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Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 16 September 2020

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

Portfolio Question Time

Justice and the Law Officers

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Lewis Macdonald): Good afternoon. I remind members that social distancing measures are in place in the chamber and across the Holyrood campus. I ask members to take care to observe the measures over the course of today's business, including when entering and exiting the chamber.

The first item of business is portfolio question time. In order to enable all the questions to be answered, I would appreciate short and succinct questions, and answers to match.

Transparency Rules (Compliance)

1. **Andy Wightman (Lothian) (Green):** To ask the Scottish Government, further to the commitment made by the Lord Advocate in April 2018 regarding raising proceedings against companies and Scottish limited partnerships for failure to comply with their statutory duties to provide information to Companies House, what progress there has been and whether there have been any convictions. (S5O-04581)

The Lord Advocate (Rt Hon James Wolffe QC): Companies House is recognised by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service as a specialist reporting agency. Since April 2018, the COPFS has continued to work with Companies House to facilitate the reporting of alleged offences by Companies House to the COPFS.

Since September 2018, 13 charges under section 451 of the Companies Act 2006 against 11 individual accused have been reported by Companies House to the COPFS. Of those 13 charges, fewer than five have been marked for summary proceedings. Of those that have been marked for summary proceedings, fewer than five have resulted in a conviction, and some are still subject to live criminal proceedings. I express myself in that way because, in order to meet its obligations under data protection law, the COPFS does not provide statistical information for groups of fewer than five.

As at 10 September 2020, Companies House has not reported any charges to the COPFS under the Scottish Partnerships (Register of People with Significant Control) Regulations 2017, and,

accordingly, no proceedings have been raised under those regulations.

Andy Wightman: We can be fairly certain that thousands of companies in Scotland are committing offences by not filing documents in time. Many of those companies are Scottish limited partnerships, some of which are known to have been involved in nefarious activities. The Lord Advocate says that there has been continuing engagement. I welcome that and the fact that 13 charges have been reported.

I understand that the Crown Office will consider criminal proceedings only when a report has been made by, in this case, Companies House. However, does the Lord Advocate agree that it is in the public interest for Companies House to report potential breaches to the Crown Office as soon as possible, in order that he can consider proceedings? Many dodgy companies are just being struck off by Companies House with no opportunity, as far as I can see, for proceedings, investigations or anything else to be launched by the Crown Office.

The Lord Advocate: It is, of course, for Companies House to decide whether and when to report alleged crimes to the COPFS. The COPFS continues to liaise with Companies House on specific cases that are reported to the Crown. There is also more general liaison, which includes advice to Companies House about the evidential requirements of Scots law in this area. There are a number of practical difficulties that affect the enforcement of such offences, including difficulties in identifying an individual offender against whom there is corroborated evidence and who can be made subject to the jurisdiction of the Scottish courts.

The United Kingdom Government has consulted on corporate transparency and on the law on limited partnerships. The COPFS has contributed to that consultation process. In particular, it has invited consideration of measures that would support the enforcement of those particular offences.

Sheku Bayoh (Public Inquiry)

2. **Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** To ask the Scottish Government what progress has been made on establishing the public inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of Sheku Bayoh. (S5O-04582)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf): Since the announcement of the terms of reference in May, my officials have been working with Lord Bracadale and his team to put in place all of the resources that are needed to make an effective start to proceedings before announcing the formal setting-up date for the inquiry. The key

appointments of the secretary, solicitor and senior and junior counsels to the inquiry have been made. Work continues on the appointment of assessors and identification of suitable premises. I continue to liaise closely with Lord Bracadale and will provide Parliament with further updates in due course.

Mark Ruskell: I thank the cabinet secretary for that update, but I ask him to confirm—[*Inaudible.*]—potential misconduct proceedings that were promised to the family by the Lord Advocate in the event of there being no criminal proceedings against the officers that were involved in the detention and restraint of Sheku Bayoh. It would appear that the Crown Office has not passed the file on to Police Scotland, and to wait a further three to four years for proceedings to be considered would be intolerable for all involved.

Humza Yousaf: I suggest to Mark Ruskell that he should write to the Lord Advocate on those matters. My job is to instruct the setting up of the public inquiry that will examine the facts of the tragic death of Sheku Bayoh. It will do so in a public, transparent way, and therefore, if there are issues as a result of the public inquiry, it will be possible to examine them fully thereafter. However, I suggest that Mark Ruskell raises those issues with the Lord Advocate directly.

Justice System (Young People)

3. **Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what analysis it has done on the role of poverty and trauma in the lives of young people who enter the justice system. (S5O-04583)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf): We have undertaken and supported a range of analysis, including research into the background of those in HM Young Offenders Institution Polmont and Scotland's secure care centres.

In May 2018, we published evidence on the links between childhood adversity and criminality, and the independent care review highlighted the need to end poverty. The evidence shows that understanding the impact of trauma and providing the right support can have a hugely positive impact. In Scotland, we have seen a dramatic change in the youth justice sector, including an 87 per cent reduction in the number of under-18s in custody between 2006 and 2019. We are committed to continuing to reduce those numbers, develop trauma-informed approaches and reduce child poverty.

Keith Brown: The cabinet secretary will be aware that Clackmannanshire, in my constituency, has significant challenges related to poverty and levels of adverse childhood experiences. Despite

the often ill-informed comments about young people that we see in the media, not one person under the age of 18 has been sentenced to imprisonment or admitted to secure residential care since 2015. Does he agree that the whole-system approach that was developed by the youth justice service in Clackmannanshire is effective and delivers better outcomes for our young people?

Humza Yousaf: The member raises an exceptionally important point. Some fantastic efforts have been made by the local stakeholders in turning young people's lives around, and I pay tribute to all those involved in that vital work in the member's constituency and across Scotland. Those efforts minimise the number of future victims. We forget that when we invest in rehabilitation, whether of young people or not-so-young people, everybody wins. Society wins because there are fewer victims of crime.

Since 2011, we have seen major sustained reductions in the number of young people who are being referred to court and sentenced to custody. We are committed to learning from good practices in areas such as Clackmannanshire and applying that across Scotland. We are confident that the whole-system approach gives us a sound method and we remain determined to make even more progress.

I am delighted that the member raised that local issue and I know that many other local authorities will look towards Clackmannanshire for that good practice.

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill

4. **Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government, in light of concerns regarding the term "likely" in relation to hatred being stirred up in section 3 of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill, whether it is reviewing that phrase. (S5O-04584)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf): Christine Grahame will have heard last week's very good debate. I thought that the tone of the debate, across the chamber, was good. Before the debate, I promised to listen to all the stakeholders involved, including those who are critical of the bill and who want to see the bill amended. Those people are being listened to and will continue to be listened to.

I am looking at all sections of the bill and I can confirm that I am of course looking at the stirring-up offences, which include the "likely" threshold in regard to the stirring up of hatred. That is one area that is being explored. I hope to come to the Parliament with an update shortly.

Christine Grahame: The cabinet secretary is right to say that there is broad support across the chamber for the principles of the bill. However, that phrase causes concern. Will the cabinet secretary consider the essential requirement for, or ingredient in a crime, which is intent, or mens rea? In my view, “likely to” does not meet that test.

Humza Yousaf: I am listening carefully to the comments that have been made about the stirring-up offence. If I may make a counter-argument, we have had a racial stirring offence for almost 35 years. The threshold for that offence is behaviour that is threatening or abusive or insulting—there is that additional threshold—but it is based on not only intent, but the potential for or likelihood of stirring up hatred.

That law has operated in Scotland for nearly 35 years with almost no controversy. We can look to that example. The protection that we hope to provide for other vulnerable groups with other protected characteristics is broadly based on the racial stirring-up offence. It is not a mirror, but it is based on that.

Notwithstanding all that I have said, I am exploring that area. The Liberal Democrats in particular pushed me on that and I have committed to come to the Parliament well in advance of the Justice Committee taking oral evidence. I will do that, and I will look closely at that issue.

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): I agree with the cabinet secretary that we had a good debate last week. Following revelations at the weekend that the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill has received the largest number of written responses in the history of devolution, and that the Justice Committee was not aware of that when it agreed its timetable for the bill, does the cabinet secretary now consider that it would be sensible to rethink the approach to the stirring-up part of the bill? That would ensure that the other parts could be sufficiently scrutinised and legislated on to tackle the pernicious hate crime that we all wish to address.

Humza Yousaf: I thank Liam Kerr for the tone of his question. I understand his arguments about timing. I hope that he will understand the counter-argument, which was best articulated by Victim Support Scotland. If we delay the bill beyond this parliamentary term, those who need its protections the most—at a time when the atmosphere for minority groups can be febrile and hostile—will wait even longer.

My commitment is to come to the Parliament as soon as I can, and before the oral evidence stage at the Justice Committee, with some proposed changes. It is for the Parliament to decide the

timetable for the bill. I am beholden to the Parliament.

The first part of Liam Kerr’s question was about this being the most controversial bill, and about the 2,000-plus submissions on the bill. It is not my job to avoid criticism; my job is to make decisions that can be extremely difficult and to ensure that we have legislation that is both effective and protects people’s rights. I go back to the quote by the American author Elbert Hubbard:

“To avoid criticism, do nothing, say nothing and be nothing.”

Our job is not to avoid criticism. Our primary aim as legislators is to pass good legislation that protects people and also protects their freedom of speech.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I thank the justice secretary for that confirmation that he has responded to my call in last week’s debate for him to come forward ahead of the Justice Committee’s stage 1 oral evidence with proposed changes to the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill, and particularly to part 2 of the bill.

The cabinet secretary has referred on a couple of occasions to coming to the Parliament as soon as possible. When and how does he intend to come back to the Parliament with those proposals?

Humza Yousaf: Those are decisions for the Parliamentary Bureau to take. I suggest that the correct approach would be for me to make another ministerial statement. That would give as many members as possible the opportunity to ask questions and to scrutinise what I propose. If the Justice Committee wished me to come to the committee thereafter, I would be more than happy to do that.

I would have to speak to the business team, who would speak to the Parliamentary Bureau, and get agreement from parties across the chamber. I intend to do that as soon as I can, to give the Justice Committee as much time as possible in advance of its taking oral evidence.

Domestic Abuse and Stalking Charges (Statistics)

5. Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the statistical publication “Domestic abuse and stalking charges in Scotland 2019-2020”. (S50-04585)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf): First, I reiterate the message that I, the First Minister, the Chief Constable of Police Scotland, the Lord Advocate and many others across the Government have—I hope—been clear about before and throughout the pandemic:

domestic abuse and stalking will not be tolerated in our society. That is particularly the case during these unprecedented times when there is potentially greater danger for victims. Regardless of local restrictions, our response remains unchanged and we encourage victims to come forward and seek help.

The "Domestic abuse and stalking charges in Scotland 2019-2020" publication provides an early indication that Scotland's new domestic abuse laws are encouraging victims to come forward and report those crimes, while providing police and prosecutors with greater powers to target those who engage in coercive or controlling behaviour towards their partners or ex-partners.

It is worth recognising that an offence that might previously have been reported as an isolated stalking charge may now, where appropriate, be included as part of a course of conduct of domestic abuse under section 1 of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018. It is also worth noting that the domestic abuse publication covers the period up to the end of March 2020 and does not reflect the full Covid lockdown period. However, we remain committed to tackling all forms of gender-based violence and will introduce legislation to the Parliament on domestic abuse protective orders within this parliamentary session.

Angus MacDonald: We know that such crimes can have a devastating impact on those affected. How many police officers and staff have been trained to identify signs of coercive and controlling behaviour? Can the cabinet secretary outline how the new domestic abuse bill will build on those protections?

Humza Yousaf: The training of police officers was an integral part of making sure that we got the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill right. There would have potentially been unintended consequences if we had enacted the bill before that training had taken place. More than 14,000 police officers and staff across Police Scotland completed the domestic abuse matters training. Further to that, training of around 700 domestic abuse champions will sustain change, identify and address good and poor practice, and support and offer guidance to their peers.

As I mentioned, and as announced by the First Minister in the programme for government, the bill that we are looking to introduce will impose restrictions on a suspected perpetrator of domestic abuse, including removing them from the home that they share with the person at risk and prohibiting them from contacting or otherwise abusing the person at risk while the order is in effect. The bill will also facilitate, where appropriate, processes for changes to be made to social housing tenancy agreements to help victims

stay in their own homes by giving powers to remove perpetrators from tenancy agreements.

Those measures are intended to further protect people at risk of domestic abuse and enable them to take steps to address their long-term safety, particularly in relation to housing. We look forward to introducing the bill shortly and I hope that it will command the support of the Parliament.

Quarantine (Country Exemptions List)

6. Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what account it takes of the impact on people who have booked holidays when determining which countries to add to its list of those where people must self-isolate for 14 days when they return. (S5O-04586)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf): I am sympathetic to the impact of border health measures on holidays. I know that Richard Lyle will understand, however, that our overarching priority must be to protect public health. Decisions on additions to and removals from the country exemptions list are based on the latest evidence available about the numbers of cases, transmission, the importation of risk, in-country controls and a range of other factors. We are continuously keeping the list of country exemptions from the quarantine requirements under review.

The measures are based on the risk to public health from international travel. That means that the list of exempt countries can change relatively quickly because the situation in a country can change at short notice. As the First Minister and I have said previously, our advice to people right now has to be that they should think very carefully about non-essential foreign travel, given the gravity of the situation that the world is facing.

Richard Lyle: I agree with the cabinet secretary's comments. However, several of my constituents have been refused total refunds for their holidays, which they cancelled due to the destination country being added to the 14-day self-isolation list overnight.

Companies say that they can refund only for actions taken by the United Kingdom Government and not for actions taken by the Scottish Government. Does the Consumer Rights Act 2015, or any Scottish law, cover my constituents? If not, why not?

Humza Yousaf: I will make a couple of comments in response to that. First and foremost, we strive for four-nations alignment where we can get it. In the vast majority of cases, we manage to get significant alignment, but I am afraid that, in a certain number of cases, we will not. That will not be for any malicious reasons; it will be because

the data on in-bound transmission in cases in Scotland may be different from the picture in Wales, Northern Ireland or England, for example. It is certainly for understandable reasons—where we do not manage to align, there is no concern at my end.

On the detail of the member's question, the operation of any air service is a matter for the individual airline. Quarantine requirements and, indeed, Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice do not prevent an airline from operating any flights, and the Scottish Government does not have the power to prevent flights from operating. Passenger rights in relation to aviation are covered by European regulations, which, in the United Kingdom, are overseen by the Civil Aviation Authority. Further information on passenger rights is available on the CAA's website.

Although the regulation of consumer protection is the responsibility of the UK Government, under the Scotland Act 2016, the Scottish Government has taken on responsibility for consumer advice and advocacy. The Scottish Government funds a consumer service that provides clear, practical advice on all consumer issues. The member's constituents may therefore wish to contact Advice Direct Scotland. Its contact details are online.

Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 (Non-harassment Orders)

7. **Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how it continues to monitor the issuing of non-harassment orders by sheriffs under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018. (S5O-04587)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf): The 2018 act makes it mandatory for the court to consider in every case whether to impose a non-harassment order to protect the victim. It also provides that, where such an order is not made, the court is required to explain the basis for that decision.

The 2018 act has a statutory reporting requirement under which the Scottish ministers are required to publish a report on the operation of the act three years after its commencement. That report will include information on the number of non-harassment orders made by the courts in domestic abuse cases. That information is being monitored closely so that it can be included in the report, which will be published shortly after April 2022.

Linda Fabiani: Last year, a similar parliamentary question was asked in the chamber, and I was pleased that there was agreement to look into the matter. However, I continue to hear reports of an apparent reluctance by the courts to

issue NHOs, despite the clear presumption in the 2018 act. Is the cabinet secretary aware of that? Is that, in fact, the case? How are the Scottish Government, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the Lord Advocate addressing the matter?

Humza Yousaf: I thank Linda Fabiani for her persistence in raising the issue, because it is important. I know that, when the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill was going through Parliament, she took an active interest in standing up for victims of domestic abuse.

I have considered the matter. We are closely monitoring the numbers, and the report is due to be published in April 2022. I can say that we have seen the number of non-harassment orders increase, which gives me confidence. Will it increase to the level that I would like to see? I will take that away and look at it again.

If Linda Fabiani can provide, perhaps offline, evidence—even anecdotal evidence—I would be more than happy to progress that with my colleagues in the Crown Office and the judiciary.

At this point, I must, of course, underline that decisions about non-harassment orders are ultimately for the judiciary to decide on and I am not seeking and would not seek to influence that. However, clearly, it is an issue of intense focus and interest for us, which we are monitoring closely.

Craig McClelland (Public Inquiry)

8. **Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will reconsider its position on holding an inquiry into the circumstances that led to the murder of Craig McClelland, following the decision by the Lord Advocate not to conduct a fatal accident inquiry. (S5O-04588)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf): My sympathies—and, I expect, those of all members—remain with the family of Craig McClelland.

I am aware that Craig's family requested a full review of the Lord Advocate's decision not to hold an FAI into the circumstances of his death. That review has concluded that there was no basis for overturning the original decision. The decision on whether to hold an FAI is, of course, one that is solely for the Lord Advocate to take, and is taken independent of the Government.

As for any further inquiry that it might fall to the Scottish Government to instruct, as I have said previously I do not believe that holding a full public inquiry would be appropriate. There has been a criminal prosecution, followed by two independent reports and two follow-up reports by the

independent police and prison inspectorates, which have prompted significant change and additional safeguards within the home detention curfew regime.

Neil Bibby: No family should go through what Craig McClelland's family has gone through, and no one should have to bear the pain of losing someone so cruelly, or to endure the intransigence of a system that prevents them from getting the answers that they need.

Now that the Lord Advocate has made his decision, it is down to the Scottish Government—and to it alone—to decide whether there will be an independent public inquiry. The Government has previously opposed the holding of such an inquiry, and has opposed a change in the law that would make the holding of fatal accident inquiries mandatory.

In the light of the Lord Advocate's decision, will the cabinet secretary reconsider the Government's position? Does not the cabinet secretary agree that it will be difficult for people to have confidence that lessons have been fully learned when the family of Craig McClelland does not have such confidence?

Humza Yousaf: Neil Bibby is absolutely right to advocate on behalf of Craig McClelland's family, whom—as he will know—I have met on a number of occasions. I say to Mr Bibby that any decision by me, or by the Scottish Government, on the holding of a public inquiry was not necessarily related to whether there would be an FAI, which is a separate decision that it is ultimately for the Lord Advocate to make.

As I said in my earlier answer, there have been a criminal prosecution and a number of reports examining the HDC regime. There have since been changes to that regime. At the time of Craig's tragic murder, about 300 people were out on home detention curfew; the figure is now closer to 80. The HDC regime has therefore been significantly tightened, and it has been improved.

Along with other partners, I wrote to Craig McClelland's family to answer about 34 questions that they had to ask at the time. If there are further questions for the Scottish Prison Service, the Government or any other party, I am sure that they will seek to respond to them. However, at this stage I do not think that a public inquiry is either needed or appropriate.

Constitution, Europe and External Affairs

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members that questions 4 and 5 have been grouped together, as have questions 6 and 8.

Scottish Information Commissioner

1. **Beatrice Wishart (Shetland Islands) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government what recent discussions it has had with the Scottish Information Commissioner. (S5O-04589)

The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey): The most recent discussion that I, as Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans, had with the commissioner was in a telephone call on 21 May. My officials held a catch-up meeting with the commissioner and his management team on the same day, and they continue to engage with his office regularly.

Beatrice Wishart: The Scottish Government's track record on compliance with freedom of information requests was already shaky, but in his recent report the Scottish Information Commissioner found that different rules were applied to requests from people with a platform. Further, in introducing emergency legislation, Scottish ministers tried to reduce public access to information. Staff were also subsequently taken out of the Scottish Government's FOI unit. Transparency is more important now than it ever has been, so will the minister commit to complying with the legislation and fully staffing that unit?

Graeme Dey: The commissioner's recent report noted clearly the improved performance of the Scottish Government in that regard. Beatrice Wishart is right to say that staff from the FOI unit were redeployed to other areas of Government. I make no apologies for that; we were and we continue to be in a pandemic, so roughly half the staff from that unit were deployed to other duties. They are gradually returning. We will staff up, but I say, to be clear, that the priority of the Government is, first and foremost, that we deal with the pandemic.

Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): The Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee recently raised concerns that the Scottish Government is using social media such as WhatsApp to avoid freedom of information legislation. Can the minister confirm to Parliament that that is not the case?

Graeme Dey: That is not the case.

Brexit (Impact on Fisheries)

2. **Michelle Ballantyne (South Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what talks it has had with the European Union regarding the potential impact of Brexit on Scotland's fisheries. (S5O-04590)

The Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs (Michael Russell): Scottish ministers and officials meet their EU

counterparts regularly to promote Scottish fishing interests and other priorities and, in line with the democratically expressed wishes of the people of Scotland, to reiterate our firm opposition to Brexit.

Of particular concern is the grossly reckless “no deal or low deal” approach that is being taken by the United Kingdom Government, which would devastate the interests of the Scottish seafood sector and our coastal communities, and put at risk almost £700 million-worth of seafood exports to the EU.

