints, crises and tragedies that have plagued the Queen Elizabeth university hospital since it opened in 2015. It is only now, in 2020, that we are beginning to see serious action being taken. Along the way, the public has lost confidence in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Although the health secretary has invited people to join or help the board, no one has been asked to leave. That feels quite incredible.

Can the cabinet secretary say, hand on heart, that she has complete confidence in the current leadership team, including the chief executive, and, if so, why?

Jeane Freeman: I agree with the comments that Monica Lennon has made, and I am grateful to her for making them. This has been an unnecessarily worrying time for families and staff. That is also why, in addition to the steps that I have outlined, we have actively sought to engage directly with families in order to hear what they have to say and to make good use of those senior microbiologist clinicians with significant expertise who stepped forward to work with us through this process. I am grateful to them for that, and their resilience and strength should be commended.

On the point about no one being asked to leave, I should be clear that NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde is now at level 4, and I have not ruled out level 5. However, I think that it is important to give the board the opportunity to work under our direction to improve its processes. It is important that we are the ones who are looking at that and are not asking it to do that. It is important that, if anything has been covered up, ignored or missed, or if any wrong decisions have been taken, there is an external view—a view that is external to us—that looks at all of that in order to uncover the truth of the matter on these infection issues, as well as anything else that might arise in the public inquiry.

It is now up to NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde to respond appropriately and to meet the requirements of it that I have set out clearly. Level 5 is a serious step. As I said, I have not ruled it out, but I am giving NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde one last chance to respond appropriately and show that it understands not only what it

needs to do now, but what it needs to do in a way that is sustainable in the long term.

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): The cabinet secretary said that the paediatric trigger tool review will also help to assess wider quality of care. Could she elaborate on the scope of that review and on what steps are being taken to ensure that actions, finding and decisions are communicated on an on-going basis to patients, families, health service staff and the wider community that relies on the hospital?

Jeane Freeman: On that last point about communicating the progress on an on-going basis, that is largely being led by Professor White, but he is being informed in that work by the parent representatives and others who are working with them.

I am due to visit the Queen Elizabeth university Hospital and the Royal hospital shortly after the February recess. At that point, I will take the opportunity not only to meet relevant staff but, if at all possible, to meet the area partnership forum which, as Alison Johnstone knows, covers all the unions that are involved on that campus, so that I can ensure that they feel that they are properly engaged and fully informed.

On the question of the wider quality of care, when the trigger tool is used, we look at how infections are identified; how the connections are made or not made; whether what was done was appropriate in terms of time, place and person; whether that was done to the standard that we and the external experts would expect; and what happened with the care in relation to the use of antibiotics, prophylaxis and so on.

None of that is, in any sense, to question what the clinicians who are involved in the care of these children have been doing; they provide the highest quality of care, as is widely recognised by many people, including me. Rather, it is about considering whether the proper management of infection incidents, and the connections that are then made and the steps taken, have a wider impact on other care decisions that clinicians might make.

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

I want to ask about wider problems in the health board, which I think underpin the problems at the Queen Elizabeth. I am grateful that the cabinet secretary has appointed an operational turnaround director. In view of the board's size and the unprecedented nature of the problems that beset it, what qualities has she sought in recruiting for that post? How long will the post be in place? How can we be assured that, when the operational turnaround director leaves, we will not slide back into the problems of the past?

Jeane Freeman: The operational turnaround director is Calum Campbell, the chief executive of NHS Lanarkshire, and he is focused on improving NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's delivery of scheduled, unscheduled and out-of-hours care. He will also be able to consider—and advise us and the board on—additional cultural issues in the board in relation to the pace of change and engagement with clinicians and staff, with an absolute focus on delivering high-quality services for patients.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's performance in these matters is not what we require it to be, which is why we not only escalated the board to level 4 but brought in the turnaround director, who is reporting directly to Government on these matters.

The member asked how long that person will be there. They arrived on site on Monday, and we will need to take a little time for their additional assessment—oversight of which is led by our chief operating officer, John Connaghan—of what more needs to be done to improve the delivery of services. That will give me a better idea of how long the turnaround director will need to be there before we see the improvements that we need.

Those improvements must be sustainable, as Mr Cole-Hamilton rightly said. There is no point in someone going in, fixing the problem and then walking away only for it all to fall over again. Improvement needs to be sustainable, which is why Mr Campbell's assessment of the sustainability of capability and capacity inside the board will be helpful. We will take a view and a decision on how long his involvement might be necessary once we have more information in that regard. I will be happy to inform Mr Cole-Hamilton as I reach that view.

The Presiding Officer: I stress again that I am looking for succinct questions and succinct answers.

James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP): I thank the cabinet secretary for her statement. I was pleased to hear the commitment to improving communication with families. Can she assure members that the parents of affected children will be fully involved in the review of their own children's cases, to ensure that the insight that they can offer is fully utilised?

Jeane Freeman: Yes, I can. Parents will be involved as fully as they wish to be. We accept that some families will want to be more involved than others, which is why I said that there should be a bespoke solution for each family, so that each family can determine their level of involvement in their case review and the extent to which they want to contribute additional information for consideration.

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con): While this Government has been fixated on what flag is flying outside, kids have been shifted from one contaminated ward to another and parents have been left in the dark. Wards 2A and 2B were supposed to open soon; now we hear that it will be summer before the work is completed. Can the cabinet secretary guarantee that the wards will open this year?

Jeane Freeman: Let me be really clear to the Parliament: I am not fixated on flags; I am fixated on improving the performance of our national health service and, most important, on ensuring that, in this instance, families and staff are treated with the respect that they deserve and are involved as fully as possible. I think that all the steps that I have set out indicate how serious I am about that.

The board's assessment is that wards 2A and 2B will be ready to open in the summer. That is why I said in my statement that the oversight board will, indeed, oversee that, to make sure of all the work that needs to be done—so that the wards can open not only safely but to the standard that we require—and that the families will be involved in and assured of it all. I am sure that Ms Wells remembers that I have appointed Professor Bain and others to make that direct work a reality for the families and the children who are involved.

David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP): What role will the additional expertise that is being brought in play in ensuring that the measures that have been put in place to date are satisfactory?

Jeane Freeman: We have additional expertise from Health Protection Scotland and from Professor Marion Bain, who has now taken lead responsibility for healthcare-acquired infection prevention and control from Dr Jennifer Armstrong, the medical director at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Also, as I have said, Professor Mike Stevens from the University of Bristol and Gaynor Evans of NHS Improvement in England are providing additional scrutiny of the work that the Government is commissioning and how that work is being done, particularly around case reviews, the involvement of families and the lessons that need to be applied in terms of overall infection prevention and control. Finally, the peer review that the chief nursing officer has commissioned on how the infection control team works will be a matter of considerable importance, and we should have that report next month.

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): This is a step in the right direction. Greater oversight of management is welcome, but we still have not got to the heart of the problem. The cabinet secretary says "if" there is a cover-up, but there is no "if" about it. The health board leadership has lost the trust of patients, parents and the public. Statements are still being issued by the health board that are simply untrue and deliberately misleading, despite the oversight board having been implemented by the Government. Managers are more interested in saving their skins than in doing the right thing. The cabinet secretary has said that they have one more chance. How many last chances do they need? What will it take for her to lose confidence in the leadership of that failing health board?

Jeane Freeman: In one respect, I agree with Mr Sarwar. What I have outlined today is not the heart of the problem, which is partly why we have the independent review and the public inquiry. Those all layer in to find out exactly what has gone wrong with that hospital in its physical build and environment and then in how it is operated and how staff are engaged and involved. I know that Mr Sarwar understands that, but it is worth making the point about the layers that are involved.

A lot of what he asks is similar to what Ms Lennon said, and I completely understand why he is asking. The allegation that statements that have been issued by the board are untrue is specifically being looked at today by Professor Bain in her meetings with the senior clinicians, who are very experienced microbiologists in the particular areas of water and ventilation. If the statements are untrue, not only will they be corrected but we will pursue directly with the chief executive and the chair of the board why statements that are not factually correct are being issued.

I have been really clear—I have certainly made it clear to the board—that this is the final chance to respond appropriately to this level of escalation and direct Government involvement in direction. Either the board will respond to that or we will go to the next stage. I hope very much that the board will respond and show itself willing to accept where it has got it wrong, learn how to get it right and take all the steps that are needed to provide assurance to Mr Sarwar, to me and, most important, to patients in Greater Glasgow and Clyde. We will see whether it does that, but we will not lie still for long, waiting to be assured of that.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): I thank the cabinet secretary for her explanation of the communication with the families so far. Can she provide information on the on-going support that is being provided to the families to reassure them that the unit at the Queen Elizabeth university hospital is safe and infection free?

Jeane Freeman: That is being done in a number of ways. Information is now on the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde website. Professor White also secures information in response to questions that individual families might have, in an on-going and iterative process. I think I made the

point that 71 questions arose from the meeting that I had with a number of families, but further questions have arisen subsequently, and Professor White is engaged with them all. There is also a group, which Professor White leads and which has family representatives on it, whose role is to report to the oversight board. In its scrutiny, it is very clear about the quality of that engagement and information.

There is more for us to do in that regard, but we have fully responded to what families have asked us to do to date. However, quite rightly and reasonably, they might require more from us. As I have touched on, there are also individual cases in which very specific work is being carried out.

The Presiding Officer: I am afraid that there is not enough time to hear from any more members, so I must apologise to Brian Whittle, Daniel Johnson, John Mason and Tom Arthur.

Holocaust Memorial Day

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-20603, in the name of Aileen Campbell, on Holocaust memorial day 2020—75th anniversary.

14:56

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government (Aileen Campbell): I thank all members who will support this important Scottish Government motion, which enables the Parliament to have a full debate as we stand together to mark Holocaust memorial day and the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

This is an important anniversary. Of course, it marks the significant passage of time that has elapsed since that moment of liberation. However, it also reminds us that the numbers of those around the world with direct lived experience of that hellish extermination camp are fewer. The opportunity for survivors to bear witness—as they did when the world united yesterday to mark Holocaust memorial day—is crucial, because the message of suffering, pain, trauma and human cruelty must never, ever be forgotten.

The testimonies that were broadcast around the world yesterday from Auschwitz, which have been published in news reports and on social media, powerfully remind us of the human impact of the Holocaust—the lives cut short, the potential unfulfilled, the families ripped and torn apart, and the courage and bravery of those who survived and who seek to ensure that that suffering informs a better future for everyone.

We must also remember the dark void of the untold stories—stories that will never be told and the darkness that we do not know about. As Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel reminded us:

> "to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time".

It is therefore important to remember those human stories of survival and to remember and respect all those who did not survive.

In so many ways, the numbers associated with the Holocaust are unimaginable. Some 17 million people were executed—6 million of them simply because of their Jewish faith. That unspeakable persecution by the Nazis also included gay, disabled, Gypsy and Roma people—and anyone else who was viewed as being different.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Bear with me a moment, please, cabinet secretary. It is not a problem of your making, but I wonder whether we could have your microphone sound turned up a

little, because some members are not hearing you clearly. Perhaps they would let me know if they still cannot hear properly.

Aileen Campbell: In Auschwitz-Birkenau, which was one of six camps built explicitly for the purpose of extermination, 1.1 million people, most of whom were Jewish, lost their lives.

Such massive numbers give us a sense of the scale of the cynical mass murder that was carried out, but they require to be remembered alongside the personal testimonies and stories so that we never remain unconnected to that dark moment of history.

As the years go by, as new anniversaries of the Holocaust are marked and as lived memory of it fades, the work to know, understand and connect to the past becomes all the more vital. In that process, we must ensure that we educate our young people about compassion and respect, so that they can emerge into adulthood as responsible and compassionate individuals who are able to contribute positively to our society.

It is for that reason that the Scottish Government continues to support the work of the Holocaust Educational Trust and its lessons from Auschwitz project, which is an incredibly powerful way for young people to gain an insight into the horrors of the Holocaust and, just as important, to learn about why it happened. The programme has enabled almost 5,000 students and teachers from across Scotland to take part in the project and to visit Auschwitz.

In November last year, I had the privilege of joining the Holocaust Educational Trust on one of its trips. I joined students from around Scotland, including some who attend schools in my constituency. Just last week, I met Carluke high school pupils Nikita Stevenson and Caitlin Woodhead to reflect on the trip, the impact that it has had and the continued relevance of ensuring that the Holocaust is never forgotten.

It is an intense trip that begins with a description of what life was like in Europe and in Poland at that time. Communities were made up of people of different faiths who lived together as neighbours, customers, friends and colleagues. The destruction of that way of life, which was caused by vilifying, othering, stigmatising and blaming social ills on those of Jewish faith or on those who were simply different, was the deliberate build-up to the strategic effort to exterminate a race. Although what went on in the extermination camps should never be forgotten, the context and systematic racism that led to the Holocaust must also be remembered.

When I spoke with Nikita and Caitlin, it was clear that the shared experiences of what we saw at the camp will remain indelibly in our minds for the rest of our lives. The mountains of prisoners' personal items that were on display—spectacles, combs, shaving tools and hair brushes—reminded us of the normal everyday actions and needs of the people who were sent to the camps. Such items are still so familiar to us today. I saw the piles of suitcases of those who were taken by train to Auschwitz, with names and addresses carefully written on them as though they would at some point get them back. I saw the crutches, callipers and medical devices and aids of those who were vulnerable and deemed to be of no use to the Nazi regime.

I saw the shoes—piles and piles of shoes—that were worn by the prisoners, who would step no more through life's journey. Some shoes were beautiful—red, and with heels that suggested times of enjoyment, fun and dancing, and a life wanting to be lived. Painfully, I saw the shoes of the children who, with their tiny feet, had made their first tentative steps in life, but whose lives, ultimately, came to a cruel and fatal end. Then we saw the mountains of hair—pigtails, plaits and curls, all shorn from the heads of the prisoners in an attempt to further dehumanise them and then bundled up like sheep's fleece.

Seeing all that alongside the terrifying scale and efficiency of a camp that was specifically designed to kill more and more people quicker and faster was impactful and overwhelming. For the ambassadors whom I spoke to, it was also life changing. Before the trip, Nikita wanted to study law because it interested her, and Caitlin wanted to be a nurse. Following the trip, Nikita wants to practise human rights law, to defend against human rights abuses and to speak up against intolerance. Caitlin wants to specialise in mental health nursing in order to help people cope with trauma.

Those are just two stories of two young women whose profound experience has led to a determination to never forget the Holocaust and to do all that they can to build a better future for themselves and others. However, there are hundreds of other stories of lives that have been impacted by the trip and of a passion to create a better world.

That is why the trip is so important. It ensures that the story is never forgotten, but it also instructs and ensures that the next generation understand that their actions matter and that their passions, commitment and acts can make a difference. I know that those two inspiring young women from Carluke will go on to have a positive impact on the lives of the most vulnerable, and that they will always be guided by the lessons that they learned at Auschwitz.

However, the sad truth is that the Holocaust did not spell the end of suffering caused by prejudice,

and the lessons of the past have not been globally heeded. Last year marked the 25th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide and the 40th anniversary of the end of genocide in Cambodia. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the start of the atrocities in northern Bosnia. Just 25 years ago, rebel Bosnian-Serb forces carried out an act of genocide that claimed the lives of more than 8,000 Bosniaks, and tortured and raped many more because of their ethnicity.

It seems unthinkable that such atrocities could happen during our lifetime, let alone on a continent that we share. It is a stark reminder of the fragility of our world that—at any time and in any place—peace, progress and tolerance cannot be taken for granted. They need to be worked for, cherished and promoted.

As we reflect on the devastating and terrifying consequences of those genocides, atrocious human rights violations are happening in the world right now. In 2018, an ordinary day of worship was turned into a day of fear that was felt across the world following the attack at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, and again last year, when hundreds of innocent people were massacred in Christchurch, New Zealand, and in Sri Lanka.

We must reflect on the division that we are increasingly seeing in the world today. We must remember that those perpetrators were not born to hate. They were ordinary people with mothers, fathers, siblings and friends who learned to hate and were drawn into a particular ideology that called for the death and suffering of people who they believed were not like them.

Although Scotland is an open and inclusive nation, we are not, unfortunately, immune to hatred or prejudicial attitudes. We must not permit the creep of complacency and we must remain vigilant in calling out discrimination, racism and hatred when we see it—here and globally. The theme of Holocaust memorial day, "Stand together", is so important in that regard because it highlights that we need to work together if we are to build safe, resilient and inclusive communities. We cannot tackle hatred and prejudice alone; we must do so together—united.

