

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Thursday 25 October 2001

Session 1

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Scottish Parliament

Thursday 25 October 2001

[THE DEPUTY PRESIDING OFFICER *opened the meeting at 09:30*]

Railways (Investment)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): Good morning. The first item of business is a Scottish National Party debate on motion S1M-2344, in the name of Andrew Wilson, on railway investment, and one amendment to that motion.

09:30

Andrew Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP): It is always with a due sense of the inevitable response that any SNP member suggests anything in any debate in Scottish politics, especially in the Parliament. It is a great failure of our culture that if one party says white, the other will immediately say black, irrespective of the argument. I often say that, had James Watt been a member of the SNP, the Labour party would have condemned the steam engine as a dangerous anti-horse device. Such an approach to politics is both pointless and tedious.

I believe that the Government is absolutely sincere about its intention to improve Scotland's railways through investment. This morning, I take the opportunity to call on the First Minister to keep the Minister for Transport and Planning in her post. Rumours abound in Holyrood of a potential ministerial reshuffle and Ms Boyack's name is always at the top of the list. I say that she should remain in position. Changing the face of Labour ministers is less important than giving the ministers the power to deliver the job that they set out to do.

At present, there is much upheaval in the railway industry, but there is a good sense of partnership in the industry. It is for us in politics and in the governing sector to ensure that we deliver that same partnership. When it comes to railways and the economy, the national interest is far more important than petty party politics. The present opportunities are too great to be missed. Sacking ministers is pointless when what is needed is to change the structure to empower the ministers to deliver on railways. The minister has neither financial control nor proper policy control over Scotland's railways. I want her to have the same control over railways as she has over roads. Only then will we get a properly balanced approach to transport policy.

Our motion sets out a balanced and constructive

request for the Parliament to re-examine the powers at the minister's disposal and to develop an independent Scottish focus on the ownership of, and investment in, the track. I am disappointed that the Executive has lodged its usual self-congratulatory and complacent amendment. There is something curious about an amendment from two ministers that not only welcomes those ministers' own work but calls on them to do things. Perhaps if they simply got together privately and did something, there would be no need for such a daft amendment. The amendment is slightly embarrassing from the ministers' perspective.

The key contention on which the SNP argument rests is that Scotland will inevitably lose out on investment if it is part of any United Kingdom structure—be that public or private, the Strategic Rail Authority, Railtrack plc or a new trust. Not one penny of the £7 billion or so in the planned rail modernisation fund is guaranteed for Scotland. Despite the fact that transport is devolved, we do not even get our Barnett formula share of that money, because capital investment in the railways is not included as comparable expenditure. Without reform, no investment in Scotland's railways is guaranteed. We need to act to change that. That is not a grievance, and I do not complain or moan about it; it is a simple recognition of reality.

The investment priority at UK level will naturally always be the south of England, because that is where the greatest volume of passengers is and where targets can most readily be met. In that sense, Scotland will always be peripheral to UK transport-centred decisions. Even the Strategic Rail Authority has admitted so, in private and in public. Only the other week, before the chairman of that rail investment body resigned in disgust at the performance of UK ministers, he said that unless structures changed and investment improved, there would be no investment north of the Watford gap. That situation cannot be sustained. Given what the head of the SRA has said, ministers must tell us today how they can guarantee new investment.

We offer our solution to the policy problem of a lack of investment and a structural constraint within devolution. We have worked with academics and others to produce our idea for a Scottish public railway investment trust and yesterday circulated a briefing note for members' perusal. It is vital that Railtrack assets in Scotland are owned in the public interest and on a not-for-profit basis. Our idea was developed along the same lines as our earlier proposal for a Scottish trust for public investment, which—incidentally—was derided by Labour politicians who are now suggesting exactly the same model for the UK. There needs to be a change of culture, so that there is an up-front acceptance of ideas, instead of

people condemning the ideas first and looking at the detail later.

Only a trust that is focused on Scotland will give us the assurance that we can get investment into Scotland, but that trust must also be backed up with the proper devolution of UK rail capital investment. Until such investment is guaranteed, we cannot make balanced choices between road and rail or decide on our priorities for new investment across the transport sector. Sarah Boyack was criticised by Professor David Begg, her former party colleague, and by others, for prioritising road over rail. My defence of the minister is that that will inevitably be the case until the minister's financial policy control over rail is the same as her control over roads. The problem lies not with the minister, but with the structure of devolution.

My proposals would be simple to deliver. I appeal for the same unity of purpose across the parties as the industry and passenger organisations have demonstrated. On 16 October, the minister said:

"By returning the rail network to some form of public ownership we have the chance to secure more direct investment in our railways and government will have a greater say on how that network develops."

I agree. However, we need to ensure that that applies equally to Scotland as it does to the rest of the UK.

It is worth noting that the UK Government's policy on the railways appears to be in something of a mess. This week, Mr Byers outlined to a House of Commons select committee his ideas for a not-for-profit trust; at the same time, the BBC was running a statement from the same minister that he was still open to offers from anyone for Railtrack plc. That proves that Mr Byers would accept another private company, perhaps even a German bank, buying Railtrack's assets. It is absurd that we should allow the problems of the past to continue. We in Scotland cannot sit back as the policy mess in the rest of the UK unfolds. Even if there is a UK trust, we need a trust in Scotland to focus on securing investment. For the UK Government to return the railways to simply another form of private ownership is unsustainable.

Dr Richard Simpson (Ochil) (Lab): Andrew Wilson made the point that Mr Byers is still open to offers for Railtrack, but the administrator is legally required to take the best offer for the shareholders. That is a statement of open fact. Ministers have no alternative in that respect.

Andrew Wilson: With the greatest respect, it is for the administrators to say whether they are open to offers, but the UK minister was arguing that he was open to offers. He was quite happy to

consider passing on Railtrack assets to another private sector controller. We cannot afford to throw public subsidy into the dividends or asset base of private or foreign-owned companies. Railway-owning companies should be kept in the public interest on a not-for-profit basis. The public will not forgive us if the new body repeats the mistakes of Railtrack. Even if the railways are taken over by a UK trust, we are not guaranteed the investment that we need.

When we launched our idea, I was condemned immediately by London-based Labour politicians, one of whom argued on the radio that the idea was unworkable, despite his having admitted to me seconds earlier that he had not even read what we were suggesting. Such an approach to politics is absurd and tedious. Special mention must be made of the buffoonery of the Minister of State in the Scotland Office, but before I do that I shall accept an intervention from Murray Tosh.

Mr Murray Tosh (South of Scotland) (Con): The logic of what Mr Wilson is saying would surely also apply to the rolling stock leasing companies and the train operating companies. If the availability of public funds for private companies is unacceptable, is Mr Wilson calling for the total integration of the entire railway industry, not simply Railtrack, into his trust? Does he differentiate between parts of the industry?

Andrew Wilson: Of course I differentiate. That is what I have set out. Murray Tosh's attempt to continue his case for total privatisation of all levels of the railway industry has failed. Silence is the best thing that the Conservative party could bring to any debate about the railway industry, because it is the failure of Conservative policy that has left us in the mess that we are in today.

The Minister of State at the Scotland Office, George Foulkes, rushed to the airways with the daft suggestion that Scotland could not possibly have an independent approach because the railways do not stop at the border. That argument is absurd and represents the bankrupt politics of the 1970s. Has no one told George Foulkes that the roads do not stop at the border either, but Sarah Boyack has total control over them? Has no one told him that railways tend to run across borders in most countries in Europe? Has he not been told that there is a railway that runs between Britain, Belgium and France and which is a joint partnership between Belgian and French publicly owned companies and a private UK company? Indeed, has no one told him about the recent investment in the Dublin to Belfast line?

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): Will the member give way?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The member is in the final minute of his speech and cannot take an intervention.

Andrew Wilson: We must look forward and not attach negative criticism to an idea just because it comes from the SNP, or simply be opposed to any argument for more power for Scotland. Even with the constraints of devolution within the United Kingdom, the minister should be comfortable with arguing that she should have greater control. The solution that is workable and which guarantees the public interest is investment in the railway industry on a not-for-profit basis. We cannot guarantee investment unless we go down the road of full devolution of powers for the minister. We must keep Sarah Boyack in the role to which she has become accustomed. Do not sack her for internal Labour party purposes. We need stability in the railway industry.

David Begg said:

"We don't want historians to look back on the birth of the Scottish Parliament as the period when Scotland's transport infrastructure fell badly behind England."

I agree. It is the structure of devolution that makes that a risk. We need to act now, in the national interest. I urge members to support our motion and reject the self-congratulation of the Executive amendment.

I move,

That the Parliament welcomes the desire of the Minister for Transport and Planning to increase investment in Scottish railways; notes that with the collapse of Railtrack plc there is an opportunity to introduce an innovative system of ownership and management for Scotland's railway network that takes advantage of the good partnership that exists across the railway sector in Scotland, and calls upon the Scottish Executive and all interested parties in Scotland to work together in the Scottish national interest to (a) re-examine the financial and policy powers at the disposal of the Scottish Ministers with respect to railways investment and (b) develop an ownership and investment vehicle for Railtrack assets in Scotland that maximises both public accountability and investment in Scotland's railways in the public interest and on a not for profit basis.

09:41

The Minister for Transport and Planning (Sarah Boyack): I am grateful to the SNP for picking this week to debate railways—the week that sees the biggest-ever set of awards for public transport in Scotland. We need mature debate and discussion about the way forward. It is not self-congratulatory to say to passengers that there is, and will continue to be, more investment in our railways.

Andrew Wilson ignored the key issue of investment under the old Railtrack, which was that Stephen Byers was faced with a request for a blank cheque for the railways. If we take the west coast mainline as an example, we see that costs rose from £2.3 billion to £7 billion. That is why we need a new Railtrack and better financial control and management.

I want to use this morning's debate to discuss the opportunity that has been brought about by Stephen Byers's announcement on Railtrack, in the context of the work that the Executive is already doing. I also want to set out where we go from here. It is just over a year since the Hatfield tragedy and what followed was chaos for the travelling public. There have been debates about the mess that we inherited from the Tories, but now we need to move forward and set new structures that can deliver the basics: safety, maintenance and better management of our railway infrastructure. The old structure lasted for only five years. That is why it is vital that the new structure and the company limited by guarantee stand the test of time. We do not need a back-of-an-envelope scheme—the railways are too important for that. We need a framework for strategic investment that meets our priorities for an integrated network.

Since the Labour Government was elected in 1997 and the Scottish Parliament was established, there has been record investment in our railways in Scotland and a new vision for the railway network. That has meant new stations at Dalgety Bay, Queen Margaret in Dunfermline and Howwood in Renfrewshire. We have seen new rolling stock and new safety measures at stations, with better closed-circuit television. Just last month, I gave the go-ahead to the Larkhall to Milngavie proposal—a £26 million project with financial support from the Scottish Executive and Strathclyde Passenger Transport.

Of course, we would all like improvement to happen faster. That is why I have allocated record sums from our public transport fund this week, acting on the representations that I have received from members from Fife, Glasgow and Ayrshire. This week's investment in new rolling stock will enable the SPT to deliver more seats on trains on the Glasgow to Ayrshire routes and the Glasgow to Stirling routes. There will be more park-and-ride facilities at Falkirk, Larbert, Stirling and Dunblane. My commitment to Fife Council that we will work with it to deliver new rolling stock will bring benefits for the hard-pressed commuters of Fife.

We are also building for the long term with rail studies now in progress on the Borders railway line. Work is also in progress on the central Scotland railway capacity study to address issues such as access at key points on the network in places such as Edinburgh Waverley and between Bathgate and Airdrie.

This week I gave the go-ahead to Dumfries and Galloway Council to work with SPT on better access to the existing network and to Dundee City Council to consider options for new stations to the west of Dundee. We need to do the basic groundwork if we are to take decisions on further

development of the network and to help us identify and prioritise opportunities for investment by the private sector.

Our consultation on the ScotRail franchise saw people sign up to our vision for the railways of Scotland. We take a strategic approach to the network that sees railways as a key way of tackling the congestion problems in our cities, with environmental benefits and a real choice for drivers who are stuck in traffic jams. We want better access to the network—better trains that are accessible to all. There is an emphasis on safety for the network as a whole and for the individual safety of passengers.

I want to set out what the new landscape that has been opened up by Stephen Byers offers us. We have an opportunity for greater transparency.

Bruce Crawford (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): Will the minister give way?

Sarah Boyack: No, thank you.

There will be an end to the perverse incentives in the railways and to the obstacles that made developing railway projects tortuous. That is the problem that Andrew Wilson identified that we need to address. There will be better management and financial control of the railways. Clearly, there is an opportunity here, but only if we grasp it.

We need to ensure that we get better value for taxpayers and passengers. The Tories' botched privatisation of the railways had to come to an end. We need to ensure that the basics are in place and that there are high safety standards and effective investment in maintenance.

Andrew Wilson: I agree with the minister. Can she guarantee that Stephen Byers will not agree to sell Railtrack's assets to a private company, whether domestic or foreign?

Sarah Boyack: Stephen Byers has been absolutely clear that the stakeholders that depend on our railways must be involved in the new structure. That includes the trade unions, the passenger interest and the freight interest. The critical thing is to ensure that the new structure is driven by the people who need it.

The last thing that the railways need is more fragmentation. We need a UK rail framework so that Scottish passengers get the high safety standards and reliability of services that they deserve. Our developing rail freight industry and cross-border services need UK-wide regulation. That is why the new company limited by guarantee is a big opportunity for us in Scotland. Devolution has brought more powers to Scotland through the McLeish settlement. The challenge is to ensure that the new company limited by guarantee reflects Scottish interests, both in the way that it operates and in what it delivers.

The rail industry in Scotland has a reputation for partnership and co-operation. There is scope for better integration, but we need to get the details right. The last thing that the industry needs is another failed quick fix. That is why I met representatives of the rail industry in Scotland yesterday and will meet them individually over the next few weeks. I met John Spellar last week to discuss our interest in ensuring that Scottish interests are taken into account fully in the structures that are set up.

The Scottish Executive has been working hard to deliver Scottish rail projects. However, Railtrack's announcements last month put back implementation of several key projects. That is why, last week, I also met John Robinson, the chair of Railtrack, to make clear just how important those projects are for Scotland. I also made our position clear to the rail administrators, Ernst and Young.

The Scottish Executive's priorities are absolutely clear. We must ensure that we have proper and full input to the restructuring of UK railways, that Scottish enhancement projects go ahead and that we make progress on the ScotRail franchise process. I want to ensure that we continue to deliver record investment in Scotland.

I move amendment S1M-2344.1, to leave out from "with the collapse" to end and insert:

"it has been a difficult time for the railway industry since the tragedy at Hatfield a year ago and welcomes the steps that the Executive is taking to meet the needs of Scotland's rail users; calls upon the Executive to continue its programme of record investment in the railways and its work to make sure that projects for enhancements to the rail network go ahead, building on the good partnership that exists across the railway industry in Scotland; also notes the recent placing into administration of Railtrack plc and the opportunity that this presents to re-examine the organisation of rail services across the UK; welcomes the Executive's commitment to work closely with Her Majesty's Government to ensure that Scotland has a full and proper input into the restructuring of the UK rail industry, and calls upon all concerned to develop an ownership and investment framework for Railtrack assets that maximises both public and national interest."

09:48

Mr Murray Tosh (South of Scotland) (Con): When I wrote to my friend and colleague, David McLetchie, three weeks ago, indicating that I would not be seeking re-election to the Scottish Parliament in 2003, I also indicated my desire to stand down from the transport brief as soon as alternative arrangements could be made. I anticipate therefore, that this is my swan-song as transport spokesman. [MEMBERS: "Aw."] I am not looking for sympathy or appreciation. I simply want to point out that what I will say today is my own reaction to today's debate and to the briefing paper that we all received and that, if I say

anything sensible or fair, it should not be seen as in any way binding on my successor.

I thank Andrew Wilson for the briefing note that he supplied to all members. That was an interesting innovation and it seemed perfectly fair that he should set out his stall in advance and try to convey a somewhat different tone from that to which we were used from SNP transport spokesmen. Previously, we had indignation from the first second from Kenny MacAskill, while Bruce Crawford's indignation usually started half an hour before the debate. It was quite refreshing to find Andrew Wilson attempting to start on an intelligent, consensual and rational basis. We were really excited when, in the middle of his speech, Andrew Wilson said that he was not moaning or complaining about things. That was the most startling innovation of all. If that sets a new tone for the SNP, we will all be very happy with it.