Michelle Ballantyne: The Scottish Fishermen’s Federation has said that negotiating with the EU for anything other than the UK being a fully independent coastal state would be a “colossal betrayal”. Does the cabinet secretary agree that foreign affairs is a reserved matter and, therefore, that any interference by the Scottish National Party in the EU negotiations undermines the devolution settlement, thereby putting Scotland’s fishing industry at risk?

Michael Russell: I am not negotiating with the EU. Every discussion that I ever have, or which the First Minister and others have, is predicated on that. However, to hear a Tory MSP talk about the undermining and gross betrayal of anybody is rich, on a day when the actions that the UK Government is demonstrating at Westminster are to destroy completely the devolution settlement. Michelle Ballantyne should be in the chamber apologising to members, not making assertions.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): As the cabinet secretary will be aware, Brexit poses a real threat to the ability of the catching and the processing sectors to recruit the workers whom they need. Unfortunately, fishing crew do not feature in the UK immigration shortage of labour list.

What discussions is the Scottish Government having with UK counterparts about how the pressures that are facing the fishing sector might be met through regional variations, in order to allow specific needs in different parts of the UK to be met?

Michael Russell: Liam McArthur makes a good point. Of course, Ben Macpherson, who has been dealing with migration issues, said last week that he is finding it impossible to get a discussion or a meeting with UK ministers. That is the reality of how the UK treats Scottish interests in such matters.

Liam McArthur is also right to reflect on the fact that it does not matter how much fish we can catch if we cannot process it, sell it or get it to market: it becomes irrelevant. What he described is typical of the short-term thinking of Brexiteers—in particular, the Brexiteers who run the UK and Scottish Conservative parties.

UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Bill

3. Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):

To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on whether the scrutiny provisions proposed for the Scottish Parliament in relation to the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Bill are adequate. (S5O-04591)

The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey): The Scottish Government considers that the scrutiny procedures chosen for the power in section 1(1) of the bill represent a good balance between allowing for effective and thorough scrutiny of use of the power and ensuring that there is sufficient flexibility to allow the Government, where appropriate, to respond quickly where legislative changes are required.

Liz Smith: The minister will be aware that at the Finance and Constitution Committee meeting on 26 August, Professor Aileen McHarg of Durham University and Professor Michael Keating of the University of Aberdeen both expressed their concern that between the original bill and the current bill, the default position changed from use of affirmative procedure to use of negative procedure. Can the minister explain why that is the case, and say whether he agrees with the two witnesses that the change reduces the scope for scrutiny in the bill?

Graeme Dey: I am aware of a range of views on the issue. I am certainly aware that there have been calls for an enhanced affirmative procedure to apply, where provision is made that amounts to substantial policy considerations, or something similar. That would be difficult to operate in practice, given how subjective that test is and how difficult it would be to divine. In effect, applying it would involve a subjective assessment of whether a provision meets the test, which could open the door to speculative legal challenges in which it could be argued that a different procedure should have applied.

We think that we have an appropriate, proportionate, workable and effective solution. [Interruption.] I hear the Conservatives disagreeing. They have every right to disagree and they can do so during the committee process. However, we believe that we have a pragmatic and practical solution. I look forward to parliamentary scrutiny of the issue.

European Union Laws

4. **Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government whether, following the end of the transition period, it will want Scotland to keep pace with all new European Union laws. (S5O-04592)

The Minister for Europe and International Development (Jenny Gilruth): It will not be possible to align with every new EU law. Some will operate properly only in the EU, some will be in reserved areas and there might be practical or resource constraints in relation to others. However, we intend to seek the closest relationship possible with the EU, and the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Bill will provide the basis on which to do that by secondary legislation. We will seek to align wherever it makes sense for Scotland to do so, because we share the values that are set out in the Treaty on European Union, which are respect for human dignity, respect for human rights, freedom, equality, democracy and the rule of law.

Maurice Golden: On the basis of current structures, what formal role will the Scottish Government have in influencing the direction or content of future EU laws?

Jenny Gilruth: Maurice Golden should remember what our constituents voted for in 2016. They did not vote to leave the European Union. They did not vote for a power grab from Westminster on the Scottish Parliament's powers. They did not vote for a Tory Government, and nor would they endorse a hard Brexit. The Scottish Government will fight to maintain Scotland's international reputation in the teeth of a United Kingdom Government that is now, by its own admission, intent on breaking international law.

It is clear that the continuity bill threatens the Tories, so terrified are they that we would dare to seek to rejoin the European Union, but rejoin we will. In the meantime, we will keep pace with the high international best practice standards that are represented by EU law, because that is what the people of this country voted for, and Maurice Golden should remember that.

European Union Laws

5. Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what role it will have in influencing the direction or content of future European Union laws that it plans to keep pace with under the proposed terms of its EU continuity bill. (S5O-04593)

The Minister for Europe and International Development (Jenny Gilruth): The Scottish Government has always had to work hard at influencing EU laws in less formal ways, as the United Kingdom is the member state. To that end, Scottish Government officials and ministers will continue to engage with their counterparts where possible.

Mr Lockhart raises a relevant and welcome point. The best way in which to influence the direction and content of future EU laws is to be a

full, equal and independent member of the EU. The partnership approach of the EU is in clear contrast to the utter contempt that the member's Westminster Tory colleagues continue to display towards the people of Scotland, which is one reason why support for independence is now the majority position in Scotland.

Dean Lockhart: The minister talks about a separate Scotland joining the EU. Does she therefore plan to keep pace with the EU stability pact, which requires member states to have a budget deficit of no more than 3 per cent of gross domestic product? If so, can the minister explain where the £10 billion of spending cuts will be made in Scotland in order to keep pace with that fiscal requirement, given that, under the Scottish National Party, Scotland has the highest fiscal deficit of any western economy?

Jenny Gilruth: The continuity bill does not require Scotland to align with any or all EU measures; instead, it allows us to assess on a case-by-case basis, applying our judgment and common sense, whether aligning is in Scotland's best interests. The democratic accountability will always remain with the Scottish Parliament. In assessing whether to align with any given EU measure, we will look at a range of factors such as the practical implications, economic and social benefits, the costs and resource implications and any impact on Scotland's future re-accession to the EU.

The premise of Mr Lockhart's question was about how Scotland can best have influence. As I have told him, the answer is that we can do so by being a full, equal and independent member of the EU.

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): The Tories seem to be having a good chuckle to themselves on the issue of Brexit. I speak to many constituents who are concerned that we will have much-reduced environmental standards and poorer food standards—are they right to be concerned?

Jenny Gilruth: Alex Rowley is correct in saying that our constituents have extreme reservations about that. I do not know about his inbox, but I have been inundated by concerned constituents who are worried about food standards, for example, and they are right to be concerned. This is a power grab on the Scottish Parliament's powers, but we have made it clear that the Scottish Government will not stand for it and that we will challenge it and work against those measures at every possible opportunity.

The continuity bill allows us to keep pace with those high standards. That is not something that the Conservatives should be threatened by, unless

they do not want to keep up with—[Inaudible.]—high standards.

United Kingdom Internal Market Bill

6. Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on whether the United Kingdom Government's proposed United Kingdom Internal Market Bill will take powers away from Scotland. (S5O-04594)

The Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs (Michael Russell): Yes, there is no doubt about that. The legislation is fundamentally inconsistent with the devolution settlements and their operation since 1999. It would centralise power in the UK Government and UK Parliament and would cut across devolved powers by imposing a blanket constraint on devolution and the democratically elected members here. It would reserve state aid and give UK ministers sweeping new powers to allocate funding in devolved areas in Scotland without the oversight or consent of anybody in Scotland.

UK ministers talk of a power surge to devolved Administrations, but that is very misleading—the new powers that the UK has listed are already devolved. The bill makes it clear that state aid is to be removed from being a devolved power to become a reserved power. It also grants greater powers to UK ministers to bypass devolved decision making. The bill is, without a doubt, the biggest threat to devolution since 1999, and we will vigorously oppose it at every turn and in every way possible.

Maureen Watt: I thank the cabinet secretary for that full and clear answer. The European single market rules recognise and allow for policy objectives, such as the health benefits of minimum unit pricing, alongside market economic considerations. Can the cabinet secretary advise whether the Scottish Government has received any confirmation that that would be the case under the UK Government's internal market plans? If he has not, is he concerned about what may happen under the legislation when minimum unit pricing comes up for review?

Michael Russell: It is absolutely clear that any and all of the decisions of the Scottish Parliament can be overturned or undermined by the internal market legislation. I noticed the evidence that was being given to the Finance and Constitution Committee this morning in relation to taxation. The Tory members are sitting in the chamber, giggling away at themselves, because they know that their jacket is on a shoogly nail on those matters and that the people of Scotland are looking at them as people who wish to damage and destroy the institution to which people in Scotland elected them, and they will not take kindly to that.

United Kingdom Internal Market Bill

8. Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what its latest engagement has been with the United Kingdom Government regarding the United Kingdom Internal Market Bill. (S5O-04596)

The Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs (Michael Russell): At the meeting of the joint ministerial committee on European Union negotiations on 3 September, I made clear the Scottish Government's opposition to the UK Government's initial internal market proposals and called for them to be withdrawn in light of significant concern raised by members of the Scottish Parliament and stakeholders across Scotland in response to a consultation, whose results the UK Government has not been prepared to publish.

Since the bill was published, we have continued to make clear our intention to oppose the bill in every way possible. Following that, the Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Fair Work and Culture wrote to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Alok Sharma, setting out in detail the economic grounds on which we consider the provisions in the bill to be unnecessary. The letter highlighted the way in which the mutual recognition model that is set out in the bill cuts across the democratic choices of devolved Parliaments and raises serious concerns about the way in which future trade deals that are made by the UK could impact on lower standards, as has already been indicated by the UK dropping public health priorities in pursuit of a trade deal with Japan.

We have been clear with the UK Government that the common frameworks programme that we have engaged in in good faith over the past two years is what is needed to manage the practical and regulatory impact of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, as was always envisaged, and, as I have said, the alternative proposals that are being put forward by the UK Government present a significant threat to devolution and to the roles and responsibilities of this Parliament and the Scottish Government, and to the everyday lives and expectations of the people of Scotland.

Ruth Maguire: Widely and correctly, the bill is seen as being incompatible with devolution, bad for business and consumers, dangerous to the environment and an impediment to necessary and effective devolved public health measures. What action will the Scottish Government take to stop the Conservative Government in London unilaterally and arbitrarily imposing its will on Scotland against the wishes of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish citizens who sent us here?

Michael Russell: The bill is being vigorously opposed at Westminster in the House of Commons. It would be good to think that all elected Scottish representatives were standing up for Scotland and that, therefore, one could look across the chamber at the Scottish Conservatives and ask whether they are prepared to stand up and defend devolution. Alas, they will, regrettably, be found wanting on that matter.

When the bill goes to the House of Lords, we expect there to be vigorous opposition there, not least because the bill also breaches international law, as the UK Government admitted. We have not and will not rule out other actions, because the bill is wrong and should not pass, and we will do everything that we can to ensure that it does not pass or come into effect. We will do everything that we can to ensure that it does not undermine the will of the Scottish people.

Trade Negotiations

7. **David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what engagement it is having with the United Kingdom Government regarding the European Union exit trade negotiations. (S5O-04595)

The Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs (Michael Russell): The Scottish Government has frequent discussions at official level with the UK Government in relation to the EU exit negotiations, as I said earlier. However, despite the Scottish Government's best efforts since the beginning of the Brexit process, the UK Government continues to refuse the meaningful engagement that is necessary to ensure that the UK position identifies, protects and promotes Scotland's interests.

Given the way in which the UK Government has consistently ignored the wishes and interests of the people of Scotland, including in the extraordinary decision to end the transition period during a global pandemic, the case for Scotland becoming an independent and equal member of the EU, as my friend Jenny Gilruth said this afternoon, has never been stronger, nor has it ever been better supported in Scotland.

David Torrance: Does the cabinet secretary agree that the UK Government has shown complete contempt for the devolved nations and that the actions of the Tories are hugely damaging to Scotland's interests and threatening to our economy?

Michael Russell: I cannot think of a better statement with which to end this session. I entirely agree with it.

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): This morning, the Finance and Constitution

Committee heard that there is a threat that the Scottish national health service, as well as other public services, could be included in future trade deals. Given that level of threat, will the cabinet secretary make representations to the UK Government on that matter, because that is just another threat to devolution?

Michael Russell: I say to Mr Rowley, you bet I will. I make those representations all the time and will continue to make them. Without doubt, despite what the UK Conservative Government or the Scottish Conservatives say, the United Kingdom Internal Market Bill is a major threat to devolution, and there is nothing that the Scottish Parliament does that is not threatened by it. It is certainly more than likely that public services such as the national health service will be assaulted by the bill.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes portfolio questions. My apologies to the members who could not be called.

Sustainable Aviation beyond Covid-19

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-22711, in the name of Colin Smyth, on sustainable aviation beyond Covid-19. I invite members who wish to speak in the debate to press their request-to-speak buttons now.

14:50

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): I declare an interest as a proud member of a trade union.

Last week's decision to slam on the brakes, and in some cases to move into reverse, on the easing of lockdown is a sobering reminder to us all that Covid-19 has not gone away. Bold talk of eradication has been replaced by a realisation that, until we have better treatments and vaccination, restrictions on our everyday lives will be with us for some time to come.

In everything that we do, our thoughts should never stray from the 4,236 lives lost to coronavirus in Scotland—a terrible toll contributing to one of the worst death rates from Covid-19 in the world. The challenge for us all, which we will face for many months to come, is how to battle this pandemic while also dealing with the impact of the actions that we take to do so.

Although Covid-19 is an appalling health crisis, it is, sadly, also becoming an economic crisis and there are few sectors where that is more profound than aviation. It was one of the first to feel the effects of Covid-19 and it is on track to be one of the last to recover. Without intervention, it is at real risk of collapse. It is difficult to overstate the damage that that would do, given the loss of employment, the impact on communities and the cost to Scotland's wider economy.

Scottish aviation supports more than 20,000 jobs and contributes more than £837 million to the Scottish economy in gross value added. On top of that, aerospace provides close to 8,000 jobs, many of which are in jeopardy as a result of the pandemic and our response to it. Analysis by the Fraser of Allander institute for Unite the union found that the knock-on impact of the 2,700 job losses already proposed in the aviation and aerospace sector in Scotland would mean a total loss of almost 5,000 jobs—5,000 livelihoods—and £320 million to our economy.

The direct loss of jobs alone is devastating enough for the families involved, but the consequences go further. Scotland's aviation is key to our economy, supporting sectors such as tourism and attracting inward investment across the country. It connects Scotland to the rest of the

world and provides vital transport links within the country, particularly for our island communities.

Covid-19 may have halted business as usual, with air traffic down by around 90 per cent, but even during the pandemic aviation has kept going, keeping communities connected, delivering vital medical supplies, personal protective equipment and testing equipment, helping to keep the shelves in our shops full, and bringing people home as lockdown took hold. It will also have a key role to play in rebuilding Scotland's economy, but without a sustainable sector that rebuilding will take longer and will be more difficult.

There is a view that helping aviation through this pandemic is somehow at odds with our climate change ambitions. Transport continues to be Scotland's most polluting sector with pollution levels now higher than they were in 1990. Although aviation contributes around 18 per cent of Scotland's transport emissions, compared with almost 70 per cent from road transport, I agree that there is an urgent need to reduce emissions from aviation, just as there is an urgent need to enforce the use of greener buses, to phase out—not bring in—40-year-old diesel trains and to make electric vehicles affordable for people who have no alternative to using the car.

Reducing emissions across all forms of transport, including public transport, is essential. That requires targeted investment and enforcement and meaningful long-term change in the way that we travel. Singling out aviation in that debate may provide a convenient scapegoat, but whatever size people believe the sector should be in the long term and however much they believe that it should be smaller, allowing a global pandemic to destroy aviation and wipe out thousands of jobs of ordinary workers right now, in the middle of an economic crisis, is not a just transition to a green economy.

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD): I congratulate Colin Smyth on identifying in his motion exactly what the Scottish Government should be doing. Will he comment on the so-called quarantine that we have? In my view, it is totally useless and so dangerous, as we fail to track people arriving at our airports who could have Covid. Germany tests all arrivals, tests again days later, and keeps track of arrivals. The answer for our aviation industry is not quarantine; it is to test, test and test again.

Colin Smyth: I thank Mike Rumbles for making that pertinent point. The reality is that the current process is simply not fit for purpose. Later, I will give details of what I believe the alternatives could be. The reason why the Government has gone down the route that it has gone down, rather than having testing, which is the real public health solution, is that the testing regime is not fit for

purpose, and it cannot put in place a fit-for-purpose testing regime at the moment.

I refer to what Mike Rumbles said. Countries such as Germany, France, Italy, Greece and Iceland have systems with testing at their heart to tackle that particular problem. The reality is that that is what Scotland's airports and aviation workers are asking for. Those key workers need our backing now.

That is why Labour is clear that support for our airports and aviation companies and any investment that is made by taxpayers cannot simply be an unconditional bail-out. It should have strings attached to support moves towards a sustainable, greener and more socially responsible sector. Crucially, it must be provided on the basis that jobs, pay and working conditions are protected.

That is why Labour is leading calls for United Kingdom legislation to end the scandal of firing and rehiring on poorer conditions across all sectors. Fire-and-rehire tactics are simply wrong. They punish good employers and hit working people hard, and they need to end.

I was proud to stand side by side recently with members of Unite the union when they came to Dumfries as part of their campaign against the British Airways betrayal. That company was firing all its 42,000 staff and rehiring on inferior terms and conditions of employment those whose jobs have not been axed. I have stood side by side with the Prospect union as it fought for its members at Prestwick Aircraft Maintenance Ltd, which is, ironically, based at the Scottish Government-owned Prestwick airport in my region. The company shamefully sacked workers when they refused cuts in wages of 50 per cent.

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): Colin Smyth talks about firing and rehiring. I do not see any mention in the motion of the bill on that particular issue in the House of Commons from Gavin Newlands MP. Labour in the House of Commons is, of course, supporting that bill.

Colin Smyth: As Keir Starmer made absolutely clear in his address to the Trades Union Congress, we fully support an end to firing and rehiring. The challenge for the Scottish Government is that there is no point in Scottish National Party members at Westminster saying that they are opposed to firing and rehiring when the Scottish Government happily hands over substantial sums of money—in relation to business rates, for example—through one door and companies hand out redundancy notices through the other door.

I have listened to people who support the ending of firing and rehiring. For example, GMB members were told by Swissport at Glasgow

airport in June that their jobs were going. They told me that they warned the Scottish Government in March that that was likely to happen. Today, the Parliament can stand side by side with all those workers, including those in our own constituencies and regions. We can come together and say, "Enough is enough." We can recognise the urgency of the crisis.

The Scottish Government can commit to working with the aviation sector, the trade unions and all stakeholders to agree a package of targeted support. That action should include making the case for an extension of the job retention scheme—or, rather, a new scheme. Not a day goes by when Labour does not make that particular case. We need a furlough scheme that is not used, as Unite the union has said, as a state-sponsored raid on terms and conditions and a subsidising of the cost of redundancy by abusing the job-retention scheme, reducing members' payments and despicably pitting worker against worker through an effective fire-and-rehire proposal.

As I have said, that principle goes for any support that the Scottish Government provides. It needs to attach conditions that protect jobs and workers' conditions. We have seen conditions being attached to support. For example, the Government tells us that the bus sector has a condition that says that routes must be protected. Why cannot we have targeted support for the aviation sector that protects jobs?

The clock is ticking for that support. Although there is much in the SNP's amendment that we support, it is, like the Scottish Government's response to the crisis so far, too half-hearted, and it lacks urgency. Back in July, in letters to unions and airports, the cabinet secretary committed to work with airports on a route recovery strategy. He claimed to be establishing a number of targeted group discussions to take forward initiatives in which the Scottish Government can provide such support. Three months later, we have heard nothing.

When Michael Matheson responds, will he give a personal commitment to meet aviation sector trade unions, which he has so far failed to do, to discuss what more can be done to support the sector? Will he tell the Parliament—*[Interruption.]*

What the cabinet secretary has said is not true. I am sure that he can answer that when he—*[Interruption.]* The trade unions have made it clear that the cabinet secretary has not met them to discuss a package of targeted support for that sector. He has failed to deliver the targeted support—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me a moment. Do not just have a private debate. We would all like to hear what you are saying.

Colin Smyth: I would like to hear the answer to my question: will the cabinet secretary meet the unions to discuss targeted support? Will he also tell the Parliament, and more importantly those workers, when his targeted group discussions will begin? He promised those in July and, so far, we have heard absolutely nothing.

The unions, airports and members want to work with the Government to find solutions, but frankly, we need the cabinet secretary to step up to the mark. The cabinet secretary also says in his amendment, in response to Labour's call for an urgent review of the existing quarantine system, that the Government will explore alternatives. I welcome that but again the question is when that will happen, because the current quarantine system is simply not fit for purpose.