Tackling hate crime and prejudice remains a priority for this Government. In June 2017, we published an ambitious programme of work to tackle hate crime and build community cohesion. As part of that, we adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism, which reflects the value that we place on tackling antisemitism and sends a strong message that we believe antisemitism to be entirely unacceptable in Scotland. We also recently consulted on adopting a definition of Islamophobia, and we are considering the responses to that.

There is absolutely no place in Scotland for any form of hatred that makes our communities feel insecure or threatened in their daily lives, and we will continue to work tirelessly to tackle hatred and prejudice in any way that we can.

Although this corner of Scotland might be many hundreds of miles away from Auschwitz, and although the sands of time pass, what must not pass or seem distant is our ability to remember and to never forget. However, we must also remember with a resolve to learn from that past and to act to build a world that is free of hatred and intolerance.

We should be heartened by the stories of courage and bravery of those who chose not to be indifferent but who fought for freedom and liberty, and who chose to save lives and offer hope—people such as Jane Haining, the only Scottish missionary officially recognised as a Holocaust hero and honoured by Yad Vashem as righteous among the nations for saving the lives of Jewish girls. She paid the ultimate price for her bravery in Auschwitz 75 years ago. We must also be inspired by a new generation who are determined to use their learning—found through the work of the Holocaust Educational Trust—to contribute to a better future for everyone, regardless of who they are or where they are from.

I am proud to be in the chamber today. Our collective presence—politicians from all parties—represents a powerful and unified display of the type of country and world that we want to be part of. Respect, compassion, love and kindness should be the hallmarks of our modern world—a world that challenges hate and the practice of othering. We are here to say that we will not forget, that we will always remember—and we do so with a commitment to act relentlessly for a better world.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises that 2020's Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January marked the 75th anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau; remembers everyone affected by the Holocaust, including the execution of 17 million people, six million of whom were Jewish; acknowledges the importance of learning the lessons from the Holocaust and subsequent genocides, including the value of the Holocaust Education Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz Project, which gives students from schools in Scotland the opportunity to visit Auschwitz; notes this year's theme, Stand together, which highlights the importance of building safe, resilient and inclusive communities in order to tackle hatred and prejudice; commends the incredible courage of those who stood up in support of justice, equality and humanity, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and recommits to stand together, united against hate, in order to build a society where hatred and prejudice are not tolerated.

15:08

Ruth Davidson (Edinburgh Central) (Con): I thank the Government for introducing the debate in its time, rather than during members' business.

Every year, we mark Holocaust memorial day and every year, by definition, the holocaust slips further into history. This year marks 75 years since the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp. I defy anyone to have watched the news last night and seen the hundreds of survivors—children then and bent-backed in old age now—gathering beyond the "Arbeit macht frei" gates, possibly for the last time, and not be moved. Their numbers have thinned and their voices grow fewer, but for all the passing of time, it seems to me that there has seldom been a year in my lifetime when the lessons of the Holocaust have felt this fresh, prescient and urgent.

The rise of hate crime, politics of identity, culture wars and out-and-out antisemitism that we see across the world is a reminder that progress is not irreversible and that things do not just get better. Injustice and prejudice must be fought, gains are hard won and ground will never be held if complacency and indifference are allowed to take hold.

Recent anti-Jewish attacks in major European cities and the mainstreaming of antisemitic hate speech at home have left our Jewish population wary and even frightened. A couple of years ago, I spoke at an event for the Board of Deputies of British Jews in London and I asked about the groups of men that were in clusters of four at every corner and entrance to the venue. I was told that they were volunteer security—men who were taken from the ranks of a community who feel the urgent need to protect their places of worship around the clock from attack and debasement, and their congregations from intimidation and threat. Such things are happening now, in our country, to a community still scarred by the events of 75 years ago, when 6 million of the Jewish people were systematically annihilated.

Following the liberation of the death camps at the end of the second world war, a horrified public came together to say, "Never again". Yet "again" happened, whether in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia or Darfur. In every case, the world failed. We turned our faces away, and when we were finally forced to look and accept, we pledged again that that was to be the last time that systematic annihilation on the basis of ethnicity would be allowed to unfold—until the next.

Unlike many in the chamber, I have never been to Auschwitz, but I have been to places of mass murder: Bergen-Belsen, the Račak massacre site in Kosovo, and the United Nations enclave in Srebrenica in Bosnia, where the blue helmets stood aside for Serb forces to sweep in and once again perpetrate genocide on Europe's soil. There is something arresting about each of those places; it is the stillness, where so much indifferent violence and perfunctory murder took place.

I wonder at the coincidence of Holocaust memorial day being so close to Burns night, when the most appropriate observation of human capacity for evil is so perfectly captured by Burns himself:

> "Man's inhumanity to man
> Makes countless thousands mourn!"

Yet, to mourn is not enough. We must resolve to do better.

We have asked too much of those who escaped death at Auschwitz, Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Ravensbruck, Treblinka and a dozen other camps and who, through luck, guile, fate or timing avoided the gas chambers, firing squads, punishment beatings or rampant disease that claimed the lives of so many. Yet, after they walked out of hell, we asked them to relive it.

The Holocaust Educational Trust's work of taking children to the camps and having camp survivors tell their stories again and again in classrooms across the country has been invaluable in teaching generations that are untouched by such horror how hate can degenerate into evil and that Kristalnacht, the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto or cattle trucks rumbling into factories of death are not events in isolation, not the alpha and omega. Rather they are the destination reached by a journey that starts with intolerance, moves to discrimination, traverses hate, ideology, dehumanisation, persecution and then reaches annihilation. All that is required for that journey to be made is for decent people to avert their eyes, stand back, leave it to someone else and be too afraid to challenge, in case those instruments of hate are turned on them. That is how it was in 1930s Europe, and that is how the world has turned ever since.

We have to take responsibility for the protection of our fellow citizens and for the preservation of the culture of openness, opportunity, diversity and freedom that so many fought so hard to secure. Soon, the number of survivors will thin to nothing and those first-hand accounts will cease, but their names will not be lost nor their stories become untold as long as we commit to that task. The Talmud says:

> "If you lift the load with me, I will be able to lift it; and if you will not, I won't lift it."

Tackling those forces of evil—prejudice, hate and persecution—along with the handmaidens of indifference, blindness and cowardice that allow them to flourish, is a load that we have left to the

survivors of Auschwitz for too long, to the Holocaust Educational Trust for too long: to other people, for too long. If we want history to be remembered and the names of those who died and those who were saved to be written, recorded, seen and to count, then it is time for us all to step forward and help lift the load with them. I support the motion.

15:15

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): Scottish Labour fully supports the motion and the cabinet secretary's very powerful speech; and, if I may say, the stunning and brilliant speech by Ruth Davidson. It was one of those speeches that people should read afterwards.

I am proud to stand together with those from other parties in support of the motion, because this year marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. Only 7,000 of the 1.1 million prisoners who passed through its gates were still alive when the concentration camp was liberated. Six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust—a third of the world's Jewish population—and there were other victims too: Roma, ethnic Serbs, Poles and gay people were among those who were murdered. It was a genocide of the highest order.

Although the motion is on the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, it will be appreciated, as Ruth Davidson said, that there were many other extermination and concentration camps, such as Treblinka in Poland, where 800,000 died and Belzec, where 600,000 died. Waiting to be sent to their death, many people starved, died of disease or were worked to death. I applaud the Government for using its debating time for this important debate. It is painful to read and learn about humanity's worst period in history and the evil that humankind is capable of, but it is up to us to mark it in this way.

In Adam Tomkins's members' business debate last year—he, too, gave a brilliant speech then—I mentioned that I had visited Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland on the last day of 2018. When people arrive there, the guide will ask them not to take photographs in certain areas, and in one such area they will see—the cabinet secretary spoke about what she saw—people's personal effects, including shoes and cases. Those are sharp and pointed messages that are not to be photographed, because each shoe and each personal belonging was from an individual person with their own story of how they arrived at that dreadful place.

Accounts from brave survivors who escaped to tell the world their stories are everything to us because, without them, we could not begin to get our heads around the horror of what happened. How it could happen at all is the imperative question for any person who is interested in truly ensuring that it could never happen again. That is why the Holocaust Memorial Trust is a vital organisation. Its purpose is to remind us not only of the six million Jews who were brutally murdered, but of how that could have been allowed to happen in the first place.

We must educate every child about those sad facts—no generation can be left out. We must have robust policies on tackling hatred of and prejudice against any group in society, and we must translate what those things mean in today's world, whether it is demonising Gypsy Travellers or attacking synagogues, churches, temples or mosques. Tackling antisemitism, Islamophobia and other such hatred must be central to the Government's work—I believe that it is. As political leaders, we must stand together and unite against hatred in order to build a better society.

As the cabinet secretary and Ruth Davidson said, there are fewer Holocaust survivors every year and, in the not too distant future, there will be none. The generations that live on will therefore be the ones who carry the responsibility of relaying those survivors' accounts to future generations, so that they are never forgotten. Even that is not enough, though, because the Holocaust must be as strong a feature in our minds in the future, as leaders and politicians, as it is now. Its message cannot fade and cannot be allowed to fade. John Stuart Mill, the British philosopher, said:

> "Let not any one pacify his conscience by the delusion that he can do no harm if he takes no part, and forms no opinion. Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing."

Among the many heroes of the Holocaust was Irena Sendler. She was a Polish social worker who saved 2,500 Jewish babies and children from the Warsaw ghetto and placed them with Polish families. The ghetto had been set up to segregate the city's 380,000 Jews, who were then sent to the death camps. She worked in the Warsaw health department and had permission to enter the ghetto. Irena and a small team of social workers smuggled the children out by hiding them in ambulances, taking them through the sewer pipes or other underground passageways, and wheeling them out on a trolley, or in suitcases or boxes. She noted the names of all the children on cigarette papers and sealed their names in two glass bottles, which she buried in a colleague's garden. After the war, the bottles were dug up and the lists were handed to Jewish representatives. Attempts were made to reunite the children with their families, but most families had, unfortunately, perished in concentration camps.

The Kindertransport was organised shortly before the war to rescue Jewish children living in Germany and other parts of occupied Europe. The United Kingdom took nearly 10,000 children—nowhere near enough—who were placed in British foster homes. One of those children is well known to all and certainly well known to me: the wonderful Alf Dubs. He was a refugee and has done amazing work in the UK on the question of refugees. The British Government supported and publicised that programme.

We know that in times of crisis and war, there are innocent civilians whose lives are threatened. We should always assess our role as a country in providing safe passage for refugees, as we have done and have argued for. Through no fault of their own, they have been caught up in conflict that we may well have made a decision to participate in. Britain and Scotland should play a positive role in today's refugee crisis. We should live up to our responsibilities and create a humane society by doing our part to make the world a better place, if for no other reason than the memory of the Holocaust.

15:21

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green): As others are, I am grateful for the opportunity to mark Holocaust memorial day in Parliament, and that a full afternoon has been allocated to the debate this year to recognise the significance of the anniversary.

The Holocaust was a singular evil—an act of calculated barbarity with which few others, if any, can ever compare. The number of victims is difficult to comprehend—two in every three Jews in Europe were murdered, alongside millions of Slavic people, Roma, disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender—LGBT—people, prisoners of war, communists and other political and religious opponents of the Nazis. More Jews—far more—were killed than there are people in Scotland today. Entire communities were eradicated; people were murdered and all trace of their existence destroyed. Before the second world war, there were 3.5 million Jews in Poland; after the war, there were a few hundred thousand.

The scale of the atrocities is so vast that it makes remembrance harder. The sheer number of deaths carries the danger of depersonalisation—that we remember only the numbers, and not the names, the faces, the people and their stories. As the Holocaust moves out of living memory, we have a duty not to let that happen.

The industrial, military and political capacity of a European superpower was for the first time in history directed to the purpose of genocide—to the annihilation of the Jewish people not as a by-product of conflict, or as a means to some other end, but as the end: It was the objective in and of itself.

But evil like that does not emerge unannounced—it festers and grows. The Nazis were in power for nine years before their "final solution" was agreed to. It was the culmination, in their case, of years of antisemitic laws and systematic oppression by all available levers of the state and, before that, not by decades but by centuries of anti-Jewish hatred. That hatred, which often manifested itself in conspiracy theories, was not destroyed alongside the Nazi regime. From one end of Europe to the other, we see it today—whether it is in Viktor Orbán's Hungary, or in the challenges that are faced by our Jewish community in Scotland and across the UK.

Nazi propaganda was not true or rational, but that did not matter. The Nazis spread lies about Jews being responsible for Germany losing the first world war and about them plotting world domination. The Nazis relished in fake science to justify their claims that certain groups of people were inferior. That the claims were lies did not halt the advance of fascism. Instead, the fascists created their own reality and made many people in their society believe it. They built on the prejudice and intolerance that already existed and turned them into something even more murderous.

Whether it is Rothschild or Soros conspiracies—accusations about control of the media or dual loyalty—that same underlying hatred continues to fester in European society, and 75 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, we have not truly vanquished the ideology that drove it.

In the past few years, it certainly feels like the people who voice hatred, whether it is against Jews, Muslims, Roma or other groups in our society, have become not just more confident, but have regained a level of legitimacy that many people had hoped would never come back.

Major newspapers in this country print articles that describe refugees as "cockroaches" who should be met with gunboats. Last year, *The Ferret* found that an openly fascist group had plans to infiltrate community councils to try to establish a network here in Scotland. Late last year, *The Sun* managed to publish an article—for which it has still not apologised—whose sources included the neo-Nazi website *Aryan Unity*. In Poland, cities and entire provinces have declared themselves to be LGBT-free zones, and the ruling party has sought to present the LGBT community as western European ideology that is alien to Poland and a threat to Polish families. The Prime Minister of Poland—a European leader—is currently engaging in historical revisionism around the Holocaust. Across the Atlantic, in the capital of the defeated Confederacy, hundreds of Neo-Nazis

felt confident enough to march in the open, their identities unobscured, chanting that Jews "will not replace" them.

It is not enough for us—especially those of us who are in public life—simply not to be racist. We need to be actively anti-racist and anti-fascist. We must remember the history of anti-fascism in this country, including events such as the battle of Cable Street in 1936, when the Jewish community in the east end of London, alongside communists, socialists and other anti-fascists, defeated Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists blackshirts.

One of those anti-fascists, Leslie Spoor, was known to a number of people in this Parliament. He went on to be a long-time member of the Scottish Labour Party and close friend of Robin Cook, before going on to found my party, the Scottish Greens. However, again I say that simply remembering anti-fascism is not enough. We must actively continue that struggle, every day.

I was honoured to be invited by the European Jewish Association to join its delegation to Auschwitz this week, and it is a source of deep regret that I was unable to do so. However, I am—as we all are—incredibly grateful for the work of the Holocaust Educational Trust and others who ensure that hundreds of young people across Scotland have that valuable experience.

At Auschwitz, you can witness the infrastructure of evil—the unsettling mix of administrative banality and murderous horror. The stories of Auschwitz—especially those of Scottish victims and survivors; people who later settled here—are ones that we must never stop telling. They are the stories such as that of Jane Haining, who has already been mentioned. She was a Church of Scotland worker who refused instructions to return to the UK, thereby denying herself safe passage, and was murdered at that camp for refusing to abandon the Jewish girls for whom she cared. They are stories such as that of Judith Rosenberg, Scotland's last Auschwitz survivor, who told her story to the BBC again this year. As Jane Haining's story has gradually been uncovered in recent years, I have been pleased to see momentum growing behind proposals for a statue or other fitting memorial to her, to join the cairn in her native Dumfriesshire and the stained-glass windows in Queen's Park parish church in Govanhill. It is our responsibility never to forget, and to never stop telling those stories.

However, it is also fitting to celebrate those who are with us today—the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of survivors who simply would not exist if Nazism had not been defeated. The horror of what the Nazis did cannot be undone—but they did not win. Our Jewish and Roma friends stand testament to that. The very least that we can do for them—and for those who did not survive—is to never stop telling the story, never stop educating those who come after us of the horror and what led to it, and never stop opposing the forces of hatred, wherever they emerge.

The Greens support the motion.

15:28

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): It is my great privilege to speak for the Liberal Democrats in this important debate. Monsters are real. They might wear business suits or military uniforms, but they have walked among us. We see the evidence of their works in the bleaker chapters of human history. This week, we recognise, in the form of Holocaust memorial day, the darkest chapter of all.

We remember the persecution and mechanised slaughter of 17 million people, more than a third of whom were Jewish. Whole communities, huge segments of entire races, and people whom the Nazis found to be deviant, seditious and disabled were rounded up and shipped to camps such as Auschwitz, Treblinka and Belsen to be murdered.