In his paper and his speech—although the speech was not as good as the paper—Andrew Wilson raised a number of worthwhile points. It is clear from the paper that Andrew Wilson understands the role that aggressive regulation appears to have played in precipitating the downfall of Railtrack. We all understand the inherent problems in Railtrack and the degree to which fragmentation, buck-passing, poor management and all the rest of it undermined the company. I agree with the Minister for Transport and Planning that we have to concentrate on where we go from here.

The SNP's approach in the debate also appears to recognise the interrelationship between the UK as a whole and the Scottish part of the network. The paper contained nothing that indicated that the SNP was opposed to a UK regulatory framework, nor did I pick up such opposition in Andrew Wilson's speech, so this year's debate has moved us on from the last time that we debated this issue at the behest of the SNP.

Andrew Wilson suggests that if we take a not-for-profit approach at UK level, we ought to consider such an approach in Scotland. I understand why the nationalists would propose that, but I do not view it as incompatible with devolution. That approach should not be rejected out of hand, but should be carefully considered. Ultimately, that approach may not be what we all want, but sorting out the current situation and working out what the fallout will be will take some time, so if the approach seems to be a sensible way of dealing with the Scottish industry in a UK context, nobody should rush to judgment and to throw it out simply because the SNP proposed it. Andrew Wilson referred in his paper to the possibility of restoring some kind of vertical integration in the Scottish industry. That should be considered sensibly as well.

I was disappointed when Andrew Wilson got carried away in his speech with rhetoric about the evils of private finance. One aspect of railway privatisation that has succeeded, although it was set back by Hatfield, is the substantial investment in the industry such as the £1 billion investment in rolling stock that is being announced by Virgin today. Private capital has brought a lot to the railway industry. The train operating companies brought flexibility, marketing ability and an orientation towards serving customers that did not exist in British Rail. One of Railtrack's difficulties was that it was slow to provide the infrastructure for the passengers and the services that the private train operating companies brought to bear. We would be careless to throw out what private capital has brought to the industry without due consideration for the partnership that could exist between the new Railtrack and the train operating companies.

I understand that the Minister for Transport and Planning will feel that she is in control and can deliver the required level of investment, but Andrew Wilson's concern about how we deliver a Scottish share of the available UK funds is a concern that I have had from the beginning. I do not see the institutional mechanisms that are required to deliver that share. I assume that all the things that Professor David Begg has said in recent times mean nothing in terms of his still being the minister's friend, but he has expressed that concern. Many authoritative, fair and reasonable people have wondered how we can guarantee investment in Scotland at an appropriate level for projects such as Borders rail, for which the case is not a capital return or major economic benefit to the Scottish economy but, in essence, a social argument and concern for the local economy. There are concerns about how our potential rail projects will feature in comparisons with crossrail and London, which will suck in £2 billion or £3 billion and involve investment on a scale that we cannot match.

I do not know whether a Barnett approach is best, but as part of the debate we should examine how we reorder our railway industry, and the relationship between ministers, the Barnett formula and this Parliament in legislative and executive terms.

I realise that I am pushing my luck, Presiding Officer, but I will finish shortly.

Andrew Wilson said that a characteristic of this debate was that as soon as the SNP said one thing, the Labour party immediately said the opposite. He then said that he wanted the Minister for Transport and Planning to stay in office. I am sure that he was looking for the opposite. I actually agree with him, but I mean it. At this time, Sarah Boyack's authority in and knowledge of this area is

an asset to the Parliament, and the Executive should consider that in handling the Scottish aspect of the issue in the months to come.

The minister's speech was a bit platitudinous. I realise that the minister could not say much in six minutes—neither can I—but she was briefed yesterday by the leaders of the railway industry. I hope that she will brief MSPs regularly. I hope that there will be a debate, that we will all come to that debate without our ideological preconceptions—right or left—and that we will all try to talk through how we might better organise the provision of railway services in the years to come in Scotland, and make that a monument to the achievements of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive.

09:55

Iain Smith (North-East Fife) (LD): If Sarah Boyack's position was in danger before the debate, she must now be extremely worried, because the Conservatives and the SNP have called for her to stay. That must be a worrying position to be in as a Government minister. As a former minister, I know that I would have felt much safer if they were calling for my resignation than if they were calling for me to stay.

I welcome the debate. Because of the collapse of Railtrack, there is an opportunity to look afresh at how rail services in Scotland are managed. However, although the SNP plans are a welcome contribution to the debate, they lack vision. That is not surprising, because the SNP's last great idea for the railways was to use £137 million of the Scottish Executive's money to buy a huge stake in Railtrack, which at today's prices would be worth nothing. That would have been £137 million of our money down the drain, rather than invested in our railways. That is what Kenny MacAskill, the previous SNP transport spokesman, suggested just one year ago that we should do. That is the extent of SNP brilliance on this issue.

The big problem with the SNP's approach is that it forgets to consider how important investment in railways south of the border is for the future of the railway network north of the border. What is the point of us spending a vast amount of money on upgrading the west-coast main line from Glasgow as far as the border if there is no similar investment south of the border down to London and the other places that we need to access? There would be no point. The example of roads was given.

Andrew Wilson: Will the member give way?

Iain Smith: I am sorry, but I have only five minutes and do not have time to take interventions.

On the M74, one drives down a three-lane motorway, but at the border one comes to a dual carriageway, because the English will not invest in the bit of the motorway network that is in England at Carlisle. The same could happen to our railways. It is extremely important that we have a say in the UK rail strategy and in how UK rail investment is used in Scotland. It is important that we have a say in, for example, the upgrading of our bridges and track to meet European standards for freight. There is no point in upgrading our facilities in Scotland if that does not happen south of the border, because where will the freight go when it reaches the border?

It is important that we have a say in ensuring that we have links to the channel tunnel. It is important that some of the £7 billion investment that has been talked about is used in England to ensure that we have full access to the rail network through the United Kingdom and Europe. It is probably better that we have that say as part of the UK than that we separate ourselves as the SNP always wants us to do.

The Conservatives have great difficulty talking about railways, because they know that it was their shambles of a privatisation of Railtrack and the railway network that got us into the situation that we are in now. In the run-up to railway privatisation there was huge underinvestment in our railway network, which got worse as we got closer to privatisation. In the final year before rail privatisation, ScotRail had only £2 million to invest in Scotland's railways, which is barely small change for the railway network. Fife Council agreed to invest in new trains and stations, but we could not go ahead with that ahead of privatisation because we were not allowed to order the trains. We were prevented from doing that.

There are similar problems with the franchising arrangements. I correspond regularly with ScotRail about the quality of the rail service in Fife. The answer that I get back is that until ScotRail has sorted out the franchise, it cannot commit to long-term investment in the rail network. Obviously, we welcome the additional rolling stock and platform improvements that the Minister for Transport and Planning announced this week—it is welcome news for the hard-pressed rail passengers in Fife—but the nature of the privatisation of the system and the fragmentation of the railways makes long-term planning in our railway network more difficult than it was.

The Conservatives can say nothing about the railways. Under the Conservatives, rail fares rose by 60 per cent between 1989 and 1997, while investment in the railway network did not.

The collapse of Railtrack gives us an opportunity to re-examine the structure of the rail industry. A case can be made for a Scottish solution—for

Scottish track to be managed by the main rail operator in Scotland. The case for that proposal needs to be examined so that we can decide whether it is the most sensible way forward for Scotland's rail industry. However, it is not the only option. It would be foolish for us to rush into a solution to deal with a problem that has resulted from a failed privatisation. We should not rush into a solution today that may not deal with the longer-term problems. Let us take our time. I agree with the suggestion in the motion that we get together to discuss this proposal and to consider all the options. However, it would not be sensible to rush into a solution at this stage.

The Liberal Democrat manifesto for the general election suggested some significant changes to the rail industry, some of which will be made as a result of the collapse of Railtrack. We suggested that a sustainable transport authority should take over from Railtrack the responsibility for investment, to ensure that priority is given to investment in lines such as the east coast and west-coast lines, including links to Aberdeen. We need to have a fast rail service from Aberdeen to London.

In our manifesto we suggested that Railtrack should continue to be responsible for the management and maintenance of the track and infrastructure, but on a not-for-profit basis. That is now likely to happen. We also proposed a separate rail safety body and accident investigation units for the rail service.

Those are important changes. I hope that the collapse of Railtrack will give us an opportunity on a UK basis to consider the issues that I have raised. I hope that it will also allow us in Scotland to examine how we can maximise and improve our rail services.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We have only nine minutes available for open debate. There will be three speeches of three minutes each.

10:01

Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP): Murray Tosh will be missed. He made a wonderful speech, which I enjoyed thoroughly. However, he should travel on some of the trains on which I travel. They are not serving their customers in the way in which he suggested. They are sometimes quite disgraceful.

I want to talk about the idea of a rail service, rather than a rail business. The key word is service. That does not exclude managerial accountability. If we put the failure to develop a rail service together with the infamous Beeching cuts, we will see where we went wrong. Business was seen as the cure-all, but in fact it was a disease that led to the collapse of investment in the rail

infrastructure—with tragic consequences, as we know.

The demise of Railtrack gives us an opportunity to be radical: to put in place a means of ownership of the infrastructure that takes the profit element out of the service. A rail service that includes a profit element is, in any event, a contradiction in terms. The establishment of a Scottish public railway investment trust—SPRINT—or of local investment trusts for community ownership would allow us to remove that profit element. A national trust would place control in the hands of this Parliament, bringing rail into line with Scotland's roads—no more, no less. Crucially, it would open the door to an integrated transport system for the nation. It would give us access to the billions of pounds of SRA funding that are Scotland's by right, but which we will not get. There is no doubt that the bulk of SRA funding will stay south of the border, where congestion and population pressure will dominate the divvying-out of resources. There will be an emphasis on quick returns, not on the social and economic requirements to which Murray Tosh referred—for example, those of the Borders. The benefits of projects in such areas are longer term and sometimes more subtle.

As members would expect, that brings me to the Waverley line. A petition calling for the reinstatement of the line from Edinburgh to Carlisle received 17,000 signatures, and in a debate just over a year ago the Parliament gave unanimous support to it. However, we have not received a commitment in principle to the funding of the line. The M74 extension that was mentioned—5 miles of three-lane carriageway—has cost more than £200 million. That is equivalent to the cost of 90 miles of track serving 180,000 people, for whom the loss of the Waverley line had dire economic consequences.

In the last minute of my speech, I want to refer members to what was said in 1968:

"It is no secret that the Secretary of State for Scotland himself argued in favour of keeping a service and had to suffer being over-ruled by his cabinet colleagues."

Westminster does not have the vision to restore the Borders railway line. I dream of that and I think that Sarah Boyack dreams of it too. She can make that dream come true. Giving £1.7 million to Hawick for bus shelters and a wee bus service is not the realisation of a Borders dream.

10:04

Bristow Muldoon (Livingston) (Lab): As someone who worked in the rail industry for 13 years, I should say that many of the events of the past couple of years have caused me a great deal of sadness. I am thinking primarily of the tragic deaths at places such as Southall, Ladbroke

Grove and Hatfield. However, my sadness at the way in which the rail industry has operated over the past two years relates to far more than just the issue of safety. It also relates to the way in which Railtrack has financially mismanaged the rail industry. In criticising Railtrack, I recognise that the company has many dedicated and professional staff. We must work with those people to rebuild the infrastructure company once it has been reformed.

The demise of Railtrack provides us with a great opportunity to repair some of the damage that was caused by the fragmentation of the rail industry. Before Murray Tosh spoke, I intended to support Andrew Wilson's suggestion that a period of silence from the Tories would be very welcome, but Murray spoiled that by making a conciliatory speech. If the Conservatives take that approach consistently, they may have something to contribute, but I suspect that they will not.

Privatisation caused great damage to the industry, because it atomised it. Overnight it turned profitable sectors such as that in which I worked—InterCity—into operations that required subsidies. It made a few lucky people millionaires but resulted in the chaos that we have witnessed over the past couple of years. We need to move forward from the current situation.

We have an opportunity to redevelop the industry and to reshape a major component of it—the infrastructure company. We should welcome that opportunity and the debate to which it will give rise. We have the opportunity to develop a railway system that operates the highest safety standards and maintains the infrastructure to a level that builds confidence among passengers in the reliability of services. We have an opportunity to develop the expanded rail network and capacity that we need if we are to deal with congestion on the roads.

I turn now to Andrew Wilson's proposal. It is a welcome departure that Andrew has floated his idea in advance of the debate. I hope that over the coming months he will take the opportunity to contribute to the debate about the future of the industry. However, the proposal demonstrates the SNP's tendency for snap solutions and a knee-jerk approach. Being an SNP policy guru must be a very easy job. All that one needs to do is develop a separate Scottish model for every policy that comes along.

I still speak to many people in the industry. I speak to people in the trade unions, the Strategic Rail Authority, the companies and the Rail Passengers Committee Scotland. Each of them has a different view on how the industry should be reshaped. However, none of them is calling for more fragmentation. The industry does not need that; it needs more cohesion and a united focus on

safety. Safety matters to Scottish travellers, whether they are travelling in Yorkshire or in Scotland. Andrew Wilson suggested the formation of cross-border railway organisations. That is not impossible, but if we want to manage safety cohesively it makes more sense to have an organisation that covers the entire United Kingdom.

As I have limited time, I will bring my remarks to a close. In the week in which the Minister for Transport and Planning announced major new funding for public transport, we have been given an opportunity to improve the railway network for the next generation. We should take that opportunity and influence the way in which the rail network is developed. However, we should not sprint towards instant solutions.

10:08

Ms Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP): I congratulate my colleague Andrew Wilson on his innovative proposal. I hope that members from all parties will vote for the motion.

We have heard members refer to the difference between the railways down south and the railways up here, but we have not got to the nub of the problem. The nub of the problem is that in Scotland we do not have control of the development of and investment in our railways. Andrew Wilson's proposal would solve that. I hope that members have read the proposal thoroughly. If so, they will realise how much work went into it.

Christine Grahame referred to moneys that have been spent in her area. The minister also made great play of moneys that have been announced to fund transport throughout Scotland. Let me take the example of Glasgow, which has received £7 million. Money has been spent in Glasgow on bus corridors, closed-circuit television in buses, upgrading bus shelters and providing four or five new items of railway rolling stock. With great respect, that is not what Glasgow needs. For 30 years, Glasgow has been crying out for a decent railway link to integrate the city centre and for a direct link to Glasgow airport. Under the minister's proposals, we will never get those things.

Liberal Democrat and Labour members said that investment had to be made down south before it can be made up here. Let us consider some of the moneys that have been spent down south. More than £2 billion has been spent on the Jubilee line; £255 million on the Limehouse Docklands link; more than £1 billion on the channel tunnel link; and £440 million on the Heathrow express. Those are staggering figures. In the Glasgow area, only just over £20 million has been spent. The people of Scotland and the Scottish National Party are not asking for too much—we are asking for fairness

across the board, but we will not get that if we do not have control of vital investment and development links.

The Parliament grasped the nettle on care in the community and the Sutherland report. We went ahead and did something on that. Why do we not grasp the nettle now and produce a proper integrated transport system for Scotland?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Please make wind-up speeches as tight as possible.

10:10

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): I pay tribute to the paper that was drawn up by Andrew Wilson, which is a worthwhile and relevant addition to the debate. Like Murray Tosh, I take the view that the SNP's suggestion does not have to be viewed in the context of independence; the idea is possible in the context of the developing federal system or equally in the unitary system that we had, although whether it is desirable is another matter that I will come to shortly. It is unfortunate that people such as Sandra White have misrepresented the statements that were made by other members. No Liberal Democrat member has suggested—

Ms White rose—

Robert Brown: I will not take an intervention, because Ms White has had her shot.

Ms White: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Mr Brown was not in the chamber to hear the speech from his Liberal Democrat colleague so how can he make assumptions about it?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That is not a point of order, but allegations of misrepresentation should be considered carefully.

Robert Brown: The suggestion that was made by Sandra White was that the Liberal Democrats, in particular Iain Smith, had proposed that investment should be made first in the south. That is incorrect and a complete misrepresentation of what Iain Smith said. He said that investment should be balanced throughout the United Kingdom in accordance with the requirements of the whole country.

Ms White: Will the member give way?

Robert Brown: No, I will not, because I have only four minutes to proceed on the matter.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You have three minutes, I am afraid.

Robert Brown: It is appropriate that I apologise to members and to Andrew Wilson for not hearing his entire speech. I arrived late as the result of the late running of the Glasgow-Edinburgh train, which is a regrettable recurring feature of that line. That feature suggests that the problems of the railway

industry are not confined to track structures, but go across a number of other areas.