The current system is a crude attempt at a travel ban that is reliant on deterring people from travelling, but it fails as a public health measure by not picking up whether anyone who enters Scotland has Covid-19. It does not do enough to ensure that those people do not then spread the virus, because it fails to robustly enforce quarantine. The most recent Public Health Scotland statistical report shows that less than 5 per cent of those who are required to quarantine under the existing rules are actually being properly contacted.

A recent UK-wide study highlighted by Professor Linda Bauld at the COVID-19 Committee suggested that only a quarter of those who had been advised to self-isolate were doing so comprehensively, and no wonder as the Government's approach to quarantine has been half-hearted. The First Minister said at her daily press conference on 10 May:

"We expect confirmation tonight of a period of quarantine for people travelling into the UK. I have made it clear that I believe this is vital to our efforts to contain the virus in the period ahead, and I would encourage the UK Government to introduce it as soon as possible."

Yet, when I asked the health secretary in a parliamentary question when the Government first began discussions with the Home Office on accessing the information that they would need to check whether someone entering the country was quarantining, the answer eventually came back that that was on 8 June—a month after the First Minister's comments, and after quarantining had begun. It took a further two weeks until 24 June before that process even began.

We need a new approach that puts public health and a rigorous testing regime at its heart. In Germany, Italy, France, Greece and other

countries, testing is part of the process for people who are entering. In Iceland, travellers are tested on arrival and again on day five of their quarantine. That is a system that protects public health by ensuring that each country knows whether someone entering has Covid-19, and it supports the economy by reducing the quarantine period.

Too often, health and supporting our economy during Covid-19 have been treated as if they were two conflicting priorities, but the reality is that our economic recovery relies on keeping the virus under control. Efforts to boost our economy at the expense of public health will be self-defeating. That is why it is important to find measures that support both. If we do not support our economy and do more to prevent thousands of job losses, the health impact on thousands of families will be immeasurable.

Why are we not properly considering airport and follow-up testing as an option in Scotland? Well, Professor Linda Bauld gave the game away when she told the COVID-19 Committee last week that

"The bigger reason why we do not yet have airport testing is to do with infrastructure."—[*Official Report, COVID-19 Committee*, 9 September 2020; c 14.]

We are compromising public health and putting jobs at risk because of the failure to put in place a robust testing infrastructure.

Now is the time for action. It is time to work with the aviation sector, trade unions and all stakeholders to urgently agree a support package for Scotland's aviation. It is time to ensure that that package puts protecting jobs, working conditions and support for a just transition to a green economy front and centre. It is time to replace a quarantine system that is not fit for purpose with one that puts protecting public health and testing at its very centre. We have the opportunity to come together as a Parliament and send a united message to Scotland's workers: we are listening to you and are on your side.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the profound impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on aviation in continuing to deliver its vital role in international transportation and keeping Scotland's remote and islands communities connected; expresses concern at the risk of further widespread job losses in aviation and in connected sectors such as tourism; notes the importance of government measures such as the job retention scheme to aviation businesses; recognises the need for the Scottish and UK governments to provide direct support to the sector through this period to protect jobs and secure a just transition to a green economy; calls on the Scottish Government to work with the aviation sector and the relevant trade unions in Scotland to agree on a specific package of support for the industry; believes that this support, and any future financial support, must include protections for jobs and working conditions, and assist long-term changes within the sector to tackle the climate emergency and ensure a sustainable

future, and calls for an urgent review of the existing quarantine system and for the Scottish Government to bring forward options for a robust regime of airport testing on arrival with follow-up testing at home that places protecting public health at the centre, including supporting evidence and mechanisms for any proposal to safely reduce the quarantine period.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We have a little time in hand. I will let members make up their time if they take interventions as we like to encourage them.

15:04

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson): We do not underestimate the international impact that Covid-19 has had on the aviation industry, nor do we underestimate the importance of that sector to our economy and the challenges that are ahead in helping it to recover.

In March, as Covid-19 spread around the world, airlines that provide our global connectivity for business, leisure and tourism experienced a sudden and dramatic collapse in demand. Quite simply, people stopped travelling and people stopped booking travel for future dates. Travel restrictions around the world meant that the number of aircraft that were operating globally was only about one third of the total available. The impact of that rippled through from airlines to airports, ground handling companies, airport retail, fuel suppliers and the many other companies that make up the aviation sector. That has led to significant job losses and more families facing the threat of redundancy as we approach what will be a challenging winter for the industry.

Over the past few months, the Scottish Government has worked with the aviation sector to provide support where it can. However, I want to impress on the Parliament that the single most impactful action to maintain jobs and put the industry in a position where it can support our economic recovery from Covid-19 would be for the UK Government to intervene to offer short-term financial relief through the coming winter months. We have repeatedly called on the UK Government to extend the job retention scheme for the industry, or to deliver a targeted alternative. I wrote again to the chancellor this week, asking him to make that critical intervention. [*Interruption.*] I will allow an intervention later, but I want to make progress first.

Over the past six months, we have maintained a dialogue with the Scottish aviation sector and the Scottish Trades Union Congress to discuss short-term measures that we can take with the powers that are available to us, and the long-term support with which we can help the sector return to growth. Those discussions have been very constructive

and, by use of the powers available to us, specific actions have been delivered or are under way.

As part of our £2.3 billion package of business support, we have provided business rates relief in 2020-21. That measure, which is not replicated in England and Wales, benefits all Scotland's airports, ground handling companies and Loganair.

Airports have asked us to engage with them on options for testing passengers arriving from overseas, and we are already doing so. We recognise the effect that quarantine restrictions have, in Scotland and elsewhere, on the propensity to travel and on airlines' decisions about which routes to operate. However, we are also clear that we have to mitigate the risk of importing Covid-19 cases, and the current 14-day self-isolation requirement is the most effective way to do that.

Mike Rumbles: Does the cabinet secretary not understand that that is not the most effective way to combat Covid-19? The Scottish Government does not know how many people have come in through our airports with Covid-19, if any. It has not a clue. The only way to find that out is to test and track people properly—not to pretend that we are testing or to say that everyone who is coming in is under quarantine, so it is okay. Covid is coming into this country—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Briefly, Mr Rumbles.

Mike Rumbles: —and we do not know who is carrying it in.

Michael Matheson: When it comes to these matters, we take very clear clinical advice. I must confess that I am much more minded to listen to the clinical advice that we receive than what is directed by Mr Rumbles. Notwithstanding that, I can say to him that we are already engaged with airports on options for testing passengers that could be piloted to help us better understand the risk around transmission. I am sure that members will fully recognise that it is not a straightforward subject, but we have agreed to assess the options that airports will submit, and our respective clinical advisers are working together on developing those options. That work is on-going, and on-going discussions are taking place between the clinical advisers on that matter.

Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con): Have the airports submitted any options yet?

Michael Matheson: My understanding is that, in the past day or so, they have submitted some data to the clinical advisers in the Scottish Government, which is presently being reviewed. Once we have had an opportunity to consider it, we will be in a

position to have further discussion with the airports and look at the issues.

Alongside that, we are also taking forward at pace our route development and recovery work. We have successfully been able to help airports to improve connectivity in recent years, securing new routes to Chicago, Boston, Washington, Doha, Dubai and many European countries. That work is continuing with a renewed focus on helping airports to rebuild our connectivity, with specific cases being progressed for summer 2021.

That work benefits from a strong and well-established partnership, with airports and officials continuing to have regular discussions on emerging challenges, priorities and opportunities. Part of that will involve assessing the changes that airlines are making to their fleets, and aspects of airlines' changes to their strategies—which, in turn, have a bearing on the likelihood of some routes resuming in the near future.

The objective is to help to ensure that the most important routes come back quickly, focusing on our connectivity to global hubs such as Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Dubai; to the USA and Canada, which are so important for tourism and exports; and to the rest of Europe, with a particular focus on business centres and our inbound tourism market. Now more than ever, it is essential that Scotland remains open and easily accessible to our friends in Europe, and that our businesses can easily access important European markets.

I am confident that that work will deliver positive results. Although we are ambitious, we are also realistic. *[Interruption.]* I am sorry; I have to make progress. I have given way a number of times.

The impact of Covid-19 on airlines globally means that that work is more challenging than it has ever been. We have strong competition from peer countries across Europe, in a changed environment, with fewer aircraft operating as airlines downsize their fleets.

In helping the sector to restore connectivity and to rebuild, we will ensure that environmental impacts are mitigated, and we will incentivise or encourage airlines to use the newest, most efficient aircraft on Scottish routes. That is an important stepping stone on the path towards lower emissions and zero-emission aircraft. We want not only to restore connectivity, but to reduce the environmental impact in doing so. We have an opportunity to help the sector showcase what it has done and what it can do in the future.

The importance of connectivity between the mainland and the Highlands and Islands was mentioned in the motion. During the lockdown period, we provided direct support to Loganair to operate a skeleton service, ensuring that all island airports had at least one flight per day to the

mainland, for essential travel and medical supplies. Recent months have shown yet again the essential role played by Loganair and Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd, and their staff, in that important part of our transport infrastructure.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):

Does the cabinet secretary support my and the Caithness Chamber of Commerce's campaign to ensure that we have a public service obligation for Wick to Edinburgh and Wick to Aberdeen? There are currently no flights at all from Wick airport. It needs a PSO, and Government support to get that up and running.

Michael Matheson: The member will be aware that we are presently evaluating the business case that has been put forward by the Caithness Chamber of Commerce. My good colleague Gail Ross has been pressing the issue for a number of months, and I can assure the member that we will give it fair consideration.

Presiding Officer, I am conscious of time.

Given the devastating impact that Covid-19 has had across the world on the aviation sector and all those employed in it, I hope that all members will support our on-going efforts to help its long-term recovery, and support our calls for the UK Government to introduce specific measures to help to prevent further failures and job losses throughout the winter months.

We do not have a window into the future of the aviation sector. We cannot with any certainty say how quickly it will recover. However, we will do all that we can to help rebuild a sustainable industry that supports business, tourism and the economy as a whole.

I move amendment S5M-22711.3, to leave out from "government measures" to end and insert:

"the aviation sector to Scotland's wider economic recovery; further notes the importance of government measures, such as the job retention scheme, to aviation businesses and calls for it to be extended; welcomes the inclusion of airports and ground handling companies in the Scottish Government's package of rates relief measures; recognises the need for the Scottish and UK governments to provide direct support to the sector through this period to protect jobs and secure a just transition to a green economy; calls on the Scottish Government to continue to work with the aviation sector and the relevant trade unions in Scotland to explore immediate support measures for industry; welcomes the support provided by the Scottish Government to rebuilding Scotland's long-term international connectivity and associated employment opportunities; believes that support should include appropriate protections for jobs and fair working conditions; welcomes the steps being taken by the Scottish Government to support recovery in the sector, which balances the need for sustainable economic growth and the need to tackle the climate emergency, and calls on the Scottish Government to ensure that measures are in place to protect public health by suppressing transmission by minimising the

importation of new cases leading to community transmission, while exploring the potential for alternative measures including testing.”

15:14

Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con): I thank the Labour Party for bringing this important debate to the chamber. I raised the matter of the crisis in our aviation sector with the First Minister last week, and, although she offered warm words, little action has been taken so far. However, Parliament can unite around the motion, which we will support. I hope that that will spur the Government into doing much more.

Government action, and then inaction, has caused the crisis. Lockdown was a policy choice with severe knock-on consequences, both immediate and potentially long-term if we do not act soon. In Scotland, we rely on our airports to get us there if we want to connect to the world, but foreign travel has all but stopped.

Across the UK, the aviation industry has lost 95 per cent of its flights during lockdown. Passenger numbers at both Aberdeen and Glasgow airports are down 80 per cent on the previous year and were down as much as 99 per cent during the first months of the pandemic. The reduction in traffic and passengers means that Aberdeen and Glasgow airports have lost their main source of revenue—their costs are the same, however.

Passenger numbers at Edinburgh airport are down 79 per cent over the past year. Airlines have cancelled routes, many of which will not return, and they are making widespread redundancies and reducing their fleets. Virgin Atlantic has announced cuts of more than 1,150 jobs; Loganair plans to cut 68 jobs; the easyJet workforce has seen a 30 per cent cut, and BA has moved to axe 12,000 roles. Scotland’s connectivity, its aviation industry and the jobs that it supports are at serious risk.

During the first four months of the pandemic, UK airports lost just under £2 billion—the equivalent of more than £15 million each day—and they are projected to lose at least £4 billion by the end of 2020. Lockdown has cost Edinburgh airport £3.5 million despite furlough. That situation cannot continue.

Last week, I warned that Scotland’s airports face a tsunami of job losses. With little to no trade, thousands of people who are employed in our aviation sector face a bleak future. I said then that Scotland could end up no longer connected to the world, and that is not alarmist.

Quarantine—even the threat thereof—puts people off flying. Last week, figures showed that no one is tested on arrival at our airports and less than 5 per cent of those who are asked to

quarantine get a follow-up phone call. However, 30 other countries are doing what our airports are asking to be allowed to do, which is to test all passengers from outside the UK on arrival. From testing no one to testing everyone, we could then follow up anyone who tested negative and do a second test a few days later.

The plain fact is that we have absolutely no idea whether anyone who is asked to quarantine actually does it—the system is hopeless. I call on the Scottish Government to beef things up and agree to a trial of airport testing. It can be done: in Italy, a negative coronavirus test is obligatory before a flight. Passengers check in an hour early and are not allowed to board if they test positive. We should at least aim to cut the quarantine period from 14 days to seven, as France has just done. If we do not act, we will lose a sector that we cannot afford to let go of.

The wider Scottish travel industry is fighting for survival, which matters to our economy. Why would we want to turn our backs on £11 billion of economic activity in the wider Scottish supply chain that tourists bring us? Without outbound tourism, we lose inbound tourism—the two are co-dependent. Outbound travel from the UK is worth £1.7 billion a year and 25,000 people are employed in that sector in Scotland.

In August, the Scottish Passenger Agents Association undertook a survey that concluded that 70 per cent of travel agents have experienced a drop in business of more than 75 per cent. We are losing many travel brands on a daily basis—Flybe, STA Travel, Flight Centres, Shearings and Cruise and Maritime Voyages—and, without urgent intervention, more will join that list.

The entire travel sector is at risk, so Governments must use all the levers at their disposal to help. That is why the amendment in my name says that they should review air passenger duty. Some people have called for a temporary suspension of the duty, which might help. Difficult times call for tough decisions, and both our Governments should get their heads together on that.

I think that all parties in this chamber—bar the Greens, who have not bothered to turn up—get the seriousness of that.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No—I will not have that. Mr Harvie is speaking remotely, as many members do. That is very unfair—please take it back.

Graham Simpson: The Greens are not in the chamber.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I beg your pardon, but Mr Harvie is speaking remotely, as is

required. If not to me, which I would accept, you should apologise to Mr Harvie.

Graham Simpson: I apologise to Mr Harvie.

However, we will not support the Government's amendment, because it does not go far enough on airport testing. The Greens' amendment shows that they do not support the aviation sector.

To summarise, we want a trial of airport testing, with follow-up testing if people test negative. We want a review of air passenger duty, with Governments working together. There should also be tailored support for the travel sector.

Health is of paramount importance, but our response to one virus should not be at the expense of all else.

Scotland needs air travel to connect to the world. Let us make sure that, when we are through the crisis, we have a sector left that is able to get us to that wider world.

I move amendment S5M-22711.1, to leave out from "at home" to end and insert:

"that places protecting public health at the centre, including supporting evidence and mechanisms for any proposal to safely reduce the quarantine period, and urges government to review Air Passenger Duty in order to stimulate demand."

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Simpson. However, you gave a grudging apology for an unfortunate remark that made me very angry.

I call Patrick Harvie to speak to and move amendment S5M-22711.2.

15:21

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): Thank you, Presiding Officer; I am happy to accept any apology for that comment. I also thank you for your recognition that working from home, where we can do so, remains the default. I am happy to take part in the debate on those terms. I am grateful to Colin Smyth for bringing the debate before Parliament.

The impact of job losses to date has been significant and devastating for many people, and many more people live with uncertainty about what lies ahead. Economic change is always disruptive, whatever the cause, and we want to minimise the harm that results. We need to plan properly and use the powerful role of the state to support people and communities, instead of abandoning them to market forces. The urgent need for a just transition plan for aviation should be clear, and that need existed before Covid. There is a tragically long track record of talk about transition, but without action.

The Greens have made the case for a just transition in relation to open-cast coal, Longannet, Grangemouth, Hunterston, Mossmorran and the whole fossil fuel industry. Transition is needed where current economic or industrial patterns are unsustainable and have to change, but it is also important to be clear about what transition means and what we are transitioning to. What does "Sustainable Aviation Beyond COVID", which is the title of the motion, mean? Fundamentally, it must involve a recognition that, before Covid, aviation growth went too far. I draw members' attention to the Aviation Environment Federation and Transform Scotland briefing, which sets out clearly that

"Transport is the biggest problem for tackling climate change, and aviation is the most polluting form of transport."

It says that

"Transport is now Scotland's largest source of climate emissions ... and one where there has been no progress since 1990"

and that, although the aviation industry has set itself a theoretical target of net zero,

"there is ... no policy mechanism for holding it to account to deliver this."

There is no rational basis for having confidence that the target can be met with pre-Covid aviation levels. Put simply, if we want to cut aviation emissions—which we must—we need fewer flights than the pre-Covid norm.

The Scottish Government has had long-standing support for new routes; regular motions come from Government back benchers to celebrate growing flight numbers at airports; and, when the airport passenger duty commitment was shelved on the grounds of climate change, the Scottish Government continued with other policies that were designed to achieve aviation growth. Then came the 2019 election and the Channel 4 climate debate, in which the First Minister made a personal acknowledgment of the need to fly less. That was a first. It clearly did not mean the collapse in aviation that Covid brought about—no one predicted that back in November last year—but it was a recognition that the pre-Covid level of aviation needed to be reduced.

For unexpected reasons, we find ourselves once again seeing immense harm being caused because we had no transition plan in place for an industry that needed to contract. Such a plan would clearly have struggled to cope with the events of this year, but it would have given us a stronger starting point. Colin Smyth is absolutely right that what we have seen in recent months is very far from a just transition, but we should not aim to rebuild aviation without such a transition plan.

We do not yet have any policies in place to support investment in new sustainable jobs in communities that have relied on aviation, or to limit the regrowth of aviation to a sustainable level below pre-Covid levels. We do not even have a sense from the Scottish Government of what that safe level should be, and we cannot afford to let that question drift.

Jet fuel consumption in Europe crashed to 5 per cent of 2019 levels by April. Now, it is back to more than 30 per cent. In China, it has returned to more than 60 per cent. It is not only reasonable but urgent to ask how far that figure should go. The latest research suggests that, due to radiative forcing, the climate impact of aviation is about three times that of the emissions alone. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 recognised that and called for an appropriate multiplier to be set, but the Scottish Government set that multiplier at 1—in other words, parity.

On Covid testing at airports, I am happy for the quarantine system to be kept under continual review. Testing might well have a role to play, but we must focus on the need to control the virus and aim to achieve the greatest public health benefit.

Other aviation issues, such as flight path reviews, have also been impacted by Covid. A clear plan from Government and the industry to manage demand would take the threat of flight path expansion off the table for hundreds of thousands of people who live around Edinburgh airport and others. It would also allow a proper consultation to take place to accommodate any technical changes that are needed for flight paths, instead of using modernisation as an excuse to push through increased capacity.

None of the other parties is yet willing to acknowledge in the debate the fundamental reality that there must be limits to aviation. A return to business as usual and pre-Covid aviation levels would be unacceptable. That is why I cannot support the motion or the Government and Conservative amendments.

I move amendment S5M-22711.2, to leave out from “in continuing” to end and insert:

“and on the industry’s workforce; recognises the role of aviation, and in particular its importance to Scotland’s remote and islands’ communities, but accepts that pre-COVID aviation levels are unsustainable; notes that, after previously supporting policies designed to increase aviation growth, the First Minister publicly stated in November 2019 that flying less is part of her personal response to the climate emergency; expresses concern at the risk of further widespread job losses in aviation and in connected sectors in the absence of a just transition plan for the industry; believes that such a plan must include measures to ensure that the regrowth of aviation is kept below pre-COVID levels, and to invest in new sustainable jobs with a focus on communities, which have been heavily reliant on the aviation industry; calls on the Scottish Government to work with the environment movement to establish safe and

sustainable levels of aviation that are consistent with the necessary reduction in greenhouse gas emissions; believes that the quarantine system for international travel must be designed around public health objectives, and urges the Scottish Government to examine the approach to quarantine being used by countries showing the greatest success at controlling COVID infection rates.”

15:27

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): I am very grateful to Colin Smyth of the Labour Party for securing the debate. As a representative for what would normally be Scotland’s busiest airport, I know the immense toll that the virus has had on the sector. Edinburgh airport is the gateway for millions of people who visit our country every year, and it supports tourism across the nation, but it has been a shadow of its normal self for months. Thankfully, it remained open for critical repatriation and medical and freight flights. I am immensely grateful to all the hard-working staff for all that they did to keep those flights going.