The outrageous regime was made possible only through the total capitulation of thousands of otherwise normal people—among them the handful of decent people who, as Ruth Davidson reminded us, averted their eyes. Of this, the Italian writer and Holocaust survivor, Primo Levi, said:

"Monsters exist, but they are too few in number to be truly dangerous. More dangerous are the common men, the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions."

The Nazis were successful in mass murder because they desensitised and normalised it. They inured every level of government and the military to atrocity with endless layers of bureaucracy that reduced millions of lives to lines in a ledger book or in a transport manifest, and to piles of unclaimed belongings.

The philosopher Hannah Arendt described that as "the banality of evil" when she covered the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961. Sitting in court, across from the little grey man who was the architect of the final solution, Arendt described what she called

"The dilemma between the unspeakable horror of the deeds and the undeniable ludicrousness of the man who perpetrated them."

He was, she said, "terribly and terrifyingly normal". There are photographs of Eichmann at the trial—a gaunt and elderly man in a suit, straining to hear the translation of the case against him. Yet that same man was reported to have said in Argentina before his capture by agents of Mossad and Shin Bet that he would

"Leap into my grave laughing, because the feeling that I have five million human beings on my conscience is for me a source of extraordinary satisfaction."

Monsters are real. It is that realisation, that horrific acts can be committed by humdrum men, that represents the most powerful warning of the Holocaust. We must keep reminding ourselves of that.

As that period of history begins to move out of living memory—as has already been said—it is incumbent on all of us to keep that memory alive and to pass it on to our children and their children to come. To that end, I am proud to be a patron of vision schools Scotland, the award that we heard about in time for reflection. The initiative was devised by the school of education at the University of the West of Scotland. It is doing its best to educate Scottish children around the country.

Research shows how imperative that work is: according to a poll that was recently reported on by BBC News, 1 in 20 UK adults believes that the Holocaust did not happen, and a full eighth of the population believe that it has been exaggerated. I have told Parliament before about an incident last year when I spent some time in hospital. At one point, when the discussion on the ward had moved to the second world war, the man in the bed opposite me volunteered his belief that the Holocaust was all a hoax. In the argument that followed, he revealed that the basis for his position was rooted in some videos that he had seen on YouTube.

Challenging antisemitism and Holocaust denial falls to all of us. We have seen the grim evidence of its revival in the rise of casual antisemitism in the UK and in the two mass shootings in crowded synagogues last year alone. This is not going away: hate against the Jewish people and many of the others who were persecuted by the Nazis still blooms. It advances incrementally and if it goes unchecked it could blossom into atrocity once again. We must do everything that we can to stamp it out.

When we speak about the Holocaust, we speak too readily about the monsters. In the study of its gruesome history, we come to the names of its perpetrators before we come to the names of its victims and survivors. Perhaps that is because the names of those who perished are innumerable and their stories too heartbreaking. However, yesterday, in the coverage of the events at the memorial at Auschwitz, we were able to remedy that, to a degree. We heard the accounts of people including David Marks and Yvonne Engelman, who spoke with such courage of their first-hand witness to the cattle trucks, the marches and the deaths by starvation, firing squad, cold and gas chamber. Their words should be seared into the hearts of every person, and preservation of their memory should be an obligation for all humanity.

The fact that we are here, living among many of the communities that the Holocaust sought to extinguish, is evidence that the Nazis failed and that the human spirit prevailed over evil. I was reminded of that when, on a Parliamentary visit to Strasbourg in 2017, I stopped, with colleagues, at the Synagogue de Paix, which is built on the site of the old Gestapo headquarters of western Europe. Above the front door is a legend written in French and Hebrew. It reads:

"Stronger than the sword is my soul."

Those words are steeped in hope and defiance—qualities that we have heard in the sentiment of this debate, and that we share as we collectively commemorate the legacy of that awful stain on human history.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the open debate. There is no time in hand, so I have to be firm: speeches must be no longer than six minutes. I call Kenneth Gibson, to be followed by Jeremy Balfour.

15:34

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): Thank you, Presiding Officer.

"Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!"

So said Robert Burns, and that was never truer than in the Holocaust.

At Auschwitz-Birkenau, at least 1.1 million people, including tens of thousands of Poles, Soviet prisoners of war and others were murdered. However, 90 per cent of the slain were Jews, killed only because they were Jews. Because a few thousand inmates survived it, more people died there than elsewhere and much of it remains intact, Auschwitz evokes our greatest understanding of the Holocaust and its horrors. Nevertheless, we cannot forget the almost 2 million Jewish people murdered in the extermination centres at Belzec, Chełmno, Maly Trostenets, Sobibor and Treblinka, from which, in total, only 110 prisoners survived the war. Nor can we forget other hundreds of concentration camps, from Belsen to Majdanek, where people died in ghettos of disease, starvation and exhaustion; or killing sites, such as Babi Yar, where entire communities were annihilated, amid great terror, despair and bewilderment. In total, 6 million Jews were murdered.

Sadly, antisemitism remains with us. At last month's general election, here in Scotland, the only European nation never to have imposed laws directly against Jewish people, the Conservatives,

Labour and the Scottish National Party each suspended candidates for antisemitic comments.

Paradoxically, the more time that passes, the greater the risk of future generations perceiving the Holocaust as an abstract and almost mythical concept, dissociated from reality. The almost unimaginable scale and scope of the atrocities contribute to that risk. After all, how could it have happened?

A common misconception is that the Holocaust was perpetrated by a small group of odious political and military fanatics. That could not be further from the truth. Doctors conducted medical experiments, involving surgery, on Jewish children and others without anaesthetic; the legal system helped isolate Jews as a precursor to genocide; railway workers transported them across Europe; and architects designed the death camps. At Auschwitz alone, 6,161 men and 174 women served in the SS garrison. Pre-war Germany, despite its Nazi regime, was seen as one of the most civilised and cultured societies in the world, and yet the Holocaust happened. So when information about it came out, it was not believed by many in the western allied states. The Holocaust happened with, it must be said, the often active participation of many others from a host of nationalities and political traditions across Europe.

Of course, we must not forget the righteous gentiles, those who often paid with their lives to save Jews whom they might not even have known but felt compelled to save because of their common humanity.

Just because the people are watching, that does not mean that genocide cannot and will not happen. From April 1994, the world looked on as atrocities unfolded in Rwanda during a three-month frenzied campaign of genocide. An estimated 800,000 men, women and children of the Tutsi minority were brutally slaughtered by Hutu extremists. United Nations soldiers were there and did nothing.

Barely a year had passed when, in July 1995, the world again watched as Bosniak men and boys were massacred near Srebrenica at the hands of Bosnian Serb forces. Again, UN forces were there, wasting time with bureaucracy, failing to intervene and turning people away from their base to near-certain death. Within 72 hours, 8,732 Muslim men and boys were murdered in Srebrenica alone.

All but a handful of Holocaust survivors who lived to tell their personal experiences have now passed away. It is up to us, not them, to make sure that we understand. Doing so allows us to recognise that antisemitism did not just rear its head again recently; it did not end with the second world war.

In 1946, 42 Jews, including a newborn baby and a woman who was six months pregnant, were brutally murdered during the Kielce pogrom in Poland. Police, civilians and soldiers attacked Jews with clubs and iron bars after an eight-year-old boy who had not come home one night claimed, according to his father, to have been held in a Jewish-owned building. It was nonsense, of course, but a town that had lost all but 200 of its 30,000 pre-war Jewish community believed it. For the Jewish-Polish community, who had just survived the Holocaust and returned home, the continuation of antisemitic violence was a massive blow.

As eastern Europe disappeared behind the iron curtain, from Czechoslovakia to Hungary to Romania, ruling Communist parties purged and executed hundreds of Jewish comrades who had survived the Holocaust. That occurred in parallel in Stalin's Soviet Union, with the ludicrous doctors' plot leading to the arrest and execution of eminent Jewish doctors who supposedly plotted against Stalin. State-sponsored antisemitism intensified to such a degree that it effectively descended into a co-ordinated campaign vilifying Soviet Jews as rootless cosmopolitans, and a plan to deport the 2 million who had not fallen into Nazi hands to Siberia and, for many, to their likely death. Only Stalin's demise before its implementation saved them.

Jews were often called parasites for living in other societies. Now, they are vilified if they support Zionism and Israel—a nation held to higher standards of behaviour than probably any other, despite the intolerant, undemocratic, sectarian and homophobic nature of the societies that surround it. It is the Jew among nations.

That antisemitism is still an issue 75 years on is indicative of problems in our society today; it must be rooted out.

Last year, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights published a poll of Jewish perceptions and experiences of antisemitism in the EU. It found that 75 per cent of British Jews think that antisemitism is a "very big" or "fairly big" problem in the UK, compared to the 48 per cent who thought so in 2012. Shockingly, 84 per cent said that antisemitism was present in political life—the highest figure in Europe.

Sticking our heads in the sand is not an option, when the reality is that not only can antisemitism rise again; it has done so. Awareness does not make it stop, and action is needed.

I conclude by asking everyone who remembers the millions who died to also remember those who survived the Holocaust and other genocides. Many

spent the rest of their lives with the trauma of being degraded, injured and deprived of their loved ones and homes. From Nobel prize winner and Auschwitz survivor, Primo Levi, to Richard Glazar, survivor of the Treblinka prisoners revolt, many subsequently took their own lives, often decades later.

The Holocaust must never be allowed to happen again and must never be forgotten.

15:40

Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Con): I am honoured to take part in this debate.

We have heard the number of people who were murdered during the Holocaust from the cabinet secretary and others. We have heard testimonials in stories in our newspapers and on our televisions over the past few days. The average length of time that a person who went to Auschwitz lived for was three months.

Last Tuesday, I had the honour to go to Auschwitz with the European Jewish Association to visit and to remember. I had been to Auschwitz before, but this visit was even harsher and more difficult, as I stood there with a majority of people who were Jewish, and knew that if I had been standing with them 75 years ago, most of them would have died: rabbis, mothers, children and anybody whom the Nazis decided had to be killed, whether because they came from different ethnic backgrounds or had disabilities.

As one speaker has already commented, the numbers involved sometimes make it difficult to see the full impact of what happened in those places. As it was for the cabinet secretary, it was the number of shoes, the suitcases, the hair, the prayer mats and the young children's toys that were never going to be used again that left me with the most difficult memory.

I am grateful to the Government for having this debate this afternoon. It is right.

On the day after we visited Auschwitz, we heard different talks from Jewish leaders and rabbis from across western Europe. The message that they wanted me and others to take home to our countries was that we have to remember and keep using the words, "This must never happen again," but beyond that, we have to root out antisemitism in our culture and our countries, whether that be on social media or in conversations with people we come across, or by educating those who will come after us. All of that is our responsibility. We cannot turn our backs and leave it to someone else.

It is clear that across our world, our continent and even, sadly, our nation, antisemitism is on the rise. As Ruth Davidson commented, there are cameras and security guards in most synagogues across our country because of a fear of what might happen. We need to not only challenge antisemitism but root it out and say that it is unacceptable in 21st century Scotland.

One of the psalms that was read in Auschwitz on a daily basis, and which has been reflected on by Jewish scholars, is psalm 102. I would like to finish by quoting the end of it.

It refers to Yahweh, the God of the Jews, and says:

"But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

The children of your servants will live in your presence; their descendants will be established before you."

Amen.

15:45

Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP): I am grateful and humbled to participate in the debate, particularly after the outstanding contributions from members across the chamber.

One theme that has emerged is the incomprehensibility of the scale of the crime that was committed against 6 million Jewish human beings. The population of Scotland is 5.4 million. The scale is beyond what any individual can possibly compute into any meaningful experience; it is too much.

However, a sense of empathy and understanding can emerge in considering individual accounts. I will take one of those, which is very small but, for me, is profound. Viktor Frankl, in his memoir of the Holocaust, "Man's Search for Meaning", describes the experience of being admitted to a camp, of being forced to undress and, prior to having his hair shaved, along with other prisoners, of being ordered to hand over any medals or jewellery that he had in his possession. When a new inmate asked another inmate, who was supervising, whether he might keep his medal, the supervising inmate laughed, because clearly the new inmate had not realised where he had arrived.

Mr Frankl had to give over his wedding ring. I thought about that. Imagine being rounded up, taken, transported, separated from your partner—your loved one—and forced to hand over your wedding ring, never to see it again. That complete dehumanisation is amplified because, having taken your clothes, having taken your jewellery, they then take your hair, and then they take your name and replace it with a number.

Those kinds of small stories bring to life the horror of what occurred in Europe between 1939 and 1945. Another very simple example is the task

that was given to the Sonderkommando—the Jewish prisoners charged with working in the crematoria—and the elaborate ruse and deception that they had to participate in. Before entering the gas chamber, the prisoners were instructed to tie their shoelaces together, so that their shoes could be retrieved easily once the prisoners had had their shower. Imagine what it must have been like to participate in that behaviour, and give that false reassurance—the sheer inhumanity of it. I find that those very small accounts and stories can often be far more profound and more powerful than attempting the seemingly impossible task of trying to contemplate the sheer scale of the crime that was perpetrated against the Jewish people, Gypsies, Roma, the LGBT community, political dissidents, and many others.

The theme of Holocaust memorial day 2020 is "stand together". However, another theme is emerging—that of a renewed urgency among survivors of the Holocaust to communicate its lessons. It is not enough to acknowledge, to reflect, and to remember. We must learn, in the deepest and most profound sense of the word.

That learning cannot be limited to understanding the Holocaust as an historical event. It has to be more than demonstrating an understanding of the causes of the Holocaust. The learning required needs to be like an inoculation, or of the visceral or reflexive kind that we develop as children in response to danger. We also need an awareness, an alertness, and a sensitivity to the trends and behaviours that are analogous to those that preceded the Holocaust.

That has to start with each of us as individuals: in our own thoughts, in our own hearts and in how we treat each other.

In this Parliament we have our disagreements and disputes, but we stand together. We stand united. We must always reaffirm those values and our fundamental shared humanity. We must cultivate a passion to understand and to learn from each other, to cherish each relationship that we have, to understand and respect our differences and to celebrate what unites us in our common humanity: our ability to reason and our capacity to love each other.

15:51

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab): Plato said that those who tell the stories rule society. That is why this day, when we ensure that the story of genocide—humanity's capacity to descend into the evil of systematic mass murder—is ever told and never forgotten, is so important.

This is a special Holocaust memorial day, because it was exactly 75 years ago that Auschwitz, the camp that has come to symbolise the Holocaust above all others, was liberated. Over 1 million people had died at Auschwitz and nearby Birkenau, along with many millions more throughout Nazi-occupied Europe. Six million of them were Jews, but they also included Roma, LGBT people, disabled people and anti-fascists of every stripe.

The themes of Holocaust memorial day 2020 are "stand together" and "never again". Yet the truth is that the 75 years since the Holocaust have been marked by our failure to live up to that promise of "never again". Forty-five years ago, the Khmer Rouge began the mass murder of over 1 million people—mostly their own; 26 years ago, 1 million Tutsis were slaughtered by their Hutu neighbours in a matter of weeks in Rwanda; and, 25 years ago, genocide stalked Europe again in Srebrenica, in Bosnia. Since the Holocaust, we have not stood together against genocide.

Hannah Arendt, who, as Alex Cole-Hamilton told us, coined the phrase "the banality of evil", also said:

"the sad truth is that most evil is done by those who never make up their minds to be good or evil".

Too often, in living memory, we have made up our minds too late. As Kenny Gibson told us, in both Rwanda and Srebrenica, the United Nations forces that we created in the aftermath of world war two to stop mass murder prevailing were actually there, on the ground. In Rwanda, they were ordered to stand by and watch the murder of the Tutsis and were then withdrawn altogether, some of them burning their blue berets on the airport tarmac in shame. In Srebrenica, Dutch UN soldiers did not just stand by: they helped Bosnian Serb forces to separate Muslim men from their wives and mothers, and 8,000 of those men were taken away and murdered. Then the soldiers partied when they were allowed to leave.

One survivor of the Rwandan genocide said:

"It will take the love of the entire world to heal my homeland. And that's as it should be, for what happened in Rwanda happened to us all—humanity was wounded by the genocide".

Like Ruth Davidson, I have never been to Auschwitz, but I have seen Tuol Sleng in Phnomh Penh, where thousands were tortured and murdered. I was in Rwanda weeks after the genocide there, when the evil that was done still lingered in that strange and empty country. I have been to Srebrenica, to the factory where Bosniaks sought refuge with the UN and to the cemetery across the road, where over 7,000 of them are buried after that refuge was refused. To be in those places is to know that all humanity is wounded and that we cannot escape our complicity. Those stories are our stories, too.