Tommy Sheridan: I bet that you had to stand, too.

Robert Brown: Quite. I would like to deal with the issues in Glasgow. Sandra White was right to mention the Glasgow airport link and the crossrail link, which would avoid the 10-minute hassle between Glasgow Central station and Glasgow Queen Street station.

I offer only lukewarm support for the Executive amendment. The Executive should consider sponsoring a national conference on the matter. Knowledgeable members such as Bristow Muldoon, Andrew Wilson and Murray Tosh have made a number of good speeches on the background to the matter. It is appropriate to bring their ideas together at a national conference sponsored by the Executive. That would develop the matter further, as it is important that we get it right. Opportunities are on offer and we cannot afford to repeat the history of bad organisation and disaster areas, particularly with Railtrack, in the rail industry.

10:13

Mr Tosh: The debate has been too short to get into many of the issues. We still need to receive clarification on many matters and I hope that the minister will find an opportunity in the near future to take the Parliament into her confidence about how she believes the new not-for-profit approach at the United Kingdom level will operate in Scotland. We must have a sense of the time that is required to establish the new organisations and of how it will be possible to raise the necessary capital for the work that is committed and in the system and the work that remains on the agenda for future delivery.

The ability to raise the money might be the weakness of the SNP's suggestion of a separate or distinct Scottish trust. I should not say "separate" given the word's emotional overtones and undertones. There must be a way of analysing how we will raise the money and whether it will be possible to do so from the public sector balance sheet if the Government guarantees the returns.

We also need to know whether the investment is going to be more or less expensive as a result of the new institutional arrangements. We need to find out about a huge area. It is not realistic to ask for definitive answers yet, because so much is in flux, but we need to have a sense fairly soon of where the Executive is going with the franchise. It seems that the two-year franchise extensions that we heard about a few months ago as a good thing were simply a stalling device to put off substantive decisions until after the Government did what it

has clearly planned to do for some time. We need some certainty about where we are going with the franchise. We also need some certainty about where we are going with the major investments in the east and west-coast main lines as well as in the domestic infrastructure.

I sympathise with many of Mr Wilson's points, but I find his motion too restrictive. I do not like a lot of the Executive amendment, which is a bit self-congratulatory. However, it ties down less and leaves more flexibility so, on balance, we will support the Executive amendment.

10:16

The Deputy Minister for Transport and Planning (Lewis Macdonald): I, too, will be sorry to see Murray Tosh leave the Conservative front bench, particularly given his rational approach today. He is wise not to bind the rest of his party to that line for the future. We can only hope that some of them will choose it.

On the wider issue, it is clear from today's speeches that the past 12 months have been a period of great difficulty and uncertainty for the rail industry and its users throughout Britain. However, the next few months will be a period of opportunity that must not be lost.

The past year has been dominated by the consequences of the tragic accident at Hatfield, but the past five years have been dominated by the consequences of a disastrous privatisation—as was expressed so eloquently by Mr Muldoon, from his own experience. Hatfield might have marked the beginning of the end for Railtrack, but the seeds of failure surely lay in the structure of the company from its creation. It has taken those five years for that structure to unravel. It will take time to create the right structure to put in its place. We welcome debate on what that structure should be, but we do not believe that the right response is to repeat the mistake of the Tory years and further fragment the railway industry into smaller pieces.

Andrew Wilson asked us to debate his proposal on its merits. I read the document that he circulated and recognised some merits. When I read about an infrastructure owner working in partnership with all the stakeholders and operating outside the public sector on a non-profit basis I thought, "Good idea." It is just a shame for Andrew Wilson that Stephen Byers thought of that first and on a larger scale.

There are other differences, but in the final analysis the most distinctive feature of the SNP's proposal is the least original. Whatever the problem, the solution always appears to be the same: to break up Britain or British institutions. In this case that means splitting Scotland's rail network from that of England and Wales.

Andrew Wilson *rose*—

Lewis Macdonald: If Mr Wilson does not like predictable responses, he should not produce such predictable policies.

Andrew Wilson: I am grateful to the minister for giving way.

All I am arguing is that the ministers should have the same control over railways as they do over roads. Why do the ministers not like devolution? Are they reluctant to involve the Parliament, or are they confident that they can deliver?

Lewis Macdonald: Mr Wilson has made it clear that he will not deviate from the fundamental objective of his party. My party is committed to the devolution settlement and will continue to develop that, but I do not believe that revisiting the devolution settlement will bring comfort to rail users or operators. However, I believe that there is room for positive and constructive debate, which we welcome.

The Rail Freight Group is one of the bodies in the industry that has made it clear how important it is to have a single British network, with a single operator and common standards from the north of Scotland to the channel ports. If that integration is put at risk, it is not the economy of the south of England that stands to suffer, but the interests of Scottish exporters. As Iain Smith said, when priorities are being set for rail investment in England, we have to be at the discussion table to make the case for investment in the east and west-coast main lines, both of which are vital to Scotland's interests.

Ms White: The minister referred to investment. Does he agree that if £2 billion is invested in the Jubilee line, a similar investment should be made up here in Scotland?

Lewis Macdonald: I was sorry to hear Sandra White's speech, which did not seem to take a constructive approach to the Scottish rail industry. She was right to mention rail links to central Scotland's airports. Next week, we will begin a study of possible rail links to Glasgow and Edinburgh airports. The SNP front bench should recognise our significant investments and initiatives.

However, leaving decisions on the wider British network to others and leaving the table of the UK railway network company to have our own railway network company would not best protect the interests of Scottish rail users. This is a time of opportunity for working out new structures. We should build on the good partnerships that exist among the various players in the Scottish rail industry.

As members from different parties have said, there may be advantages in developing the

relationships between operating companies and the network provider not only throughout Scotland, but throughout Britain. We should explore that.

We should be clear about our fundamental objectives of protecting the standards of the national network, allowing the Scottish passenger rail company to concentrate on passenger services, having significant Scottish input into strategic decisions on cross-border mainline services and promoting rail freight.

As Sarah Boyack said, we have worked closely with the UK Government and the Strategic Rail Authority to ensure that our investment priorities gain their support. Those are priorities not only in Scotland, but elsewhere for Scotland. We will continue with that partnership approach.

When decisions about the future of the rail network are made, we will not look for a quick fix or a separate solution. We will look for a new structure that will last and give Scottish passengers and Scottish exporters the rail service that they deserve.

10:21

Mr Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP): It would have been easy for the SNP to use the debate to castigate other parties for their disastrous railway policies over many decades. We chose not to revel in their discomfort, because it is in the Scottish national interest to lend our efforts to finding a lasting and stable solution to securing future investment in, and development of, our rail network and to promoting its good governance.

We must learn from mistakes, chief among which was the surrender to the dogma of privatisation and the mantra that private finance initiatives and public-private partnerships are the only way of supporting a significant number of additional projects beyond those for which the public purse can provide.

I take some issue with Murray Tosh's otherwise excellent speech. The error has been to confuse financing with funding, which obscures the fundamental truth that the taxpayer must, sooner or later, pay for public infrastructure, to the extent that it is not commercially viable. Most would acknowledge that few of our rail services fall into the category of commercial viability.

I know of no member of the Parliament who would not want our rail network to be extensively developed. There are sound and convincing grounds for that, such as to further environmental, economic development and social inclusion objectives in urban and rural Scotland. Who could deny the strength of the case for the Borders rail link, as presented by Christine Grahame, or

Sandra White's arguments for a Glasgow crossrail scheme and airport link?

We propose a Scottish variation on the theme that Stephen Byers has advocated of reformulating Railtrack as a not-for-profit trust or a company limited by guarantee with a board of directors who are drawn from rail industry stakeholders. That body's priority would be the interests of the travelling public, not the need to increase shareholder value. It would invest any operating surpluses directly into the network.

As Andrew Wilson has cogently argued, we want Scottish ministers to take a further step forward by negotiating for the establishment of an independent Scottish trust to raise investment funds in capital markets, for the devolution of railway policy to the Scottish Executive and Parliament and for a fair share of planned UK public spending on the policy, perhaps through the Barnett formula. That would allow us to create a publicly accountable railway system that is fully integrated with other transport modes.

What are the alternatives? A UK-only trust will mean continued strategic control of our railways by Whitehall and its agency, the Strategic Rail Authority. Scotland is bound to lose out without decentralisation, as it is sure that the Treasury will insist on maintaining pressure to focus on investment schemes with the best short-term return on capital. That means directing investment to the areas where high passenger flows already exist—principally London and south-east England.

What about vertical integration and the ScotRail franchise taking over responsibility for track and stations? I suspect that companies such as National Express would run a mile from that prospect, given market conditions. As David Begg has said, without market growth to provide the collateral for investment, the private sector will depend heavily on public investment to deliver new infrastructure. Just like almost every other public railway, our railway needs public commitment and support.

Notwithstanding the predictable boorish reactions to our proposals from the usual suspects in the Labour ranks and the response of the Minister for Transport and Planning, who seems to equate sensible decentralisation and the devolution of powers with fragmentation, I urge her to take up our proposals and I commend the motion.

International Situation

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): The previous debate concluded a little earlier than expected. I will plug the gap with two announcements. The Presiding Officer has selected a late amendment for this morning's debate on Scotland and the current international situation and a copy of that amendment is available from the reference point at the rear of the chamber. The amendment is in the name of the First Minister and reads:

"As an amendment to motion S1M-2347 in the name of Mr John Swinney, leave out 'compatible with' and insert 'accompanied by'."

I also point out that in the fourth line of Dennis Canavan's amendment, the word "role" should be "rule".

David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con): On a point of order. A further typographical correction is needed. In the sixth line from the bottom of my amendment, the word "development" has been used in the business bulletin. The amendment that was lodged said "deployment".

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That is noted and is helpful.

I hand over to Sir David.

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): As the Deputy Presiding Officer made clear, I have selected a late amendment in the name of the First Minister, which will be the first amendment that is taken.

The debate is heavily oversubscribed. If I may suggest it, the Opposition parties should reflect on whether it is wise to squash two important debates into one space of time. Doing so makes difficulties for the chair. Many members will be disappointed this morning, so I appeal for short speeches all round.

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): On a point of order. Yesterday afternoon, the Scottish Executive placed three important pieces of business on the Parliament's agenda. Why should the Opposition parties be singled out?

The Presiding Officer: I am trying to make a perfectly neutral point. When two major debates of interest are held, it is impossible to fit everyone who wishes to speak into the short space of time. I have said that the Parliamentary Bureau will reconsider the matter in the light of yesterday afternoon's events, because I was not happy with them either. I am not singling anyone out. I am just saying that we cannot get quarts into pint pots. Many people will be disappointed this morning.

The Minister for Parliament (Mr Tom McCabe): For the interest of Mr Gallie and the

chamber, I point out that our business finished two minutes early last night.

The Presiding Officer: I am sorry to say that that is precisely my point. At the end of the day yesterday, we were light on business. The Presiding Officers spotted that when we met for our pre-briefing. The bureau could not have known that when it made its decisions. I am asking the bureau to reflect on that when it meets next week. If I had had the flexibility to extend the statement beyond 3.30 pm, we would not have finished early.

We have taken time out of what I have already said is a tight debate. I call John Swinney to speak to and move motion S1M-2347.

10:30

Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP): If the Minister for Parliament can get the business of the Parliament to close early, perhaps he should be running the railways so that the trains run early, if not on time. That is my last flippant point for the morning.

The Presiding Officer: I am sorry to interrupt you, but someone has a mobile telephone switched on. It is causing interference with the electronics. All mobile phones should be switched off.

Mr Swinney: It is now six weeks since the terrorist atrocities in the United States inflicted misery on thousands and thousands of people of many differing nationalities. In the process, the atrocities changed utterly the nature of our international community. When the events took place, our Scottish Parliament—this precious democratic institution—met to express our outrage and, just as important, our democratic solidarity with the people of the United States. In the circumstances, it was vital that our Parliament met and it is equally vital that our Parliament meets today to discuss the current conflict. It is a matter of pride that the Scottish National Party has made the debate possible.

In recent weeks, I have not spoken to an individual in Scotland who has not expressed an opinion about the situation in Afghanistan. If the people of Scotland are talking about this crisis, it is only natural that our Parliament should do likewise. I am sure that people will say that the debate involves issues that are reserved and that are dealt with by London-based politicians. Of course, many of the issues are reserved, but all of the issues in this international conflict touch each and every one of us. Our Parliament should be able to debate them.

It is for many of those reasons that, when the military action commenced on 7 October, I asked the Presiding Officer to recall Parliament. Sir

David told me that he was not persuaded that there was any need for the Parliament to meet immediately to discuss the impact on Scotland. With the greatest respect to the Presiding Officer, I could not take a more different view. At moments such as this, it is imperative that our democratic Scottish Parliament should meet to consider the situation and to express a view. The Parliament should also hear from ministers what steps they are taking to address the impact of the crisis on Scotland.

On 8 October, the First Minister made it clear, in comments to the media, that there was an impact on Scotland and that his Administration was taking action to address that impact. In the circumstances, it is vital that the Parliament should hear from the First Minister and I am glad that today we have that opportunity.

The impact on Scotland is formidable as the situation impacts on our domestic security. I appreciated being given a private briefing yesterday by the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister on the steps that have been taken to address internal security in Scotland. There is also the economic impact, which has resulted in a slowdown in travel and tourism business. We must give support and resources to VisitScotland so that it can actively promote Scotland to domestic and European markets to offset the inevitable fall in business from the United States. There is also the further weakening in economic confidence. Given that we are experiencing an alarming increase in unemployment and that our manufacturing sector is already in recession, that is particularly damaging for Scotland.

There is also an impact on Scotland's Muslim community, among whom fear and alarm has grown since 11 September. Many people in that community feel alienated by the international action that is now taking place. Race-related attacks in Strathclyde and in other parts of Scotland are reportedly higher than for comparable periods. The chief constable of Strathclyde police has already warned of a growing sense of insecurity among Glasgow's Muslim community. I felt that insecurity on my visits to mosques in Dundee and Glasgow. Each one of us has a duty to reassure what is a very concerned population.

We have to recognise that the current international situation creates concern in a whole number of ways in our Muslim community: concern that the conflict in Afghanistan could cause wider problems in the Middle East, which could spill over into other societies, and concern that while the military action is pursued, it is impossible to deliver the scale of humanitarian effort that is required to alleviate the suffering of the Afghan population.

In this conflict, the SNP has made it clear that our support for military action is conditional. We believe that any action should be targeted, based on evidence and undertaken with a determination to bring the perpetrators of the atrocities in the United States to justice. We have said that there should be a specific United Nations Security Council mandate for military action and that there should be no widening of the conflict beyond Afghanistan. We believe that once the dreadful Taliban regime has been rejected—and we hear this morning that that is proving much more difficult than had been expected—Afghanistan should become a United Nations protectorate to stabilise the country in advance of free elections being held.

We believe that if a conflict has to take place, it should be between combatant and combatant and not between combatants and innocents. We believe that a significant humanitarian effort has to be made on a much greater scale than is happening today. Such an effort is needed to meet the desperate needs of the Afghan population.

On the evening that the bombing commenced, the Prime Minister said that the operation in Afghanistan would be a balance between military, diplomatic and humanitarian elements. I quote the Prime Minister. He said:

“There are three parts, all equally important, to the operation in which we are engaged: military, diplomatic and humanitarian.”

The Prime Minister continued:

“On the humanitarian front, we are assembling a coalition of support for refugees in and outside Afghanistan, which is as vital as the military coalition.”

I welcomed that statement because it recognised the balance that has to be struck in this conflict. That is why the SNP motion is so constructed.

I count myself as someone who is becoming increasingly concerned that that balance no longer exists. The military action is being pursued with vigour, but the humanitarian effort is faltering badly. I want the Prime Minister to deliver the commitment that he gave to the public. The balance of the campaign must ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those who need it most. That is why we have asked the Prime Minister to set out a clear statement of humanitarian aims and to show how those aims are compatible with the current military effort.

The aid effort is vital: 52,000 metric tonnes of aid are needed each month to feed up to 7.5 million Afghans and, since 11 September, only 15,000 metric tonnes have been delivered to the population. For every 10 people who are starving today in Afghanistan, we are providing aid sufficient to feed only three. We are fast

approaching the Afghan winter, when distribution will become even more difficult and the conditions more perilous.

Last Friday, I met representatives of aid agencies that are based in Scotland. Over many years, they have made a huge contribution to the aid effort in Afghanistan. They were Mercy Corps Scotland, Oxfam and the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund. Last night, many of the aid agencies were in the Parliament working with the Parliament's cross-party international development group. The message the aid agencies put to me was clear: a humanitarian catastrophe beckons unless aid reaches its destination. The flow of aid is just not fast enough to meet requirements.