However, in the long term, it is impossible for Edinburgh airport to balance the books when 80 per cent of airport costs, which cover security to air traffic control, cannot budge. One third of staff have already been made redundant—2,000 out of the 7,000 jobs across the campus are gone. That is devastating for the individuals personally and a blow for my Edinburgh Western constituency, where so many of them live.

Sectors such as aviation will take much longer to bounce back once we get out of the crisis, so we should be smoothing out the cliff edges. We should extend support such as the furlough scheme, as Germany, France and Austria have already done. Taking the scheme into the middle of next year could avert 1.2 million UK redundancies.

The pandemic sparked job losses, but Edinburgh airport is clear that Scottish Government decisions in response to the crisis have further fuelled them. It says that quarantine has “exacerbated” the number of job losses at the airport.

The Scottish Government’s amendment fails to even acknowledge that there are problems, but the list is very long. There was no quarantine system until six months into the global pandemic, and the Spanish quarantine was turned off on a Monday so that it could be switched back on by the following Saturday—air bridges come with a degree of uncertainty and we all know that the decisions are based on watching the rates in other countries, but that was total chaos.

The justice secretary said that 20 per cent of people were being spot-checked in June, when the actual figure at that time was zero. Contact

tracers have been unable to find more than 800 people. That number is rising and the Government has not even been measuring how many of those in quarantine become ill. Therefore, we do not know which air bridges are working to stop the spread of the virus. Edinburgh airport described the current system as a

“travel ban in all but name”.

Badly implemented, poorly policed and sapping confidence—those are its words, Presiding Officer. I know that that was not the intention of ministers, so this mess needs sorting out. A robust system would help the sector find its feet and boost consumer confidence and, critically, I am convinced that it could achieve so much more in the protection of public health and the prevention of the further importation of the virus.

In response to questions from Willie Rennie last week, Professor Linda Bauld told a committee that airport testing would be required. Airport testing with follow-up testing at home could have twin benefits. Professor Bauld argued that it could improve quarantine compliance and pointed to one study that suggested that only 25 per cent of people who were advised to self-isolate were doing so comprehensively.

Public health could be better protected if there was knowledge that either tests or testers would turn up during quarantine. Compromising safety is not an option, but quarantine testing could allow people returning from abroad or visiting to get on with their lives sooner. That possibility is so important to the viability of airports such as Edinburgh. The Scottish Government needs to do the work on that. It needs to acquire and share the science, and to look at what France, Estonia and Germany have all been doing.

Professor Bauld also told us last week that the bigger reason why we do not have airport testing is infrastructure. Since then, the testing system has plunged deeper into chaos. The test half of the test and protect system is falling down. If the Scottish and UK Governments cannot get that right, it is not just our aviation industry that will be in big trouble; so too will our schools, the NHS and our care homes.

During the debate, I am very mindful that the pandemic is not the only pressing threat that faces humanity right now. The climate emergency cannot wait, and aviation needs to play its part. That is why we successfully opposed the Scottish National Party's plan to slash air passenger duty and it is why I cannot fathom the SNP's support for a third runway at Heathrow, which will bring 600,000 tonnes of new emissions to Scotland by 2040.

Edinburgh, like the rest of Scotland, needs aviation for tourism and its economy, but we need

it to be greener too. Grounded flights, people working from home, far fewer tourists buzzing up and down the Royal Mile—that all feels huge, but for the climate it is not. Experts are already telling us that the changes from Covid will barely register as a blip in humanity's continued contribution to climate change. However, the route map to making aviation sustainable is not to let the economic impact of coronavirus do its worst and shred through livelihoods; it requires systems change, and Governments need to reach for that—including in their discussions with airlines and airports. Edinburgh airport knows that too. It says that it is important that the Government sets a price for its interventions. It is possible to get those transition plans, accelerate decarbonisation, attach green strings and support jobs.

We are still firmly in the clutches of this virus. Lives and livelihoods are under threat. I believe that the changes that we have outlined today and those that are outlined in Colin Smyth's excellent motion, which we will support at decision time, can protect both of those. Thousands upon thousands of workers in my constituency are crying out for this Parliament and this Government to do something to step in to help with testing and quarantining and to give more support as part of the picture.

15:34

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): Airports have ground to a halt in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The industry is collapsing, and some think that there might be no return if no help is offered. That is the reality today.

The reality is that the unions and some political parties are very concerned about the short, medium and long-term prospects for our aviation industry. Job losses are expected to be on the scale of the collapse of the mining industry in the 1980s, and I do not think that that is an exaggeration. The impact on the wider economy is acute. Airline capacity is already shrinking; some airlines have already permanently scrapped their planes. We must understand that to understand the potential devastation and the prospect of any real recovery.

The Scottish Government does not so far seem to recognise the scale of the impending disaster. Michael Matheson and other ministers are too quiet while it unfolds. I heard the cabinet secretary promise three months ago that there was a long-term recovery plan. We must hear more about that. We need the cabinet secretary's assurance that some of the powers that are within his gift are being used and that he recognises the scale of the problem.

Unite the union has warned for months about the depths of the crisis and the horrendous attack on terms and conditions that Colin Smyth talked about. If that is allowed to happen without conditionality attached to any Government funding, it will spread across the country and to other sectors, unless we get a grip. As the Labour motion makes clear, we demand a specific package of support for the aviation industry, which should include protections for jobs and for working conditions.

However, it must be understood that this is about the wider economy and not just airports. As other speakers have said, the policy of self-regulated quarantine on return from an at-risk country is not working. Although my evidence is anecdotal, I have been counting the number of times that I have heard about people not adhering to quarantine: the number of cases that I have counted is in double figures. If it was adhered to, and if people were observing 14 days' quarantine, it might be accurate for the Government to say that that is the most effective way to stop the spread of the virus, but most ordinary people do not think that it is the most effective way.

I hope that we are at one on the issue. We are not arguing for a policy change that could create a public health risk. We support the Government in seeking a policy that protects public health. However, the policy is killing the industry, and there is another way to achieve those same aims.

In Germany, the financial sector has returned to some normality and workers have returned to their offices. The reason for that is simple: mass testing. On landing at Frankfurt airport Channel 4's Paul McNamara reported last night that there is no 14-day quarantine in Germany. It is not perfect, but he said that it is the best way without locking everything down.

I ask Government ministers: is it the lack of capacity that ties them to their current policy, or is it that they do not think that testing could solve the problem? Airports have called for a pilot of testing. I am pleased that the First Minister seems to have left the door to that idea open.

Michael Matheson: The current clinical advice on moving to an airport testing regime is that it carries a greater risk than that of the existing quarantine arrangements. I respect and understand the points that the member has made about the challenges of the existing quarantine arrangements, but the clinical advice is that the risk of importing the virus increases after any move to an airport testing regime. We are undertaking some analysis, in partnership with the clinical advisers from the airports, to understand that risk in greater detail. Different countries will deal with the risk in different ways.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: It is all right, Ms McNeill—you will get all that time back.

Pauline McNeill: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

That is the heart of the matter, but I have to ask the cabinet secretary why 30 countries are using some form of airport testing. Why are Ireland, Iceland and Germany using it if we are not? The Government must answer that question.

We must take clinical advice seriously. People write to me about quarantine. Some people are adhering to it. Some people cannot, or do not want to, because they have jobs in which they do not get sick pay. Most people I talk to say that, if everybody adhered to the quarantine policy, that would be all right. We have to weigh up what the most effective policy would be.

I believe that the First Minister has left the door open, and she is right to do that. The airports are telling her that, if she does not change the policy and is not satisfied that what is proposed will still protect public health, we will see mass job losses. In Glasgow, the city that I represent, the figure is predicted to be about 5,000. That is a big number and it is a big issue for us in Parliament.

I turn to the issue of the just transition to a greener system, which Colin Smyth began to address. We all signed up to the idea that people would take fewer flights and that there would be a just transition. However, it needs to be done in a planned way and should not be done on the back of an economic crisis, with the industry spiralling into disaster. I cannot agree with the Greens' approach to the issue. There is no chance that Glasgow airport will return to last year's levels. In fact, the current thinking is that recovery will take five or six years or even longer without Government support. It is unfortunate that the Greens could not at least join with Labour on our motion today, with the caveats and positions that they want to take on a just transition, because first and foremost the issue is about jobs and our economy right now.

There are only two flights from Glasgow to London now and there used to be eight. We might not want to go back to eight, but two will not be enough to sustain the business that Glasgow businesses need, and for many businesses, the train is not an alternative. Perhaps on another day we can discuss with the cabinet secretary the failings of the rail network.

We should recognise that passengers are nervous about travelling. However, those who do travel do not have confidence in travelling under the current policy. The position of the Scottish and UK Governments appears to be that a negative test on arrival does not mean that a person does not have Covid, so that point has to be acknowledged. However, Graham Simpson has

spoken twice in the chamber on what I believe is the airports' position on testing, which I ask the cabinet secretary to acknowledge. The fact is that many countries have a double test—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must wind up. I gave you another minute and a half.

Pauline McNeill: Right. Thank you.

It is not about eradicating the cost-free policy; it is about reducing the time taken so that confidence in travelling might come back.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I measure how long an intervention takes, by the way. We measured how much time the cabinet secretary's intervention took out of your speech.

15:41

George Adam (Paisley) (SNP): This debate comes at a difficult time for everyone. It is a time like no other—a time of great challenge and a time of unknown futures, which is the part of the issue that I will talk about.

I speak in the debate for two important reasons. First, as everyone knows, Glasgow International Airport is actually in Paisley. Secondly, I want to highlight the importance of the airport to the economy of both Paisley and Renfrewshire. The second point is the main focus of my speech. Glasgow airport supports in excess of 10,000 jobs, but that is not the only reason why it is important. Its geographical position is vital in connecting business and Scotland to the world, and in connecting people to Scotland's many islands.

Aviation is threatened by not just Covid-19 but the loss of consumer trust in aviation, as has been mentioned. I can honestly understand why people would not want to spend two to three hours packed together in a metal tube, breathing recirculated air during the coronavirus pandemic. However, the challenge that we face is that an important sector of our economy is struggling. How do we deal with that? I believe that we need to protect what we have, which means ensuring that we still have our aviation infrastructure if—or when—we come out the other end of this. That means protecting jobs and ensuring that Glasgow airport can rebuild in the future.

Glasgow airport is responsible for how it deals with its staff, but in order to help the airport, it is important that the job retention scheme continues. As we live through the scary times of a worldwide pandemic, there will obviously be challenges for aviation, and the UK Government should follow the lead of nations such as Germany, which has continued its furlough scheme for another year. If a sector in our economy is affected to the extent that aviation is affected, it is only logical to continue the furlough scheme. As long as

consumer confidence is at its current low level, there will be no mad dash to the skies and beaches of Europe, so if an industry such as aviation continues to struggle, the UK Government must continue the job retention scheme.

I would go as far as to say that the continuation of the scheme is our starting point in the debate, and I find it strange that the Labour Party has not said the same. Why has Labour left that point out of its motion? Colin Smyth mentioned it during his speech, but it is not in the motion. That is ironic because, in his letter to the Prime Minister yesterday, Len McCluskey said:

“Winter and Christmas are fast approaching and the recent rise in the ... infection rate is very concerning, as your recent ‘rule of six’ ruling underscores, but it also indicates that any ... ‘normal’ consumer behaviour and economic activity will not return for some time.

It is therefore vital that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is extended and that there is a comprehensive plan drawn up for sector specific support.”

We have to ask ourselves why the Labour Party is not today supporting that call by Len McCluskey and Unite. *[Interruption.]*

The job retention scheme extension is the most important issue in the debate. We are 45 days away from the UK Government pulling away that support mechanism, which is vital to families in Scotland. *[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Sorry—just a minute, Mr Adam. In a quiet chamber, little chats get very loud. Two members are at it again.

George Adam: A person could probably receive a redundancy notice over that 45-day period. It is an absolute disgrace for Graham Simpson to acknowledge that there is a potential tsunami of job losses but not to argue for continuing the job retention scheme.

Colin Smyth: The member accuses me of not supporting Unite the union, but he may want to look at some of the representations that it has made to the Scottish Government, which it has called on to take action to support sector. Labour is clear: we support a new furlough scheme that has conditionality attached to it to stop jobs being lost. Why does Mr Adam not support conditionality?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Before Mr Adam responds, I hope that people listening remotely heard you, Mr Smyth. I know that it is polite to look at the member you are addressing, but try to speak to your microphone.

George Adam: One answer to Mr Smyth is that, if he believes in that so much—if he thinks that it is such an important part of the debate and he wants to protect jobs—he should not try to talk the Tories into supporting his motion, just because he wants

to beat the Government today. This is about real people, real lives and real jobs.

We are all responsible for ensuring that Covid-19 does not spread, and the problem with airports and any increase in traffic is the potential importation of the virus from elsewhere. We need to be careful.

As Paisley's MSP, it is difficult for me to say that at the same time as worrying about the jobs in the industry. That is why I say that the UK Government must continue the job retention scheme, because that is what will make a difference to the industry and ensure that the jobs are still there if and when we come out of this.

We are living in a very difficult time. All of us, regardless of which party or Parliament we belong to, need to look for solutions. There is no point in any of us making petty points in the debate. We are literally dealing with life and death. Today, let us all keep the heid and ensure that we are all part of the solution and not engaging in some pointless academic debate. I ask members to always remember, please, that the people we are discussing are the people whose jobs are at stake. There are far more important than any of us in the chamber.

15:48

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con): There are not many sectors that have been as deeply affected by the pandemic as the aviation industry has been.

The significant decrease in air passenger numbers is having a severe impact. In the UK, the aviation industry is facing a potential loss of more £20 billion this year. It is a worrying time for those who are employed directly by airlines and airports and for those whose livelihoods rely on a functioning aviation sector.

Clearly, the size and scale of the UK Government's interventions have saved tens of thousands of jobs. Hundreds of millions of pounds have been paid to the industry through the job retention scheme. British Airways alone furloughed 22,000 employees—more than half its workforce. British Airways, EasyJet, Wizz Air and Ryanair have accessed an additional £1.8 billion through the Covid-19 corporate financing facility.

Unfortunately, despite the unprecedented size of the UK Government's interventions, we have seen redundancies on a wide scale, with tens of thousands of jobs either lost or at risk across some of the biggest operators in the aviation sector. Every week, we hear of more redundancies and more jobs being at risk. The scale is staggering. Last week, another 1,150 jobs were lost at Virgin Atlantic, and 68 jobs went at

Loganair—an airline that is a lifeline for Scotland's remote and island communities. Unfortunately, with the industry being on its knees, the magnitude of those losses will not come as a shock to anyone.

The impact on the industry has already filtered through to its supply chains. In my region, that was brought home by the news that 700 jobs would be lost at Rolls-Royce's civil aerospace facility at Inchinnan, brought about by a drop in orders as a result of the pandemic. Those redundancies will have a devastating impact on the people and communities affected by them.

More and more job losses in the aviation sector are likely over the weeks and months ahead. We need action, and we need it now. I urge the Scottish Government to work closely with the UK Government as it develops and implements its aviation recovery plan, and to consider all available interventions at its disposal in order to support the sector and its employees at this time.

Kenneth Gibson: Does Mr Golden believe that the UK Government should support what is known as the fire and rehire bill, which Gavin Newlands MP has introduced to the UK Parliament? A number of Conservative MPs have said that they will support that bill. Should the UK Government do so, too?

Maurice Golden: I will come on to that. However, in general, I would not support the practice of firing employees and then trying to rehire them on reduced terms and conditions. I do not believe that responsible companies would go down that particular route.

As my colleague Graham Simpson said, the Scottish Government should look again at introducing coronavirus testing at Scottish airports. Industry leaders have made it clear that such a move could be vital to the survival of the industry and would ultimately protect jobs. The Scottish Government should also undertake a review of air passenger duty and explore the impact that a reduction in current rates would have on airlines during these desperate times.

Furthermore, the aviation industry workforce is highly skilled and highly trained. It is therefore vital that it is not dismantled before the industry has had a chance to recover. I call on the Scottish Government to explore further how it might support skills retention in the industry and if, that is not possible, how it might support individuals who have lost their jobs to find new employment.

Michael Matheson: Mr Golden has raised an important point about skills retention in the sector. A critical element of that is the certification process, which enables airside staff to hold their certificates for extended periods of time. Given that aviation is a completely reserved area, does

he agree that the UK Government should proactively consider relaxing the existing timescales for applications for airside operatives' certificates? It should also explore how it might flex those to support people currently working in the sector in getting back into it when opportunities arise. The Scottish Government has raised that issue with the UK Government but, to date, it has not addressed it.

Maurice Golden: I have been quite clear that I agree that both the UK and Scottish Governments have roles in retaining aviation staff, including looking at the specific issue that Mr Matheson raised on certification and ensuring that, if skills cannot be kept within the industry, they are redeployed for the benefit of the wider Scottish economy. Retaining staff and skills will be critical as we look forward towards recovery. Although airlines need to act with a commercial focus at this time, I urge all operators not to use the pandemic as an opportunity to rewrite staff terms and conditions unfairly or to impose unjust restructuring measures.

It is clear that this is a difficult time for the aviation sector and that there will be more challenging times ahead, but the industry is far too important to Scotland for us to allow it to be decimated. In my own region, the importance of Glasgow airport to the local community is massive. It employs thousands of individuals and contributes more than £1 billion to the Scottish economy each year, and similar comments could be made about Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Inverness, Dundee and Prestwick airports.

I call on the Scottish and UK Governments to do all that they can to support the industry, including our baggage handlers, cabin crew, airport logistical staff and the tens of thousands of other individuals employed directly and indirectly in the sector. These are desperate times, and they need all the help that they can get.

15:55

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab): I welcome this Scottish Labour debate on the aviation sector, which I know will be of interest to many workers in my region. I support the motion in Colin Smyth's name.

We need an urgent plan, strategy and package of support from the Scottish Government to save aviation jobs. That should include sector-specific support with conditionality on jobs, and it should be agreed in conjunction with the trade unions GMB and Unite, as well as with Scotland's airports. It is also vital that we have a robust testing regime for air passengers.

It is clear from the debate so far that most people understand the need for sustainable travel

options. However, most people also recognise that air travel is still a necessity for many of us. Air travel has opened up Scotland to the world as well as having opened up the world to Scots. It is a hugely valuable part of our economy. Like other members, I cannot emphasise enough how important it is to my area. In the West Scotland region, Glasgow airport is a key driver of growth and is quite simply the backbone of the Renfrewshire economy.

In 2018, it was estimated that Glasgow airport contributed £1.4 billion to the Scottish economy. It supports over 30,000 jobs throughout Scotland. Many thousands of those jobs are available to my constituents, and are jobs that cannot be easily replaced.

In 2017, the airport handled more than £3.5 billion-worth of goods. As Glasgow Airport Ltd's managing director Mark Johnston said,

"when Glasgow Airport succeeds Scotland shares the benefit".

However, far from succeeding in the face of the pandemic, our airports, our aviation industry and our world-leading aerospace sector are in crisis. In Renfrewshire and the west, we know only too well the costs of deindustrialisation. We are still living with the scars of industrial decline from the 1980s, which was symbolised in Renfrewshire by the closure of the car plant in Linwood. I am sorry to say that we risk this happening all over again with the decline of the key sectors of the Renfrewshire economy in 2020—aerospace and aviation.

Unemployment in Scotland is rising at twice the rate of unemployment in the UK as a whole. According to the latest labour market statistics, the claimant count in Renfrewshire has nearly trebled. As we have heard from Colin Smyth, the Fraser of Allander institute is forecasting a loss of up to 5,000 jobs in civil aviation and aerospace, which are pivotal sectors for my community.

Yesterday, we read that the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland has signed a lease on premises in Renfrew to develop with Boeing an £11.8 million project that will look into manufacturing processes and technology that are related to metallic components. That project depends on there being a future for aviation and aerospace in Scotland.

Rolls-Royce, with its state-of-the-art facility at Inchinnan, is the jewel in the crown of Scottish aerospace. It, too, depends on a healthy world economy in which aviation is thriving. In the era of environmental awareness, Rolls-Royce is a key player in designing and developing aero engines that are more efficient and less environmentally damaging. Without healthy aviation and aerospace industries, my West Scotland region will be devastated; 700 workers at Rolls-Royce are

already losing their jobs, and many have been made redundant in the past few weeks.

The measures that have been announced by the Government to protect jobs in the sectors clearly have not worked. Not one of the jobs at Rolls-Royce in Inchinnan has been saved. Thousands of Scots in the sectors have already lost their jobs, with thousands more set to lose theirs with the premature ending of the furlough scheme. This is an unprecedented crisis that requires an equally unprecedented Government response.

It is right to recognise that certain sectors need special help: surely, special help is justified for the aviation and aerospace industries. How can our economy recover and prosper if Glasgow airport cannot survive? How can we provide the manufacturing jobs of tomorrow without Rolls-Royce jobs? If we are to preserve a successful future for ordinary Scots, we need action such as we have never seen before. We need not merely to extend the job retention scheme, important though it is; we need to build the industries back up. We need not to appease companies that fire and rehire and companies that turn their backs on us such as Rolls-Royce, but to push back against offshoring and redundancies with a plan for urgent action.