Yesterday, I was honoured, with Daniel Johnson, to host Scotland's national Holocaust memorial day event here, with the First Minister speaking for us all. We heard from Janine Webber, a Holocaust survivor, and Hasan Hasanović, who survived the death march from Srebrenica but lost his father and twin brother. The burden of bearing witness that we ask of such people is a heavy one. They must remember so that we cannot forget. They must relive their pain so that we cannot plead ignorance. They are condemned to tell and retell their story to make us understand our part in it.

What is the beginning of that story? It is not the gas chambers, the machete gangs of Kigali or the blood-soaked meadows of Srebrenica. For German Jews, Rwandan Tutsis and Bosnian Muslims, it began with their neighbours, with their workmates, with those they thought were friends and even with their in-laws. It began with the language of us and them.

Their story did not end with the genocide, for what followed was denial such as that of the current mayor of Srebrenica, who claims that the genocide never happened and that the 7,000 graves in his town are faked, or that of the Austrian author and Srebrenica genocide denier who was shamefully awarded the Nobel prize just last month.

We must tell and retell the true stories of the Holocaust and other genocides so that the truth prevails, and we must call out the language of hate, division and denial in our own communities, our own parties and even our own families, if need be. Only thus do we choose to be good, not evil. Only thus do we earn the right to say that we "stand together". Only thus do we earn the right to say "never again."

15:57

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): I pay tribute, as others have done, to a remarkable woman who died in Auschwitz. Jane Haining, from the village of Dunscore in Dumfriesshire, died because she protected and loved the Jewish children in her care at the Church of Scotland missionary school in Budapest, where she was matron. I thank the cabinet secretary for praising Jane in her speech.

Reading her biography, "Jane Haining: A Life of Love and Courage", by Jane Miller, which informed an excellent feature by Neil Mackay in the *Sunday Herald* this weekend, it is clear that Jane was that rare thing: a truly selfless person. A farmer's daughter, born in 1909, by the time she was five she had lost her mother. However, she excelled at school, won a bursary to Dumfries academy and became dux. After working in Coats mill in Paisley, she decided to devote her life to others, and that path took her to Hungary, where she became a surrogate mother to the Christian and Jewish girls in her care, who were often poor and orphaned. As others have said, when war broke out, Jane had the opportunity to return to the safety of Scotland but she refused, saying,

"If these children needed me in days of sunshine, how much more do they need me in days of darkness?"

Soon, she was taking in refugee children from occupied countries. When Budapest fell under Nazi control, in 1944, Jane was arrested by the Gestapo and accused of consorting with Jews. One of her so-called crimes was being seen to weep when her girls were forced to sew yellow stars on their uniforms.

She arrived at Auschwitz on 15 May 1944, and documents show that, on 17 July, she was admitted to Birkenau, the extermination part of the vast complex. One million people died in Birkenau, 900,000 of them Jewish. In the summer of 1944, in just eight weeks, 424,000 people were transported to Auschwitz from Hungary, and that is in addition to the 80,000 people who were shot dead on the banks of the Danube that year and the 70,000 who starved or were murdered in the Budapest ghetto.

The near elimination of European Jewry was poignantly illustrated to the parishioners of Jane's village church in Dunscore when, in 2016, they travelled to Budapest to pay their respects and visit the synagogue where Jane's girls would have worshipped. The synagogue was built to seat 3,500; now it has around 200 worshippers at most on Fridays.

Jane's sacrifice shows that non-Jews were also victims of the Nazis. As Aileen Campbell reminded us, Roma, disabled people, mentally ill people and gay people perished in the camps along with political opponents, particularly communists.

However, we must never forget that the Holocaust, which is also known as the Shoah, was the genocide of two thirds of Europe's Jews—6 million people. The Shoah was a crime against Jewish people and the culmination of centuries of antisemitism in Europe. There have been other genocides, and it is absolutely correct that we remember them and learn lessons, but world war two's Holocaust was exceptional in its scale and its approach. It was pre-meditated and meticulously planned by a modern state. It was mechanised mass murder in cold blood, deploying technology that Germany had perfected. Mary Miller notes in her book on Jane Haining that, in the month in which Jane died, the commandant in charge of the crematorium at Auschwitz ordered sophisticated sieving machinery so that larger pieces of bone could be separated from the

cinders of human beings that were being dumped in nearby ponds.

The Shoah was not an outbreak of uncontrolled, frenzied violence such as we see in conflict zones across the world when society is brutalised and the rule of law collapses. The concentration camps were planned, built and managed by detached bureaucrats. The entire apparatus of the state, with its courts and legal processes, was designed to support the death factories.

Holocaust memorial day falls on the anniversary of the red army's liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, which dwarfed the other death camps in scale. In fleeing the camp, the Nazis left evidence of their crimes, and, because Auschwitz was a forced labour camp, there were many surviving eye witnesses.

Our understandable focus on Auschwitz on this 75th anniversary must not be allowed to obscure the historical fact that the Holocaust stretched far beyond that vast extermination complex. It was a widespread programme of murder right across occupied Europe. In the Netherlands, France, Greece, Hungary, Norway, Poland and Germany, Jewish men, women and children were rounded up in plain sight and forced into cattle trucks that transported them east. The railway network itself was designed around the extermination programme.

As Pauline McNeill said, there were other death camps. Some 900,000 died at Treblinka, 500,000 at Belzec and a quarter of a million at Sobibór—and there were other camps. The first stage of the systematic killing of Jewish people was carried out by the Einsatzgruppen—the mobile killing units in the east, who gassed people in the backs of lorries.

As others have said, all those atrocities were witnessed by good men who did nothing. However, brave people, including Jane Haining, did not stand aside but instead stood up for others and paid the ultimate price. As members said, Jane is honoured in Israel as righteous among the nations. She has a memorial in Dunscore church, in her home village. I agree that the time has come for us to pay her a lot more attention in Scotland. The time has come for some sort of national memorial.

We are told that the Holocaust reminds us of the depths to which human beings can sink. The selflessness of Jane Haining and others reminds us that there is good in this world and that there are human beings who rose up against evil. That is something that we must never forget.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): I remind members that time is tight in the debate.

16:03

Bill Bowman (North East Scotland) (Con): I feel privileged to speak in this debate, in a chamber in which the mood is serious and rightly so.

On this Holocaust memorial day and the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camps, it is as important as ever that we remember the Holocaust and that we never forget one of history's darkest moments. This day also coincides with the 25th anniversary of the genocide at Srebrenica, in Bosnia. On Holocaust memorial day, we remember the horror of 6 million Jews murdered by the Nazis. However, it is important to remember the other genocides, including those in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur, which have been mentioned and which are also commemorated on this day.

My speech may mention what others have already said, but this is a topic on which repetition and reinforcement are necessary. Holocaust memorial day has been commemorated since 2000 and was instituted after 46 of the world's Governments signed the Stockholm declaration. The seven points of the declaration commit its signatories to

"remember the victims who perished, respect the survivors still with us, and reaffirm humanity's common aspiration for mutual understanding and justice."

Holocaust memorial day coincides with the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Yesterday marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and may be the last commemoration that will be attended by Holocaust survivors. The memory of one of the most horrific events fades with the passing of those who endured it; however, it is more important than ever to teach its lessons, because antisemitism and the proliferation of extremist views are re-emergent. In a recent poll, more than 80 per cent of European Jews admitted to feeling unsafe. A new strain of antisemitic opinion is growing, and views that would recently have been regarded as abhorrent are now met with a resigned shrug in many cases.

A recent poll of more than 2,000 people, which was carried out by Opinion Matters for the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, laid bare the levels of ignorance about the scale of the Holocaust that exist among British adults. It has been mentioned that one in 20 did not believe that the Holocaust took place, that one in 12 believed that its scale has been exaggerated and that one in five believed that only 2 million Jews were murdered. That equates to 5 per cent of UK adults not believing that the Holocaust actually happened. It is therefore extremely important that the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government are providing £1 million of funding for the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation.

That will support the consolidation, restoration and long-term maintenance of the Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps. The donation will help to support the site's preservation, so that we can never forget the horror of the Holocaust, and to educate future generations, so that it will not be repeated.

I have been fortunate enough to visit Auschwitz, in Poland, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, in Berlin, and Yad Vashem, in Israel. They are all powerful memories for me and powerful memorials to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Yad Vashem is dedicated to preserving the memory of the dead, honouring the Jews who fought against their Nazi oppressors and researching the Holocaust and genocide with the aim of avoiding such events in the future. It is encouraging that, in 2015, the UK Government committed £50 million to a national Holocaust memorial and learning centre, with a further £25 million committed last year contingent on match funding and other conditions. It will allow us to educate people about, and remember, the horrors that have been committed in the past, to ensure that they never happen again.

As I have mentioned, it is important to remember, as well as the Holocaust, the atrocities that have been committed elsewhere, in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. In Darfur, between 200,000 and 400,000 civilians have been killed in the civil war in western Sudan, and up to 2.6 million people are still displaced.

The Nazis murdered 6 million Jewish men, women and children. We must continue to educate, commemorate and remember the events to ensure that it does not happen again. Last year, more than 11,000 commemorative events took place across the UK as part of Holocaust memorial day.

There are also permanent memorials across the UK to Holocaust victims. One such memorial is in Broughty Ferry, in the region that I represent. Two pupils from Grove academy visited Auschwitz and, upon their return, met representatives from Dundee City Council to discuss the creation of a memorial. It is located in Windmill gardens in Broughty Ferry, and the memorial reads:

> "To the six million Jews and the other victims murdered in the Nazi death camps and to all who have experienced the horrors of genocide and the destruction caused by prejudice and discrimination. We Will Remember."

The plaque also features a quote from Anne Frank:

> "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

That is a voice from the past that still speaks clearly today. We must stand together.

16:09

Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP): Auschwitz-Birkenau was the largest Nazi death camp. Between August 1941 and the liberation of the camps, 1.3 million were held there. Of that number, 1.1 million died. The horrors that took place there make Auschwitz synonymous with the Holocaust and the Nazis' so-called "final solution".

The 1.1 million people who died at Auschwitz included 960,000 Jews, 74,000 non-Jewish Poles, 21,000 Roma people, 15,000 Slavic prisoners of war and up to 15,000 other Europeans. The extermination camps there housed the notorious Nazi-devised gas chambers. On arrival at Auschwitz, the vast majority of Jews were immediately sent to the gas chambers if they did not look fit or able to do forced labour. It was done with a flick of the finger—left to the gas chambers or right to the work camps. Those arriving had no idea how sinister that small hand movement was and what it would mean for their lives. Only the next day would they find out that their family members, friends and loved ones who had been sent to the left were now in the smoke rising out of the chimneys in the distance. Survivors and psychologists Dr Viktor Frankl and Dr Edith Eger spoke of having the same experience of learning the incomprehensible fate of their friends and loved ones. Of the 960,000 Jews killed at Auschwitz, 865,000 were killed on arrival, as a direct result of that left-pointing finger.

Stories from survivors detail the torture, starvation, disease and apathy that followed arrival. Once the shock had sunk in, people battled with the realisation that there would be no reprieve from the hardships that they would have to endure. Stripped of their belongings and names, shaved bare and beaten cruelly, those people had to comprehend the incomprehensible: that, for most of them, there would be no way out.

That description is inadequate to depict the cruel reality endured by those who went through the Holocaust. Some 6 million Jews were murdered through evil, underpinned by an ideology of cold racism—a baseless hatred. For us, it is hard to comprehend how it could have happened. How could such a vile emotion and ideology not only arise but gain authority in any place or nation? It is perhaps not constructive to dwell on that and have our thoughts lie too long in the depths of such evil and darkness.

However, what can be said—and what should be acknowledged—is the well-known saying that evil can triumph only if good men do nothing. We cannot be passive. Holocaust memorial day makes it clear that the world is not immune from such horrors. As we mark this day, there is an onus on us to feel that with conviction and on all people to be aware of such dangers. By guarding

our hearts and keeping them in the right place, we will not let hatred or lack of forgiveness win. There may yet be a point in our lives when we have to decide—perhaps at great cost—to do what is right and good. We must remain true to our humanity by having the courage to speak out and make honourable decisions.

After the Holocaust, the world said, "Never again." We might think that surely the question of deciding—at great cost, whether social or material—to do the right thing, to avoid experiencing a repeat, is not relevant to our own country or to us. However, we have seen genocide—a word that was created to explain the horror of the attempted extermination of the Jews in the second world war—happen repeatedly, from Rwanda to Burundi, and from Srebrenica to South Sudan. We also hear news of the on-going plight of the Rohingya people in Myanmar. How do we form a response to that, when faced with conflicts that seem intractable and hatred that is senseless?

It is perhaps best to draw lessons from those who have survived. Doctor and psychiatrist Dr Viktor Frankl wrote, in nine days, "Man's Search for Meaning", which was published in 1946. A survivor of Auschwitz, he dedicated his life after liberation to helping others to find meaning in their own lives. Incredibly, he also used his experience as a basis for therapy. In his book, he wrote:

"The experiences of camp life show that man does have a choice of action. There were enough examples, often of a heroic nature, which proved that apathy could be overcome, irritability suppressed. Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress.

We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

The testimony of Viktor Frankl and many others draws our attention to the best of humanity. Even in dire situations, the best of humanity—hope and love—perseveres. Against the greatest darkness, light cannot be overcome, cloaked or concealed. Even a small flicker of light is much stronger than the darkness around it; hope and love persevere and, ultimately, win. Today, we stand in solidarity with survivors, and for those who lost their lives.

16:15

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): There are moments in this Parliament that reflect some of the worst of our politics, but this debate reflects the best of our politics and, more important, the best of our collective humanity. The speeches from members from different sides of the chamber show that we should never forget that there is so much more that unites us and on which we can find common cause than that which divides us.

When I listened to the speeches from Ruth Davidson and Iain Gray in particular, I thought for a moment about what it would be like if my family, or my child, had gone through such absolute horror, whether in Auschwitz, Srebrenica, Rwanda or anywhere else where there is tyranny and injustice.

On Holocaust memorial day, or when we commemorate other tragedies across the world, we often say, "Never forget," and, "Never again". However, the reality is that we do forget and that it does happen again. We forget that the politics of hatred are still alive and well and kicking, here in the UK and across the world—indeed, in some places, they are on the rise. We forget that we still create the us-versus-them politics and society that treat others as though they are different. That difference is used to allow prejudice and hatred against communities and the othering of whole communities. We forget, which leads to mass deportations, torture, blood baths and murder. We forget, which leads to injustice that is based purely on someone's nationality, their faith, the colour of their skin, their sexuality or their gender. We do forget, and it does happen again.

Seventy-five years after the Holocaust, we must send a message of solidarity to all members of our Jewish community here in Scotland, across the UK and across the world. Indeed, we must send that message to all communities that lost loved ones or ancestors in that war. However, we cannot be complacent, thinking that the fight against antisemitism has been won or that what happened then could never happen again.

We still have people from communities in our own country who fear getting on public transport to go to work or who fear being abused as they take their child to school in the morning. There are people in our society who have been racially abused. At home and abroad, places of worship—whether synagogues, mosques, gurdwaras, mandirs or churches—which are supposed to be the symbols of peace, unity and togetherness, have been attacked. Such acts promote hatred and prejudice. That is why I welcome the Government's announcement this week on the safety and security at places of worship fund, which is long overdue. I am sure that we wish that we did not have to have such a fund, but we need it to ensure that everyone feels safe as they visit their places of worship and go about their everyday lives.

We say, "Never again". Last year, I went to Bosnia, and I know that many members have been to Srebrenica through the work of Remembering Srebrenica. That genocide took

place just 25 years ago. Let us not forget that, in 1984, Sarajevo hosted the Olympic games. The eyes of the world were on the games, which were seen as a symbol of diversity, openness and an inclusive society. Only eight years later, divisions based on faith and identity led to a genocide in which 160,000 people lost their lives over a four-year period.

We say, “Never again”, but it happens again. My fear is that the world in which my children will grow up will be even more divided and hate filled than the one in which I grew up.

I was not alive when the Holocaust took place and I probably was not politically conscious when the Srebrenica tragedy and the Bosnian genocide took place, so in my adult life I have not lived through what a genocide feels like. However, we cannot be complacent, thinking that something similar will not happen again any time soon, and we must redouble our efforts to take on prejudice and hatred.