Many of the aid agencies have called for a halt in the bombing campaign. Many did so with great reluctance because, while they have concerns about the bombing, they have just as many concerns about the ghastly nature of the Taliban regime and all that it represents. It is clear that the regime is an obstacle to much of the humanitarian aid reaching its target of the ordinary, innocent Afghan population. The Government has rejected the aid agencies' call for the bombing campaign to be halted. The aid agencies' question to the Prime Minister is: how he will deliver the commitment to pursue a military, diplomatic and humanitarian campaign of equal measure? That is a question that the Prime Minister so far has not answered.

Yesterday, in the House of Commons, my colleague Annabelle Ewing, the MP for Perth, asked the Prime Minister for a personal assurance that the military campaign was fully compatible with the humanitarian effort. The Prime Minister conceded that current efforts are, in his words, "not sufficient". We believe that the military campaign should be configured to ensure that the humanitarian aid effort can be delivered. The creation of a safe and reliable humanitarian corridor could help and—as has been done in the past—military resources could deliver such an initiative.

It is right for the Scottish Parliament to undertake this debate. Strong, divided opinions will be expressed in the Parliament and within political parties—and so they should be. We are democratic politicians in a democratic Parliament.

I conclude on a point that may bring some unity. Scotland has a rich history of contributing to international aid. In the Balkan wars of the 1870s, the first volunteers were the Scottish women's ambulance corps. In the first world war, Scottish public contributions funded hospitals in St Petersburg and Paris. In the second world war, we paid for two Scottish hospitals in Rostov-on-Don. In that spirit, we in Scotland can take the initiative to help the situation in Afghanistan. The aid agencies tell me that giving by Scots to their

efforts to assist in Afghanistan has been much slower than they would have expected or have experienced in other tragedies. Their funds desperately need to receive a boost. I suggested to them, and reiterated at the weekend, that the party leaders in the Scottish Parliament could support a cross-party venture—I hope with media support—to encourage greater giving to Scottish charities. The agencies are fully supportive and yesterday the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister gave me some encouragement for the initiative, but I will let them speak for themselves.

With the proximity that television brings to homes across the globe, the events of 11 September will live with all of us who witnessed them. From the awful misery of that atrocity we must build not further conflict but tolerance, understanding and a world order that tackles inequality rather than feeds it. Surely, that is the challenge. There is no more fitting issue to debate in Scotland's national democratic Parliament.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the significant impact of the current international crisis on our domestic security, on our economic prospects and on our Muslim community in Scotland and calls upon the Scottish Executive to continue to bring forward proposals to deal with these matters; supports the international community's desire to bring to justice the perpetrators of the acts of terrorism in the United States of America on 11 September 2001, and agrees that any military action in Afghanistan must, as the Prime Minister has asserted, be compatible with an effective humanitarian operation which meets the desperate needs of the innocent Afghan population.

The Presiding Officer: I am grateful to Mr Swinney for cutting his time. I ask all those who want to take part in the debate to press their buttons now, as the debate is oversubscribed and I must make my selection.

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. We have not yet seen the First Minister's amendment. Will you read it out before the First Minister speaks?

The Presiding Officer: There are copies at the back of the chamber. It is a short amendment, which simply replaces "compatible with", in the third line from the bottom of Mr Swinney's motion, with "accompanied by".

10:43

The First Minister (Henry McLeish): Barely six weeks have passed since the events of 11 September. Already the world is different. Since the horror of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington we have seen the painstaking diplomatic efforts to build an international coalition against terrorism and an international consensus on the way ahead. We have seen Governments around the world take action to thwart the

terrorists' activities and to protect their citizens. In the past two weeks, we have seen the powerful international coalition begin to take direct action to bring Osama bin Laden and the al-Qa'ida network to justice.

Throughout Scotland—as elsewhere in the world—people have recognised the gravity and complexity of the situation and the need for measured, determined and broadly based responses—diplomatic, political, military and humanitarian. As all of us know, foreign relations and defence are not matters within the powers of the Scottish Parliament. That is our constitutional settlement. It is for Westminster, the UK Government and the Prime Minister to decide on Britain's part in the on-going campaign. Scottish MPs have played their full part in that process.

To echo John Swinney's sentiments, this is a time for solidarity and absolute unity. I want to express our support for the Government and the Prime Minister in the range of actions that they have taken since 11 September as part of the international coalition against terrorism. Those responsible for the attacks on 11 September must be brought to justice and terrorism must be eliminated as a force in international affairs.

As has been alluded to, the current international situation raises issues that directly challenge us here in the Scottish Parliament and in the Scottish Executive: the potential threat to the security of the people of Scotland; the impact of events since 11 September on the Scottish economy; and the potential effect on the good relations among the ethnic and religious communities of Scotland. Our discussion of those issues today should be a time for unity, a time for us to come together to recognise the challenges that we face and a time to address those challenges in a spirit of consensus and determination.

It is, of course, the duty of an Opposition to oppose, but in Government too there are duties. Foremost among them is our duty to ensure domestic security, as far as that is within our power. While there is no evidence of a specific threat to Scotland from terrorism, the clear message that I want to convey today is that we are doing everything possible to ensure that we are prepared for any eventuality. That is why I took the opportunity to brief David McLetchie and John Swinney on the current situation—I hope that that was of help to them, because this is an issue that we all want to share in and be party to. Our approach means that the public can proceed with their normal day-to-day lives with assurance, but that does not mean that we should not remain vigilant.

The Executive and other authorities and agencies are taking action. The police have set up their own centre to improve the security and

intelligence response throughout Scotland, with direct links with law enforcement agencies throughout the rest of the United Kingdom. I am confident that that will enable the police to take the necessary steps to address any increased threat.

Last Friday, the Scottish emergencies co-ordination committee met to review arrangements throughout the emergency services and other key organisations such as the health service and local authorities. That gave all those involved a chance to review the arrangements that are in place and to consider the need for any further action. New guidance on dealing with the threat of chemical, biological and radiological substances has been issued and specific guidance on anthrax has been provided to all GPs. Local emergency planning networks have been on alert since the events of 11 September. Scottish ministers have attended meetings of the civil contingencies committee, which is co-ordinating the UK response. I am sure that the whole Parliament would join me in paying tribute to all the agencies that are working to ensure that Scotland has the right level of preparedness for any contingency. Much of the work has been done quietly and away from the public gaze, but it is no less important to our country for that.

The Executive has been in discussion with the UK Government about the anti-terrorism measures that are being developed for consideration by the UK Parliament. Final decisions have yet to be taken and we stay in close contact with the Home Office to ensure that those measures are applied consistently throughout the UK, either through legislation here or by means of the Sewel convention.

The impact of recent events on the Scottish economy has rightly received much attention. The terrorist attacks came against the background of an already deteriorating global economic environment. As a global player, Scotland is not immune from global events. We recognise that, in some sectors, the short-term consequences will be serious. We must all have the confidence and the resolve to see our economic strategy through. It would be a completely unacceptable concession to terrorism if we were to allow the atrocities to undermine that confidence. If we do nothing else today, we must promote a positive message, in difficult times, that it should be business as usual. We should encourage people to travel and to fly. We acknowledge that there will be apprehension and misgivings, but if we stop doing the things that we have done for years we will concede to terrorism. That simply must not happen. We must not be distracted from our goal of creating a competitive, knowledge-based economy, building on Scotland's resources and skills, ensuring the conditions for Scotland's future prosperity and allowing us better to withstand short-term shocks.

The chief economic adviser's report, "Building for the Long Term: Understanding the Impact of the Terrorist Attacks on the Scottish Economy", confirmed that our strategy remains the right one. The foundations are sound and the work goes on. Yesterday, I met representatives of the Scottish Trades Union Congress, who suggested to me and to the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning that we should bring together trade union leaders and the business community to consider the way forward, so that we can build on the solidarity and consensus that are required to make progress.

This is also a time for people in Scotland of all faiths and beliefs to recognise their common ground. Tomorrow, I will be visiting the Central Mosque in Glasgow, because members of the Muslim community in Scotland need to be reassured that the Executive and, I am sure, everyone in this Parliament are sensitive to their concerns and committed to their safety. We have practical measures in mind. Tomorrow, I will announce details of enhanced security for mosques in Scotland. That is important. We have said many reassuring words, and that is right, but we can make tangible progress in ensuring that those who want to inflict damage and vandalism on our mosques will be tackled.

I have also made it clear that we share the Government's determination to protect people from attacks based on religious hostility. In a civilised society, such behaviour is beyond the totally unacceptable. At UK level, the Home Secretary has made specific proposals, including the creation of a new offence of incitement to religious hatred and an aggravation of religious motivation that would allow a court to impose a heavier sentence for other offences such as breach of the peace. It is no secret that we have distinctive problems of our own, so we will take distinctive action and will make our position known to the Parliament soon.

I am sure that everyone in the Parliament recognises the need for effective humanitarian help for the innocent Afghan population. We watch the television and we hear the news stories. Being moved by the scenes that we see is not a party issue. As the Prime Minister has made clear, the humanitarian effort is just as important as the military one. It is an essential part of the world response to world terrorism. It is worth stressing that, as the Prime Minister has also made clear, the principal problem facing aid convoys going into Afghanistan is not the military effort of the coalition, but the activities of the Taliban.

In response to the question from Annabelle Ewing yesterday, to which John Swinney alluded, the Prime Minister said:

"I hope that the hon. Lady will accept my commitment to do all that we can to make sure that the humanitarian process is taken forward and will join me in calling on the Taliban regime to facilitate aid going into Afghanistan".— [*Official Report, House of Commons, 24 October 2001; Vol 373, c 277.*]

That is a vital point, and I hope that it is supported by every one of my colleagues in the chamber.

The UK Government has already set aside £40 million for humanitarian relief for Afghanistan. We all know that the Scots are generous people and that members of the public in Scotland will show their humanity, concern and sympathy for the ordinary people of Afghanistan in their response to appeals to help them. I say to John Swinney and to Jim Wallace, who is not yet in the chamber, that we want to support that initiative. It is a time for care and compassion. If Scotland can be encouraged to give more, we will certainly want to play a part in that, along with John Swinney and David McLetchie.

We look forward to a positive and constructive debate that reflects the spirit of unity among the members of the Parliament and the wide support of the people for UK and world action in the current crisis. I am mindful that there are sensitivities at a time such as this and I remind colleagues that we live in a dangerous world. There may be men and women of our armed forces in and around Afghanistan. Some of them will be putting their lives on the front line and it is not idle emotion to say that they expect from the people of the United Kingdom, from the people of Scotland and from democratic forums such as this Parliament the maximum support so that they can do their work on behalf of the nation with the greatest confidence.

I move amendment S1M-2347.3, to leave out "compatible with" and insert "accompanied by".

10:55

David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con): In the debate on the current international situation, there is a danger that we may lose sight of the fact that all this started with an act of war perpetrated against the people of the United States of America, which resulted in some 7,000 deaths, by a group of fanatics who use religion as a justification for their murderous acts.

If this new outbreak of barbarity is to be defeated, it is essential that the civilised world unite against the scourge that is terrorism. That is why the Conservative party has continued to support the United Kingdom Government and the Government of the United States in building and maintaining an international coalition for that purpose. It is also why we have lodged our amendment, which aims to bring clarity to the Scottish National Party motion and to enable the

Parliament to express unequivocally its support for the actions that Her Majesty's Government is taking on behalf of our people, and not the limited, conditional and qualified support advocated by Mr Swinney.

The key objectives are to end the bin Laden organisation's reign of terror and to replace the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which gives that organisation succour. To those who are rightly concerned about the suffering of the Afghan people, I say that the best way of relieving that suffering is to install a civil administration in Afghanistan that commands widespread support and with which Governments and international aid agencies can work to deal with refugee problems and the threat of widespread famine. It has been noted on a number of occasions that, during the recent conflict, the Taliban regime has been one of the major obstacles to an effective humanitarian effort.

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): Given the points that Mr McLetchie has made about the Taliban regime, does he now accept that the previous Conservative Government and the Labour Government elected in 1997 were wrong to support the Taliban Government?

David McLetchie: I am here to debate the here and now, not past history. I do not deny that, in the complex world of international relationships, alliances, regimes and support for those regimes change. I see the world as the complex place that it is, not in the black-and-white fashion that Mr Sheridan constantly does.

There is a fundamental difference of values between civilised nations and the terrorists. Those who cast doubt on the wisdom of the present actions need to recognise that. We see humanity and concern for our fellow men as a strength of our societies, whereas people such as bin Laden and his followers see them as a weakness to be exploited. Lenin characterised the doubters, faint-hearts and apologists as "useful idiots" to be exploited in pursuit of the establishment of a totalitarian communist regime. I am in no doubt that Osama bin Laden takes an equally contemptuous view of their modern-day equivalents.

In what I have no doubt is a just war, we should not try to conceal the consequences of the actions that we have undertaken. We should not hide behind euphemisms such as "collateral damage". Those are the sort of weasel words that we hear far too often in the Parliament and they are designed to obscure the truth. We should treat the public with the respect that they deserve. They know that, when the military speaks of collateral damage, it means that innocent civilians have been killed. The use of such language only raises the suspicion that we lack confidence in the justice

of our cause. Although any civilian casualties are, of course, a matter for profound regret, there never has been and never will be a war that avoids the loss of innocent civilian lives. We have to be open about that and deal with it in a mature way, recognising that it is a factor when our leaders have to take tough and difficult decisions. I believe that the public would welcome and respect such honesty.

Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP): On the war being just, does Mr McLetchie agree that, if it is just for us to pursue Osama bin Laden in a way that affects innocent women and children—as he has admitted—it is also just for the representatives of those innocent women and children to pursue a war against us? If we dignify a punishment campaign by calling it a war, I presume that action can justly be taken against us.

David McLetchie: I do not see the equivalence between the position of the coalition and that of others.

The SNP's attitude to the war is clear—or obscure—from its motion and its leader's recent statements, which are ambiguous to say the least. The SNP seems to be moving towards calling for military action to be scaled down on the basis that that will somehow help the humanitarian effort. I have no doubt that the SNP is well-intentioned, but its sentiments are misguided. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive. As I have said, the best way to help people in Afghanistan is to remove the Taliban regime, which bears significant responsibility for the impoverishment of the Afghan people. Once the regime is removed, it is vital that we do everything that we can to help to restore the norms and values of a free society to that war-torn country, which already had 3.5 million refugees in adjoining nation states before September 11.

Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green) rose—

David McLetchie: I will not take an intervention, Robin.

The suspicion remains that Mr Swinney's ambiguous position is a result of pressures in his party. A number of his colleagues share the anti-war sentiments of Mr Sheridan and his party. The SNP's motion is about holding the SNP together rather than anything else.

It is vital that we do not fall for the propaganda of bin Laden and the Taliban regime. That would be the surest way of undermining the international coalition, which has been painstakingly built up.

Leaving aside the SNP's tortuous efforts at a foreign policy, which are best ignored, I should add, in fairness, that the motion notes the impact of the current situation on domestic security and on our economy. I appreciate the First Minister's remarks on domestic security and his courteous

briefing to me and Mr Swinney yesterday afternoon.

Current events have had an impact on our economy. The First Minister acknowledged that the downturn in the economy preceded the terrorist attacks of 11 September. Undoubtedly, problems have been exacerbated and we should continue to ensure that the Government and the Scottish Executive take the appropriate policy measures to tackle the economic problems that, as has been said, were already present and have been made more difficult. As I have said several times, we should seriously consider reducing the burdens of tax and regulation on businesses and we should start by considering business rates in Scotland.

I am happy to accept the SNP's motion in so far as it applies to the economy and domestic security. I also welcome its acknowledgement of the impact of the current situation on the Muslim community in Scotland. I have said that those who perpetrated the appalling acts of terrorism hijacked the Muslim religion and that they are blasphemers. I utterly condemn anyone who seeks to use the current situation as an excuse to attack members of the Muslim community in Scotland. An ignorant few have done so and we must unite to show that mindless bigotry has no place in our society.

In the current circumstances, it is not surprising that there have been calls for new legislation to deal with incitement to religious hatred. It is understandable that many members feel that a symbolic statement or action is necessary to demonstrate our revulsion at such incitement. However, we should be wary about rushing headlong into ill-conceived legislation in response to a perceived public demand for something to be done. Recent history has taught us that legislation passed in haste has a tendency to make notoriously bad law. In this instance, legislation could be tokenism at best and counterproductive at worst.