The current crisis demands that the Scottish Government use its full range of powers and every penny that it has to work in partnership with councils, companies and organisations that have stakes in aviation and aerospace. We need imagination and a will to succeed. We need economic leadership—which has, to be honest, been lacking for a decade. We need to be big enough to set aside differences and work for the common good.

The crisis demands a Scottish response, but it also requires a concerted and joined-up UK approach, particularly in the perilous Brexit world in which we live. It is not either/or; we need both. The Scottish Government, the UK Government and other devolved Administrations should come up with an emergency programme for aviation and aerospace jobs.

If our aviation and aerospace industries collapse, we will be at a permanent disadvantage in the world economy. That is why my Labour colleagues and I are calling on the Scottish Government to promise that it will use its powers and resources, and work with trade unions, the airports, the other devolved Administrations and the UK Government to develop a plan of action that is equal to the scale of the challenge that confronts us, and which starts with the objectives in Colin Smyth's motion.

We need a plan and strategy because, despite the warm words from the First Minister and the cabinet secretary and in the Government amendment, there is no meaningful plan to save the airport jobs of my constituents and there is no plan or strategy to replace those jobs. That needs to be changed urgently.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am sorry, but you must conclude.

Neil Bibby: The thousands of my constituents whose jobs rely on aviation and aerospace, along with their families, will not forgive us if we allow our political differences to hinder an effective fightback for jobs. If the Scottish Government carries out that fightback, it will have our support.

16:01

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): Mr Bibby talked about manufacturing job losses in the 1980s. He will no doubt therefore wish to condemn the record of Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair, who from 1997 to 2007 presided over the loss of 37 per cent of all Scotland's manufacturing employment, including 55 per cent of such employment in Ayrshire.

I appreciate the fact that Labour MSPs are using their debating slot to discuss the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the aviation industry, but I grow weary of their continued failure to recognise that neither aviation nor employment law is devolved. They ask the Scottish Government to support the aviation sector, knowing fine well that fiscal constraints mean that the Scottish Government cannot replicate a furlough scheme in Scotland, which is a constitutional situation that Labour wishes to continue. [*Interruption.*]

I will let the member in soon.

Our focus has to be on urging the UK Government to step up and to support the aviation sector through the appalling situation that we are in. It would be better if Labour were to join us in calling for the return of all powers and responsibilities to Scotland, so that we no longer have to urge the UK Government to do anything, given that so much of that urging often falls on wilfully deaf Tory ears.

On 17 March, the Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer promised to put together a tailored support package for the aviation industry. That was exactly one week before he told the aviation industry that it should just make do with what it had. In a report that was commissioned by Unite, the Fraser of Allander institute estimates that there will be 2,330 direct and indirect job losses in civil aviation, with an overall economic loss of around £140 million to Scotland. The Scottish Government recognises the enormous impact on

the industry and on supply chains and it is doing all that it can, with its limited powers. It is providing business rates relief for aviation, airports and ground-handling providers, which is not available in England under the Tories or in Labour-run Wales.

The Scottish Government's PACE—partnership action for continuing employment—initiative has also sprung into action, and has been working with many people who have sadly lost their jobs due to the crisis. As an Ayrshire MSP, I am very much aware that the aviation and aerospace industries consist of much more than airports. They involve manufacturing, research and development and so on, and their supply chains reach far and wide. Our airports provide jobs for thousands—from high-tech engineering jobs to retail, baggage-handling and security people, with a huge range of skills, aptitudes and interests.

The Scottish Government has long since recognised the specific needs of the industries and their potential for Scotland and Ayrshire's economies. When Prestwick airport was struggling in 2013, the Scottish Government stepped in to purchase it for £1, thereby saving 300 direct and 1,400 indirect jobs. I am delighted that, last year, Prestwick airport made a £3 million profit, having increased its revenue by 46 per cent year-on-year to £36 million. It is therefore disappointing that Councillor Tom Marshall, the Tory leader of North Ayrshire Council, has called for Prestwick airport to be closed and all its flights moved to Glasgow, regardless of the impact on Ayrshire's economy.

Prestwick airport is well placed to become a spaceport, due to its existing facilities, infrastructure, meteorological conditions and transport linkages. That would create potential spin-off opportunities for local employment and tourism across Ayrshire.

The International Air Transport Association predicts that passenger air travel will not return to pre-pandemic levels until 2024, which is a year later than was initially thought. However, there is a focus on and enormous potential in international freight and aviation services. At the beginning of the pandemic, before we had a chance to manufacture personal protective equipment here in Scotland, Prestwick airport was instrumental in taking receipt of PPE. Who does not remember footage of the first flight arriving from China carrying supplies, including intensive care unit equipment and testing kits.

During the lockdown, the Scottish Government established the aerospace response group to help to preserve the industry and jobs during the pandemic, to formulate a response to Covid-19 and to explore opportunities. The economy secretary, Fiona Hyslop, and her counterparts in Wales and Northern Ireland have called on the UK

Government to establish an aerospace task force to help to preserve engineering and other skills, of which there is a wealth in the supply chain. Many of those skills could also benefit other industries.

In chairing that group, the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills liaises closely with union representatives, as he does on a host of other matters. That is vital, because British Airways and others have chosen to use the coronavirus pandemic to fire employees and to seek to rehire some of them on contracts with inferior terms and conditions, including pay cuts of up to 43 per cent. BA has fired about 12,000 of the 42,000 staff that it had at the start of the pandemic and has—as it says—“renegotiated” contracts.

This morning, while giving evidence to the House of Commons Transport Committee, BA's chief executive, Alex Cruz, insisted that it was absolutely appropriate to use fire and rehire threats against his staff. He also said that BA had reached an agreement in principle with unions that would result in amendments to existing contracts rather than firing and rehiring. I was in the Education and Skills Committee all morning, so I have not had a chance to see how meaningful an exchange that actually was.

SNP member of the UK Parliament Gavin Newlands's Employment (Dismissal and Re-employment) Bill 2019-21, also known as the fire and rehire bill, seeks to ban that behaviour, which is aimed at commercially exploiting the pandemic. If the bill is passed, it will amend the Employment Rights Act 1996 to

“Prohibit employers dismissing employees and subsequently re-employing them for the purpose of diminishing the terms and conditions of employment; and for connected purposes.”

By the addition of firing and rehiring practices to a list of actions that constitute unfair dismissal, workers across Scotland and the UK could be protected from having to choose between the two evils of losing salary and losing their job. The bill has achieved cross-party support and the backing of key unions, and would protect many more workers than just those in the aviation industry. I would like to see whether the UK Tory Government will back it.

The perceived ruthlessness of BA and other airlines reinforces the message that aviation continues to be hit exceptionally hard by the pandemic and merits a tailored support package. Scottish ministers are doing their utmost, but aviation and employment remain reserved to Westminster. We must unite as a Parliament to demand that UK ministers deliver a support package that is tailored to aviation and aerospace, in order that we can preserve employment and skills in those sectors and their supply chains.

16:07

Michelle Ballantyne (South Scotland) (Con):

No one doubts the importance of aviation as an industry, and the debate is welcome, given the number of emails that I have received from very worried employees. Because of our geographic position as an island, we cannot just dismiss aviation; we need to cross the seas, and we need to cross them fast in many cases. John Holland-Kaye, the chief executive of Heathrow airport, was right to note that the aviation industry impacts not only on visible issues such as tourism but on the manufacturing industry through the necessity of long-haul flights, with many businesses relying on those flights for their just-in-time supply chains. He notes:

“Unless you get those flights moving again ... we will not be able to get the UK economy rebooted.”

In my opinion, he is quite right. Not only do 80 per cent of inbound visitors reach the UK by air, but air freight accounts for 40 per cent of trade by value.

It is essential for the economy that the aviation industry gets back on its feet, and the best way to achieve that is for planes to cross our skies again. That would not only protect cabin crews; it would help to retain airport staff as well as those in industries that are dependent on air travel. Airports need customers, otherwise they are left paying expensive overheads with little or no income. By June of this year, Heathrow airport reported that it was losing £200 million a month, and Edinburgh airport has advised that 80 per cent of its costs are fixed overheads—costs that accrue no matter how many flights take to the air. I have no doubt that the Scottish Government must also be concerned about the fixed costs of running airports without passengers, given the fact that the Scottish ministers own and operate 11 airports that are not even paying business rates. That makes increasing traffic in airports not simply desirable but a necessity.

Indeed, that is something that Gordon Dewar, the chief executive of Edinburgh airport, highlighted succinctly in a recent open letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice. Mr Dewar noted that a

“dual approach with balanced attention given to health and prosperity”

is the only way forward, citing the need for a robust testing regime and calling the Scottish Government’s quarantine policy

“a travel ban in all but name”.

As he says, that is simply not a sustainable approach, and I believe that he is quite correct.

Airports and airlines need customers, and commerce is the best remedy that we have available. However, we need an effective testing

regime if we are going to tackle Covid continuously. Quarantine does not work, because, for most people, 14 days in one place requires 14 days’ supply of food, and several people have informed me that the places that they have gone to quarantine have told them that they are not supplying meals and that they will have to go out to get them. I leave members to consider what that means for people.

For the sustainability of the sector and for the sake of the taxpayer, simply bailing out aviation companies does not present a long-term solution. We have seen that with firms such as Flybe. Propping up failing businesses is not the way forward; sometimes, market forces should be allowed to take their course. However, financial support is necessary at present, and measures such as the Scottish Government’s moves to waive business rates for airports are welcome. As the Covid-19 pandemic develops, it looks very much like the possibility of aviation returning to a state of normalcy by spring next year is highly unlikely. Accordingly, I ask the Scottish Government to conduct a study into the feasibility of waiving business rates for airports for another six months, if necessary.

As in countless sectors across Britain, the UK Government’s job retention scheme has sought to protect jobs in aviation, and other helpful measures—including waiving air traffic control charges for 14 months, VAT deferrals, the Covid-19 corporate financing facility, the coronavirus business interruption loan scheme and the introduction of a payment plan facility for the Civil Aviation Authority to cover the payment of annual charges—have been generous. As some members have said, companies such as Ryanair and easyJet have accessed £600 million each, while BA and Wizz Air have received £300 million apiece. Sadly, though, that does not appear to be enough. I suggest that both Governments consider introducing holistic measures such as offering tailored financial support to tourism and travel businesses that are reliant on air travel for their customers. That trade is worth £11 billion to Scotland’s economy.

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):

The member says that she does not agree with bail-outs, but she has just given us a long list of bail-outs. Which is it? Either the aviation industry is in trouble and needs assistance or it does not.

Michelle Ballantyne: I do not agree with bail-outs when there is no future for the company. However, as I acknowledged just then, assistance is required at the moment, and I have listed some of the assistance that is being given. What we must bear in mind is that we need the arrival of visitors and we need safeguards, and effective

testing is the most effective way to make that happen.

Trade is what we need in the aviation industry, as in all areas of our economy, and we have to be careful with large-scale bail-outs and financial support. I have heard calls today for continuing the job retention scheme. I would say that, although the UK's shoulders are broad, they are not broad enough to continue paying everyone's wages for ever. We need to understand what aviation is going to look like after Covid, and we need to have a tailored plan that ensures that the money that we are putting in is about sustaining the industry going forward, not just delaying an inevitable—*[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ms Ballantyne is just closing.

Michelle Ballantyne: In conclusion, we need a balanced approach that takes safety and sustainability into account while addressing the fundamental economic realities. The months ahead do not present a menu of easy choices, but it is important that we stimulate the aviation sector through the ebb and flow of business. That is the lifeblood of the industry, and that is where we must focus.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am keen that we do not have to delay decision time. We are aiming for 5.10. I ask everyone to take note of that and to be quite succinct.

16:14

Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP): I am grateful to the Labour Party for bringing this important debate to the chamber. The constituency that I represent takes in a large portion of west and southern Renfrewshire as well as the Leven valley area of east Renfrewshire. Where I live, in Johnstone, the airport is a big presence not just in terms of employment but because of the sound of aircraft regularly roaring over my head. The undercarriages do not quite clip the chimney of my house, but they are not far off.

One of the most disconcerting and surreal experiences that I had during lockdown was the all-pervasive silence across Johnstone and seeing the rows of aircraft on the runway when I was driving through to Parliament. Every day that those aircraft were on the runway increased the threat to jobs at Glasgow airport as well as in aerospace and wider aviation. That highly skilled workforce deserves full support from both our Governments working together. I appreciate that there is a great deal of distrust and mutual antagonism between the UK and Scottish Governments at the moment, for understandable reasons, but this issue is too important to be lost in that particular debate.

I recognise the work that the Scottish Government has already undertaken, particularly through the provision of business rates relief for aviation that benefits airports and ground-handling providers. I note that that has not been offered elsewhere in the UK. The UK Government has chosen not to extend that relief, so that resource has come out of our money in this Parliament.

The impact on the aerospace industry in Renfrewshire as a consequence of reduced demand across the supply chain has been particularly marked at the Rolls-Royce site at Inchinnan, where 700 jobs are going—half of the workforce. By any measure, that is a huge blow to the local economy. In these difficult circumstances, I welcome the work that is being undertaken by the Scottish Government to support staff through PACE and the involvement of the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, Jamie Hepburn, particularly through the establishment of the aerospace response group.

I see Mr Hepburn in the chamber and understand that he will be summing up for the Government. I ask him to give an update on the work of the aerospace response group if he is able to, but to write to me if he is not. A wide range of stakeholders is involved in that group, and I very much welcome the involvement of the unions, noting that the STUC, Unite, Prospect and the GMB attended the last meeting for which minutes are available. I also welcome the attendance of Renfrewshire Council and the inclusion of representation from Rolls-Royce.

One of the key areas of interest for the group is people and skills—particularly apprenticeships and job-loss mitigation, which were identified as immediate priorities. The group is looking to establish a sub-group to have further discussions on aircraft decommissioning, and it sees this as a good opportunity to maintain the skills and capacity for that. The minutes note that it was highlighted that aircraft decommissioning is not about creating a scrapyards for planes but remanufacturing and reusing components.

There was optimism that there is the further potential to create a global centre of expertise, and work is now required to develop a full business case to progress that opportunity at pace. I am sure that all members will want to see that work undertaken expeditiously so that we can retain the talent and skills of those people, which will be vital for our economy going forward, particularly if we want to effect a truly just transition to net zero for the aviation sector.

I pay tribute to the work of my colleague Gavin Newlands MP, who is a constituency neighbour, taking in the northern part of my constituency in Linwood, Craigends and Brookfield. He has been a tireless champion for the aerospace sector and

for Glasgow airport. His engagement with the aviation and aerospace industries has been very welcome, and he has pushed for targeted support for the sector in the House of Commons.

I thank Gavin Newlands; as others have done, I want to ensure that he is credited for the private members' bill that he has introduced to end the exploitative and disgraceful fire-and-rehire policy. I welcome the announcement on Monday that Mr Starmer is now supporting the bill, which was introduced by Gavin Newlands on 22 July, having been presented to Parliament on 9 June, three months ago. It is not about whose name is on the bill, but it is important to recognise that a hard-working constituency MP has addressed the issue in order to represent his constituents.

It would be remiss of me not to recognise and welcome yesterday's announcement of the partnership between the University of Strathclyde and Boeing. That is the latest venture to be set up with the advanced manufacturing innovation district Scotland, which is a few miles north of my constituency. It has been forecast that that partnership can potentially create as many as 200 high-skilled and high-value jobs at the cutting edge of design and technology. That has been made possible in part through £3.5 million of Scottish Enterprise funding. That is exactly the kind of intervention that we need, and it is very welcome to see the Scottish Government engaging with that.

There is much more that I would like to say, but I will make a final point. The UK Government needs to provide targeted support for the aviation sector. That is not a cop-out; we simply do not have the borrowing powers under the fiscal framework to effect the necessary quantum to give that support, so the UK Government needs to do that. The situation is impacting on aviation throughout the UK, and aviation is a reserved matter. The UK Government needs to give targeted support and, most important, it must extend the furlough scheme.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Please keep to under six minutes.

16:20

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): I am very glad that Labour's motion has been able to get a real debate going that is focused on what a sustainable future for the aviation industry looks like and how we can deliver it.

I thank Unite the union for its campaign work alerting us to the crisis in the industry, and Edinburgh airport, which is in my area, for its briefing and the work that it has put in to make us aware of the solutions that it thinks are needed, which we can debate.

As colleagues have said, there are currently hundreds of jobs at risk. Many of those jobs are in companies that operate at multiple airports. That shows how interconnected the businesses that make up the industry are. However, it is not just about those jobs; it is also about tourism and hospitality jobs and the wider regional economy.

The Government's amendment to Labour's motion highlights the rates relief that is given to the aviation sector, which has been welcome. However, Benny Higgins has stated:

"This has been an effective mechanism to provide immediate, broadly based support to business. But it is a blunt instrument. Over the coming months, it will be necessary to deploy more targeted, continuing support in specific areas, and to specific sectors, as part of recovery plans."

Our motion focuses on what can be done by the Scottish Government now. On the points that a couple of SNP back benchers made, the motion refers to the job-retention scheme at the UK level. However, we need more.

This debate has to generate change. The response to the challenges that the aviation sector faces needs to be forward looking. That is why the motion is about sustainable aviation. Aviation has to look beyond Covid-19. With the industry at risk of collapse and services reduced by an estimated 98 to 99 per cent, according to the Airport Operators Association, now is the time to deliver changes to keep the industry going and to transform it for the future.

The aviation sector has a skilled workforce and provides good-quality jobs for people throughout Scotland, and it connects our communities—particularly our island communities. Those benefits have to be protected. Any recovery plan must be tied to maintaining and improving the pay and conditions of the workforce and meeting environmental targets.

The Scottish Government needs to use its powers and learn from other countries across the world to leverage change from business and support that change. Surely saving and transforming the aviation industry for the better means ensuring that dividends are not paid to shareholders until the company is financially viable, and ensuring that any company that is in receipt of Scottish Government support is tax-domiciled in the UK, uses UK suppliers and the most ecologically friendly technologies and fuels, and looks at local investment and development.

I know that the Scottish Government agrees with that sentiment—that was clear in the cabinet secretary's opening remarks—but we have to see action. We need boldness from the Scottish Government. We need leadership, not just headline announcements. Our transport sector

more widely needs support to make the transition that we need.

I refer to Transform Scotland's comments. It is right to say that we need to look at the environmental impact across the transport sector. That means investment in green, low-carbon buses, not seeing contracts cancelled at a time when we need to reduce damaging emissions. It means that there must be not just low-carbon trains but affordable train travel so that people are able to choose trains rather than driving or flying because of the cost of certain journeys. With any Government expenditure or tax reduction, we need to see multiple benefits right across our economy.

Finally, I want to comment on testing. Surely testing is fundamental to the recovery of our economy and our people. What is the point of quarantining without testing? How can anyone plan ahead given that, on average, the advice on travelling is changed every 3.6 days? I listened carefully to the cabinet secretary's intervention in response to Pauline McNeill's passionate speech. He did not address the fundamental issue in Labour's motion, which calls for:

"an urgent review of the existing quarantine system and for the Scottish Government to bring forward options for a robust regime of airport testing on arrival with follow-up testing at home that places protecting public health at the centre, including supporting evidence and mechanisms for any proposal to safely reduce the quarantine period."

The motion does not tell the cabinet secretary exactly what to do; it says what needs to be delivered.

The UK and Scottish Governments need to be ahead of the game and not way behind—not way behind the rest of Europe, including Iceland, Germany, Greece, France and Italy, as others have mentioned. We need action now.

We need to look at the scientific advice. We cannot dismiss the concerns of our constituents who have been through the airports and know that the quarantine system is not working. We have to align the points about the impact of testing and the need for a reliable testing system. It cannot be right that the only testing in our airports is done for people who are sent there to drive in and get tested before going back home, and not for anyone who is using the airport to travel. We need to get that fixed and that needs to happen now.

We need a sustainable aviation industry with decent jobs and a transition to low-carbon infrastructure. We need confidence in the industry to enable that change to take place and to keep the industry going through what has been an unthinkable experience for our economy. However, it will get worse if those jobs are not protected. A tsunami of job losses is coming soon

if we do not get the job-retention scheme in place and we do not get the targeted investment from the Scottish Government that it has at hand to put in place now.

I hope that this debate is not just a series of speeches but that it will lead to urgent action from both the Scottish and UK Governments and that it will have meant something. Our constituents and those who work in the industry need change now.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Members must come in under the allotted time or decision time will be late.

16:27

Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): A good place to start in a debate on aviation is surely with some good news. I welcome the news that Prestwick airport, which was saved by this Government in 2013—saving 300 direct jobs and 1,400 indirect jobs—is back in profit, as of last year, with a £3 million operating profit. That point was made by my colleague Kenny Gibson, but it is worth repeating.