In practice, that means that silence is not an option. We should not pick and choose condemnation or solidarity based on the identity or politics of the perceived perpetrator or victim. We should call out hatred, wherever it exists—no matter the political party it comes from, even if it is our own; no matter which institution it comes from, even if we want to defend it; and no matter which group in society it comes from. It is only when we recognise together that it is not for individual communities to take on the fight against prejudice or hatred alone and that it is a fight for all of us that we make sure that we challenge antisemitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, bigotry, sexism and every other prejudice.

I say a special thank you to the Holocaust Educational Trust and all the people who are involved in making sure that we never forget the tragedies of the past and that we keep the stories of the Holocaust survivors alive. Those survivors will eventually lose their lives; we must ensure that the lessons that they teach never die.

16:22

Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP): It is a great privilege to speak in this afternoon’s debate on Holocaust memorial day. It is a day on which we commemorate both the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp and those who suffered and died at the hands of the Nazis during the second world war. I, too, note that this is also the 25th anniversary of the start of the Bosnian genocide.

The atrocities of the Holocaust and of other genocides around the world must never be forgotten. Holocaust memorial day is a vivid reminder that inhumanity, violence and hatred must be challenged, otherwise they will be repeated. We must remember the suffering and the loss of life to ensure that no such horror ever happens again. We can do that only by robustly tackling prejudice and hatred in our society and beyond.

I am proud that the Scottish Government is committed to tackling all discrimination, as the cabinet secretary outlined. In Scotland, we have a reputation for fostering and building a multifaith, multicultural and inclusive society, which is something that we should be very proud of.

However, it is clear that we have more to do. It is highly important that we build mutual trust, respect and understanding of other cultures, as well as ensure the eradication of prejudice, hatred, intolerance and discrimination. People in Scotland must be supported to maintain their culture and religion without fear of intolerance.

Like Anas Sarwar, I welcome the new security at places of worship fund, which the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice launched yesterday.

I will focus on the Government’s on-going commitment to providing opportunities for Scotland’s children and young people to learn about the atrocities of the Holocaust and how that has impacted on young people in my constituency.

Holocaust education sits in international and citizenship education and is a key part of curriculum for excellence. It gives our young people the opportunity to learn about the atrocities of the past and an understanding of why they must never happen again. For more than a decade, the Scottish Government has supported the Holocaust Educational Trust to organise two sets of trips a year from Scotland to the lessons from Auschwitz project, and I am pleased that the funding for that will continue in 2020-21.

High schools across my Coatbridge and Chryston constituency have integrated Holocaust education into their curriculum and have engaged students in educational activities, including art projects, presentations and listening to podcasts from Holocaust survivors.

This year, two pupils from St Ambrose high school and St Andrew’s high school in my constituency participated in the project. They reported that the trip brought valuable insights and reflections on racism and intolerance. They said that, having visited the camp, they were able share the experience with their peers when they returned to their schools. The visit fuelled discussion in the classroom, and all pupils were given a chance to participate and ask questions. I am sure that we can all agree that that is an

excellent way for our young people to find out, first hand, what took place at Auschwitz.

Auschwitz is certainly a tough place to visit. Like other members, I have not visited it, but it is important that we remember what took place there and that our young people learn from the past so that it is never, ever, repeated.

St Ambrose high school also took part in a minute of silence to show respect to the victims of the Holocaust and to all victims of genocide around the world. St. Andrew's high school created a digital presentation that was displayed in a social area for a month, giving Holocaust education great support.

This week, pupils from Chryston high school participated in a commemorative service that took place outside the civic centre in Motherwell. The highlight was a symbolic signing of the Stockholm declaration, which commits signatories to remembering the 6 million Jewish victims of the Nazi regime in Germany, and the millions of other victims from around the world. Signing the declaration means making a pledge to help educate people about the very real impact of such harrowing events and to try to prevent future genocides. In that way, the horrors of the Holocaust are never forgotten and we promote understanding among young people about the importance of commemorating Holocaust remembrance day.

The headteacher of Coatbridge high school took time out of her busy day today to email me to say that Holocaust memorial day is the main focus of their humanities department and is used to produce a range of activities to promote a safer and better future.

In Scotland, we are committed to building a safe, resilient and inclusive community by tackling prejudice and hatred. We should never underestimate those who stand up to support justice, equality and human rights. It remains crucial that we learn from the past and work together to ensure that all forms of genocide can never happen again.

I was invited to Chryston high school's Holocaust event last year. I was humbled to meet survivor Janine Webber, who has been talked about already in the debate. She told her and her family's extraordinary and hugely emotional life story of terror and persecution by the Nazis in her home in Poland. She spoke about being hunted and about the loss of people of importance to her during those years. The room fell totally silent as she spoke. Amazingly, her strength, kindness and spirit were all still there—they had not broken her humanity. She now travels the UK to remind us of what can happen when othering is allowed. Her message was abundantly clear: always treat one another with respect and dignity, regardless of race or religion, and never again allow intolerance to bring such shame on humanity. She is indeed a true human rights defender.

16:27

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I wish that I was not here to give this speech today on the inhumanity of humanity. I speak in the hope that we can all ensure that history does not repeat itself.

I would like to recall some events that might help us to remember. In 1983, I joined my regiment in Germany. I was 22 years old, full of enthusiasm and purpose, and was following a well-trodden route. However, those that did so in 1944-45 might have gone to the same area, but they did so in very different circumstances. The war was coming to an end and the full horror and barbarity of the genocide were only just coming to light.

My base was close to Bergen-Belsen—originally a Soviet prisoner of war camp—which will be my focus today. In 1943, parts of the camp were taken over by the SS to be a holding and exchange camp housing Jewish inmates who could be traded for Germans who were being held outside Germany. The conditions, although harsh, were not as bad as those of other camps, such as Auschwitz or Buchenwald, simply because the Jewish inmates were viewed as tradeable assets.

By the end of 1944 control of the camp was taken over by the commandant of Auschwitz, and the size of the camp dramatically increased to 60,000 people. Many Poles and women were sent there, including Anne Frank, who was to die there in February or March 1945. There were no gas chambers at Belsen: death occurred by bullet, disease, starvation or—as a last resort—transportation to the gas chambers at Auschwitz.

Suffering was acute and it was estimated that more than 50,000 people were killed in the camp during the Nazi tyranny. In 1945, as the allies neared Bergen-Belsen, orders were given that all inmates were to be executed. Thankfully, that was ignored and, on April 15 1945, the camp was handed over voluntarily to the allies. However, that was no humanitarian gesture; it was a gesture that was driven by the wish of the Nazis to prevent the spread of a typhus epidemic to the local population.

When the British troops moved down the mile-long road to the camp, they passed decaying corpses. When they got to the camp, they were ill prepared for what met them. Brigadier Glyn Hughes said:

"The conditions in the camp were really indescribable ... there were various ... piles of corpses lying all over the

camp, some in between the huts. The compounds themselves had bodies lying about in them. The gutters were full and within the huts there were uncountable numbers of bodies, some even in the same bunks as the living."

Chaplain Hardman described prisoners dying where they stood, and prisoners' clothes being so full of lice that they appeared to move of their own accord. While the handover was taking place, murder was still going on: unobserved, Hungarian guards who had replaced the SS were shooting inmates. British troops tried to instil some semblance of order. Camp guards were ordered to bury corpses and the local Wehrmacht barracks were converted into hospital wards.

Some 29,000 prisoners moved through those wards during April and May 1945 alone. Not all the guards were helpful and many still viewed the task of caring for those whom they had tortured as being below them. Sadly, the kindness of the liberators also contributed to the death of some inmates, with the rations that they freely handed out proving to be too rich for the starving inmates.

The main buildings in the camp were so contaminated by disease and lice that all of them were burned, which removed the physical evidence of suffering, but not before evidence was assembled to try the perpetrators. The subsequent trial resulted in the execution of 16 people, including the commandant, the head female guard and the doctor, who had carried out hideous experiments on inmates.

Presiding Officer, you may well ask why I have picked this story to recount today. I do so because in 1983, 37 years ago, I deliberately traced the route that the British forces took as they moved into the camp. I did so in order to understand fully the horrors that had occurred there. On my way to the camp, I went through the very woods that in 1945 were littered with corpses. The map at the entrance of the camp shows the layout of the camp as it was and the location of the mass graves, which can clearly be seen as mounds that cover the corpses. Now, the only buildings on the site are the museum and the document centre, but there is also a stone memorial.

The camp's site might not look as it was in 1945 and it might be quiet, but it still felt cold, ominous and evil—and it was. During my entire visit, I never heard a bird sing; it was as though all life had been sucked from the earth and sky. I will never forget what I saw. If we are to prevent what happened there happening again in the future, it is vital that we never forget how inhuman humans can be. We must always be vigilant. We must stand together, for often those who seem to be most human can be the most inhuman.

16:33

Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP): It is, indeed, a privilege to have been called to speak in this most impressive debate. I am proud that our Scottish Parliament is marking the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in this way. We have heard many members rightly offering their recollections of visits to the Nazi death camps; I will record my own recollections of such a visit.

I was 21 years old when I visited Auschwitz-Birkenau. I had been studying in Bologna at Johns Hopkins University's school of advanced international studies and took up the opportunity of a summer-school exchange at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Part of the programme there involved a visit to Auschwitz. Some of my fellow students declined to go because they felt that it would be too upsetting, but I considered it my duty to go and to bear witness.

It was not just the hugely cynical message at the camp's entrance gate—"Arbeit Macht Frei"—that saddened me and caught at my soul so, nor was it the mountain of shoes, or the countless photographs of young twins that adorned an entire wall, with their faces full of hope because they had yet to meet the butcher, Mengele. What broke my heart was standing at the end of the rail track in Birkenau as a young European woman in the early 1980s, trying to get my head around how it could be that only 40 short years previously people could get on a train in Paris, Brussels or any other modern civilised European city and end up in hell.

That experience has stayed with me all my life and has informed my approach to my fellow man and my choice of the law as a career, to ensure that people's rights are respected. It has also informed the objectives of my political life. For, as has been said by Scotland's First Minister and others, the industrial killing machine that Germany became did not start at the end of that train track in Birkenau. It started with the othering of the Jews, with the incremental denuding of Jews of their rights, with the normalisation of antisemitism and bigotry and hatred, and—it has to be said—with non-Jews and the international community failing, in the main, to speak out when all that was happening.

That is why it is vital that we all remain vigilant, that we challenge antisemitism, that we challenge bigotry and that we challenge hatred, wherever they are promoted. That is our duty as parliamentarians and as citizens: we must discharge that duty and we must encourage the generations to come always to bear witness.

While I was working on my speech, I was struck by an historic moment last week when German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier became the

first German President ever to give a speech at Yad Vashem at an event to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. In a very moving speech, the President said:

"The Eternal Flame at Yad Vashem does not go out. Germany's responsibility does not expire."

He went on to say, with considerable candour and honesty:

"I wish I could say that we Germans have learned from history once and for all. But I cannot say that when hatred is spreading."

We should all be prepared to exercise the same candour because, of course, as has been recognised in this debate, hatred is spreading, and it is up to each of us to do what we can in the face of such developments in our society, here in Europe and across the world.

In the past few days, we have heard stories of such bravery and endurance in the face of barbarism and obscenity; such stories of individual survivors who were determined, following their liberation, not to be victims, but to live their lives to the full and to make their contribution. It is perhaps fitting, given our imminent—and, I say, sad—departure from the European Union, to reference a remarkable woman called Simone Veil. She was the first President of the first directly elected European Parliament, for which elections were held in 1979. Simone Veil bore the stamp of her Auschwitz number on her arm, but she was determined to make her mark on the life of her country, France, and was very attuned to the founding purpose of the European project.

I bear witness, Presiding Officer.

16:38

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): Last night, I was proud to sponsor Parliament's Holocaust memorial day event with my colleague, Iain Gray. I was struck by the sense of people coming together not just as an act of observation, but in participation and shared responsibility. We were privileged to be joined by Janine Webber, who is a Holocaust survivor and whom other members have referenced. She told her remarkable story of how she survived through the resilience of family members, twists of fate, rare acts of defiance by others and, above all—although she would not say it herself—her own personal strength.

I was struck by her age as she lived through those experiences. Born in 1933, she was seven when her father was shot by the Nazis within her earshot. She told us of her experience of witnessing her mother's death from typhoid in a damp rat-infested basement in the ghetto when she was nine. At 10, her brother was shot in front of her by a member of the SS. She showed us photos of her and her brother that were taken before the war. Looking at those two children, who were the same age as my daughters are, I listened to the 87-year-old woman but thought of that seven-year-old girl. As a father, what I felt was anguish and horror that a child so young should have had to experience those things.

I want to speak about the need for us all to carry forward the memory of Auschwitz and the Holocaust. In the 75th year on from the liberation of that most infamous of Nazi death camps, many members have—rightly—commented on the significance of those years, as direct witness to the events is slowly lost. It is, therefore, incumbent on each of us to consider what the Holocaust means to us, to share the experience and not just the facts, and to learn from and act on those lessons.

An important recent influence on my thinking was a book that I read, "East West Street", which is one man's exploration of his family's experience of the Holocaust. The main reason why the book made an impression on me was the story that it told of everyday people, and of how Nazi persecution and extermination of Jewish people unfolded. It tells of the lives of shopkeepers, lawyers and farmhands, of aunties and grandparents, daughters and sons. It tells of lives like anybody's—lives like ours.

The Holocaust did not happen to them in a single action or event. There were a number of small, sometimes subtle, steps. There were municipal edicts, regulatory changes, Government requirements and mandated actions. Those were enabled not by initial overriding hatred, but by casual prejudice, careless othering and the self-interested inaction of people who chose to look the other way. That is how it starts and how it takes hold, and that is why we must be so wary of the insidious rise of antisemitism that we are currently experiencing.

I feel that I must, as a Labour Party member and elected representative, say that that is a particularly important point for me to state. The Labour Party is supposed to be the party of equality, of social justice and of human rights. However, in recent months and years, we have failed. In particular, we have failed the Jewish people. Following recent events, I made a personal point of reaching out to talk with, and to listen to, the Jewish community in Edinburgh. I felt that I needed to take direct personal steps, and have been struck by the pain, the hurt, and the fear that our actions, and inactions, have caused. They include our failure to deal with complaints, our re-admission of members who have been guilty of antisemitism and our reluctance to adopt

the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism.

In my 25 years of being a Labour Party member, the party has done things that I have disagreed with, and it has done things that have made me angry. However, in all those years, those events and conversations were the first times when I have ever felt ashamed to be a Labour Party member.

I am in no doubt that the challenges are not unique to the Labour Party—they are challenges that we all face. However, I want the Labour Party to hold itself to a higher standard. I want it to be the party of justice and of human rights. Labour must put an end to this, and it must never let these issues arise again. As the party that is responsible for enshrining so many of our rights and for pursuing equality, we have a responsibility to put this right. I know that we will.

The events have also convinced me that we must take personal responsibility to carry on the lessons of the Holocaust and to tackle antisemitism and prejudice. We cannot allow the actions of the Nazis to be something that happened to other people. They are things that happened to people—people like me, people like you, people like all of us. They were crimes against humanity—crimes against us all.

We must strive not only to memorise the facts of the Holocaust, but to share and pass on the feelings and human experience of those who survived, and of those who fell victim. To truly learn the lessons, it is not enough simply to say the right things; we must also take the right actions. We must call out intolerant behaviours, we must challenge casual prejudice and we must take action against the powerful when they seek to oppress the minority.

Those are my personal lessons from what was experienced those 75 years ago.

16:44

Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Con): Many members have rightly said that it is a privilege to speak in this debate, but if I may say to Mr Johnson, it is a particular privilege to follow his speech, which was courageous, brave and right.

At time for reflection today, Stephen Stone, from St Roch's Secondary School in my city, Glasgow, talked eloquently about Holocaust teaching and education in contemporary Scottish schools. I will return to that at the end of my speech, but I will open with some reflections on my time in school in England in the 1980s. I went to an ordinary state comprehensive school in Dorset, which was at that time led by an extraordinary teacher, whose name was John Webster. At my school, history was compulsory for all students, alongside maths and English. We knew that that was unusual; we did not know why history was compulsory in our school, but we knew it had something to do with Mr Webster, the headteacher. It was only when I read his obituaries, about three years ago, that I began to understand why.

In 1945, on His Majesty's service, my headteacher Mr Webster was a young man in uniform at the end of a long war, like those young men who Edward Mountain described a few moments ago. He was one of the very first allied soldiers to walk into the death camp that his unit had discovered. He saw with his own eyes the horrors that we all think we understand. He resolved, there and then, that he would do all that he could to ensure that those he met thereafter would never forget.