All members want to protect Muslims in Scotland from attack. The question is whether a specific offence of incitement to religious hatred is the best way of achieving that. There is a danger that a profusion of such offences would threaten freedom of speech, which is a fundamental value that no member should want to undermine.

We should remember that freedom of speech means freedom to say things that may cause offence to others. The correct response to such comments is not always to legislate against them as crimes. Where would the legislation stop? Such comments should be exposed and opposed in open debate.

Before we consider passing legislation and creating a brand-new crime, we must examine our

existing laws and our courts' sentencing policies to find out whether they are adequate. I welcome the First Minister's cautious and considered remarks on the subject.

All members want to rid the country of bigotry in all its forms, but we should not leap to the automatic conclusion that new legislation is the way in which to achieve that. Ironically, such legislation could be used against the Muslim community in Scotland and so further divide our religious and ethnic communities rather than promote greater tolerance.

I move amendment S1M-2347.2, to leave out from "the international" to end and insert:

"Her Majesty's Government in its aim of building the widest possible international coalition, with maximum United Nations support; welcomes NATO's decision to invoke Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and its role in the international effort; agrees that the immediate objectives of the campaign should be to prevent Osama Bin Laden and the Al Qa'ida network from posing a continuing terrorist threat and, to this end, to ensure that the Taliban regime in Afghanistan ceases to harbour and sustain international terrorism and is replaced by a broadly-based government which is representative of all groups in the country; acknowledges that the attainment of these objectives requires the deployment of all available means, including taking steps to deal with the humanitarian crisis confronting Afghanistan and believes that halting the military action in Afghanistan at this time would hinder the achievement of these objectives and would simply prolong the suffering of people in Afghanistan."

11:06

Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West): I welcome the opportunity for the Scottish Parliament to debate the international situation. That opportunity was denied it in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September.

We must unequivocally condemn such atrocities and express our condolences and support to the victims and their families. We must use every legitimate means to bring to justice those who are responsible for such atrocities. However, the response of the international community must be based not on vengeance or senseless retaliation, but on respect for the rule of international law and human rights—especially the right to life of innocent people.

An innocent life in Afghanistan is just as valuable as an innocent life in Scotland, New York or Washington DC. I fear that that is not adequately recognised by those who are responsible for the military attacks on Afghanistan. Those attacks have not been authorised by the United Nations; under international law, they are at least questionable and probably illegal.

Anyone with respect for democracy must abhor the Taliban regime—I agree with David McLetchie on that. The Taliban regime has a deplorable

record in relation to the violation of Afghans' human rights. However, David McLetchie should remember that the United States Government helped to create the monster by giving the Taliban funding and weapons. That enabled the Taliban to take power in Afghanistan. The people of Afghanistan did not elect the Taliban and do not deserve to be punished for the Taliban's misdeeds.

Ben Wallace (North-East Scotland) (Con): Did not the Soviet Union create the mujahedin and the Taliban? The Soviet Union drove in as a military dictator and took over Afghanistan. It caused the split and fragmentation that led to those groups.

Dennis Canavan: I am not a defender of the Soviet Union—I never have been. No member should try to rewrite history. The Central Intelligence Agency's obsession with anti-communism led to the creation of the Taliban and its taking power in Afghanistan.

There is already evidence that many innocent people have been killed in Afghanistan as a result of the aerial bombing. Loss of innocent lives can make the entire situation worse instead of better. Such military action could be counterproductive in our campaign against terrorism. If we are to defeat terrorism, we must not alienate the people whom we need on our side. If we alienate those people, there is a danger that some of them may become terrorists or supporters of terrorist organisations. I am sure that we can all think of examples where the creation of only one martyr has led to the recruitment of an army for a terrorist organisation.

John Swinney's motion and my amendment refer to the need for an effective humanitarian operation to assist the innocent population of Afghanistan, particularly, I would say, those who are the victims of the current military action. Even before the recent military action, the people of Afghanistan faced appalling disaster. Millions of people in that country are living in abject poverty. A quarter of the children in Afghanistan are doomed to die before reaching the age of five. The United Nations has warned of a humanitarian catastrophe with 5 million people being threatened with death. Most of those are innocent women and children. Five million people—that is approximately the entire population of Scotland.

Phil Gallie: I recognise the seriousness of Dennis Canavan's point. However, does he not agree that the situation arises from years of misgovernment in Afghanistan and from other natural factors and that it cannot be attributed solely to any bombing campaign?

Dennis Canavan: I did not say that it could. The disaster is not a recent happening; even before the recent military action there was disaster in Afghanistan. However, the military action is

making things worse instead of better. The UN, Oxfam and other non-governmental organisations are reporting daily that the food convoys cannot get through because of the military action. However, a British Prime Minister is taking to the world stage and appearing as an apologist for George W Bush with a bomb in one hand and a loaf of bread in the other.

The United States Congress has recently voted £25 billion for the military action in Afghanistan. If we add the contributions from other countries, including the United Kingdom, the cost of the conflict is already more than the annual budget of the Scottish Executive. That is a waste of valuable resources that could be used to eradicate poverty in Afghanistan and other countries.

The Scottish Parliament now has an opportunity—one that was denied to our colleagues at Westminster—to send a strong message to the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States that the military action in Afghanistan is ill-conceived and unjustified and that it must stop.

In the campaign against international terrorism, it would be foolish for any of us to imagine that there are easy, quick-fix solutions. We cannot have a credible campaign against terrorism by subjecting the victims of terrorism to more terror. We cannot keep killing people in an effort to teach people that killing people is wrong. We cannot cure the world's ills by military might alone. A genuine lasting peace, which we all want, must be based on justice.

We must all work harder, in our own countries and in the international community, to ensure that terrorists and potential terrorists do not get the support, the weapons and the opportunities to commit their evil deeds. We must work even harder to eradicate poverty and injustice throughout the world. I ask the Parliament to support my amendment.

I move amendment S1M-2347.1, to leave out from "and agrees" to end and insert:

"but agrees that any measure to that effect must be based on the rule of international law and respect for human rights, particularly innocent people's right to life, and therefore calls for an end to the current military action in Afghanistan and for an effective humanitarian operation to meet the desperate needs of the innocent Afghan population."

The Presiding Officer: I thank Mr Canavan for coming in under his allotted time.

11:15

Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD): The Liberal Democrats support the motion, which recognises the real impact of the current international crisis on our domestic

affairs, highlights the importance of an effective humanitarian operation in Afghanistan and supports the use of force that is designed to bring the terrorists of al-Qa'ida to justice.

The Liberal Democrats share the UK Government's resolve to destroy the terrorist network of al-Qa'ida and continue to support a robust and effective response to the atrocities of 11 September, including the use of military force. We regret that the crisis could not have been resolved peacefully but, given the obstinacy of the Taliban Government, there was no other option. The Taliban regime harbours bin Laden in defiance of world opinion and he fosters terrorism in the face of global decency. That is why the actions that have been taken so far are both just and proportionate.

The air-strikes that are aimed against the military targets of the Taliban and the al-Qa'ida organisation are designed to ensure that civilian casualties are minimised as far as humanly possible. That is in sharp contrast to the actions of those who flew aircraft into the twin towers on 11 September, whose purpose was to cause the maximum number of civilian casualties. I say to members such as Dennis Canavan and Margo MacDonald that the acts of 11 September and the current campaign in Afghanistan are certainly not morally equivalent.

Ms MacDonald: I think that I speak for Dennis Canavan when I say that neither he nor I would attempt to demonstrate such moral equivalence. Both of us say that neither action—the killing of innocents in America and the killing of innocents in Afghanistan—can be morally justified.

Mr Rumbles: I thank Margo MacDonald for that point of clarification. She takes a pacifist view, which is perfectly honourable, but I do not share it.

Ms MacDonald: Will the member give way?

Mr Rumbles: No.

As the air-strikes continue, as they must, there will soon come a time when we must commit ground forces to complete the task because—

Tommy Sheridan: Will the member take an intervention on air-strikes?

Mr Rumbles: I will give way in a moment.

Air power alone will never achieve the objectives of rooting out the terrorists of al-Qa'ida. I ask all members, including Tommy Sheridan, to remember that, at this very moment, British Army and Royal Marine specialist ground forces could be being deployed within Afghanistan and may soon be risking their lives in military operations on the ground. It is essential that the support of the Parliament and of the people of Scotland is given to our service personnel, who will be putting their

lives on the line for the greater good.

Tommy Sheridan: Mike Rumbles believes that the air-strikes must continue. The US estimated that Afghanistan had between three and 16 planes and said that it had achieved air superiority after three days of air-strikes. It has admitted bombing a village, a UN aid centre and a hospital. When does Mike Rumbles think that the air-strikes will stop?

Mr Rumbles: I hope that the air-strikes will stop as soon as possible, but there are military reasons why they must continue. As we know, the air-strikes are currently focused on the Taliban's front-line troops, which face the northern alliance.

I am saying—and we must all realise this—that it is only a matter of time before specialist forces are deployed on the ground. We must give our forces the necessary support, because they are operating on our behalf.

Many members have made this important point: the moral authority for our military action will be severely undermined unless we take every possible step to maximise the humanitarian relief effort. Hundreds of thousands of Afghans will perish if aid does not reach them before winter sets in. The Liberal Democrats believe that the international community must explore every practical possibility for delivering that aid, including perhaps the creation of safe corridors in Afghanistan under United Nations supervision.

Mr Swinney: I am interested in the point that Mr Rumbles is developing, because it gets to the heart of the debate and the disagreement in Parliament. I am becoming increasingly concerned that the compatibility between the military operation and the humanitarian aid operation cannot be sustained. Evidence is mounting of the failure to get humanitarian aid to the people who require it. Does he agree that that is the cause of the tension in the debate? I have made several suggestions about how the situation can be resolved by ensuring that humanitarian aid is brought forward. When should the military action be configured to support the humanitarian effort?

Mr Rumbles: I agree with Mr Swinney: we must maintain the military action against the Taliban regime and the al-Qa'ida organisation, but at the same time ensure that we make maximum effort to get humanitarian aid in. It is helpful that the focus of military action has switched to the units of the Taliban regime ranged against the northern alliance in northern Afghanistan. I hope that that raises the possibility that more humanitarian aid will get through.

On the domestic issues that face us as a result of the crisis, the Scottish Executive—in co-operation with the UK Government—must ensure that all the security and emergency plans and procedures that are necessary for civil defence in

Scotland are in place. I am pleased to hear the First Minister say that the Executive has been doing that; I commend the Executive for that.

There is no doubt that the well-being of our domestic economy has been hit by the crisis. This would be a welcome moment for the Scottish Executive to consider enhancing the role of the Government in, for example, the tourism industry of Scotland, perhaps through the creation of a dedicated post of minister for tourism. I also suggest to the parliamentary business managers that a parliamentary committee for tourism could be set up. Those are only ideas, but they might help an industry that is being particularly hit. They would be welcome, practical steps for the industry at a time when it could do with more support from the devolved Government and Parliament of Scotland.

Last but by no means least—I am conscious of the time and want to let other members speak—I believe that the Parliament must send a clear message to the Muslim community and the wider communities of Scotland that any attempt to stir up bigotry over religious differences will not be tolerated. That is why I was so pleased to see Donald Gorrie's timely consultation document on his proposals for a bill to protect people from sectarianism and racial hatred. The proposals do not create a new offence; they would make sectarian behaviour and religious bigotry an aggravation of a current offence. I hope that they meet with success.

The Liberal Democrats support the motion. We share the Government's resolve to combat terrorism by effective and proportionate military action. We want more to be done to improve the delivery of humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan and we want specific measures to be taken to assist our domestic economy, especially the tourism sector.

The Presiding Officer: We are due to begin the wind-up speeches at 12 o'clock. No fewer than 13 members would like to speak, which is clearly impossible unless members can keep speeches to about three minutes. I may delay the start of the wind-up speeches for a few minutes, but I cannot do so for much longer than that.

11:24

Mr George Reid (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): For 12 years I worked for the victims of war and disaster in some of the poorest countries in the world, including Afghanistan. I should declare that I still do the occasional consultancy for international humanitarian agencies.

The organisation for which I worked, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, has a specific legal mandate as a

neutral, impartial and independent intermediary in conflict situations. It is not a pacifist organisation. Its sole purpose is to bring humanity to those caught in the crossfire. My experience with the Red Cross has shaped how I feel and think about the current conflict.

Thousands of innocent people were murdered in New York and Washington. I have no doubt that al-Qa'ida and the other forces of darkness would like to murder many more. I am clear that the USA and the UK have the right of response under article 51 of the UN charter.

The question is, what sort of response? After all the Anglo-American rhetoric in recent weeks, it is instructive to listen to our European allies and the tone of what they are saying. They have consistently argued for a proper balance between the military and humanitarian elements of any response.

Last night the international development group of the Parliament convened a meeting addressed by senior representatives of the Red Cross, Oxfam and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. There was standing room only, with 27 MSPs present. The speakers were asked what the Scottish Parliament could do. Michael Kingsley-Nyinah of the UNHCR answered for all of them. He stated:

"Be the voice of conscience—get military and humanitarian action back in balance".

I have read the sitreps—the agencies' internal situation reports from the field. The volume of food is not the problem. Apart from the food that is already there, there will be 65,000 tonnes on the frontiers within a fortnight, a further 100,000 tonnes is en route and there will be more to come.

The problem is distribution. Of course, the bombing has disrupted that, as the snows will do in a few weeks. The Taliban have also disrupted and destroyed the food chain. They have seized the World Food Programme's warehouses in Kabul and Kandahar to feed their troops. Their forces, aided by those of al-Qa'ida and rogue armed elements, are deliberately destroying what humanitarian resources are left in the country. Consider some of the sitreps. They state that an NGO de-mining team in Kandahar was badly beaten—that was last week—and that the Taliban removed seven ambulances, six pick-up trucks and six cargo trucks. The International Organization for Migration offices were trashed and all vehicles were stolen. The Kandahar and Mazar-i-Sharif offices of Médecins Sans Frontières were looted, vehicles were stolen and staff were beaten. Can anyone blame the private truckers who move the food stocks and whose sole source of livelihood is their vehicle, for refusing to go into that situation?

There are no moral certainties in time of war. I fully support the right of Dennis Canavan and others to call for an immediate stop to the bombing, but in all conscience I believe that they are wrong. What the Taliban are doing to food supplies is one reason. Another is that, perversely, military activity may be the key to humanitarian relief. When Mazar-i-Sharif falls, the road to the south will be open and it should not be too long before humanitarian corridors, free of mines and fighting, can be opened elsewhere.

Poverty fuels terrorism. When people have no food, no hope, no dreams and no future, they turn to false gods. Those are the seas in which the terrorist swims.

If the British Prime Minister is serious about a global crusade there must be more than fine words—I support the work already done by Clare Short. A thousand million people in the world live below the poverty line. Something must be done about that. It would require immediate action to relieve debt and to open world trade to the poor, and a commitment to secure justice for the people of Palestine. If there is no peace and security for them, there is no peace and security anywhere.

There has been talk of a Scottish appeal for the victims of conflict. Who should that be for? It should be for the poorest of the poor: the Afghan women. Under Taliban diktat, no Afghan woman can be seen by a male doctor—the health record is appalling. Many women have been damaged by war mines in a country which has 12 million of them. Through our Scottish agencies, let us show solidarity with the Afghan women who are victims of war.

Finally, in the words that Michael Kingsley-Nyiah of the UNHCR spoke last night, let this Parliament be “the voice of conscience” that calls for military and humanitarian action to be put back in balance.

11:30

Mr John Home Robertson (East Lothian) (Lab): I welcome George Reid’s constructive and well-informed speech. However, I am depressed by the terms of a motion that seems to support the desire for justice, but seems reluctant to support the means of achieving that justice. I am afraid that that fundamental confusion came through even more as John Swinney continued with his speech. That said, I am thankful that the SNP is not following its sister party in Wales in calling for negotiations with the Taliban regime.

Scotland’s role in the world is inextricably linked with its role in the UK. I say that with the benefit of some experience as a member of the House of Commons Defence Select Committee. Furthermore, I delivered humanitarian aid to

Muslim communities in central Bosnia during the conflict there.

The hard fact is that tyrants, aggressors and terrorists are not influenced by pious resolutions in small parliaments. Sometimes, aggression has to be confronted by effective force to make it possible to help a greater number of innocent victims. Although that is a difficult fact to face, we should not fudge it.

Tommy Sheridan: Does that explain why Israel has ignored UN resolutions 242 and 338 for the best part of 50 years?