The swift action that was taken by our Government secured the airport's future and gave it a fighting chance to recover and prosper. Prestwick airport is crucial for the aerospace sector and the Ayrshire economy as a whole, as we hope to capitalise on the growth deal and the spaceport, if that comes our way. Prestwick airport is a strategic asset for Ayrshire and the Scottish Government is rightly doing all that it can to nurture it and secure its future.

Now, of course, we are facing a different battle. We need to try our best to stick together locally and internationally to help the aviation sector get through this crisis. The impact on the sector is wide and varied and affects us in Ayrshire in particular.

Global aircraft manufacturers' decisions have an impact on the supply chain, from Boeing in Seattle to the wing makers in Ayrshire. At the end of July, Boeing had reduced its deliveries of aircraft from 240 in the first half of last year to only 70 this year and only 20 from April to June. Airbus is in a similar position, with orders being delayed. Those two giant supply lines stretch across the Atlantic into the Scottish aerospace sector; the leading edges for wings for Boeing and Airbus are made in Ayrshire.

Jobs have already been lost. Around 270 jobs have been lost at GE Caledonian and about 180 at Spirit AeroSystems. Rolls-Royce and Wyman-Gordon have shed nearly 800 jobs. The consequent impact on our economy is substantial, with a loss of anything between £90 million and £140 million when the knock-on effects are

considered. I note that some aspects of Airlines UK's recent letter to the Prime Minister calling for him to intervene chimes with some of our views about what needs to be done on job retention, for example. It also asks for things such as air passenger duty waivers, regional air corridors and Covid testing trials with five-day quarantine arrangements. Perhaps I can leave that with the minister to offer a view on later.

I am not sure whether those asks will work, but the industry does not expect a recovery to pre-2019 levels for at least four years. As a result, it is consulting on around 30,000 job losses, and many more jobs in the supply chain are affected. The letter further claims that other jurisdictions put in place support packages for their industries some time ago, which I hope to mention before I close.

Last week I met, online, colleagues from East Ayrshire Council, from the SNP, Labour and Tory groups. They were united in their calls for help from wherever it may come. They, too, are particularly keen to protect Prestwick at this vital time in its recovery. The three Ayrshire councils are working to put together local schemes that might help sustain jobs and provide opportunities to help the industry get through this period.

It is really encouraging that the aerospace response group has been set up by the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, Jamie Hepburn. There is good representation from the council sector lead officers, and I think that the group has met two or three times already. We literally have high hopes, but we cannot do all this alone. No doubt, the action plan that the group will come up with will ask both Governments to use whatever leverage they can to sustain the industry until it is certain that the virus is no longer a threat to public health. It is time for creative minds to come together with creative thinking, or the consequences will be dire.

Other jurisdictions are doing what they can, by extending their furlough arrangements or providing cash and loans, in one form or another, to the sector to tide it over. America announced \$50 billion in bail-outs for airlines and \$10 billion for airports. Italy has spent \$650 million buying Alitalia in order to save the company. The Dutch Government is spending €3.4 billion in loans, Lufthansa is getting €9 billion, Air France is getting €7 billion and the list goes on.

I do not envy the task of ministers in all the Governments that are trying to navigate their way through this. Being open-minded enough to try new ideas and new solutions is probably a good place to start. Listening to the industry and the workers who make it a success is more important than it has ever been. I sincerely hope that we can find a way that allows the industry to survive and to flourish safely in the years ahead.

16:32

Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West)

(Con): I also thank Labour for bringing the debate to the chamber, as the impact of coronavirus on our aviation industry is one that rightly deserves attention. As my colleagues and other members have noted, communities across the country are dependent on the sector remaining reliable for both personal and business reasons, and therefore we have a duty to protect it in Scotland.

Jobs are at risk at airports across Scotland, but it is not just the aviation workforce that could face redundancy if the industry does not receive adequate support through this crisis. Several other industries will be affected, such as fuel suppliers, construction companies, manufacturers and businesses that sell goods in airports—the list goes on. Furthermore, our tourism industry is heavily reliant on our aviation industry. Once we reach a stage where we can welcome residents from more countries around the world back into Scotland, it will be vitally important that our aviation industry is ready and waiting for their arrival, while we keep Scotland safe from the threat of coronavirus.

That is why it is important that we get testing right as soon as possible. We need to see urgent action on airport testing. At First Minister's question time last week, Ruth Davidson highlighted the need for airport testing, after recent figures showed that only 5 per cent of people who are coming into our airports are being contacted by the national contact tracing centre. Airport bosses are warning that thousands of job losses are on the cards if there is no mandatory testing at airports, and the firm AGS Airports, which operates the airports in Glasgow and Aberdeen, stated that it

"cannot operate in such an unpredictable environment."

My local airport in Aberdeen knows the importance of testing: Dyce airport is being used by the UK Government to provide additional testing facilities. As Aberdeen is the busiest helicopter terminal in the world, I know that it will be keen to get on top of the testing regime so that it can help to reduce the spread of coronavirus.

The aviation industry is willing for this change, and the Scottish Government needs to help it to achieve it—and soon. Although Nicola Sturgeon stated last week that work on airport testing regimes is on-going, I, like many, remain sceptical. The aviation industry is no stranger to broken promises from the SNP. The SNP promised to cut air departure tax by 50 per cent, but it broke that promise. Considering that pre-coronavirus research showed that Scotland could get up to 20 new connections if that tax was abolished, it seems even more counterproductive now to continue with a stance of not cutting ADT, when

we should be finding ways to boost our aviation industry.

Perhaps it is time for Labour members to join Scottish Conservative members in our calls for a reduction in air departure tax. I know that the SNP rejected on climate change grounds the reduction of ADT, but, given the reduction in flights during the pandemic, perhaps that should be reassessed. Our policy is for a cut for long-haul flights, which would avoid undermining surface travel alternatives such as cars and trains. We are not suggesting a reduction in the domestic rate. We continue to promote green alternatives for travel within the UK, such as hydrogen technology and the electrification of rail lines.

In addition, the UK Government is to publish a strategy to 2025 that will address aspects such as the return of growth to the sector, workforce skills, regional connectivity and freight, consumer issues, climate change, decarbonisation, health, safety, security and the role of UK aviation in retaining the nation's global reach.

I note that the airports could take small steps in assisting the industry, for example on parking charges. At a time when we want to reduce barriers to encouraging people back into businesses, I believe that a review of airport parking charges could entice users to airports once more. For example, a user of Dyce airport can come from as far afield as Dundee, Braemar or Keith—all of which involve a longer travelling time than some flights to Aberdeen. That means that those who travel to pick up family or friends may face expensive parking charges if they find out that a flight has been delayed. I know that that is an issue at airports across the country, and I hope that members will join me in asking for airports to reconsider their parking charges, to help those who are doing all that they can to save money during a time when we face another recession.

Much can be done to help the aviation industry get back on its feet again, and our Scottish Government must do what it can. It can start by cutting ADT and sorting out a proper airport testing regime.

16:37

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleton) (SNP): I am very grateful to be able to take part in the debate. Aviation impacts hugely on the Scottish economy and has a major influence on all our major statistics, such as those on tourism and unemployment. It is also a local and individual issue, and I have had constituents contact me in recent months about their jobs and terms and conditions with employers such as airports, airlines and airport service businesses.

I believe that aviation has a strong future in Scotland. The pandemic is not going to last forever. We surely do not want to go back to doing exactly what we did previously—aviation has an environmental impact, which I will discuss later. However, flying is a big factor in the lives of many of us, whether that is because of work commitments, visiting family in distant locations or perhaps going for an annual holiday overseas.

We want tourists to come to Scotland to benefit from our scenery and history, and to boost our economy and create jobs.

Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): The member rightly points to issues about the environment and the economy. Will he also acknowledge that lifeline flights, in the islands of Scotland, are exactly what the name suggests—that they make the difference between local economies being viable or not?

John Mason: Yes, absolutely. I was going to mention Loganair later, as an example—perhaps one of the better ones—of an airline having continued to operate during the pandemic.

I know that some of the trips that we have mentioned could be done without flying. I personally have done Hong Kong to Glasgow by rail. [*Laughter.*] I am glad that that got a reaction—thank you. However, realistically, we cannot all do that regularly.

Kenneth Gibson: That would be a difficult commute. [*Laughter.*]

John Mason: I will do a separate speech on that story.

Flying is necessary and the industry will recover.

I agree with a lot of the detail of the Labour motion. I agree that job retention through the furlough scheme has been hugely important. I am pleased that Westminster introduced it and kept it going even longer than was first expected. The scheme has had gaps from day 1, but it has, on the whole, prevented the kind of instant mass unemployment that many of us feared.

It is true that some sectors of the economy are getting back to something closer to normal. However, that is not true of all sectors, and aviation definitely is among those. As members have said, we really need a continuation of the furlough scheme, albeit probably in a more targeted way than before.

The motion mentions the direct support from the Scottish Government and the UK Government to the sector. That is not contentious in broad terms, but we have to be realistic about the actual money and resources for that support. Virtually all business support so far has come from UK borrowing, and that level of borrowing clearly

cannot continue indefinitely. However, given the low interests rate at present, I have no problem with shorter-term borrowing in order to target more support at sectors such as aviation and to give the economy in general a boost.

As things stand, that support has to come from Westminster. The Scottish Government can, and has, tweaked the funding that was received, to make it more suitable for the Scottish context—it has also been able to add a bit more money here and there—but more borrowing has to be talked about at a Westminster level.

A just transition to a green economy is mentioned in the Labour motion—Patrick Harvie spent quite a lot of time on that part—and I am, again, fully supportive of that. Many of us felt that the level of flying that we, as a western society, did before the pandemic was unjustifiably high. Planes are quieter and more fuel efficient than they used to be, but, as we seek to pull more people out of poverty in this country and around the world, I do not believe that the environment can afford to have ever-increasing numbers of flights, whether for business or leisure.

I understand that 4.5 billion scheduled passengers flew throughout the world in 2019. That is slightly more than one flight for every two people, so it looks as if some of us need to cut back.

Pauline McNeill: We believe that the industry is collapsing. I spoke to many business people in Glasgow who fear that Glasgow airport might not have a future if we do not act. Is that a concern to the member? Will he address the matter of double testing? Will cutting back on flying really help us to plan our way out of a disaster?

John Mason: I have concentrated today on the finance and economy aspects—that is my background. The Scottish Government has given a pretty clear answer. The Government is sympathetic to what Pauline McNeill asks for, if double testing is indeed possible and a safer system. It appears at the moment, however, that the quarantine system is the safest one.

It looks as though we all need to cut back on flying in order to give others more of a chance and prevent an increase in the overall number of flights. When constituents who work in the aviation sector contact me, I take up their cases, but I always point out that the sector needs to reduce in size in the longer term. However, there absolutely must be a just transition for all those who are affected.

The part in the motion about working with the sector and the trade unions seems fine to me. To be fair to both unions and employees with whom I have been in touch, they have all been open to temporary measures such as reduced hours or job

sharing to minimise redundancies, which is welcome.

I fully agree, however, that some employers have unfairly tried to use the situation to reduce costs, terms and conditions.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Close, please.

John Mason: When we received an online briefing from Unite the union, it seemed clear that some employers in the sector behaved better than others. I realise that I have to cut out a little bit of my speech—I was going to mention Loganair—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Please do not do that. Could you close?

John Mason: It sadly had to cut 68 out of 150 staff—it did better than some did. I believe that aviation can, and must, have a bright future, but we need the UK Government to intervene in the short to medium term.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the closing speeches; Patrick Harvie will speak for up to six minutes.

16:44

Patrick Harvie: I begin with some points of agreement. The furlough scheme has had a critical role in protecting jobs, and even if it is ended in general—which I do not welcome—specific sectors need continued support. I hope that even the strongest critic of the aviation industry wants that support for its workforce and for people whose livelihoods are being lost or remain at risk. Michael Matheson and Colin Smyth both made that point, as did many other members.

Another point of agreement is that our remote, rural and, in particular, island communities have a special need for aviation in order to stay connected with the rest of Scotland, let alone the wider world. Sarah Boyack and Alasdair Allan were among the members who mentioned that.

In addition, I agree with the point made by Pauline McNeill, among others, that both the response to the immediate crisis and the development of a just transition plan must be the result of dialogue and co-operation with the unions that represent the people whose jobs are at stake.

There are also shared concerns, both old and new. There are wider knock-on impacts from reduced aviation activity, including on Scotland's tourism and hospitality businesses. Greens have made the case for years that Government policy and the work of agencies such as VisitScotland need to support positive change by placing a much higher priority on domestic tourism and surface travel routes.

Whether because of strikes, terrorism, volcanoes or, now, a global pandemic, we know that aviation is subject to unpredictable changes. It is also clear and, I hope, becoming more widely understood that climate change—the environmental damage that the aviation industry has helped to cause—is closely connected to the risk of new pandemic diseases. We are probably entering a time when such disruptions will increase, and when fewer people around the world will treat aviation as casually as some have done in recent years.

That is the common ground, but there are also differences. In his opening speech, I do not think that Michael Matheson made any reference to the need for a just transition plan for aviation. He did not reflect on the First Minister's view that we need to fly less; instead, he spent part of his speech talking with enthusiasm about new routes. I ask him to confirm in his closing speech whether he agrees with Nicola Sturgeon's comments in Channel 4's climate debate, when she acknowledged that aviation levels at that time were too high.

The cabinet secretary argued for achieving aviation growth in a way that ensures that the environmental impact is mitigated. Other members, such as Alex Cole-Hamilton, talked about greener aviation. It appears that some people take at face value the empty promises of the industry, which has never offered a coherent or convincing plan for cutting emissions while increasing the number of flights.

Pauline McNeill said that we all sign up to the idea that we should take fewer flights. I hope that she was right—I wish that she was—but I am not sure that we all sign up to that. Certainly, those who are trying to revive the absurd plan of cutting aviation tax do not agree. I do not think that Graham Simpson does either, as he told us that, if Scotland wants to connect to the world, we must rely on aviation.

I am not going to compete with John Mason's rail trip from Glasgow to Hong Kong—although my transatlantic trip by cargo freighter came as close as I have managed—but most of Europe is easily accessible by rail. This Parliament, which is proud of its climate change targets, still treats aviation as the default option.

How much do we rely on aviation? Even before Covid, the Greens have never argued for grounding all the planes or digging up the runways, but we have said that overreliance on aviation, and the assumption that aviation could keep going for ever, was unsustainable. Far from signing up to the idea of flying less, we have, as a society, been flying ever more and we have come to treat aviation as an entirely casual thing, as though it does no harm at all.

Therefore, in this context, we now have a responsibility to ask how immediate support for people whose jobs are at risk and any recovery plan for the industry can happen in a way that is consistent and within environmental limits. That responsibility falls to all of us, because it simply will not happen with assumptions about technologies that do not even make sense on the drawing board yet.

It also will not happen without a change in our social attitudes to aviation. Much of the public already acknowledge that. The citizens assembly on climate change, which was set up by six Westminster committees, published its report last week. It showed 80 per cent support for a frequent-flyer levy to reduce the environmental impact and to recognise the economic inequality of access to aviation.

If I heard right, Pauline McNeill made a special case for short-haul flights from Glasgow to London and called for a jobs-first approach. We should not be willing to abandon the people or communities whose livelihoods are being lost, but we would be failing them more if we pretended that business as usual will return or that recovery means going back to the way things were.

Those of us who have argued for an end to humanity's systematic destruction of the world around us have been told year after year, decade after decade and generation after generation that economic growth must come first. It seems from the debate that it is still only the Greens who are willing to challenge that fatal ideology.

16:51

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I thank the Labour Party for bringing this debate to the chamber. It has been quite a constructive debate. Given everything that has been happening in the Labour Party this week, I am sure that Labour members welcome the chance to unite around an issue for once—long may that continue.

The scale of the problem that aviation faces was outlined by a number of members. At the start of the debate, Colin Smyth talked about 5,000 jobs being at risk. Graham Simpson talked about job cuts at Virgin Atlantic, Loganair, easyJet and BA. We know that passenger numbers are down an estimated 80 per cent at Aberdeen and Glasgow airports, and they are down at Edinburgh airport, to which Alex Cole-Hamilton referred, by almost the same amount—79 per cent.

The economic impact of that is huge. Direct employment at airports is affected, but there is also a huge knock-on effect on the wider economy. Maurice Golden and Neil Bibby referred to the job losses at Rolls-Royce in their area. There is a knock-on effect on ancillary services for

aviation—on people who produce the food that people eat on planes; on people who clean the planes; on people who service the airports; on people who work in airport shops, bars and restaurants; on taxi drivers and other transport providers; and on travel agents. There is a huge knock-on effect on the wider economy. Michelle Ballantyne and others talked about the impact on tourism. We need people flying into Scotland to support our tourism economy. The scale of the challenge is enormous.

Three key potential solutions were raised in the debate. The first is direct Government support. We have talked about UK Government support through the furlough scheme, which we will discuss in more detail tomorrow. The UK furlough scheme is among the most generous in the world and supports more than half a million jobs in the Scottish economy. We have to accept that the furlough scheme cannot go on for ever. Nevertheless, businesses will need support after the end of October; the Chancellor of the Exchequer has already acknowledged that point.

There is also a role for the Scottish Government. It is not good enough for SNP members to stand up and say, as they have done in the debate, that it is only ever up to the UK Government to take action. The UK Government has given the Scottish Government a guaranteed £6.5 billion of additional money in this financial year. Has all that money been spent? We do not know.

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance (Kate Forbes): Will the member take an intervention?

Murdo Fraser: Oh! Ms Forbes can give the answer to the question that I asked three weeks ago but to which I did not get an answer. Where has the money gone?

Kate Forbes: I just want confirmation that Murdo Fraser recognises that the only part of the UK to ensure rates relief for the aviation sector was Scotland.

Murdo Fraser: Ms Forbes has still not answered the question that I asked her three weeks ago. Has all of the £6.5 billion been spent? Where has it gone? I hope that we will get an answer very soon.

The second area that needs to be addressed is air passenger duty, or the air departure tax, which our amendment touches on. Alex Burnett referred to that in his speech. A number of organisations, including the Scottish Passenger Agents Association and Edinburgh airport, have called for a six-month suspension of APD. APD is, of course, still reserved, despite being devolved under the Scotland Act 2016. Indeed, this Parliament passed the Air Departure Tax (Scotland) Bill in 2017, but the Scottish

Government has still not taken up that power. That is a real irony. The Scottish Government is always demanding more economic levers, but when the UK Government gives it an economic lever it does not want to take it on. [*Interruption.*] I will not take an intervention now; I need to make some progress.

I remember sitting on panels with Fergus Ewing for years while he demanded that APD be cut. He would say that it needed to be cut to help the tourism industry, and that the UK Government needed to stop dragging its feet and devolve APD to the Scottish Government so that it could cut it. Now the Government does not even want responsibility for APD to be passed to it.

Quite a number of members spoke about testing, including Graham Simpson, and both Pauline McNeill and Sarah Boyack made very powerful contributions on testing and quarantine.

Graham Simpson said that it is a fact that quarantine is putting people off flying because nobody wants to have to quarantine for 14 days when they come home. The uncertainty is also putting people off of flying, given that the regulations change day by day and week by week. People do not want to commit to flying if they do not know how they will be affected.

We could mitigate the quarantine issue with better testing. At present, we are not delivering testing on arrival, and fewer than 5 per cent of those in quarantine get a follow-up call. Therefore, I absolutely agree with those who call for better airport testing. Such testing is done in more than 30 other countries around the world and it could be done here if we put our minds to it. I welcome what the cabinet secretary had to say about that, and the initial steps that have been taken to try to address the issue, because I think that, above all the other interventions, that could make a real difference to restoring the confidence of people who actually want to travel. However, it must be linked to proper follow-up of those in quarantine.

I am conscious of the time, so I will briefly sum up the key issues. Financial support from both the UK and the Scottish Governments is needed; we need to look at reviewing APD and the tax burden; and we need better airport testing. If we can agree on things, which need to be done, this will have been a very constructive and useful debate.

16:57

The Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills (Jamie Hepburn): As others have done, I thank Colin Smyth for lodging the motion for today's debate. I want to start from a point of consensus. The debate this afternoon has shown that, as a Parliament, we have a broad recognition

of the scale and impact that Covid-19 has had on the global aviation industry.

At the outset, I want to be clear with members—especially those who represent the areas in Scotland in which its airports are located—and, in particular, those who work in the aviation sector that the Scottish Government recognises the depth of the challenge that the aviation sector faces. That is why we have said in our amendment that we recognise the need for the Scottish and UK Governments to provide direct support to the sector through this period to protect jobs. Picking up on the point that was made by a number of members, particularly those on the Labour benches, about the necessity for us to look at conditionality, I note that our amendment goes on to say that support should include appropriate protections for jobs and fair working conditions. It builds on the fair work first agenda that we already have at play.

It should be recognised that there are no quick fixes for the sector. I thought that Graham Simpson said something interesting in his opening remarks: he said that lockdown was a political choice. I am unclear whether he recognises the necessity for that choice. I suppose that in some sense he is correct because a choice had to be made to save people's lives. There is no greater responsibility for any Government than that. However, even if we had not made the political decision to have a lockdown, the idea that there would have been no impact on the aviation sector is wishful thinking, because this is an international and global challenge. There are travel restrictions around the world, and until they are lifted there will be some difficulties. Therefore, the question is how we can respond best.