At school, I was blessed with remarkable and brilliant history teachers, whose work was placed front and centre in our curriculum for reasons I never understood as a child, but for which I will always be grateful.

I have used this quotation before, but I make no apology for repeating it:

> "With the absurd precision to which we later had to accustom ourselves, the Germans held the roll-call. At the end the officer asked 'Wieviel Stück?' ... The corporal saluted smartly and replied that there were six hundred and fifty 'pieces' and that all was in order. They then loaded us on to the buses and took us to the station ... Here the train was waiting for us ... Here we received the first blows: and it was so new and senseless that we felt no pain, neither in body nor in spirit. Only a profound amazement: how can one hit a man without anger?
>
> There were twelve goods wagons for six hundred and fifty men; in mine we were only forty-five, but it was a small wagon. Here then, before our very eyes, under our very feet, was one of those notorious transport trains, those which never return, and of which, shuddering and always a little incredulous, we had so often heard speak. Exactly like this, detail for detail: goods wagons closed from the outside, with men, women and children pressed together without pity, like cheap merchandise, for a journey towards nothingness, a journey down there, towards the bottom. This time it is us who are inside."

Those words are from the opening chapter of Primo Levi's autobiographical account of the Holocaust, "If This Is A Man". In the middle of that passage Primo Levi asks a hauntingly simple question:

> "how can one hit a man without anger?"

The Holocaust happened because, not very long ago, in the heart of Europe, it was the policy of the Government of what had been a leading European civilisation to eliminate the Jewish people from the face of the earth. The Nazis were not angry with the Jews: the brutality, the beatings, the murder and the killing did not happen because anyone had cause to be angry; they happened

because of cold, calculated hatred—"baseless hatred", as Bill Kidd called it a few moments ago.

That is what must be remembered. That is what my headteacher, Mr Webster, wanted us to learn through the study of history: that hatred is such a venal emotion that it can cause, as Alex Cole-Hamilton reflected, perfectly ordinary people to commit vast and extraordinary crimes on an industrial scale. The cabinet secretary reflected on that in her opening remarks, saying that we are "not born to hate". Hatred is something that we learn, and we—all of us here now—cannot be complacent and must have the courage, as Mr Johnson has shown, to call out hatred and prejudice wherever we see it, because, as the cabinet secretary said:

"peace, progress and tolerance cannot be taken for granted"—

not here; not now; not anywhere.

Those who were sent to the death camps lost their possessions, their loved ones, their family members, their clothes, their shoes—even their hair. They were deformed by starvation. They were enslaved in hard labour. They were tattooed with a number. They lost their names, their identities. They were stripped naked in the snow and ice with nothing but their own arms to warm them, alone in huge numbers. This was mass, systematic, organised murder on an unprecedented scale. At Auschwitz, about which we have heard so much today, in August 1944, 24,000 people were murdered in a single day, and those people were not prisoners of war. The war had nothing to do with it. They were just people whom a Government wanted to annihilate because that Government hated Jews.

I have never been to Auschwitz, but I have been to Yad Vashem, which is Israel's Holocaust museum on the western slopes of Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. "Yad Vashem" is a phrase taken from the book of Isaiah; it means "a place and a name". It is a place of remembrance where the names of those who were murdered by the Nazis are recorded and where their memories are honoured. It is at once a place of calm dignity—which Ruth Davidson spoke about—and outraged defiance.

I have not been to Auschwitz because one day, when they are old enough, I am going to take my children there. My children are Jewish. They have all attended, and two of them still are attending, Scotland's only Jewish primary school: the superb Calderwood Lodge, which now shares a campus with a Roman Catholic school. We think that it might be the only joint Jewish-Catholic primary school campus in the world. It is a very special place. Like St Roch's in Glasgow, about which we heard at time for reflection, Calderwood Lodge takes Holocaust teaching seriously. Every year, primary 7 pupils from Calderwood Lodge go to Amsterdam for a few days, where they visit the Anne Frank museum and learn at first hand at the feet of Holocaust survivors.

No matter how much you think you know about the Holocaust and the suffering of the Jewish people, you realise within a few minutes of being at a place such as Auschwitz or Yad Vashem that you will only ever be able to scratch the surface of the unimaginable pain that it caused. Of course, the resolution that burns throughout all of us as we walk through those places, as we bear witness, as we think and reflect, is: never again. As you leave Yad Vashem, you see carved into a huge stone archway the words of Ezekiel chapter 37, verse 14:

"I will put my breath into you and you shall live again, and I will set you upon your own soil".

Amen to that.

16:52

Aileen Campbell: The debate has been remarkable. Every speaker and every contribution has been powerful and impactful. Regardless of political party, we unite to stand here today in solidarity against bigotry and intolerance, recognising the inhuman violence that they can cause if they are left unchallenged. The debate has allowed us not just to offer mealy-mouthed messages of never forgetting, but to resolve to be actively anti-racist and anti-fascist; to unite as political leaders to not just speak out against hate but, instead, use our privileged positions to influence, to advocate for positive change and to back up our words with deeds and actions.

The theme of this year's Holocaust memorial day, "stand together", helps us all to focus on what we can and must do to prevent those atrocities from happening again. Although it is the responsibility of every individual, it is, as Pauline McNeill pointed out, especially significant for those of us who are leaders and politicians. We have the privilege of being in positions where our actions and words can have influence. The debate has shown that, here in this Parliament, we have chosen to use those positions collectively to reject hate and to help to shape the inclusive and welcoming society in which we want to live and in which we want our children to grow up.

The debate has also revealed the ultimate price of turning a blind eye to politicians or political leaders whose actions create fear, legitimise oppression and othering, or breed hatred and contempt. That fear is seen all too often, as Ross Greer and others have pointed out, in the continued festering antisemitism in too many countries and communities here and around the world, and in the worrying and increasing

confidence that fascists have as a result of the increasing legitimacy that political discourse has created.

Commemorations should not only be about remembering the past, but should act as a lesson for generations to come about the need to confront prejudice and hatred. We must work together in our communities nationally and internationally to promote understanding, recognise diversity and challenge discrimination, to ensure that the burden of bearing witness that Iain Gray described, which is often demanded of survivors who have to relive their horror, is heeded and brings about the positive change that we seek. That is the very least that survivors should expect and deserve.

The horrific roll call of genocide and mass annihilation based on ethnicity that followed the Holocaust serves to show just how much work has yet to be done. Ruth Davidson described how the world failed in its obligation to take responsibility for the protection of others that so many had fought for, and Iain Gray and Kenneth Gibson described the failures of the UN in protecting those who faced persecution.

The debate has also rightly discussed the banality of evil. Much of what we remember this week is not just the actions of political leaders or troops but the banality of that evil. Alex Cole-Hamilton described the terrifying acts that can be committed by humdrum men, and Tom Arthur described the false reassurances that were offered to those entering Auschwitz and other camps by troops who were facilitating their murder. Kenneth Gibson reminded us that architects—educated people—designed the death camps. The education that we often cherish as being a protective factor against racism and hatred was not so in that case. The banality of evil is, unfortunately, a perfect summation of what we mark and remember today.

All the themes that we have discussed today—how we remember the past, honour those who died, heed the words of those who survived, and work for a better world—point to the importance of the work of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the Holocaust Educational Trust.

We remain committed to supporting learning about the Holocaust, in line with the values of the curriculum for excellence, which has compassion at its core. We continue to support the Holocaust Educational Trust's lessons from Auschwitz programme, as we have done for the past 10 years.

The Holocaust Educational Trust does excellent work and has been rightly singled out by members during this debate. It is crucial to see the trust's work first hand; its impact and reach are ever-more important. It is not easy work. Working with young people, the trust tackles an issue that is horrifying and distressing, and confrontation with such inhumanity is painful. However, the young people who participate in the programme become Holocaust ambassadors and share their experience and reflections with fellow pupils. I will be attending an event at Lanark grammar school this week.

As the lived memory of the Holocaust fades, it becomes crucial that we ensure that each and every generation to come continues to understand and reflect on the culmination of oppression, hate, othering, racism and fascism and that we instil in our young people the desire to want something different: a world that is open-minded, peaceful, loving and kind. That would be a fitting legacy for those whom we saw bearing witness yesterday—possibly for the last time—to ensure that they are reassured that we will not forget, turn a blind eye or walk on the other side. We can all agree with Ross Greer's message to never stop educating.

Although Scotland is an open and inclusive nation, as too many have described, and as too many colleagues have experienced, unfortunately we are not immune from hateful behaviour or prejudiced attitudes. Although I was glad to announce £500,000 for the places of worship fund with Humza Yousaf the other day, Anas Sarwar is right—that is something that I wish I did not have to do. However, faith communities need to feel that their Government supports them, has listened to them and cherishes them.

We can never be complacent about antisemitism or any form of prejudice or discrimination. We still have much to do to create a truly welcoming and inclusive society that promotes equality and human rights. That is about how can we use the lessons of Auschwitz to guide our approach to how we look after and support refugees, and how we recognise the consequences of global political conflict and the need for us to provide sanctuary to those who are fleeing persecution as a result.

We must keep at the forefront of our minds that hatred and prejudice do not happen in a vacuum, but are driven by people who deliberately turn communities against each other.

Holocaust memorial day in Scotland provides an opportunity to learn from the past and encourages us to work together to tackle hatred and prejudice so that we can create a stronger, more inclusive future for everyone.

Daniel Johnson emotionally addressed the challenges that are felt in his party and sent a message to his colleagues that his party should be held to a higher standard, and Anas Sarwar talked about the things that unite rather than separate us. Perhaps, given that coming together, we should all

treat each other a bit better and collectively ensure that our Parliament is held to a higher standard to show that politics can be better and that politics here in Scotland can be kinder.

Our commitment to promoting and supporting Holocaust memorial day demonstrates our collective resolve to stand in solidarity with victims of genocide and of other terrible human rights abuses around the world. We must keep alive the memory of such genocides, and never forget the consequences of bigotry and intolerance.

By keeping memories and stories alive, we honour those who have suffered. It is a vital reminder of the consequences of unchecked prejudice, and that our vision of an inclusive society should never be taken for granted. It is an important spur to action. It should encourage us to do everything in our power to stand together to challenge prejudice, tackle discrimination and celebrate diversity, because ultimately that is the best possible tribute that we can pay to those whom we remember today.

The spirit has been invoked of Plato, John Stuart Mill and Robert Burns—wise men who we must also heed. I am proud that Scotland's national hero, our national bard, was not a man of war but of poetry and prose that espouse messages of love and kindness. I can think of no better tribute to those who survived the Holocaust—and the memory of those who did not—than that we build a country with that as the hallmark of how we create a better future. I thank everyone who has taken part in the debate.

Point of Order

17:01

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I raise my point under rule 8.11.3 of the standing orders concerning business motions. In an unprecedented situation, MSPs will be asked to vote to direct the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body to do something that it has already decided unanimously not to do. Our corporate body makes non-partisan decisions on behalf of all MSPs.

Presiding Officer, do you believe that the two hours allowed was enough time to lodge amendments to the business motion? I understand the difficulties that the parliamentary authorities, including yourself, would have been under, due to the short notice of the motion. If more time had been given, members could have lodged amendments, so that more than two members could have been called to speak on the business motion.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): I thank Mike Rumbles for his point of order.

Mr Rumbles is correct to say that, under the standing orders, only one person may speak against the business motion, and that the Government minister may respond. We have relaxed that rule for the forward planning motion on Wednesdays, in order to allow more members to speak.

The key point is that tonight's motion arranges the business for this week, and it is unusual to change the business at such short notice. However, there will be time in the debate tomorrow: the business motion simply arranges time for the subject itself to be debated, and it proposes putting half an hour aside for that tomorrow. There is time for only one member from each party to contribute tomorrow. However, as is usually the case, members can make an intervention; in fact, members can make interventions during the debate on the business motion too, when that is moved. I hope that that explains the standing orders on the subject.

Business Motion

17:03

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item is the business motion that Mr Rumbles referred to. Motion S5M-20624, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, sets out revisions to this week's business.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees to the following revisions to the programme of business for—

(a) Wednesday 29 January—

delete

2.00 pm	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
2.00 pm	Portfolio Questions: Health and Sport; Communities and Local Government

and insert

1.30 pm	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
1.30 pm	Scottish Government Debate: Recognising Scotland in Europe
2.00 pm	Portfolio Questions: Health and Sport; Communities and Local Government

(b) Thursday 30 January—

delete

2.30 pm	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
2.30 pm	Portfolio Questions: Social Security and Older People

and insert

2.00 pm	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
2.00 pm	Portfolio Questions: Social Security and Older People— [*Graeme Dey*.]

The Presiding Officer: Maurice Golden will speak against the motion.

17:03

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con): I speak against the motion on the basis that, between now and June, we have to accommodate six committee debates, nine opposition business days, eight stage 1 debates and 13 stage 3 debates; next week, we will be voting until 7 o'clock in the evening on Tuesday, and on Wednesday that might be even later.

Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab): I thank Mr Golden for taking an intervention.

Does he agree that, since parliamentary time is scarce, it ought to be allocated to Scotland's priorities, such as our health service and our children's schools? Mindful of that, I am, however, pleased that the Minister for Parliamentary Business and the Parliamentary Bureau have agreed to extend by 30 minutes the drugs debate on Thursday, and as a consequence to move the European flag debate to tomorrow. Due to that, Scottish Labour intends to abstain on the business motion, rather than vote against it. However, we also accept the explanation given by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body on the flag issue.

Maurice Golden: I thank the member for her comments. Some of the SNP members might want to make representation to their business manager on extending parliamentary time, perhaps to accommodate a statement on Scotland's crumbling police stations, which has unfortunately been ruled out to accommodate the debate on flags tomorrow. I thank both Labour and the Liberal Democrats for supporting the statement on Scotland's crumbling police stations.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): The member will know that I am a strong pro-European [*Interruption*.] I will always be a strong pro-European, but I respect the decision of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body and, more importantly, its independence.

Is he as disappointed as I am that the Government can find time to debate flags, yet not one minute can be found to debate the performance of our education system or the state of Scotland's police service?

Maurice Golden: I know that the member is a committed European, and I find it incredibly worrying and disappointing that members of the SNP seek to barrack and bully and boo respected members of this Parliament who support European values. I am also incredibly disappointed that the SNP, aided and abetted by the Greens, see flying flags as more important than improving Scotland's public services and I urge members to vote against the business motion.

The Presiding Officer: I call the Minister for Parliamentary Business, Graeme Dey, to respond on behalf of the Government.

17:07

The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey): None of the parties represented on the Parliamentary Bureau would have wanted to be in this situation. The two parties—the SNP and the Green party—who supported the scheduling of the debate at issue did so with heavy hearts, having made concerted efforts over the past two weeks to seek a compromise following the SPCB's original decision to take down the flag that represents both the Council of Europe and the European Union from outside the Parliament on Friday.

The matter was discussed in detail at last Tuesday's bureau meeting and, as a result, the SPCB was asked to meet again and consider the matter further. It did so, but, by majority, decided to stand by its original decision. On Friday, on behalf of the Scottish Government, I wrote to the SPCB suggesting a compromise that would have seen the European flag stay up through the transition period and the SPCB able to review the policy on flags during that period. I understand that the Green party also communicated its thoughts on a way forward that would have averted the matter coming to the chamber.

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD): Will the minister take an intervention?

Graeme Dey: No, I will not.

Unfortunately, the SPCB could not agree to revisit its decision. Although the SPCB is rightly non-political, there is no decision that it could take on the matter—to leave the flag up or to take it down—that would not be seen as political. Therefore, it is surely right that the Parliament as a whole makes the decision.

As I am speaking on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, I do not intend to get into the detail of the stances that the parties represented on the bureau have adopted on the matter. Those will become apparent during the 30-minute debate that the motion seeks to schedule for tomorrow. I stress that the interactions between the SPCB, the Parliamentary Bureau and those parties opposed to the decision that was reached have at all times been respectful, recognising that the SPCB acted in good faith and that those who hold an alternative view have genuinely sought to secure a compromise. I hope, perhaps forlornly, that tomorrow's debate can be conducted in a similar vein.

The motion, in addition to scheduling the short debate at issue, extends—as Elaine Smith noted—the time allocated on Thursday for the debate on drugs and alcohol. That was a very reasonable request by Labour, which the Government and the bureau were happy to support.