Mr Home Robertson: Israel has ignored many resolutions. I agree with Tommy Sheridan, George Reid and colleagues in my own party that part of this international problem is the failure to address the legitimate rights of the people of Palestine. However, I stick to my fundamental point.

Surely the key point is that the UK is a prominent and active member of NATO, with effective, professional armed forces that are equipped and trained to engage in peace-keeping, peace-making and—if necessary—high-intensity warfare. Scottish servicemen and servicewomen, including infantrymen from the Royal Scots Regiment, made a very significant contribution to the defeat of Saddam Hussein in Kuwait. I saw them there. I also had some interesting experiences with Scottish service personnel when they helped to defeat the ethnic cleansers in Yugoslavia.

Our servicemen and servicewomen made a real difference in those conflicts. They saved tens of thousands of lives and, crucially, made it possible to deliver desperately needed aid supplies. It is worth mentioning that our forces have experience of providing direct support to the Department for International Development and humanitarian non-governmental organisations in delivering quality aid where it is needed. Very soon, they should be able to undertake the same task in Afghanistan. When they do, they will do it well and with the benefit of much experience.

Our ability to contribute to such vital operations would be drastically degraded if Scotland were not part of the UK. If I can borrow a phrase, it would be unpardonable folly to take Scottish servicemen out of Britain’s armed forces and to extract Scotland’s contribution from the excellent work of Clare Short’s DfID.

Ms MacDonald: Will the member give way?

The Presiding Officer: No. Mr Home Robertson is in his last minute.

Mr Home Robertson: Defence and overseas aid are two crucial examples of the advantages of the collective responsibility of the UK.

My instinct has always been to support the victims of tyranny and oppression. That is why I went to Bosnia; that is why I have always supported the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people; and that is why I think that it is right that British forces are being deployed to root out the evil that wiped out 7,000 innocent human lives on 11 September. I have complete confidence in the judgment of the UK Government and Parliament on the issue and strongly support the British service personnel who are engaged in this difficult and dangerous operation.

11:34

Mr Kenny MacAskill (Lothians) (SNP): Unlike John Home Robertson, I believe that it is vital for Scotland's voice to be heard in the current global circumstances. We should make our views known and take what action we can, most especially on humanitarian aid. However, the flip-side of the coin is equally important. As current global circumstances are having a significant and increasing effect in Scotland, it is important that we take cognisance of them and make appropriate adjustments in light of them. As other members have concentrated on the former point, I will concentrate on the latter.

What is the current situation? Job losses have risen and manufacturing exports have declined, and it is important to bear it in mind that both statistics predate 11 September. The problem is worse now than then. In manufacturing, further closures have been announced and diverse voices, from the director of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce to the Scottish leader of the engineering union, have warned of a crisis and called for action. The manufacturing sector was already suffering from the high level of the pound and high fuel costs.

What action have we seen so far from the Government? We have received only lectures to the effect that those who acknowledge the extent of the crisis are apparently talking us into a crisis. The Government should wake up. No matter how deep it buries its head in the sand, the problem will not go away. The First Minister's suggestion of convening a meeting is no solution. The first priority must be to acknowledge the severity of the situation and to plan and prepare accordingly. With a pre-budget statement around the corner, surely now—if not before—is the time to make it clear that the high pound and high fuel costs are crippling our economy.

The problem is not confined to manufacturing. The tourism and aviation industries are facing meltdown. Since 11 September, the Air Canada service has been withdrawn, the American Airlines service has been reduced and Continental Airways' proposed service into Edinburgh has

been abandoned. All that has happened despite the knowledge that the value to the Scottish economy of tourism from America dwarfs the losses that we have already sustained through foot-and-mouth disease. Our tourism industry was in difficulty before both the foot-and-mouth crisis and 11 September. The high pound and high fuel costs made Scotland a high-cost destination; now we face devastation through the loss of the north American market.

It is not so long ago that the Executive was selling that market as the saviour of our tourism industry. Clearly it could not have anticipated the 11 September tragedy. However, why were all our tourism eggs put in one basket? I will tell the chamber why. Because of the exchange rate, it was easier to sell Scotland as a destination to the north American market instead of to the UK and European markets. Now we have been told that there will be an upweighting of the marketing budget to promote Scotland in the UK and Europe. That is simply a reallocation of resources that were already too meagre and to a great extent had already been spent or committed.

What about the proposal to promote Scotland in the UK and European markets? Our major competitor is Ireland, which outspends Scotland by more than 100 per cent in television marketing. London, which is the most populous place in the whole of the UK, spends £1 million, while the Executive, through its quango, spends not one penny.

As for the Highlands and Islands, when Ryanair discussed opening up the Highlands—beyond simply the long haul up the A9—and offering destinations to UK and Europe, what did we find? We found an airport authority, wholly owned by the Executive, which was wholly indifferent to the plight of the Highlands. That is just not good enough.

What happened on 11 September will live with us as not only a human tragedy, but an economic one. That is why the SNP has raised this debate; and it is for that and the other reasons that I have outlined that the Executive must take action now.

11:38

Ben Wallace (North-East Scotland) (Con): First, I want to pay tribute to the men and women of our armed forces who are right now putting themselves in the front line in the fight against terrorism. All our thoughts are with them and their families, many of whom live in Scotland.

Although there is much to commend in the SNP's motion, I want to pick up John Home Robertson's point that there is much that it does not say. For example, we must question the fact that although the motion mentions support for "the

international community's desire" for justice, it does not mention the explicit intention behind that desire.

The First Minister came to the debate with the right attitude. He spoke predominantly about what the Scottish Parliament can do to better Muslims' lives and to protect them from sectarian attacks and to safeguard Scotland's men and women from terrorist attack and the chemical and biological threats. That is what this Parliament can do.

We should also remind ourselves that there are 72 MPs from Scotland at Westminster and that they are not, as John Swinney suggests, London politicians. I am not sure that he would want to call the previous leader of the SNP a London politician. Those MPs are having the debate down there, and we should be debating how we can safeguard our society from the type of terrorist attack that killed 7,000 innocent people in New York and Washington, some of whom were from Scotland and the United Kingdom.

Ms MacDonald: Will the member take on board the fact that the members who think it relevant to debate the matter here and who give voice to what we feel are concentrating mainly on the moral and humanitarian aspects of the situation, and that morality and humanity know no artificial divisions between reserved and devolved powers?

Ben Wallace: They do not know any boundaries. However, we should be debating what this Parliament can achieve and leave it to others elsewhere to discuss what can be achieved there and the morality of the situation.

If the question is asked whether we have cause for the attack, we will answer that we have cause. Terrorism must be fought wherever it is. Terrorism, bullying and the use of fear to get one's way when no society wants that is wrong. We have a right, as the United Nations confirmed on 12 September and 28 September, to take action and defend ourselves. We have a right to make war on those terrorists who seek to limit our freedom. That is a just cause and I will go wherever necessary. I will not stop at Afghanistan. Wherever men and women bully people and use fear as their weapon, we must stand up to them.

Robin Harper *rose*—

Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP) *rose*—

Tommy Sheridan: Will the member give way?

Ben Wallace: No, I will give way in a minute. Sit down and listen.

I have been in war zones and have seen people—from the third world and all over—fleeing in fear. I have seen people in Northern Ireland suffering from fear of terrorism. When I saw the

fear in their eyes, frightened because their children had been bullied, obliterated, kidnapped or made into slaves by terrorist regimes, it gave me the passion to stand up and do something about it. That is what it is about—standing up and doing something about it.

The biggest obstacle to getting aid to the Afghan people is the Taliban regime. As George Reid correctly pointed out, we must first remove that regime in parts of Afghanistan if we are to deliver aid to those who need it. They need a lot of aid and it would be a crime to abandon Afghanistan once we have removed the bin Ladens of this world and the terrorist network. We should press for as much money and aid as possible to be sent to those countries, to ensure that those people do not despair. We should be there to ensure that terrorism does not raise its ugly head. We must take action to remove the terrorist regime.

The Presiding Officer: Please close now.

Ben Wallace: I was going to address the SNP's defence policy, but that would mean that I would have to finish, because that was it.

The Presiding Officer: No, I am sorry. You must finish.

Tommy Sheridan: Sit down.

Ben Wallace: I ask members to support the motion.

11:43

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): To John Home Robertson and to Ben Wallace, I say that "man's inhumanity to man" is not a reserved matter—it is something that the Parliament is entitled to discuss. We live in a global society, not a kailyard called Scotland. It is the right of the Parliament, of every individual in Scotland and of every parliament throughout the world to discuss this global affair.

I have three points to emphasise. The first relates to the geopolitics of the situation and has been referred to already. If we are seeking peace in the world and an end to terrorism once and for all, a key ingredient of that will be to deal with the situation in the middle east and to bring to an end the willy-nilly breach of international law by the state of Israel. Nothing does more to spread terrorism and the kind of problems that we have had than the present activities of the Israeli state.

My second point relates to geo-economics. Naturally, we are concerned by the impact of terrorism on Scotland, the UK, Europe and north America. However, according to the World Bank, the most negative impact of the recent events will not be on Scotland, the UK, Canada or America, but on Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa, 46 per cent

of the billion people to whom George Reid referred live on less than US\$1 a day. Half their aid has been cut off in recent years and the big worry in Africa—especially in countries such as Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia and the Sudan—is that international attention is now, understandably, focused on the middle east and Asia. The worry in Africa is that the people there will now be ignored completely and that, in trying to solve one crisis, we will create another deeper crisis in Africa. We must take an internationalist position. That is why John Swinney's initiative to help to boost aid from Scotland and to encourage political leaders to put their hands deep into their pockets for the international community is to be commended. I hope that it will be taken up as an exemplar by other parts of the UK and Europe.

My third point is that we should recognise the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan—a country with a population of about 21 million people, 25 per cent of whom are already refugees in Pakistan, Iran and the other three “stans” that surround Afghanistan. Many Afghans are also in effect refugees in their own country. We owe it to them and to the humanitarian principles on which the UN was founded to put our hands in our pockets and do everything that we can to save them from the annihilation and starvation that they are facing. We heard last night that Oxfam needs \$50 million to address the problem, but that it has been able to raise only \$31 million. Let the nation of Scotland fill that gap of \$19 million to the best of our ability, along with others in Europe. We are a rich country; it is high time that we put our hands in our pockets to demonstrate our humanity and our belief that those people be given the kind of treatment that they deserve.

11:48

Hugh Henry (Paisley South) (Lab): The Parliament does not often hear speeches from members that can properly inform, persuade and make us think again. However, we heard a profound speech from George Reid that was extremely illuminating and which will make some people stop to think carefully.

The world was obviously shocked by the events in America on 11 September. With the shock and the grief has come understandable anger. Throughout the world, the clear message has been given that those who are responsible must be brought to justice. It is to the credit of the Prime Minister and the British Government that the US Government was persuaded to think carefully before engaging in action. I hope that a sense of proportion will continue to prevail in the coming months.

As well as taking action to track down those who are responsible, politicians throughout the world

must ensure that that action does not lead to further atrocities. We have seen that it is all too easy to start something that is difficult to finish. The Russians found that out to their cost in Afghanistan. The reaction against terrorists must not be allowed to develop into a wider war, but must be tempered by an effort to consider some of the real grievances and problems that exist throughout the world, which can be a breeding ground for fanatics who are prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice.

We must also ensure that, in taking action, everything is done to protect the innocent people of Afghanistan who have suffered terribly over many years. Ordinary people in Afghanistan have had to endure suffering brought about not only by other Afghans, but by foreign powers playing global politics at the expense of the people of Afghanistan. Any action should ultimately ensure that the people of Afghanistan are freed from the shackles of oppression and are allowed to pursue their lives in peace and with stability in their country.

We have seen the evidence of the human cost of the Taliban regime: the starvation, the cruel oppression of women and the destruction of the infrastructure of Afghanistan—such as was left when the Taliban took over. It would appear that the protection of Osama bin Laden is a higher priority for the Taliban than the protection of the women and children of Afghanistan.

In recent weeks, we have seen human suffering in Afghanistan grow. Everything possible should be done to support those faced with starvation and disease. As George Reid and others were, I was shocked to hear last night from Oxfam representatives that the Taliban have begun to demand extortionate payments from World Food Programme convoys seeking to cross into Afghanistan. The donations that John Swinney is encouraging the people of Scotland to make should not end up lining the pockets of the Taliban.

The execution of military action is properly the reserve of Westminster. However, I hope that the Scottish Parliament can usefully spend its time in the coming months considering what we can legitimately do within our devolved powers. Whatever happens, let us resolve that justice, humanity and common sense guide us through the difficult period ahead.

11:52

Dr Winnie Ewing (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): In my life, I have been privileged to have been able to visit 28 third world countries as a member of the Lome delegation from Europe. Most, although not all, were in Africa. I have seen

enormous refugee camps in Angola, Ethiopia and on the border of Somalia and I will never forget those experiences. What shocked me were the outstretched hands.

How many of us meet the non-governmental organisation people who work in those places? They go on doing their jobs and live in terrible conditions, as George Reid mentioned, and half our population does not even know about the wonderful things that they do. Perhaps when the current situation is over we should give them an accolade, as the city of New York intends to do for its fire fighters. Those people do a wonderful job under conditions in which there are never enough administrators, nurses, doctors and so on. Many people in this country are willing to help and would go if we could channel them better.

The United Nations does a wonderful job, but it is overstretched. Why? It is because member states do not give—as recommended—1 per cent of their gross domestic product to the third world. The UK does not and America certainly does not. However, Denmark does and that is why I was not happy with the way in which John Home Robertson dismissed small countries. Many people in the NGOs thanked the small country of Denmark because it gives more than 1 per cent of its GDP to the third world. I hope that an independent Scotland would do likewise and not what most countries, including European countries, do.

I speak with heartfelt grief about what is going on. I am glad that Africa was mentioned because I have seen wonderful things and terrible things in Africa. The most wonderful thing that I saw was in sub-Saharan Mali. A man was digging furrows in a dead piece of land. I asked what he was doing and was told that he was waiting for the rain. The rain might never have come, but at least the land would have been ready for the rain if it had come. That is what the world is allowing to happen. Our world is wealthy, but we are allowing terrible tragedies to occur. People are starving and dying. As has been said, children are dying of starvation before they are five years old. Life expectancy in Afghanistan is only 40.

We must sort out this monster, Osama bin Laden, whom the west helped to create. I am a child of the second world war and my older brothers fought in it. How many people today remember the name of the Japanese general that sent in the suicide bombers? He is a footnote in history and that is what we must make of Osama bin Laden. One way or another, we must do that, which is why I support the motion. I am puzzled that the Scottish Executive bothered to lodge an amendment to replace the motion's word "compatible"—which was used yesterday in the House of Commons by my daughter—to

"accompanied by". That is petty and stupid. We are all surely on the same wavelength on the matter. We all want military action to be compatible with the delivery of aid. That was the burden of John Swinney's speech.

The situation changes from day to day and we know that, when a country is fighting a war, it cannot inform the electorate of everything that happens. However, we are all terribly worried about aid getting through. We should ask the UN to take practical steps, such as sending trucks with armed guards to deliver the aid. We are united on this and it is a pity that we are involved in petty disagreements about issues that do not count.

11:57

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): The recommendation that Winnie Ewing mentioned that member states of the UN dedicate 1 per cent of their GDP to international aid was made in a report that was produced by Willy Brandt 20 years ago. I must point out that the UK does not dedicate even 0.7 per cent of our GDP to international aid. I hope that today's calls for aid are heard in Westminster and that we begin to dedicate a proper level of resources to aid.

The First Minister—who unfortunately has not been able to stay for the rest of the debate—called for unity. David McLetchie told us that the debate was not about history. As a socialist, I will express unity in terms of compassion for the loss of innocent lives on September 11 in New York and Washington. What I will not do as a socialist is express selective compassion or selective horror. David McLetchie is wrong: history is extremely important in today's debate. The debate is about world order—or world disorder, if we think about what the United States of America has been responsible for in its pursuit of global political, social and economic domination.

In May 1996, the then US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, appeared on the "60 Minutes" television show in America to talk about the situation in Iraq. The interviewer said that there had been reports that half a million children had died as a direct result of economic sanctions and that that was

"more children than died in Hiroshima".

The interviewer then asked:

"is the price worth it?"

Madeleine Albright replied:

"I think this is a very hard choice, but the price is worth it."

Half a million kids. There were kids in the public gallery earlier; I ask the chamber to reflect on the fact that kids in Scotland, kids in America, kids in

Iraq and kids in Afghanistan are just that—kids. They are innocent and they do not deserve to die as a result of the sort of direct economic sanctions that America has imposed on Iraq and the bombing strikes that it has launched.