We must look at the actions that we can take, both here as the Scottish Government and with the UK Government. I am pleased that many members agree with our representations to the UK Government to extend the job retention scheme. That is important not only for Scotland's airports but for our economy as a whole. The Scottish Government's chief economist today published research that shows that extending the furlough scheme for just eight months could reduce unemployment in Scotland by 61,000 through the first half of next year. I say to Michelle Ballantyne that that is why it is necessary to consider the extension of the furlough scheme.

David Stewart: The minister mentioned representations to the UK Government. What representations has the Scottish Government made to the UK Government asking for a public service obligation for the Wick to Edinburgh route?

Jamie Hepburn: I congratulate the member on getting the issue of the public service obligation on the record once again. The point has already been

made that Caithness Chamber of Commerce has made a business case and it is being considered.

There is an opportunity for Parliament to show today that we believe that the furlough scheme should be extended. That is laid out in our amendment.

Michelle Ballantyne: Will the member accept an intervention?

Jamie Hepburn: I do not have time; otherwise I would.

The issue of quarantine was mentioned by a number of members. Our decision on that has been informed by clinical and scientific advice. In our estimation, it is the best measure by which we can respond to the threat of the spread of Covid-19. We keep measures under constant review as changes occur here and in other countries. That will always be done on the basis of advice. A number of members asked us to look at these matters in conjunction with testing, and of course we commit to do that. I refer members to our amendment, in which we conclude that we will explore the potential for alternative measures, including testing, and also to the point that Michael Matheson made in his opening remarks about the proposition that will be considered in conjunction with Scotland's airports.

It is unfortunate that I do not have time to update members on the considerable range of work that is under way as we respond to the challenge that is faced by the aerospace sector. If members want to contact me directly, I will be happy to update them on the work that the group has undertaken—the group has not met only two or three times, as Willie Coffey suggested; it has met six times. I am happy to update any member who has an interest in that.

I hope that Parliament will unite around the amendment that we have presented, which takes on board the fundamental points made in Colin Smyth's motion and makes the point that the UK Government must extend the furlough scheme that is so important for aviation here in Scotland and for our entire economy.

17:03

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): I welcome the contributions to the debate. A number of key themes have been discussed: the importance of the aviation sector to employment and to our economy, and how we protect both passengers and jobs.

Colin Smyth was right to remind us that Covid-19 has not gone away and that, until we have a vaccination, restrictions on our everyday lives will remain with us. In that context, we must take continued action to deal with the pandemic and

urgent action now to deal with an impending economic crisis.

The aviation sector is synonymous with travel and tourism. When we think of that sector, we think of holidays and sunshine as we visit the rest of the world. The many visitors who come from abroad to visit Scotland contribute substantially to our economy. The sector is also about cargo, delivering important supplies such as PPE and keeping our shelves fully stocked. It is concerning that the aviation industry will continue to suffer until people feel comfortable to travel abroad again, for business and for pleasure.

Employees at every level of the aviation industry, from pilots to baggage handlers, face widespread uncertainty, with new redundancies announced almost every day. It is not just the airlines and airports that are struggling; off-site support services that provide catering and cleaning are affected, too, as is the maintenance of aircraft. As Neil Bibby said, 700 redundancies have already been announced at Rolls-Royce and Inchinnan. We also know about the impact on tourism businesses. The cancellation of the Edinburgh International Festival alone has cost the economy £1 billion, never mind the impact of that on travel agents and hotels.

As a number of members have mentioned, analysis by the Fraser of Allander institute for Unite the union has predicted that proposed job losses in the Scottish civil aviation and aerospace engineering sectors might cause the loss of up to 5,000 jobs in Scotland alone, with an associated £750 million loss in economic output and £320 million lost in gross value added. The impact on our economy as a whole is likely to be much greater than that, because there is £11 billion in inbound tourism and almost £1.7 billion in outbound tourism—all of that will have an impact.

The aviation industry needs urgent sector-specific support. We need the Scottish and UK Governments to work together alongside trade unions, employees and representatives from the industry, because only by doing that will we ensure that the support being provided is effective and targeted. It is simply not enough for the cabinet secretary to call on the UK Government or simply to write to the UK Government; he needs to roll up his sleeves and do something now. Any future financial support should include protection for jobs and working conditions. Of course, long-term changes are needed to tackle the climate emergency to ensure a sustainable future, but the immediate focus must be on saving jobs, because the industry is facing collapse.

I return to the issue of the protection of jobs and working conditions. The no-more-firing-and-rehiring bill proposal by Gavin Newlands is to be welcomed, and Keir Starmer has made clear the

Labour Party's support for that bill. What a shame that that is not matched by action here by the Scottish Government. The SNP has a real opportunity to ensure that the support that it provides for the industry is conditional on fair employment. Will the cabinet secretary tell us now whether he will do that?

Michael Matheson: Jackie Baillie will recognise that the key areas of law that relate to fire and rehire are reserved to the UK Government. I can assure her that we will do everything that we can to ensure that workers' rights are respected, and we have pursued that already with the aviation sector. However, I hope that she will support us in getting employment law devolved to this Parliament.

Jackie Baillie: That is an abject excuse for not doing anything now and not taking the opportunity to provide support but to make it conditional. The cabinet secretary can do that and should get on with it.

The scale of the redundancies to come is breathtaking; tens of thousands of jobs will be lost and it will be like nothing that we have seen before. If the Scottish Government needs any more convincing about that, it can look at the Airport Operators Association figures that show that passenger traffic is down 98 to 99 per cent on this time last year. In addition, ABTA—The Travel Association, which represents travel agents and tour operators, estimates that up to the end of May about 3.5 million Air Travel Organiser's Licence-protected bookings worth some £7 billion were impacted.

Understanding the scale of the impending crisis is one thing, but where is that sense of urgency? Pauline McNeill was right to talk about the real urgency for the Scottish Government to intervene fast because it is becoming too late. I suggest that the cabinet secretary call an urgent meeting with the aviation sector trade unions—GMB and Unite the union—to discuss targeted support for the industry, because that has not been done so far.

I turn to the issue of quarantine, which has been mentioned by many members across the chamber. We need an urgent review of the existing quarantine system. The Scottish Government needs to introduce options for a robust regime of airport testing. Testing travellers as they arrive in Scotland, backed up by follow-up testing at home, would provide a degree of reassurance. That is not the only option available. The Government can consider what happens in 30 countries across the world, including Iceland, Ireland and Germany. Let us learn from their approach, and let us put something in place now.

The Scottish Government has, in fact, changed its guidance on quarantining a total of 19 times,

which is, on average, once every 3.6 days. It should do that again—put in a testing regime that allows the economy to reopen and keeps passengers safe.

Let me say again that there is much that the Scottish Government can do. Do not just make calls on or write to the UK Government. We need the two Governments to work together, not engage in megaphone diplomacy. They need to roll up their sleeves, get on with it and deliver a package of support with conditions attached to protect jobs and a robust testing regime.

We have heard about the tens of thousands of jobs at Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Inverness and beyond and the billions of pounds that they contribute to the Scottish economy. I finish by expressing my real anger at the comments of the SNP MSP who represents Glasgow airport. It is disgraceful that he described this as a “pointless academic debate”. Shame on him, because this debate is about an impending economic crisis. This is a debate about saving the aviation sector; this is about saving jobs and livelihoods. His comments were ill considered and he should apologise to the many constituents of his who might lose their job at Glasgow airport.

George Adam: Presiding Officer, I have a point of order on some of Jackie Baillie’s comments. That was not—[*Interruption.*] I ask that she looks at the actual—[*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Will those in the chamber please quieten down? Let me hear whether we have in fact a point of order.

George Adam: I would want—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Adam, stop speaking until it is quiet—there is no point. Thank you.

George Adam: I ask that Jackie Baillie looks at the *Official Report* and, if an apology is to be made, I am willing to accept it. [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am well aware that that was not a point of order, thank you, Mr Mountain. However, the member has put it on the record, as he wished to do. Ms Baillie and Mr Adam can decide how to progress from here.

Business Motions

17:12

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-22725, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 22 September 2020

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions

followed by Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee Debate: Complaints Against MSPs – Amendment of the Scottish Parliamentary Standards Commissioner Act 2002

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Promoting Equality and Human Rights for Minority Ethnic People and Communities

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members’ Business

Wednesday 23 September 2020

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:
Education and Skills;
Health and Sport

followed by Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Approval of SSIs (if required)

5.10 pm Decision Time

followed by Members’ Business

Thursday 24 September 2020

12.20 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

12.20 pm First Minister’s Questions

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions:
Communities and Local Government

followed by Ministerial Statement: Draft Infrastructure Investment Plan 2021-22 to 2025-26

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.05 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 29 September 2020

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Social Security Administration and Tribunal Membership (Scotland) Bill

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 30 September 2020

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:
Social Security and Older People;
Finance

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Approval of SSIs (if required)

5.10 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 1 October 2020

12.20 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

12.20 pm First Minister's Questions

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions:
Environment, Climate Change and Land
Reform

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Financial Resolution: Financial Resolution: Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.05 pm Decision Time

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 21 September 2020, in rule 13.7.3, after the word "except" the words "to the extent to which the Presiding Officer considers that the questions are on the same or

similar subject matter or" are inserted.—[*Graeme Dey*]

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-22727, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, on the stage 1 timetable of a bill.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Tied Pubs (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be completed by 27 November 2020.—[*Graeme Dey*]

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:13

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The next item of business is consideration of two Parliamentary Bureau motions. I ask Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, to move motion S5M-22728, on approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, and motion S5M-22729, on committee membership.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 10) Regulations 2020 (SSI 2020/252) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that—

Stuart McMillan be appointed to replace Stewart Stevenson as a member of the COVID-19 Committee;

Mark Ruskell be appointed to replace Ross Greer as a member of the COVID-19 Committee;

Stewart Stevenson be appointed to replace Stuart McMillan as a member of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee; and

Patrick Harvie be appointed to replace Mark Ruskell as a member of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee.—[*Graeme Dey*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The questions on the motions will be put at decision time.

Decision Time

17:14

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): There are five questions to be put as a result of today's business. I remind members that, if the amendment in the name of Michael Matheson is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Graham Simpson will fall.

The first question is, that amendment S5M-22711.3, in the name of Michael Matheson, which seeks to amend motion S5M-22711, in the name of Colin Smyth, on sustainable aviation beyond Covid-19, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

I suspend proceedings for a short break, to allow members to access the digital voting system.

17:14

Meeting suspended.

17:24

On resuming—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We come to the division on amendment S5M-22711.3, in the name of Michael Matheson, which seeks to amend motion S5M-22711, in the name of Colin Smyth, on sustainable aviation beyond Covid-19.

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)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (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)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)

Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)

McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 54, Against 60, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-22711.1, in the name of Graham Simpson, which seeks to amend motion S5M-22711, in the name of Colin Smyth, on sustainable aviation beyond Covid-19, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

When we have a pause at this point, it is generally to ensure that members have been able to vote and can raise points of order accordingly. I have a point of order from Elaine Smith.

Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab): Thank you, Presiding Officer, I—*[Temporary loss of sound.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am afraid that Ms Smith's connection has dropped out. I understand that she wished to raise a point of order to say that she had voted no. However, without her doing that, I cannot include her vote.

She has now come back.

Elaine Smith: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I wish to vote no.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Okay.

For

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)

Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinrossshire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)

Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S5M-22711.2, in the name of Patrick Harvie, is: For 29—[*Interruption.*] You can have confidence in the voting system, but perhaps not in the Deputy Presiding Officer. They do not even look similar.

The result of the division on amendment S5M-22711.1, in the name of Graham Simpson, is: For 29, Against 86, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-22711.2, in the name of Patrick Harvie, which seeks to amend motion S5M-22711, in the name of Colin Smyth, on sustainable aviation beyond Covid-19, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I tried to vote but was unable to. I would have voted no.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That is noted—thank you, Mr Cole-Hamilton.

Elaine Smith: I wish to vote no.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, that is noted, Ms Smith.

The Minister for Children and Young People (Maree Todd): I also had no opportunity to vote. I wish to vote no.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That is also noted. The clerks have been directed to record those votes, which will be included in what I read to the chamber.

For

Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
Baillie, Jackie (Dumarton) (Lab)
Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinrossshire) (SNP)
Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)
Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 6, Against 109, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S5M-22711, in the name of Colin Smyth, on sustainable aviation beyond Covid-19, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (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)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)

Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (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)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 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)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 54, Against 61, Abstentions 0.

Motion disagreed to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I propose to ask a single question on the two Parliamentary Bureau motions.

The question is, that motions S5M-22728 and S5M-22729, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, be agreed to.

Motions agreed to.

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 10) Regulations 2020 (SSI 2020/252) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that—

Stuart McMillan be appointed to replace Stewart Stevenson as a member of the COVID-19 Committee;

Mark Ruskell be appointed to replace Ross Greer as a member of the COVID-19 Committee;

Stewart Stevenson be appointed to replace Stuart McMillan as a member of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee; and

Patrick Harvie be appointed to replace Mark Ruskell as a member of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes decision time. I ask members who are leaving the chamber to do so quietly and to observe social distancing.

Museum for Human Rights

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-22614, in the name of Stuart McMillan, on a museum for human rights. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament notes its agreement to motion S5M-22004 (as amended) on 10 June 2020 (*Official Report*, c.133), which agreed that the Scottish Government would work to create a national museum to highlight Scotland's role in the slave trade and colonialism; further notes that there are various locations across Scotland whose history in the slave trade would merit consideration for such a facility; highlights the link that Inverclyde has with the triangular trade and the sugar, tobacco and cotton industries and the financial wealth that was generated for merchants; notes that Inverclyde was reported to be the world leader in the sugar trade, which ensured that vast wealth was created both during and following the abolition of the slave trade in 1833; highlights the building of the historic sugar warehouses at the James Watt Dock in Greenock, which were opened in 1886, and notes the view that, with its existing transport and historical links, in addition to the educational and economic opportunities that could be created for future generations, Inverclyde should be the location for such a museum.

17:41

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): I thank all those members who signed the motion, enabling the debate to take place, and those who have stayed to take part in the debate. I also thank everyone who has offered their support and provided feedback on the idea.

Today, I will only scratch the surface of Inverclyde's history in the transatlantic slave trade and why the museum should be located in my constituency.

At the outset, I clarify one point: although the Slave Trade Act 1807 prohibited the slave trade in the British empire, it did not abolish slavery, which continued until the Slavery Abolition Act 1833, which is the reason why I used that date in the motion. Also, according to black history month 2020, Scots owned nearly 30 per cent of the estates in Jamaica in 1796 and 32 per cent of the plantations by 1817.

I will touch on a few themes: Parliament's decision in June; Inverclyde's history; the initial proposal as per my motion; and the actions to date. On that point, I will touch on the fact that Canada has a national museum for human rights in Winnipeg, which Clare Adamson has spoken about in the chamber before and which I am sure she will touch on again today. I believe that that museum could be a positive model for us to look at.

I was not one of the speakers in the debate on showing solidarity with anti-racism in June, but I sat in the chamber and listened to everyone; it was a powerful afternoon. I was pleased that the Parliament voted to address our shameful past—a past that we can never change. Some people would like to erase our past or keep it confined to the shelves, but we must own up to it and educate future generations and ourselves about it. We must learn the lessons of the past and find a way that tells the history of the transatlantic slave trade and how some of Scotland's wealth was created. Along with today's announcement in Barbados, it is worth noting that that debate is taking place across the world.

I am not a historian, but a politician. I can never tell the history as historians do, but I can bring to the table political reasons why my constituency should be the location for such a museum.

Various locations in Scotland have played a part in the transatlantic slave trade. As well as Greenock, Port Glasgow and Glasgow, there were Ayr, Dumfries, Bo'ness, Leith, Dundee, and Aberdeen. Greenock and Port Glasgow were the two ports that served Glasgow and, with an increasing number of merchants in Glasgow, the two ports became key in the transatlantic slave trade. I grew up in Port Glasgow and I remember the stories of when the town was called the Port of Glasgow.

Inverclyde's maritime history has many aspects, and many ships have been built there over the years. However, our maritime links include the sugar, tobacco and cotton industries, which are linked to the transatlantic slave trade. Until the 1750s, Port Glasgow was the main port for voyages to western Africa. Greenock became the larger of the ports and that continued until 1766. Greenock became the main port for the trade in tobacco and sugar. It has been reported that, in time, Greenock became the worldwide port for the sugar trade, although other reports indicate that it was just one of the biggest.

It is a fact that ships with enslaved people left Greenock and Port Glasgow. It is known that 2,692 enslaved people left the two ports to cross the Atlantic to work on plantations and that 471 of those people died during those voyages. I realise that the number of voyages, the number of people transported and the number of people who died on those voyages may not compare with other areas in the UK, such as Liverpool and Bristol, that—and I use the word advisedly—benefited from the slave trade and its associated industries. But that does not mean that this part of Scotland's history should be only quietly reflected upon. Each of those people was a human being.

Scotland's history in the transatlantic slave trade goes beyond that of just Greenock and Port

Glasgow and it is right that a museum be created. The fact that Scotland is now prepared to fully face up to and to own its past is a welcome step.

There is a variety of reasons why a museum of human rights could be based at the sugar warehouses at James Watt dock. First, the history of the building as part of the sugar industry, which was built on the back of slavery, highlights that the wealth generated by the slave trade and associated industries is still visible today.

Secondly, the vast size of the building gives the opportunity to deliver something of educational stature. The building could be divided into multiple facilities, including the excellent and innovative proposition from the Clyde Atlantic trust to create a fully immersive maritime museum. There would be space for other activities too.

Thirdly, other parts of Scotland's negative history could also be explored. For example, the stories of the Highland clearances and of the 1820 martyrs could be incorporated; both those stories have strong local connections. The museum could explore the story of why—in addition to those who left Leith—600,000 Scots left Greenock to go to the new world. There is also the history of Irish immigrants to Scotland and of how they were treated.

Those ideas could get people to imagine what we could achieve to educate future and current generations. Any museum must focus on the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism, as per the agreed amended motion passed here in June. That does not mean that the museum cannot touch upon other aspects of Scotland's past.

Fourthly, the site is located at the historic James Watt dock in Greenock. Watt himself was not involved in the transatlantic slave trade, but he did profit from it.

Fifthly, the educational, social and economic opportunities for Inverclyde and Scotland are such that a project of this size could have a transformational effect on my constituency.

I studied in Dundee in the 1990s. It is wonderful to see the change that is happening there now and I am proud of that city for its level of ambition. Placing the museum in Inverclyde could transform it, bringing inward investment, reversing population decline and making Inverclyde socially and economically stronger.

The Scottish Government's programme for government talks about starting to examine ways to address migration and to support areas dealing with population decline. I questioned the minister, Ben MacPherson, on that last week at the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee. The museum in Inverclyde could be part of that solution.

I have done a number of things so far. I have spoken to Sir Geoff Palmer and David Hayman. I have undertaken a variety of press activity, which has helped to garner wider support. I have also established a short-life working group that includes Ronnie Cowan MP; the principal of West College Scotland; Scottish Enterprise; the Inverclyde Chamber of Commerce; Creative Inverclyde; the Clyde Atlantic trust; singer-songwriter Matthew Hickman; and the television presenter Jean Johansson. I have also invited the leader of Inverclyde Council to join the group and we are hopeful that he can do so once internal council procedures are fulfilled.

I have also spoken with Lucy Casot of Museums Galleries Scotland, which is taking forward the project for the Scottish Government. Lucy will speak to the working party on Monday. The Heritage Lottery Fund has also been engaged and has agreed to speak virtually to the group. We have met three times and have an agreed purpose to bring this facility to Inverclyde.

We are discussing the sugar warehouses today and the process has begun. Greenock still has other historical buildings, including the glebe, which was a sugar refinery, and the tobacco warehouse. Those buildings are a stone's throw from each other in Greenock town centre.

I am conscious of the time, Presiding Officer.

I was born in Barrow-in-Furness but grew up in Port Glasgow. It is still my home town, even though I no longer live there. As a boy, I never knew or questioned why we had a Kingston Yard in the town, or why there was a Jamaica Street, Tobago Street, Togo Place and Virginia Street in Greenock. I had no idea about the Gourock crest of arms and its links to the Darroch family, who made their fortune as sugar merchants in Jamaica in 1700s. That story was quite a revelation to many people locally during the summer.

A museum of human rights, focusing on the transatlantic slave trade, would not be out of place in Inverclyde. Sadly, we have many links to that trade—I have only touched on them. I would like to educate younger generations about the past to improve the future.

We can use the museum as the foundation stone on which to build a regeneration project that will breathe new life into an area that is much in need of a helping hand, that has suffered many social ills over many decades and is again reeling, this time from the effects of Covid-19.

I believe that a beacon of hope emerging from the clouds of Scotland's past would be a fitting way to honour those whose lives were lost and taken by our inglorious colonial history.