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that motion S5M-20624 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (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, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (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)
Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Against

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

Abstentions

Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 62, Against 30, Abstentions 17.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees to the following revisions to the programme of business for—

(a) Wednesday 29 January—

delete

2.00 pm	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
2.00 pm	Portfolio Questions: Health and Sport; Communities and Local Government

and insert

1.30 pm	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
1.30 pm	Scottish Government Debate: Recognising Scotland in Europe
2.00 pm	Portfolio Questions: Health and Sport; Communities and Local Government

(b) Thursday 30 January—

delete

2.30 pm	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
2.30 pm	Portfolio Questions: Social Security and Older People

and insert

2.00 pm	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
2.00 pm	Portfolio Questions: Social Security and Older People

Decision Time

17:10

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): There is one question to be put as a result of today's business. The question is, that motion S5M-20603, in the name of Aileen Campbell, on Holocaust memorial day 2020, the 75th anniversary, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament recognises that 2020's Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January marked the 75th anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau; remembers everyone affected by the Holocaust, including the execution of 17 million people, six million of whom were Jewish; acknowledges the importance of learning the lessons from the Holocaust and subsequent genocides, including the value of the Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz Project, which gives students from schools in Scotland the opportunity to visit Auschwitz; notes this year's theme, Stand together, which highlights the importance of building safe, resilient and inclusive communities in order to tackle hatred and prejudice; commends the incredible courage of those who stood up in support of justice, equality and humanity, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and recommits to stand together, united against hate, in order to build a society where hatred and prejudice are not tolerated.

Alasdair Gray

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): The final item of business today is a members' business debate on motion S5M-20306, in the name of Sandra White, on Alasdair Gray—a creative force. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament is deeply saddened at the passing of Glasgow born Alasdair Gray, who it considers was an incredible creative force; understands that Alasdair studied at the Glasgow School of Art, going on to create murals across Glasgow, including Arcadia Theme, the stairwell mural in the Ubiquitous Chip Restaurant, Ashton Lane, and his most recent, the 40ft mural for the entrance hall of Hillhead subway station in the West End of Glasgow, which includes local landmarks and, in Alasdair's own words, a section devoted to "all kinds of folk", "hard workers", "head cases" and "queer fishes"; believes that Alasdair's work as a writer, including the novels, *Lanark* and *1982, Janine*, his plays, including *The Fall of Kelvin Walker*, and his poetry and short stories, were the catalyst for a hugely talented creative generation, and acknowledges Alasdair's body of work, which it considers has influenced, engaged, inspired and entertained and, more importantly, is a lasting legacy to a cultural giant.

17:10

Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): We have come together today to pay tribute to the life and works of Alasdair Gray. I thank members for supporting my motion and take this opportunity to thank those representing Alasdair who are joining us in the public gallery for the debate: Francis Bickmore, Alasdair's publisher; Jenny Brown, Alasdair's agent; and Claire Forsyth from the Glasgow Print Studio, who worked with Alasdair for many years.

I have received messages of support from Alasdair's sister, Mora Rolley, and his niece, Kat Rolley. Unfortunately, they were not able to attend this evening, but they were touched to know that this motion would be brought to the chamber for debate.

It is difficult to fit a whole life's work into a speech of a few minutes, but I will do my best. I hope that we can share our thoughts on Alasdair and celebrate him and his incredible cultural achievements, as well as raising how we can safeguard that legacy for future generations.

Alasdair Gray was born in Riddrie, Glasgow, in 1934. He trained as a painter at the Glasgow School of Art and worked as a part-time art teacher, muralist and theatrical scene painter before becoming a full-time painter, playwright and author.

His highly acclaimed first novel, "Lanark", was published in 1981, winning a Scottish Arts Council book award and the Saltire Society book of the

year award. It was followed by more than 30 books, all of which he designed and illustrated, including novels, short story collections, plays, volumes of poetry, works of non-fiction and translations, as well as his visual art book, "A Life in Pictures", which also won an award.

His most recent work was an interpretation of Dante's "Divine Comedy", and in November 2019, a month before he passed away, Alasdair won the inaugural Saltire Society lifetime achievement award for his contribution to Scottish literature.

Alasdair's public murals are visible across Glasgow and his work is on display in galleries from the V&A to the Scottish national gallery of modern art and in universities and public libraries.

Glasgow is where Alasdair lived and worked for most of his life. In the later years, he was embedded in the west end and could often be seen going up and down Byres Road or in Partick—it was always a great pleasure to bump into him in the street.

It was in that area, in the studio in Alasdair's house, that I had the incredible opportunity to sit for Alasdair, so that I could be immortalised—if that is the correct word—in his wonderful mural at Hillhead subway station. It was an honour to be included in one of his many artworks. I fondly remember the sittings at his house and the great chats that we had about Glasgow and, of course, politics.

On the subject of politics, I am reminded of two books that Alasdair wrote. "Why Scots Should Rule Scotland" was published in 1992, and the follow-up, which he co-authored with Adam Tomkins, "How We Should Rule Ourselves", was published in 2005. The latter book's parting note was that what we need is a Parliament without whips and a constitution without the Crown. Radical or rascal? Perhaps Alasdair was a bit of both. I am sure that Mr Tomkins will talk about that.

Another claim to fame for the Parliament is that, when Alasdair stood as a candidate to be rector at the University of Glasgow, very early on, the person who helped him and put him forward was Jamie Hepburn, who is now a minister in the Scottish Government—I do not know whether Jamie is here for the debate.

After a serious fall in 2015, Alasdair was unable to walk and was confined to a wheelchair. That did not deter him; he continued to create and produce right up to the very end, working with the Glasgow Print Studio, with which he had a relationship that spanned decades. He was delighted when the studio's director, John MacKechnie, invited him to hold an exhibition this year. The exhibition will consist of the many prints that Alasdair made with GPS over the past 30 years, and it was to be the launch event for several new screenprints that GPS produced with Alasdair over the past 18 months. It is incredibly sad that Alasdair did not get to see his work displayed at an institution of which he had been such a huge part over many years. However, we can all go to the exhibition.

What can we do to safeguard this incredible legacy? What would be a fitting tribute to such a creative individual? Francis Bickmore, Alasdair's publisher, has said that the strongest message of Alasdair Gray's work is the understanding that culture—especially literature and art—offers essential building blocks with which to forge a nation.

Through his novels, from "Lanark" onwards, and his paintings, murals, poetry and plays, and through his support for many other artists and writers, Alasdair helped to create the modern Scottish imagination. He helped to foster community and he helped to unlock our sense of the possible. Now seems like the perfect time to commemorate him with a foundation or literary fund to support emerging or struggling artists to do the same. I am incredibly supportive of the establishment of such a fund, and I hope that the suggestion can be taken forward.

I also champion the proposal to have, here in the Scottish Parliament, the mural that Alasdair's assistant Nichol Wheatley had been working on, which would sit really well with the words of Alasdair that are engraved on the Parliament building.

As well as making those suggestions, I take the opportunity to highlight the work of Sorcha Dallas, gallerist and Alasdair's friend, who has the responsibility of taking forward the Alasdair Gray archive. Sorcha has her work cut out. Alasdair was a key Scottish figure and his archive is of national and international significance. Support should be provided to the archive.

I ask the cabinet secretary to meet me and discuss the support that the Scottish Government can offer to the projects that I have mentioned.

Alasdair will be mourned by everyone whose life he touched. Following his death, his family said:

"Alasdair was an extraordinary person; very talented and, even more importantly, very humane. He was unique and irreplaceable and we will miss him greatly."

His niece said:

"The most important lesson I learned from Alasdair was humanity. He talked to everyone as an equal and he valued everyone's contribution."

Claire Forsyth from the GPS said:

"Alasdair lived his life looking, reflecting, reworking, not settling, challenging and innovating, protesting when it might be easier to remain silent. It is this spirit that lives on in the tenet of one of his final screenprints: 'Work as if you

were in the early days of a better nation', the legacy of a man driven by creativity and political engagement."

We are incredibly fortunate to have had such a formidable, creative force, who I had the pleasure to know, as did many others. I am sure that his legacy will live on.

17:20

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): I thank and congratulate Sandra White for bringing the motion to the chamber. Scotland and the world have lost a cultural icon, and it is fitting that we recognise him in our national Parliament.

As Sandra said, how does one begin to capture the essence of Alasdair Gray in a short speech? When we are speaking about a literary and artistic giant, a polymath who influenced a generation of Scottish culture, compiling it into a short speech is a task that I am not worthy of. "A Life in Four Books" would be more appropriate, but members will be relieved that I am not starting my speech on page 3. Perhaps I will borrow one of Alasdair's techniques and elaborate in my footnotes.

We simply need to look at the outpouring of tributes that followed his death to see the profound and lasting impact that Alasdair Gray had on contemporary Scotland. He lived in Glasgow for most his life—indeed, much of his work is based around the city—and his global credentials are testament to the common humanity of his works. His writing and his art capture something that is intrinsically appealing to people across the world. The wonderful Ian Rankin summarised that very nicely, because a big part of Alasdair Gray's genius was making Scottish life interesting on the international stage:

"He could take something very personal to him—his background growing up in Glasgow—and make it that people around the world wanted to read it."

He was at the forefront of the palpable revival of Scottish literature in the 1980s. "Lanark" was arguably Alasdair Gray's most enduring masterpiece. I remember when it was published. I was 14 years old and my brothers and sisters, who were a bit older than me, decided that it would be a good present for my dad that Christmas. I was fascinated by it: the work was named after my home county and the graphic design on the cover was so iconic and unusual that it captured my imagination. It was a few more years before I was able to read "Lanark" and some of the works of James Kelman. I cannot say that I enjoyed them—not in the way I enjoyed the science fiction and fantasy novels that I had been reading up to that point—but they were serious, grown-up books: challenging, sometimes bleak, but I loved them nonetheless.

I will finish with my personal memories of Alasdair Gray. My former colleague Rob Gibson and I were founder members of the Cunninghame Graham Society in Scotland, supported by Alasdair, who I am sure gave a speech or reading at one of our dinners. I remember a dinner at Babbity Bowster, in Glasgow, when Alasdair was on the top table and Billy Kay was giving the address to the group. Alasdair—maybe feeling a bit tired and weary, or maybe just concentrating hard on what Billy Kay had to say—snuggled into the shoulder of Maria João Kay, Billy's lovely wife. We think he just had a little sleep. He would hate to be called a national treasure, but only a national treasure would have got away with that on that evening. Billy reminded me of that in his tribute to Alasdair on Twitter.

Alasdair was much loved and he has contributed so much to our culture and our experiences. I will never forget my first visit to the Ubiquitous Chip and seeing his mural there, or the Òran Mór and the wonderful quotation—not coined by Alasdair, but used by him—about living as if we were

"in the early days of a better nation."

What an inspiration, and what a loss to our country.

17:24

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con): I thank Sandra White for bringing to the chamber a motion for a debate to recognise the life of Alasdair Gray. He and I held different political beliefs. As we have heard, in his time he fostered interesting intellectual dialogue. However, I want to focus on celebrating the life of one of Glasgow's and Scotland's finest creatives of the recent past.

Anthony Burgess, the author of "A Clockwork Orange", went so far as to say that Alasdair Gray was the most important Scottish novelist since Sir Walter Scott. Indeed, his work as an author was an inspiration to many Scottish authors who came after him—he blazed a trail that many followed. It is even more inspiring to know that his first novel was not published until he was 46 years old. We cannot all become world-famous authors at 46, but he certainly showed that age is no barrier. "Lanark" was obviously worth the wait, because it went on to become his most famous work.

Of course, Alasdair Gray was an artist first. As so many others have done, he launched his career at Glasgow School of Art. Across my region of Glasgow, his artwork lives on in various well-kent places, including in Ashton Lane and the mural at Hillhead subway station, which Sandra White described.

The motion references a number of Alasdair Gray's works, but it is testament to his drive and sheer creativity that so many others could have been included. Everyone will have different reasons for celebrating his work, but mine is simple: what strikes me most is that his love of Glasgow and its people shines through it. It is probably the most overwhelming aspect of the body of work that he produced in his career. He wore his roots as a badge of pride, and he involved the ordinary working people of Glasgow and of Scotland in his work wherever possible.

There are few Scots who can claim to have contributed to our cultural life on the scale that Alasdair Gray contributed. He will be remembered as a pioneer. His reach went far beyond the east end of Glasgow—and beyond Scotland—and he will be sorely missed. We can only hope that his passing will highlight his work to another generation of Scottish creatives, who will in turn will be inspired by it as so many others before them have been.

17:27

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I welcome the debate and congratulate Sandra White on securing the time for it.

It is appropriate that we hold a debate to mark the achievements of Alasdair Gray and his significant contribution to Scottish culture. The extent of the commentary following his death demonstrates the high esteem in which his work is held, the inspiration that he provided for a generation of Scottish writers and the recognition of his talent, which is evident on public buildings throughout Scotland.

"Work as if you live in the early days of a better nation."

Those words are among the inscriptions on the Canongate wall of the Parliament. The inclusion of Alasdair Gray's work there is a significant expression of Scottish identity and aspiration. In true postmodernist fashion, he borrowed that phrase from the Canadian poet Dennis Lee's "Civil Elegies", in which Lee said:

"And best of all is finding a place to be
in the early days of a better civilization."

Gray reshaped those words to describe a new circumstance in Scotland.

Alasdair Gray is rightly acknowledged as one of the most innovative figures in our contemporary literature and culture. The diversity of his creative talent means that he leaves a legacy of novels, poems, murals, portraits, scripts, illustrations, short stories and other work. Success might have come later in his life, with "Lanark" not being published until he was 46, but he undoubtedly finished his career as one of Scotland's most-loved artists.

I first read Alasdair Gray's work when I was a PhD student at the University of Glasgow. Because I was studying the work of Sylvia Plath, I had always focused on American literature, so reading Alasdair Gray's novel "Poor Things" when I was tutoring first-year students was a delight. I found it to be innovative, imaginative, witty and perceptive. Published in 1992, it was described by the *London Review of Books* as

"a magnificently brisk, funny, dirty, brainy book".

Although it represented a departure from Gray's focus on Glasgow, the novel still addressed the themes of social inequality, relationships, memory and identity. Its combination of text and illustration was immersive and demonstrated the quality of Gray's writing and art.

The many tributes that have followed Alasdair Gray's death have highlighted not only his creative influence but his humanity, compassion and vision. He was central to the renaissance in Scottish literature and has inspired and supported a generation of writers.

The motion rightly highlights some of Alasdair Gray's most well-known murals in Glasgow, including those at Hillhead station and at the Ubiquitous Chip. Although his artwork has been widely exhibited and included in several collections, the presence of public work such as his murals is invaluable. There is generosity in his work. Many people will be familiar with his work and enjoy and respond to it. His work is very egalitarian.

The Alasdair Gray archive at the National Library of Scotland has a wonderful collection of his original artwork, as well as handwritten manuscripts, correspondence relating to his novels, notebooks that he used to record ideas and drafts, and diary entries. I support the proposals that Sandra White made being explored.

In 1995, Alasdair Gray was commissioned to create a ceiling mural for the upper gallery of Abbot House in Dunfermline. His "The Thistle of Dunfermline's History" depicts the timeline of the town in the form of a tree of life, with branches dividing the centuries. Abbot House is due to reopen soon, following renovation, and I look forward to revisiting his work. In 2015, Alasdair Gray returned to Abbot House as part of the 20th anniversary celebrations to speak about his mural. He also gave talks to local art pupils from the four Dunfermline high schools, reflecting his generosity of spirit and his background in teaching.

Alasdair Gray did not die a wealthy man. At the height of his career, he said:

"I am a well-known writer who cannot make a living from his writing".

Although he was critically acclaimed, in recent years, he had to apply for support from the Scottish Artists Benevolent Association special fund. However, his talent, imagination and creativity have bestowed riches upon the people of Scotland and the world. He will be sorely missed.

17:31

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): I have been thinking about some of the words that we have already heard this evening: "formidable", "inspirational", "irreplaceable", "unique", "humane" and "loved". I am not sure that there is a higher aspiration for a human life than to be remembered with such words, which have clearly all been said with sincerity. I am very grateful to have the opportunity to speak in the debate, and I echo other members' thanks to Sandra White for lodging the motion.

In an interview in his later years, Alasdair Gray described his art as

"documentary work, in as much as Dickens documented London, and Dostoevsky documented Moscow and St Petersburg".

I do not think that we can be in any doubt but that future generations will look back on his extensive collection of novels, short stories, poems, paintings, murals and illustrations and see a treasure trove that documents Glasgow, in particular, and all its characters, stories, hopes and aspirations. One of the reasons why his art has been taken to the city's heart is that public murals and paperback books are accessible and affordable—for the cost of a subway ticket or a pint in a pub, or even the free loan of a book from a public library.