Before starting the air-strikes, Mr Bush said, “We’re a peaceful nation.” I need only mention China, Korea, Guatemala, Indonesia, the Belgian Congo, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Grenada, Libya, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Iraq, Bosnia, and Sudan. To that list I add Afghanistan. Since the second world war, America has been at war with or has bombed 20 nations. That is relevant to the debate. The terrorist networks that are springing up throughout the world are doing so on the basis of that history and in response to that type of oppression and injustice.

In the socialist camp, we have no time for terrorism. We believe in mass, organised action. We believe in disobedience if it is civil, but we are not going to be placed in camps by Mr Bush. David McLetchie said that the matter is complex—he is right. That is why the George Bush’s nonsense—

“Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists”—

is not good enough as far as the debate is concerned. I am not with the terrorists, nor am I with George Bush. I am with the forces of peace.

We need a genuine international court. We need justice to be pursued, not through killing more innocents, but through a credible inquiry that has the support of nations throughout the world.

John Home Robertson admitted that the situation is a bit like that of Israel ignoring UN resolutions. We cannot merely pass motions, because countries just ignore them. That is why we are taking military action against Afghanistan. On that basis, I wonder when military action will begin against Israel.

12:01

Colin Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP): I will try to keep my speech short because I know that we are under pressure for time.

We all understand that all people in the world are victims of history. That accounts for much of the passion in what Tommy Sheridan said and some of the other things that members have said in the course of this important debate.

I regard wars as memorials to the failures of politicians. Unfortunately, history is littered with such memorials. The price of bad politics is, at worst, dead people. However, there are times when the application of judicious force is essential. The current situation is one such time.

Bombing planners are advised and controlled by

lawyers who have international legal experience and whose legal judgment is the criterion for whether the planners are choosing a legitimate military target with low, or no, risk of civilian casualties. The United States is probably aware—I am not an apologist for everything that the United States does—that any apparent carelessness will risk the integrity of the fragile coalition that they have built against terrorism.

The fact that the situation in which we find ourselves was caused by the indiscriminate murder of civilians in the United States has been mentioned. That was a random killing of civilians who were going about their normal business. I remind members that random killing of people through the distribution of anthrax is also going on. We should try to be objective when we compare one set of activities with the other. The attackers are being completely indiscriminate in their actions.

I endorse the position of the Scottish National Party that, in addition to accurately targeted and executed military action, a parallel humanitarian programme should be set in train. Coupled with that effort—indeed, essential to it—must be diplomatic efforts. As George Reid said, it is vital that humanitarian corridors be set up, as should safe drop zones for humanitarian aid. With good will, it should not be beyond the negotiating powers of the UN and all the participants in Afghanistan to allow access to reputable NGOs and international humanitarian organisations. That would create no-war corridors, which both sides would be pledged to respect—although, to be frank, I do not think that everybody would respect them.

I deeply respect the right of pacifists to their point of view. My wife is a pacifist and her father-in-law was a pacifist during the war. I have been round that argument often. I respect everybody who wants to minimise civilian casualties and bring as much relief as is humanly and administratively possible. We all share that aspiration. Although some unpleasant little shots—which were quite unnecessary, given the overall tone and the purpose of the debate—have been fired round the chamber, we are all on the same side and have the same aims. However, those with whom the military operation is designed to deal would perceive cessation as a sign of weakness that would encourage them. That is not to anyone’s benefit—not the populations of the world to whom they are hostile, nor the unfortunate inhabitants of Afghanistan, whom they currently oppress.

12:05

Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP): The debate is of great importance. However, it

takes place within the context of perceptions. The problem that was created by September 11—which was probably created many years ago, between 1946 and 1948 in Lebanon and Palestine—is at the heart of the problem of perceptions.

I know from many meetings that I have attended over the past two or three weeks that the perception in the United Kingdom is that the Muslim community in Scotland now believes firmly that the war in which the United States is engaged is a war against the Islamic countries. That is causing great polarisation. The principal reasons why they believe that are our failure to deal with the situation in Palestine, the situation in Iraq and the situation of the Saharawi people. Those people are all victims—as perceived by the Muslim community—of western Governments.

If we do not begin to address properly our involvement in other countries, particularly in the middle east, polarisation will continue. We perceive that the attack on Afghanistan is an attack on terror, on Osama bin Laden and the al-Qa'ida network. The general perception in Pakistan and many other Muslim countries is that it is an attack on Islamic people.

I believe that by one set of actions only can we prevent perceptions from polarising and leading to more events that are similar to those of September 11. There must be a complete cessation of the bombing of Afghanistan, we must force the state of Israel to respond to UN resolutions, Israel's current occupation of Palestinian National Authority areas must cease, its bombing and shelling of hospitals and power stations must cease and the murder of innocent villagers, such as the 22 whom the Israeli defence forces killed yesterday, must cease.

If we believe that we can separate the events—seen on al-Jazeera throughout the Muslim world—on the West Bank and Gaza, we are kidding ourselves. Even this morning and yesterday the Prime Minister, Mr Blair, had to speak to Muslim leaders to assure them that the war is not against Islam but against terror. He did that only to be told at the end of the meeting that no matter how many times he says that, every death of an innocent Muslim child or civilian as the result of a free-fall bomb dropped from 30,000ft simply reconfirms that those are nothing more than words.

The Muslim world has given civilisation much over the years. In the west, we have spent the past 15 to 20 years—particularly since the fall of the Shah of Iran—talking about Islamic fundamentalism, but seldom about Christian fundamentalism. I read an article in translation yesterday that talks about the Christian fundamentalism that is carrying out the war against Islamic people in Afghanistan.

We must begin to understand that our perceptions cannot be imposed on other cultures. We must listen to what they are saying. If the people of Pakistan—an unstable country that has nuclear arms—believe that what is happening in Afghanistan, in Palestine, in Iraq and with the Saharawis is a deliberate attack on Islam by the west, we must take that on board. As every bomb drops, that perception grows. We must say, "Stop now!", not just for sake of the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, but for the future.

12:10

Brian Fitzpatrick (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab): Today's debate has in the main been measured and serious, and that is quite appropriate. Many, if not all, of us will never forget where we were when we realised the utter indescribable evil of what happened on 11 September. Many members were here in the Parliament. I was with colleagues in room 3.13 of parliamentary headquarters. We watched as a patch of clear blue sky that should never have been there opened up in a familiar New York skyline. We watched as the heavens rained down people.

The situation took me back to the time not so long ago when I was making my way to the Faculty of Advocates library, which is just down the road. I met a member of staff who knew that I, like him, had very small children. He told me that a madman had gone into a primary school and slaughtered innocent children. Like him, I could not get to a phone fast enough. That was irrational and unthinking, but it was a bolt of fear. I just wanted to speak to my wife and she just wanted to speak to me. Her worry was the same as mine: "Where are my children?" Terror leaves its residue on us all. It makes us vulnerable, but that is its purpose.

However, let this debate—as with other debates throughout Britain, Europe and the rest of the world—serve to remind us that our best response to those who seek to destroy our way of life is that which was outlined by the First Minister today. In all its terrible tragedy, 11 September serves to remind us how we are interconnected one with another. Let it also remind us of the need for a robust defence of our democratic institutions and way of life. Our best response to bin Laden and those who somehow—God knows how—manage to find meaning and purpose in hurling planeloads of innocent people into buildings full of innocent people, is to get on with the business of democracy. As Hugh Henry mentioned, we need to ensure that our democratic institutions go on unaltered. That is the best legacy for those who survive and the best memorial to those who died.

Ms MacDonald: Will the member give way?

Brian Fitzpatrick: I would rather not.

The First Minister spoke to the first part of Mr Swinney's motion. I thank the First Minister for the information that he gave on the full participation of the civil contingencies committee, on the impact on our economy and on his support for Scottish Muslims.

There are genuine concerns in the Muslim communities in Scotland, as there are throughout the rest of the UK. I have met leaders of the Muslim communities in my constituency before and since 11 September. I trust that one welcome outcome of our debate is that, just as throughout the rest of Britain, the members of the Parliament and the people of Scotland have universally rejected the old and devalued rhetoric. The current conflict is not Chesterton's age-old struggle, nor is it a rerun of the great game, nor is it even a clash of civilisations.

David McLetchie mentioned legislation. I say that we should see what is proposed. Let us see what we can do. In and of themselves, laws will never eradicate sectarian hatred. People change people, but laws can help. We must of course be careful that civil liberties do not become a casualty along the way. However, it is not acceptable to incite people to kill Muslims, Catholics, Jews or others because of their religion. That is no more acceptable than it is to kill people because of their race.

Last night, a constituent of mine, who is worried not least because of his own relatives in Pakistan, told me that the fact that the Prime Minister moved quickly to discuss the situation with religious and community leaders demonstrated what the Koran calls the "wisdom of the learned". Would that the others who have held his post had done so. Some people might know that, unlike Mr Canavan, I am a firm supporter of our Prime Minister. I support his careful leadership in building a coalition for humanitarian aid in Afghanistan. I support what he has done for delivering on the peace process in the Middle East and for the rebuilding of hope for Africa. I support his declaration on the interconnectedness of us all. In recent months, we have had good cause to be proud of our Prime Minister. I trust that the thoughts and wishes of us all are with our Prime Minister, with the men and women of our armed forces, with the people of Afghanistan and with the victims and survivors of the attacks in the United States.

The Presiding Officer: I have allowed the debate to overrun in view of its importance and the number of members who wanted to speak. I apologise to members who have not been called, but we must now move to wind-up speeches. John McAllion will wind up in support of Dennis Canavan's amendment.

12:15

Mr John McAllion (Dundee East) (Lab): The way in which the debate has been conducted this morning has, for the most part, justified holding a debate in the first place. We have heard many excellent and thoughtful speeches. I sense that the Parliament is reflecting the confusion and lack of certainty about this war, which characterises Scottish public opinion outside the chamber. That is no bad thing.

Indeed, at a time when the debate about the war is bringing thousands of Scots on to the streets in protest against the war, packing public meetings across the country—some for the war, some against it—and is dominating the national press and media, particularly in the letters pages as people write in to express their views, it would have been a real tragedy if the only sound to come out of the Scottish Parliament was the plaintive cry, "Don't mention the war because it's reserved to Westminster and nothing to do with us". I am delighted that the Parliament decided to go ahead with the debate this morning.

Obviously, I am speaking in support of Dennis Canavan's amendment. During the debate, several members implied that because British armed forces are preparing to put their lives on the line, it is somehow disloyal on our part not to give maximum support to the politicians who are requiring the British armed forces to put their lives on the line in the first place. That is not something with which I can agree. As far as I am concerned, the British armed forces are fighting—if they fight—to defend democracy, the right to dissent and the right of freedom of speech. The armed forces are subject to military discipline and cannot give expression to what they think about the war, and since they are prepared to lay down their lives silently on our behalf, it would be a real betrayal not to question the political judgments and decisions that have been made. The real betrayal would be in not asking tough questions and not challenging the politics that require them to lay down their lives. Those who question what the Government and the coalition are doing are speaking out on behalf of the British armed forces.

It is right for us to ask what the armed forces are fighting for. Is it just to destroy Osama bin Laden and his terrorist network, as some members have argued? If that is so, is the widespread bombing of Afghanistan proportionate to that end? We do not know, and will not know until long after the war is over, what the real nature of the bombing of Afghanistan has been. For example, we are told that it is targeted, using smart weapons that will ensure the minimum amount of civilian casualties. I have to say that I have heard that argument before, from the very same sources. I heard it during the Gulf war when we were shown video

games almost every day on television—video footage of the pinpoint accuracy of the new weapons that would ensure the minimum of Iraqi casualties. It was only long after the war was over that we discovered that only 7 per cent of the 88,500 tonnes of bombs dropped on Iraq and Kuwait were smart weapons, that some of those smart weapons had gone astray and that the rest of the massive total were dumb bombs, which—we found out years later—killed a quarter of a million innocent men, women and children.

We have already heard that in the war in Afghanistan innumerable Tomahawk cruise missiles have been fired. Those missiles cost £400,000 every time that they are fired. They are not fired for or with minimal effect—they are fired with maximum damage and effect. What that damage and price is, we do not yet know. The allies have admitted that 2,000 bombs, most of them dumb bombs, have already been dropped on Afghanistan. They have been dropped from B-52s from a height of 40,000ft. Those are the same B-52s that caused 600,000 innocent people to die in Cambodia. Do not tell me that innocent men, women and children are not being killed in Afghanistan because they are. I cannot support that killing in any way.

Would those deaths be justified if the objective were to overthrow the Taliban regime? The Taliban are vile beyond words—everyone in Parliament agrees with that. However, they were vile beyond words back in the 1990s, when the US Government, the UK Government and the Pakistan Government armed, supported and helped them into power in order to remove the northern alliance, which was thought to be worse than the Taliban. Now we are being asked to believe that we have to remove the Taliban to put the northern alliance back in power. That cannot be right.

The events of 11 September are seared into the imaginations of every man, woman and child who watched them on television, but part of the reason for that is that we watched them live on television. There are no live pictures of the bombing of innocent men, women and children in Afghanistan, but because we cannot see it, that does not mean that the horror for them is any less than was the horror for the men, women and children who died in New York and Washington. There is an equivalence between the suffering of the innocents in Afghanistan and the suffering of the innocents in New York.

There are alternatives. The terrorists who brought down the embassies in Kenya and Tanzania have been brought to justice without a war. The terrorists responsible for the events of 11 September could be brought to justice without a war. I urge members of this Parliament to support

Dennis Canavan's amendment, because there is another way.

12:21

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con): This has been a significant debate. Two fundamental freedoms are at stake: freedom to live without starvation, and freedom to live without terrorism. I am a fundamentalist in their defence. It is needless to add that starvation and the illnesses to which it gives rise, and the violence that is associated with terrorism, can each cost countless civilian lives. It is clear that the crisis caused by the flight of many thousands of refugees is every bit as important as dealing with the dangers of terrorist aggression, so we have to approach the subject—as many MSPs have stressed today—with, at the forefront of our minds, not just the cause of democratic freedoms, but the desperate threat of starvation to millions of people in Afghanistan and outside its boundaries.

Scotland has a strong and admirable record of supporting aid agencies. I should mention my own interest, as president of the International Rescue Corps, which helps to save lives in emergencies, including, in particular, after earthquakes. For the sake of objectivity, I mention that apart from the corps' many successful missions abroad, it offered to help in Afghanistan after its severe earthquakes, just as it offered to help New Yorkers after the collapse of the twin towers.

While we acknowledge the Government's success in establishing an international coalition, which includes European countries, Russia, China, Pakistan and India, as well as the United States and Arab countries, we recognise that one of the harsh realities of the attack on the twin towers and the military conflict is that civilian casualties have arisen. Nonetheless, we believe that every effort must be made to keep civilian casualties to an absolute minimum. Clare Short stated in the House of Commons:

"It must be a focused and just war with no civilian casualties."—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 8 October 2001; Vol 372, c 897.]

That must be the ideal, however hard to achieve, even if, as George Reid hinted, there may be few moral certainties in time of war. As Hugh Henry said, the response must be proportionate.

I add to that by emphasising John Swinney's obvious, but central, point. We have large Muslim and ethnic minority communities in Scotland, and they are appalled by what happened on 11 September. I quote from the excellent article by Shami Khan in the *Evening News* on 13 September:

"The Pakistan Society, as a representative of the Muslim and ethnic minority communities of Edinburgh and Lothian,

utterly condemns the horrific, barbaric and cowardly acts of terrorism which took place in the United States.”

I endorse what he wrote under the heading:

“Don’t blame this atrocity on Muslim neighbours”.

We support the British Government in its aims, which include assisting with humanitarian aid. Clare Short made a positive contribution in that regard during her recent visit to Pakistan. We also appreciate the nature of the military aims, which were outlined by Michael Ancram:

“first, to bring Osama bin Laden to justice and to destroy his al-Qaeda organisation. The second is the longer term but equally essential eradication of international terrorism ... The third is to enable the people of Afghanistan to regain their rights and to live in peace, not least by a determined effort to free them from the threat of famine”.—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 16 October 2001; Vol 372, c 1065.]

It follows that a definite objective must be the departure of the Taliban regime, in which case it is essential not to leave a vacuum. I say to John McAllion that it is important that any future Government represents all tribal interests, and that a Government emerges that is dissociated from international terrorism, and which genuinely represents all Afghanistan.