17:51

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): I thank Stuart McMillan for securing the debate. I admire his tenacity on behalf of his constituency and he has made a good case for a museum of human rights being based there.

The member is right to say that I visited the Canadian Museum for Human Rights on a visit from this Parliament in 2017. That was a profound experience. I had never before come across such a museum. The manner in which the Canadians have approached the issue is incredible. They established the museum in 2008, by amending their Museums Act 1990. The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is seen as a national and international destination centre of learning, where people from all round the world can engage in discussion about and commit to taking action against hate and oppression.

Mr McMillan has laid out the foundations for what a museum in Scotland could be about. I was intrigued by some of the displays that I saw at the museum in Canada. One of its measures to educate younger children is an interactive floor. When someone walks on to it, a single-coloured circle appears underneath their feet. In order to get the pattern moving, people have to engage with one another. It is a simple metaphor to say to the young people that, unlike being on their own, interaction enriches beauty and life.

The museum also has a jury exhibit with real-life cases that have gone through the Canadian courts. We know that Canada has had to deal with the issues that we have been talking about. Indeed, it has also had to deal with the issue of its first nation people, who were treated so badly in the past, and the reparations that have been made.

The two aspects that I took from the museum are education and bearing honest witness to the past and what colonialism has meant for Canada as a country. The education part of that is key. Earlier this year, I was delighted to work with North Lanarkshire councillors Danish Ashraf and Aggie Macgowan, when they presented a motion asking for education to include an honest look at the colonial history of our country, which I believe was the first motion of its type to be passed in a council in Scotland. That happened after the Black Lives Matter movement had taken hold. I was delighted that North Lanarkshire Council agreed the motion.

I pay tribute to two of my young constituents, Aleisha and Lauryn Omeike. Of mixed-race background, they spoke out at that time about what it was like for them growing up in Scotland and the lack of knowledge about why they were here, what the history of their family was and how they integrated into our country. It is so important

that we pay tribute to the people who are asking for that engagement. When the programme for government was announced, I was delighted to see the commitment on education.

I am not asking for the museum to be in my constituency, although some others in the chamber might do so. My ask of the minister this evening is for an indication of how people such as the Omeike twins, or the council group in North Lanarkshire, can engage with the Government to ensure that education on Black Lives Matter and colonial history is taken forward, and that their voices are heard during the development of those programmes.

17:55

Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Con): I thank Stuart McMillan for bringing this important debate to the Parliament. His motion refers to a previous debate that was held in the chamber back in June, when, I am pleased to report, there was cross-party support to create a museum of slavery here in Scotland, and now we are considering where it should be.

Over the summer, we witnessed the appalling death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. The terrible action of violence that was carried out by a police officer has led to widespread anti-racism protests throughout the USA and has sent shock waves across the world, including in Scotland.

As protests in Edinburgh and Glasgow encouraged us all to hold debate and discussion about how we build a more equal future here, we must not forget Scots' participation in slavery. In his motion, Stuart McMillan refers to Inverclyde's past, which we have heard more about this evening. The area prospered due to the slave trade, by importing slave products such as sugar. The great tobacco trade of the 18th century in Glasgow could not have existed without slave labour, and working on the plantations was a false choice for Scots who were seeking their fortunes in the late 18th and early 19th century. Historians have argued that Scotland's relationship with transatlantic slavery is encased in a collective amnesia—a widespread lack of awareness of how our country participated in both the slave trade and slavery.

In June, a group of protesters toppled the statue of a former slave trader, Sir Edward Colston. Following that action, there were calls from across Scotland to remove statues and street names that honour individuals who were involved in the slave trade. However, I have concerns about using the common moral standards of today as benchmarks by which to judge past behaviour. Is it right that the University of Edinburgh has taken the decision to temporarily rename David Hume tower because

of the 18th century philosopher's comments on race?

I believe that it is not possible to make a moral balance sheet of the past. I am not suggesting that historical figures should escape our moral judgment, but we have to accept that our past contains uncomfortable truths. Rather than hide our past from the future generations, surely it is better to change attitudes through education and museums, as we are talking about tonight. I agree with Sir Geoff Palmer, Scotland's first black professor, who stated:

"if you remove the evidence you remove the deed."

I believe that there is an opportunity to create a museum with the responsibility to reflect and debate history accurately, and, in doing so, to confront, challenge and learn from the uncomfortable truths of Scotland's history and our past.

As we have heard tonight from Clare Adamson, she spoke in the debate in June about the profound experience of visiting the Canadian museum for human rights. Canada's national museum is a unique exploration of the importance of human rights. It is located in a stunning building, and its mandate is to explore the subject of human rights, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, in order to enhance the public's understanding of human rights, promote respect for others and encourage reflection and dialogue. I feel that such a model could be used to articulate and examine Scotland's role in the slave trade and to explore the diversity of human rights, whether in relation to the Holocaust, the suffragette movement, employee rights or what is happening in China at the moment.

Inverclyde, with its historical links to the slave trade, may well be the right place to put the museum—we have heard a compelling argument for that tonight. It is important that the museum reflects the lived experience of individuals, preserves and promotes Scottish heritage, overcomes ignorance and inspires learning to do better today and in the future.

18:00

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab): I welcome the motion and the debate that has been secured by Stuart McMillan. We must recognise, as Jeremy Balfour did, that the Black Lives Matter movement and the death of George Floyd have been instrumental in the renewed focus and debate in Scotland and across the UK on our country's past links with colonialism and the slave trade. It is important that we actively consider those issues and how we respond to them, in discussion not just in Parliament but across the wider country, too. Although we cannot erase the

past, we can do more to ensure that we remember it honestly. A national museum of human rights would be one way to achieve that. I therefore support the idea of having a national museum and establishing it in Inverclyde.

Earlier this year, Inverclyde Council set up a working group in response to the new public discussion on our past. A council report reflects honestly on how Inverclyde was a hub for the slave trade, as Stuart McMillan and others have said. Inverclyde was particularly active in sugar and tobacco trading. Regrettably, Greenock's first member of Parliament, Robert Wallace, owned and co-mortgaged five plantations in Jamaica and owned more than 500 slaves. Therefore, Inverclyde would be an appropriate place for such a museum, and I support the aspirations and hopes that are expressed in the motion. A national museum must commit itself to a wide-ranging recognition of our entire country's role; Stuart McMillan raised some important points about how other issues affecting people's history could be incorporated.

There are a couple of obvious questions for the Scottish Government on this topic. The Government has said that it is supportive of the idea, but it would be helpful to know whether the Government is committed to a single physical space or whether it is considering options such as virtual or pop-up exhibitions across the country to explore different regional contributions to the slave trade. Secondly, we can all respect the fact that, as one of the areas worst hit by the Covid crisis, Inverclyde would benefit from the creation of a museum, but it would be unfair for one council, which is already suffering due to cuts, to bear the cost of a national museum. Therefore, it would also be helpful to know whether the Government is prepared to fully fund the capital and revenue costs of a national museum.

In considering the proposal, the Government must also commit to using education in our schools as another way of recognising our past links with colonialism. Like other members, I have raised with the education secretary the view that Scottish pupils should be taught about our abhorrent historical links with slavery. I raised that issue following representations from young people and teachers, who contacted me because they are upset that their education has left this piece of Scottish history untouched. I welcome the confirmation that a reference guide on key resources on black history and minority ethnic heritage has been made available. However, the Government must go further and ensure that there are direct, accurate and detailed resources about Scotland's past. As Stuart McMillan said, Inverclyde's and Scotland's history are inextricably linked with colonialism and slave trading, so there is scope to build on the curriculum that we have

and go further in teaching a more honest representation of Scotland's past and past Scots.

The discussion on Scotland's past will not go away, and nor should it. This is an opportunity to redouble our efforts in the campaign for equality. Although we are discussing today the injustices of the past, it is clear that there is also injustice today on which we must take action. Coronavirus has disproportionately hit black and minority ethnic communities, and black and minority ethnic people continue to be chronically underrepresented in Scottish public life. We must also take action against modern-day slavery. The Co-operative Party suggests that there are 13,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK, and I renew my support for its campaign.

Slavery was one of the great evils in society, and it remains so. Even today, tens of thousands of people across the UK are believed to be victims of forced labour, sexual exploitation and modern forms of slavery. Understanding the past helps us to understand the injustices of today. Our role now is to remember past injustices while fighting against those injustices that continue to prevail in Scottish society today.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Stewart Stevenson, to be followed by Jamie Greene.

Mr Stevenson, are you muted?

18:04

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): Thank you, Presiding Officer. I manually switched on my microphone; I had expected it to come on from your end.

I thank Stuart McMillan for the opportunity to discuss this important subject. In passing, I will comment on the 1820 martyrs, to whom Mr McMillan referred. Our colleague Gil Paterson had a members' business debate on that on 5 December 2001, which happened to be the third debate in which I participated after I joined the Parliament. Of course, that subject was important to me, because John Baird was my great-great-uncle.

However, to the matter at hand. There are many places across Scotland that we could consider for a museum, but the sugar warehouse in James Watt dock in Greenock is perhaps one of the most significant symbols of Scotland's relationship with slavery and would, as such, be a perfect site, because it would juxtapose the brutal human costs of slavery with a symbol of Scotland's economic wealth.

It is hard for a modern person to recognise our connection to that time. However, my grandfather was an infant when Abraham Lincoln managed to abolish slavery in the United States, so the

temporal distance might be shorter than some of us care to imagine. The human psyche has a habit of distancing itself from unpleasant things—all the more so when the subject is something as violent and abhorrent as slavery. The brutal legacy of much of colonialism belongs to us as much as anything else does.

There are many places where a museum on the topic could be sited, including in the north-east, which I represent. We need only consider the Powis gates in Aberdeen, which were built by Hugh Fraser Leslie in 1834. The gates feature carvings of slaves, making direct reference to the several coffee plantations that he owned in Jamaica.

The connections do not end there. Former students of Marischal College became involved in the slave trade. There were people who inherited wealth from the trade and even some who were involved in the abduction of slaves from Africa. No matter where a person is from in this nation, they will have at least some connection to that dark part of our history.

A museum will give us the opportunity to take some responsibility, but it will be far from the only and final step in doing so. Rather, it will be a first and very useful step. It represents a new chapter in our maturation as a nation and as human beings.

We have a responsibility to uphold the human rights of all people in the present and to recognise our failings in the past. We should not pretend that the unpleasant past never happened by simply trying to erase it. There have been interesting comments made in that regard. I share the belief that we should not tear down statues, but should instead rewrite the context in which they exist, because they remind us of a dark past that we should not seek to erase.

A museum could represent a signal that we have come to recognise the iniquities of our predecessors, and to recognise that our society should reward honesty, growth and knowledge. However, the benefits of a museum will go much further than that and will force us to look at the truth of our past brutality. If we are anything as human beings, we carry compassion. I hope that, when a museum is established, we will share responsibility for our history through it, and that it inspires us to be compassionate and to be the best that we can be. I hope that such an establishment will be a light to guide us out of darkness and ignorance.

I congratulate Stuart McMillan on his championship of local interests and of the interests of his constituency. That is exactly the exemplar that all members should look to. I am happy to support his efforts.

18:09

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): I thank the member for Greenock and Inverclyde for bringing the debate to Parliament. I am delighted to speak in it for two reasons. First, I would not miss the opportunity to talk about my home town in a national debate in our Parliament, given that town's historical connections with the subject that we debate; and secondly, and more importantly, I participated in the previous debate that we had on the subject.

My interest in the issue is to do with education because, ultimately, as far as I am concerned, this is not really a debate about whether we should have such a museum or where it should be; it is a debate about what its purpose would be and what benefits it would offer. For me, education lies at the heart of understanding our heritage, our history and our culture. If it is taught properly, it can enlighten us in a way that means that we often criticise with the judgments of today those who thought themselves enlightened in the past.

I am phenomenally proud of Greenock, and am proud of having been born and brought up there. I am proud of Greenock's rich history, and I am proud to be able to represent it as part of my West Scotland region. It really has punched above its weight in the world. We have produced the likes of the great engineer James Watt, the great comedian Chic Murray and the great novelist Lin Anderson, whose genre—tartan noir—could easily describe the subject matter that we are discussing today. Historically, we were at the heart of the United Kingdom's trade with the rest of the world, and I think that we should be overwhelmingly proud of what we have achieved and of the town's contribution to the world in all those fields.

However, it is undoubtedly the case, as others have pointed out, that there are aspects of our history that are darker, and which should be explored and learned from, including our role in the triangular trade between continents, when, unfortunately, ships would carry not just coffee and tobacco, but people. That is undeniable. It is difficult for us, but it is not something that we should shy away from. Just as we marvel at the glory of the buildings, art and statues of that period, at the institutions and philanthropic efforts of the time, and at the infrastructure that those enlightened people built, we cannot be in denial about the source—in many cases—of their wealth.

However, I will say this: I was not there. I was brought up with the phrase, "Who am I to judge another when I walk imperfectly?" I think that anachronistic judgment of the deeds of history does us no favours. I believe that a credible compromise is to acknowledge that people did things then that we no longer deem to be

appropriate, legal or moral, while accepting that not all those deeds were cruel or corrupt.

For me, James Watt, the great son of Greenock, epitomises that. He had such a great mind and was such a great thinker, but for many people is now tainted by the source of his wealth. I studied at James Watt College in Greenock with a great sense of pride. The connotations of his inventive mind were things to be proud of.

Let us look at how other countries have dealt with their chequered past. Mention has been made of Canada. The mission of the Canadian Museum of History in Quebec is to give pride of place to the first peoples. My Canadian family taught me to participate in and respect the culture of Canada's indigenous population, and its history in Ontario, where many of my family still live. When I lived down under, I visited the Australian Museum in Sydney, which explores in great detail the history of the aboriginal population who lived there long before we did. New Zealand has taken a different route by embracing its past with a great deal of pride. This week is Maori language week, which is celebrated by all parts of Kiwi culture. The International Slavery Museum in Liverpool in the city's Royal Albert dock is a great example of a museum that is more than bricks and mortar; it is a living centre of study and learning, and is something for the community to be proud of. It is not simply a building of judgment.

Surely we can do the same here on our shores. A new national museum on our heritage should, in my view, be based in Greenock, and the James Watt dock sugar sheds provide an ideal location—but if that is not possible, it could go elsewhere. The symbolism of that alone should serve as Greenock's second beacon—one of light, acknowledgement and hope.

18:13

The Minister for Older People and Equalities (Christina McKelvie): I congratulate Stuart McMillan on bringing this incredibly interesting and informative debate to the chamber and on securing support for his motion from across the Parliament. I have enjoyed all the speeches and they have given me much to think on.

The motion acknowledges the presence across Scotland of various locations that have links to slavery and that should be considered in the planning for a new national museum, the proposal for which was agreed to by the Parliament. Although I cannot give commitments to Mr McMillan or Mr Greene on a permanent site in Inverclyde, I congratulate Mr McMillan on his considerable efforts for Inverclyde and Greenock, of which I know that he is a true champion. Notwithstanding that, I know that Stewart

Stevenson has just made a bid for the north-east of Scotland as well, and I reassure Neil Bibby that we are looking at all the options, including some of the more virtual options in the work with the Hunterian; there are many ways in which we can do this.

We have a rich, but complex history and our challenge is in accepting the unacceptable truths of our past, as we have discussed. The trading of humans as slaves, as chattel and as property, is absolutely unthinkable to us now, notwithstanding the challenges that we have with modern slavery. It is deeply incompatible with notions of dignity, respect, the autonomy of the individual or indeed their human rights. In Scotland, we have tended to think of ourselves as distant from the transatlantic slave trade. We convinced ourselves with some romantic notion that we were remote from the abuses of empire and exploitation, but we just need to take a walk down Virginia street for that notion to be smashed from our heads.

As the debate has highlighted, a significant part of the wealth that flowed into 18th century Scotland came directly from the sugar, tobacco and cotton industries that in turn built and shaped cities, towns and communities across Scotland. As we acknowledge, there are many legacies that we are confronted with—street names, historical statues, monuments and museum artefacts—that, although once celebrated, have become symbols of injustice and pain for many, many people. Our places and museums can bring us face to face with parts of our history that are shameful by today's standards. As Jeremy Balfour said, that is an important way to change attitudes.

During black history month in October last year, I went on a historical walk through Glasgow city centre, organised by the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights—CRER—and guided by Dr Stephen Mullen, whom many of you will know. I recommend doing that walk if you get the opportunity. Many people do not understand the reasons why Jamaica Street, Virginia Street and others are named as such, but I did that day, from that experience. As set out in our programme for government earlier this month, we recognise that we must find a better way to present a more accurate portrayal of Scotland's colonial and slavery history and re-examine how we interpret Scotland's past through our public heritage.

The people who came to Scotland through the slave trade and the British empire, and their descendants, have made an enormous contribution to our country, yet many of their achievements are not celebrated and their stories are not told in the many museums and heritage centres across Scotland. That must change.

As Neil Bibby suggested, there is much more to do and I hope that this debate, the debate that we

had in June and the debate that we will have next week will look at some of those wider actions that we need to take, especially those regarding the recommendations from the expert reference group on Covid and ethnicity.

To that end, the Scottish Government is proud to be working with Museums Galleries Scotland to commission an independent expert review group, which will bring together public and expert voices to make recommendations to ensure that people in Scotland are aware of the role that our country has played in past injustices as well as the positive legacies, and how both elements continue in our society.

Both anti-racism work and improving ethnic minority representation in society are crucial for delivering our vision of a Scotland where everyone is treated equally. I hope that there is a very different look to this chamber after we return from the election next year.

An important first step will be to ensure the involvement of diverse representation from across the race equality and museum sectors in the museum advisory group. That is a key element in what we need to do. The group's expert opinions will be considered alongside findings from a national consultation to include the many and varied views of the people of Scotland, including whether there should be a national museum. I wish to reassure CRER, which wrote to me last night—and I will respond in full—that the work that it has been doing over the past few years will definitely be included in that approach.

The debate provides us with an opportunity to recognise efforts to promote equality and what has already begun within the heritage sector. The V&A has already announced that it is reviewing the stuff that it has in its museums and how that is presented.

Jamie Greene: I thank the minister for her comments, in which there is much to be welcomed. Can I ask her to confirm whether it is the Government's position that it is not considering a physical museum but looking at options that may include a virtual museum, or is it the case that we are trying to find the right place for a building and how to fund it?

Christina McKelvie: We will commission the group to come up with ideas about whether there should be a physical building, or a combination of virtual and physical or something else. We should leave that to the expert group and the people who have been campaigning along with CRER for a long time to say what we really need in Scotland. I hope that we get some diverse and interesting recommendations from the expert group; I am sure that we will, given the walk-through that I did

with it in Glasgow last year. There are lots of interesting options.

There is a project funded by Museums Galleries Scotland called curating discomfort. The name speaks for itself. The project is led by the Hunterian in Glasgow, and it aims to identify new and inclusive ways to interpret existing collections to better address the many meanings and implications of the historical assets in their care. We have much to learn from other examples, such as those explained by Clare Adamson and Jamie Greene after their visits to Canada and Australia, and the approaches taken there.

Equality for us all is critical, nationally and locally, so it is vital to have these conversations in all the spheres that allow us to do so. Glasgow City Council demonstrated that in a recent motion from Councillor Graham Campbell and Councillor Annette Christie, which expresses solidarity with equality campaigners and commits to continuing the work with CRER. The council remains an "unwavering voice" alongside that of the Government

"that amplifies the idea that Black Lives Matter."

It is good to hear about the motion in North Lanarkshire Council and that young people are learning about their heritage. In a few minutes, I will address the questions about education that Jamie Greene and Clare Adamson asked.

As a nation we are proud to recognise and protect the intrinsic value of all people, and to champion the pillars of dignity, equality and respect for everyone in our modern and inclusive Scotland. Human rights is very much at the heart of that. We are determined to engage in eradicating racism, inequality and injustice, and to build a better, fairer world. That is why we allocated £2.6 million last year to fund organisations that are working to advance race equality.

As Stuart McMillan, Jeremy Balfour, Neil Bibby, Clare Adamson and Stewart Stevenson said, we must not erase or ignore difficult elements of our history. Instead, we should seek to reinterpret them, adding new layers of meaning to develop better understanding of how we want to live together, working with others, and that is what this Government is committed to doing.

I also agree with Professor Sir Geoff Palmer's points. Jamie Greene and Clare Adamson asked me specifically about education. We have funded the fairer future panel through Young Scot to look at the issue, and we are looking at ways of engaging Young Scot in that. Intercultural Youth Scotland, which is an amazing organisation based here in Edinburgh, has been funded to support minority ethnic young people throughout the pandemic. The Deputy First Minister is already

working with partners to look at the curriculum, and I hope that he will have more to say about that in the weeks to come.

The work of the expert reference group and the accompanying national consultation will open up a conversation on this very important subject in all the areas that every member has mentioned tonight. They will deliver insights that will help us to establish how we can better manage, present and interpret those elements of our heritage to ensure that we look forward to an equal future and look back in a balanced and unbiased way. I look forward to progressing that work.

Meeting closed at 18:23.

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