Gray has given daily life in Glasgow not just a visual language but a whole mythology. The epic narrative of "Lanark" showed us that every aspect of life and death is being played out right there every day, and that the Glasgow version is every bit as valid as ancient Greek poetry or renaissance masterpieces. He gave us vivid characters, including Bella Baxter in "Poor Things", which can be read as a reworking of the Frankenstein myth or as a contemporary allegory for a modern Scotland—beautiful but disjointed, and not in control of her bodily autonomy.

"Lanark" gave us a vision of municipalism that was both good and bad. Gray often spoke about that in his non-fiction works. He was a committed believer in local control and local decision making, and he often spoke passionately about the importance of the public library in Riddrie, and about Miss Jean Irwin's art classes at Kelvingrove art gallery and museum, which he attended on Saturday mornings throughout his childhood.

Gray also spoke about the importance of his first regular paid work as an artist recorder at the people's palace in the late 1970s, and the opportunities that that afforded him to refine his skills as a documentary artist. That was supported through the Government's job creation scheme, at a time when society valued the role of local artists and was prepared to pay for it from the public purse. Alasdair Gray would not have been the artist that he was without the opportunities that were afforded him by Glasgow's public institutions, and Glasgow would not be the city that it is without his unique, playful and ambitious contributions.

Gray's people-focused approach made it so natural for his work to cross over into political contributions. He saw his role as an artist as being to hold up a mirror to ourselves and to help us to see the best and the worst of our personalities and our communities. As a supporter of independence, he was always keen to emphasise that political autonomy is meaningless if we do not use it to benefit the pursuit of equality and social justice.

I will refer to the two publications that Sandra White mentioned. The 2005 pamphlet, "How We Should Rule Ourselves", warned politicians like us that

"sovereignty belongs to the citizens of a nation. There should be no political or legal authority superior to the people. Government is for the benefit of the people, not the other way around. We the people lend power to a government in order to help ourselves—power is not the government's to keep."

I suppose that we are all left guessing which of the great minds involved contributed most to that sentiment.

Gray's earlier publication, "Why the Scots Should Rule Scotland", summed up perfectly the role that art and culture have to play in building a healthy and participatory vision of a country. He said:

"A truly independent Scotland will only ever exist when people in every home, school, croft, farm, workshop, factory, island, glen, town and city feel that they too are at the centre of the world."

That is what Alasdair Gray's art did for us: he put people at the centre of his visual and literary world. We have much to learn from him. He will be sorely missed.

17:36

Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP): I thank my colleague Sandra White for securing this evening's members' business debate.

Unlike Sandra White and Clare Adamson, I did not know Alasdair Gray personally, but I am

fortunate to know two individuals who did and who worked closely with him. I am very grateful to Dr Rodge Glass and our mutual friend Mark Buckland for their help in preparing my remarks.

For seven decades, Alasdair Gray worked furiously across space and form, transforming the artistic landscape of the country. He documented his home city of Glasgow as it disappeared and reappeared, almost as one of his "imagined objects", in all its vibrancy.

Alasdair Gray charted Glasgow's changes with compassion, training his focus on the marginalised and the forgotten. So successful was he in his endeavour that the famed description from "Lanark" that

"not even the inhabitants of Glasgow live there imaginatively"

has been ironically but pleasingly rendered obsolete by his own reimagining of the city and his ability to project the interior life of its inhabitants.

Alasdair Gray's achievements were born of a lifetime of perseverance. Having scribbled in teenage diaries an imaginary shelf of books that he wished to create, Gray steadfastly made that shelf a reality, producing work that changed Scotland, how it sees itself and the way that it looks to the future.

Though some people believe he belongs to Scotland, for me, Gray's work knows no boundaries or borders. As Patrick Harvie acknowledged, Gray argued that he was merely doing the same as Dickens with London or Dostoyevsky with St Petersburg—using the local to approach the universal and asserting Scotland's legitimacy in the process.

We have rightly heard much praise for Alasdair Gray's work today. Praise of the dead must also be accompanied by reflection. By that I do not mean guesswork—pretending that we can know what he would have wanted or reducing him to a set of beliefs. In Gray's case, that is too reductive. What drove Gray was doubt and the search for knowledge, not the dogmatic fortification of opinion. True reflection is considering what can be learned from the life and works of those who are no longer with us.

We learn not only from Gray's works but from how he lived his life. Mr Gray stipulated that he should have no funeral. He wanted no fuss. Who knows what he might have made of this debate? That behaviour goes beyond the humble nature of a preternatural talent. It is telling that, in my conversations with his collaborators and supporters, I have found that the first line of each eulogy does not mention his artistic achievements. They remember him as a man whose kindness had few peers. He treated his collaborators with respect, often paying them more than he earned. His grace was not an impersonation. Gray wrote that, if a mask rarely slips in a lifetime, it is likely that it is not a mask at all.

Gray believed himself to be the equal of anyone and was unafraid to assert that. He also thought himself better than no one. Gray wrote many times that he was a product of his time and his community in Riddrie. He had been provided with encouragement and opportunity, and he believed that everyone has a right to aspire. Through his example, Gray elevated a new generation to follow his compassionate conduct, his artistic bravery to see the world anew and his internationalist approach that gleaned universal truths from the mundane.

Alasdair Gray's work will live long, and Scotland is the richer for it. However, as well as reflecting on the artist, we should reflect on the democratiser who created that work. One could not have existed without the other, and, if we truly want to remember Alasdair Gray, we should seek to hold his principles in the highest regard. The triumph of his artistic vision can be understood only as a product of the man who made it and did so much to help others have a vision of their own.

17:40

Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Con): Thank you for squeezing me in, Presiding Officer. I might be the only person ever to have co-written a book with Alasdair Gray. The fact that that person became a Tory MSP shocked Alasdair even more than it shocked me. Our book, which Sandra White and Patrick Harvie have kindly mentioned, is called "How We Should Rule Ourselves". If it worked, it did so because of the creative tension in that second word: "we". For Alasdair, it was a book about Scotland; for his co-author, it was about the United Kingdom. If anyone here has read Rodge Glass's brilliant biography of Alasdair Gray—Rodge worked for Alasdair at the time of our collaboration—they will know that a long passage on the making of "How We Should Rule Ourselves" makes it clear that Alasdair wanted to write with me precisely because he knew that I did not believe in Scottish independence.

The book is not about independence, nor about socialism, but about republicanism and its very particular strain of thought, which has nothing to do with the identity of the monarchy, the Crown or getting rid of the Queen or any members of her family—they do that by themselves—but with the insight, which Patrick Harvie correctly identified, that the Government is accountable to us and not the other way around. You do not have to be in favour of independence to believe that; you do have to favour localism and the idea that the

Government is something that should happen with and for us—not to us.

The book tried to give voice to that insight. I do not know whether we were successful, but *The New Statesman* certainly thought that we were when we made number 48 on its list of the top 50 "red reads"—the best books ever written from the left in the English language. I did not tell them that when I asked whether I could be a candidate for the Conservative Party.

My abiding memory of working with Alasdair is his great, unbridled sense of fun and mischief—often fuelled by drink, particularly whisky, if I am honest. He was very proud of his books, although nowhere near as proud of them as he was of his paintings, thinking of himself as a painter first. He loved prefaces, and I remember sitting in his room when he wrote this dedication—he had been very kind to give me copies of his books:

"To Alasdair from Adam, or was it the other way around?"

I have a wonderful copy of one of his books with both of these dedications: "To Adam from Alasdair" and "To Alasdair from Adam", as if which of us had written the book and which of us was the collaborator in receipt of it mattered.

Sandra White asked whether Alasdair Gray was a radical or a rascal; he was, of course, both. Even though he had a great sense of mischief and fun, he was not always loveable and did not always act as a national treasure. His essay on settlers and colonists, in particular, was a profound mistake. However, let us not fall out about whether we agreed or disagreed with aspects of his political writing. We can all agree that he was a genius—a mad genius, perhaps—and, above all, a great Glaswegian. It was a real privilege to know him and to work with him.

17:44

Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (SNP): I do not know where to start. I was delighted when I read Sandra White's motion, not just because it celebrated the life of Alasdair Gray, but because of its important asks, which I hope we can all get behind.

I was not going to speak in the debate, as you know, Presiding Officer, but I managed to shift things around, as I felt very compelled to say something. It is so important. I was trying to work out why I felt that way, and I think it is because Alasdair Gray has been a part of most of my life from the first time that I read his work, which was in a compilation of his short stories and those of others. I think that James Kelman was one of the authors who had stories in that anthology, but another author in it was Agnes Owens. She is the one of the most underrated writers Scotland has ever produced.

Alasdair Gray just fascinated me, so I want to talk about him because of that and because of "Lanark". I was a bit older than Clare when I purchased "Lanark" to read. My fascination with the author's writing and intellect, coupled with the artwork in the book, was another reason for wanting to talk about him. I want to celebrate his art, including the public murals—for example, in Òran Mór and the Ubiquitous Chip—which are fascinating and wonderful. I have an Alasdair Gray print, and every time that I look at it, I see something different and I think different thoughts. The print is a bit weird; it is one of his later ones.

Clare Adamson: I omitted to say that I have a piece of work from Alasdair. I am a lifelong rugby fan, so it might surprise people to know that I have a copy of "The Celtic View" that he did a special edition of a few years ago. He promised to sign it for me. Unfortunately, he never had an occasion on which that could happen.

Linda Fabiani: She has always got to go one better, eh? However, that was one of the reasons why I wanted to talk in the debate; it is just to celebrate the absolute brilliance of the man, whether it be in his writing, his intellect or the artwork and the imagination behind it. I have always found him a fascinating character.

Unlike Sandra and Clare, I did not have the privilege of knowing him, but I did meet him once and that gave me another thing to celebrate: his absolute eccentricity. Oh, my goodness! I remember it very well, because I got the fright of my life. I was at the art gallery—Kelvingrove, for those who are not from Glasgow—for the unveiling of a memorial bust of Surjit Singh Chhokar. I left the main part of the main hall for some reason and was walking away when Alasdair Gray jumped out from behind a pillar and gave me the fright of my life. I said, "Oh! Mr Gray, what did you do that for?" and he said, "Oh, you know me—how disappointing." We then had a right good laugh and he told me that he was hiding from folk because he was fed up with people wanting to talk to him. We had a really nice chat and I have always cherished that memory.

We also saw that sense of fun in some of his work, but some of his work was very dark, too, as a couple of members have mentioned. For example, "Lanark" was a very dark book, but I think that that reflected the context of Glasgow. Glasgow is referred to in the book as a city that we hardly ever notice because nobody imagines living there. A character contrasts Glasgow to other European cities and says:

"Nobody visiting them for the first time is a stranger because he's already visited them in paintings, novels, history books and films."

Alasdair Gray has done some of that for Glasgow. He was part of that revival that gets talked about in terms of Glasgow being the city of culture and the garden city event, which was driven by our writers and artists. Alasdair Gray was very much at the forefront of that.

I see that I am well over time, so I should set a good example. I thank Sandra for the debate, and I hope that the cabinet secretary will take seriously that request for a memorial for Alasdair Gray. I hope that the Parliament will take seriously the request that a work of Alasdair Gray's be celebrated here, in this building. We celebrate Alasdair Gray and the wonderful memories that he has left us, Glasgow and Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am giving up on the issue of members using first names, as a Deputy Presiding Officer was using first names right, left and centre there—I knew that she would be surprised to hear that.

I call Fiona Hyslop to close for the Government.

17:49

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): We have just heard a short speech about breaking rules and a rule breaker, which I suspect is fitting for this debate.

I, too, am grateful to Sandra White for lodging the motion and securing the debate. The debate has been a brilliant tribute, with outstanding, beautiful speeches from across the chamber. I particularly liked the personal insights from Clare Adamson, Linda Fabiani and Adam Tomkins. I also want to extend my condolences to Alasdair Gray's family and friends.

The level of interest in the debate is testimony to the reach and depth of Alasdair Gray's work. His creative output as an artist included poetry, plays, criticism, historical and political philosophy, painting, illustration and design, teaching and translation. It is also testimony to the widespread sadness that exists in the Parliament as well as in communities across Scotland following the death of the "maker of imagined objects", as he described himself.

It is fitting for the Parliament to remember Alasdair Gray as one of the most influential Scots of the past 30 years and to recognise his significant achievements, which have influenced and shaped Scotland and beyond.

Many of those who spoke in the debate have reflected on words that are inscribed on the Canongate wall of the Parliament:

"Work as if you live in the early days of a better nation."

Alasdair Gray lived by those words, often mentioning them in his own writing. He also acknowledged, as we have heard, that they were adapted from the words of a poem "Civil Elegies" by his fellow poet, Dennis Lee, although they have often been ascribed to Gray himself. The words on the Canongate wall are still relevant today—perhaps even more so now than when he first brought them to our attention.

As he made clear during his life, Alasdair Gray's wish for Scotland was for it to be an independent country. Not everyone here shares that view, but our focus now is on how we remember the man and his considerable work across the full spectrum of his artistic endeavours—because artist he was—and our collective wish for that to be celebrated.

I had the enormous pleasure of meeting Alasdair Gray a number of times, as I am sure a number of members did. The title of today's debate "Alasdair Gray—A Creative Force" is apt for that most stellar artist. He was a force of nature who carried with him an intensity of purpose in all that he did. His idiosyncrasy was part of his genius. I note that in one tribute, he was described as

"an eccentric, mischievous, occasionally prickly figure",

which I think is very apt. His individuality and creativity shone through in all his activities. He also expressed his opinions, which occasionally led to controversy. That reminds us that artists help us all to see the world from new perspectives and in different ways.

Alasdair Gray's achievements also highlight the incredible strength of modern Scottish culture. Nobody has done more to enhance the international reputation of Scottish culture in the past few decades than he did—he was one of the towering figures of contemporary Scottish literature and art. To mention just one example, the stunning mural in Òran Mór demonstrates his outstanding skills as a painter. As a writer, novels such as "Lanark", "Poor Things" and "The Fall of Kelvin Walker: A Fable of the Sixties" are genuine landmarks of world fiction in the past 30 years—they are startling, challenging, otherworldly, but also thiswordly.

The legacy of all artists is their work, as that will live on and shine brightly well into the future. As others have said, Alasdair Gray's work is characterised by an experimentation of form and shape that led to work that was at once instantly familiar but unexpected. He combined the written word and the visual image to form memorable epic narratives. He brought Glasgow—the place that he loved so much—into stark focus in his work. He received the inaugural Saltire Society lifetime achievement award as recently as November

2019, which was a fitting confirmation of his legacy. The award recognised his rich and experimental Scottish writing, as well as an impressive body of illustration, visual art and design.

In the coming months, it is right that we collectively take time to reflect, to remember and to celebrate the work of Alasdair Gray, in consultation with his family. Commemorations are important times for us to consider and reflect on people and events that have a profound impact on shaping our lives, our history and our country, and to consider their legacy. The Scottish Government supports all efforts to commemorate Alasdair Gray and will look to our national and other cultural organisations to consider marking his work in their future work programmes. That could take many different forms and I encourage organisations to think creatively about a suitably broad and diverse response to his life. It will also be important for the wishes of the family to be considered in shaping those opportunities.

It is still early days, but I know that plans are already under consideration in many organisations. So far, Creative Scotland has published an article on its website, entitled "Remembering Alasdair Gray", which assesses his contributions to visual art and literature. I am delighted to see that the National Library of Scotland, working with Glasgow Life, is sponsoring an event at this year's Aye Write festival in March at which a number of Alasdair Gray's contemporaries will discuss his legacy.

I also understand that the National Galleries of Scotland, along with a range of other organisations, is considering how to mark Alasdair Gray's huge contribution to the art world. As we heard, Glasgow Print Studio will stage a new exhibition of his work. The exhibition, which will run from February to April 2020, is entitled, very appropriately, "Alasdair Gray: Omnium Gatherum" and will include new and never-before-seen works, which will sit alongside existing prints made at the studio. I am also aware that Historic Environment Scotland has been asked to consider for listing Alasdair Gray's mural on plaster at the Palacerigg visitor centre door in Cumbernauld.

On securing the future of Alasdair Gray's work, I note that the National Library of Scotland already holds part of his archive, and that discussions about future plans will be going on with a number of organisations. I look forward to hearing more about those plans once they are agreed and announced—we all share an interest in how they unfold.

Alasdair Gray has left us a remarkable legacy. Of course I will meet Sandra White and interested parties to discuss suggested tributes to him. I congratulate everyone who took part in the debate. We can look forward to a rich and varied programme to remember the extraordinary legacy that Alasdair Gray has left us to preserve and to continue to enjoy. The world, and Scotland, are so much richer for the contribution of such a remarkable man.

Meeting closed at 17:56.

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