As David McLetchie and Ben Wallace stated, we have made no secret of the fact that we support the British Government at this time of danger in the world. These are difficult times, and no conflict of this nature can take place without substantial risk. If eternal vigilance is the price to be paid for liberty, courage in the face of adversity is necessary to protect the democratic freedoms that are essential to our way of life.

I end by quoting from Sir Winston Churchill’s last great speech to the House of Commons on 1 March 1955. He said:

“We must never allow, above all, I hold, the growing sense of unity and brotherhood between the United Kingdom and the United States ... to be injured or retarded. Its maintenance, stimulation and its fortifying is one of the first duties of every person who wishes to see peace in the world and wishes to see the survival of this country.”

He went on:

“The day may dawn when fair play, love for one’s fellow men, respect for justice and freedom will enable tormented generations to march forth serene and triumphant from the hideous epoch in which we have to dwell.”

Those words are as relevant today as they were when he spoke them nearly 50 years ago. I end with his last message of hope:

“Meanwhile, never flinch, never weary, never despair.”—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 1 March 1955; Vol 537, c 1905.]

12:26

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice (Mr Jim Wallace): This has been a serious and wide-ranging debate, which has touched on the complexities of the political situation in the middle east and of global poverty. It has been marked by some very serious and thoughtful speeches. Even if members disagreed with those speeches, they will have recognised the sincerity with which opinions were offered.

I would like to join John Home Robertson, Ben Wallace, Mike Rumbles, Brian Fitzpatrick and Lord James Douglas-Hamilton in paying tribute to our armed forces as they engage in some very difficult operations. Many of the members of those forces are based in Scotland and it is important that they know that they carry out their duties with the support of members of this Parliament.

I disagreed with the speeches made by Dennis Canavan, John McAllion and Tommy Sheridan. However, it is very important—not least at times when a country is at war—that the right of those who wish to challenge the conventional wisdom is respected. Although I disagree with what was said, I respect the viewpoint that was put forward.

Dennis Canavan asked whether there was a difference between the value of the civilian lives taken in Afghanistan and the value of the innocent lives that were taken in the World Trade Center. There is, of course, no difference. However, as Mike Rumbles pointed out, there is a difference between the acts carried out on 11 September, which were deliberately designed to maximise innocent casualties, and the action of the coalition forces in Afghanistan, which is designed to minimise them. That is an important and fundamental difference.

Quite properly, the debate has reflected on issues relating to humanitarian aid. George Reid’s speech was one of the most profound contributions that has been made to this or, indeed, to any debate that has taken place in this Parliament. I noted what George Reid said: that military action might be the key to providing humanitarian relief. It would be naive of us to think that the cessation of military activity would lead the Taliban at once to open all entrances to Afghanistan and to wave the aid convoys through. I doubt that that would happen.

Alex Neil, Hugh Henry and Winnie Ewing, as well as George Reid, made the point that global poverty fuels terrorism. That is a profound issue, but one for another day.

John Swinney proposed that a collective appeal be made to the Scottish people to support the aid charities. I endorse the call that he and others have made. To date, the Afghanistan appeal has not raised as much money as many people would

have liked. It would be invidious to pick out any particular charity, but over many years the Scottish people have responded very positively to aid appeals.

Mr Swinney: I am grateful to the Deputy First Minister for his comments on my initiative. I want to take him back a couple of sentences in his speech to the nub of the debate and to a point that I made in my intervention during Mike Rumbles's speech. I have argued that military action must be compatible with and supportive of the humanitarian aid operation and that the balance of the current conflict must reflect that. Does the Deputy First Minister believe that the way in which the conflict is being pursued maximises the opportunities to get humanitarian aid to those who require it, or does he think that the balance needs to be changed?

Mr Wallace: I think that the World Food Programme stated that it is not the bombing that is stopping the food getting through, but the activities of the Taliban regime, which are far more blocking. As I said, I do not believe that simply stopping the bombing would mean that the Taliban would suddenly wave the convoys through.

I want to deal briefly with the responsibilities that the Scottish ministers have in circumstances such as at present, to ensure the security and safety of people in Scotland and to tackle the economic impact.

Phil Gallie: Will the minister give way?

Mr Wallace: I do not have much time.

The First Minister set out some of the actions that are being taken to ensure the security of the people of Scotland; we will continue to contribute to the emergency planning procedures for the United Kingdom as a whole and to monitor and evaluate the emergency procedures that are in place. If it becomes necessary, we are willing to issue new guidance as required. There is no evidence of a specific threat against Scotland, but people should be assured that we continue to review our capability to deal with contingency situations.

On Tuesday of this week, I attended a memorial service at the Citizen Firefighter statue, which was organised by the Scottish fire brigades to pay tribute to those in the emergency services who lost their lives in New York. Although we hope that our emergency services will never be called on to deal with a similar situation, it is important that we acknowledge the courage and commitment of those who serve in them.

David McLetchie, Mike Rumbles and Brian Fitzpatrick raised the question of religious hatred. They indicated that laws alone are not always the answer. I think that Martin Luther King junior said

that

“the law cannot change the heart, but it can restrain the heartless”,

at least.

The First Minister made it clear that we share the United Kingdom Government's determination to protect people from attacks that are based on religious hostility. Such behaviour has no place in a civilised country. The Home Secretary has produced specific proposals, and we are committed to affording the same level of protection to the Scottish people as is the case in other parts of the United Kingdom. As the First Minister said, we are considering the Home Secretary's proposals. We have not decided how they should apply in Scotland.

A number of members said that Scotland has some distinctive problems, such as sectarianism—Donald Gorrie's consultation paper of this week airs that issue in a measured and considered way. We intend to take distinctive action. We will let Parliament know what that will be in due course, after giving proper consideration to the various options.

Kenny MacAskill and Mike Rumbles referred to the global economy. It is difficult to be precise at this time about the impact of the terrorist attacks on the Scottish economy, but there will be an impact. However, some of our key policies that are already in place, such as enhancing skills and ensuring that we have the proper infrastructure for a competitive, knowledge-based economy, remain as important, if not more important, in the aftermath of what has happened. The Executive will keep under constant review the impact on individual sectors and will work with business to address short-term impacts and to lend what assistance we can.

Mike Rumbles referred specifically to tourism. We are marshalling the resources of VisitScotland and the enterprise networks. VisitScotland is up-weighting its spend on the United Kingdom, domestic and European markets, while retaining a presence in the United States market. There might be an effect on long-haul travel, but short haul and short breaks continue. We are also trying to learn lessons from the foot-and-mouth outbreak that will boost our tourism industry.

I refer to the Executive amendment. Winnie Ewing asked why we should quibble about a few words and defended the use of the word “compatible”, which her daughter Annabelle used yesterday in the House of Commons. It is not a quibble, because the SNP motion states that

“military action in Afghanistan must, as the Prime Minister has asserted, be compatible with”.

In fact, the Prime Minister did not use the phrase

“compatible with”, which is ambiguous and could be misinterpreted. It is therefore important that we clarify that position and return to the words that the Scottish National Party originally lodged, to say that any military action must, as the Prime Minister has asserted, be “accompanied by” an effective humanitarian operation. With that small amendment, the Parliament can unite around a motion that is a measured and sensitive expression of our view in the face of a complex international crisis.

12:35

Roseanna Cunningham (Perth) (SNP): I express my solidarity with the American people after the tragedy that took place on 11 September. I have not had the opportunity to do that in the chamber. We must remember that the attack on the World Trade Center affected not only the USA. Citizens of many nations and people of many religions were killed.

Several thoughtful speeches have been made that expressed different views. It is sad that David McLetchie’s speech cannot be counted among those thoughtful speeches. His tone was unfortunate and discordant. I am tempted to describe him as a wannabe colonel, but most real colonels would never adopt such a tone in their speeches. I do not want to be drawn into a historical debate, but I will paraphrase an old saying: those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it. Perhaps David McLetchie should ponder that.

The events of 11 September and the action in Afghanistan have left their mark on Scotland in many ways. Perhaps the part of our nation that has been most directly affected is Scotland’s Muslim community, which has been in a state of fear and alarm since then. In *The Scotsman* yesterday, Syed Jaffri, a businessman with premises in Glasgow and Edinburgh, described the situation as “intolerable”.

We cannot ignore the real and perceived threats to the safety of a section of our community. I accept that the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister have given a commitment to reviewing the criminal law, but I am concerned that the problem exists now and cannot wait for some future solution. Every one of Scotland’s politicians must take every opportunity to reassure our Muslim community of its safety and security and to condemn those who perpetrate racial and religious prejudice. The First Minister, and the Deputy First Minister in his role as Minister for Justice, must ensure that the existing legal protections are vigorously enforced consistently throughout the criminal justice system—by every part of it. At times, that does not seem to be the case.

It is hardly surprising that the Scottish economy has suffered, given our massive dependence on the tourism industry. Several members referred to that, including the First Minister. He talked about the short-term consequences, but we should also be concerned about potential long-term consequences.

The debate was intended to ensure that here in our Parliament, Scotland’s view of recent world events can be expressed, that the impact of those events on the people and the economy of Scotland can be recognised and that the ways in which Scotland can help can be addressed. Those matters are hugely important, and this is our national Parliament, so we should discuss such matters. I hope that the diversity of the views that we heard will continue to be countenanced throughout the chamber and in all parties. Mr McLetchie’s comments in that regard were ridiculous.

I respect the conscientious arguments of pacifism, although I had not appreciated that Tommy Sheridan was a pacifist. The SNP has supported the decision to take military action. I am not a pacifist. The views of most people lie somewhere between pacifist beliefs and the extremes of David McLetchie’s views. The concerns that some express are also shared by most people. We have only to go around with our ears open to know that. It is not exactly hold-the-front-page news. There are concerns about whether the humanitarian campaign is compatible with the military action. George Reid made it clear how they can be made compatible. One need not oppose military action to believe that we can pursue a humanitarian agenda, too. I want to say, in passing, that it is a pity that George Reid’s job as Deputy Presiding Officer precludes him from making more contributions in the chamber, as we have all benefited today from the speech that he made.

I repeat the point that was made by John Swinney, which relates to what Jim Wallace had to say about the difference between “compatible with” and “accompanied by”. As John Swinney pointed out, Tony Blair’s statement had three parts, all of which are equally important to the operation in which we are engaged: military, diplomatic and humanitarian. The concern of the SNP, and it is my own concern, is that that balance is seriously out of kilter—objective analysis would not suggest anything different. In particular, the humanitarian side of the equation is losing out. Humanitarian aid is simply not getting through.

The much-publicised airdrops from US planes are indeed a drop in the ocean of what is needed. That is especially true if comparisons are made between the amount of money that is being spent on armaments compared with the amount spent

on aid. If we are honest, the humanitarian exercise is more a part of the diplomatic campaign than of a humanitarian campaign.

More must be done to head off a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Because of lack of food, 7.5 million people are at risk. In Pakistan, there are about 2 million Afghani refugees. Goodness knows how many more Afghani refugees are in other surrounding states.

I would be at the head of the queue of those making criticisms of the Taliban regime and have done so on previous occasions, including in the House of Commons. However, the issue is not only about the Taliban not allowing humanitarian aid to get through. That is a convenient excuse, but it cannot be allowed to put the balance so much out of kilter. Tony Blair said that the military, diplomatic and humanitarian aspects were equally important: in practice, that has not worked out. We should be clear that, unless we get the aid issue right, building the peace will become infinitely more difficult. Building the peace is absolutely vital if we are to minimise the likelihood of being in this position again.

The SNP has been criticised for calling the debate. Some of the criticism has been explicit and some implicit. However, there can hardly be a living room or a pub in Scotland where the debate is not taking place in one form or another. Can we really say that the one forum where the debate should not be happening is in Scotland's Parliament? I cannot imagine that that could be thought to be appropriate.

The First Minister recognises the direct challenges that we face in Scotland. He outlined a series of measures that, as a result of the crisis, are to be undertaken by the Executive and other agencies. Those are proper measures. I shall list four—although there might be more—which involve the police; the emergency co-ordinating committee; new guidance in regard to bio-terrorism; Executive discussions with Westminster; and the proposal from the Scottish Trades Union Congress for an economic summit. Those are proper measures and should be pursued. However, they ought also to be discussed in the chamber. I wish that the Executive had initiated a debate of this kind, as we should talk about actions that are very properly being undertaken.

I reiterate that the aim in the long term must be peace. Lord James Douglas-Hamilton quoted Winston Churchill. I want to quote Franklin D Roosevelt. In the very different but perhaps similarly challenging circumstances of 1945, he said:

"The structure of world peace cannot be the work of one man, or one party, or one Nation. It cannot be just an American peace, or a British peace ... It must be a peace which rests on the cooperative effort of the whole world."

However small our nation, let us resolve—at least here today—that Scotland, too, will play its part in that co-operative effort.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes the debate.

12:44

Meeting suspended until 14:30.

14:30

On resuming—

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): Before we start question time, I will mention two matters. First, I am sure that members would like to welcome the speaker of the Swedish Parliament, Miss Birgitta Dahl, who is sitting in the distinguished strangers' gallery. Secondly, I take the opportunity to tell members that I shall be missing for the first half of next week as I have to attend the annual conference of the presidents of the regional legislative assemblies of Europe. I trust that members will grant me leave of absence.

Question Time

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Borders Rail Link

1. Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive what the implications of Railtrack plc going into administration will be for the re-establishment of a rail link to the Scottish Borders. (S1O-3936)

The Minister for Transport and Planning (Sarah Boyack): It is far too early to speculate on how the new infrastructure company will affect enhancements to the Scottish railway network as the proposed construction of the Borders railway is not expected until 2005 at the earliest. The challenge is to ensure that the new railway structure enables cost-effective public and private investment that meets our strategic objectives.

Ian Jenkins: Does the minister acknowledge that, whatever the administrative arrangements and changes, we have to ensure that the public service ethos and social and strategic interests are taken into account in making decisions? The authorities at every level must recall that the Parliament, for powerful and compelling reasons, endorsed the principle of re-establishing a rail link to and through the Borders. There should be no reason for going back on that commitment.

Sarah Boyack: I am happy to acknowledge that the first feasibility study into the Borders railway line was conducted in recognition of the social and economic conditions in the Borders. Those conditions still remain. The key thing is for the work being done by Scottish Borders Council to advance, so that the correct work is in place to consider the Borders railway line further.

Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP): On 25 August last year, in answer to my question on discussions with the Strategic Rail Authority about financing the Borders railway line, the minister responded that that was discussed on

26 June last year. On what occasions since has funding been discussed with the SRA? What advice and guidance has the minister given to the SRA about funding the line?

Sarah Boyack: We have yet to give strategic advice and guidance to the SRA on the next ScotRail franchise. However, throughout the period in question we have been in regular discussions with the SRA—at ministerial and official level—on a range of railway projects.

Mr Murray Tosh (South of Scotland) (Con): Will the minister confirm recent reports that she has been discussing with possible funders the terms of a private finance initiative to procure the Borders railway link? Is the fate of Railtrack likely to affect materially the prospects of achieving agreement on such a procurement route?

Sarah Boyack: The new structure will give us a range of options to procure new railways infrastructure—that gives us opportunities across the whole of Scotland, not just in the Borders.

Terrorism

2. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West): To ask the Scottish Executive what discussions it has had with Her Majesty's Government about combating terrorism. (S1O-3927)

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice (Mr Jim Wallace): I can assure Mr Canavan and the Parliament that there are regular contacts between the Scottish Executive and Whitehall departments about a range of issues relating to the combating of terrorism.

Dennis Canavan: Can members have an assurance that the Parliament will have the opportunity to debate any anti-terrorist legislation, rather than leaving it all to Westminster? Is the minister aware that there would probably be a warm welcome in Scotland for legislation to stop incitement to religious, as well as racial, hatred, but that there would probably be strong opposition to some other suggestions, such as identity cards? What exactly is the Scottish Executive's position on compulsory identity cards?

Mr Wallace: I cannot guarantee that there will a debate on all aspects of any anti-terrorism bill introduced at Westminster, because terrorism is a reserved matter. As was explained in this morning's debate, aspects of any proposed legislation may have implications for devolved responsibilities. We are examining those implications. It might be appropriate for us to bring some of them before the Scottish Parliament; it might be appropriate to invite the Parliament to approve a Sewel motion, not least because of the time imperative.

As Mr Canavan will have heard the First Minister

and me say this morning, we want to ensure that all religious communities in Scotland have proper protection, equivalent to that applied south of the border, but we want to examine those issues from a Scottish perspective, given, in particular, the different degree of sectarianism in Scotland compared with south of the border. There will be distinctive proposals for Scotland. Whether those are made in co-operation with Westminster or in this Parliament is still under discussion.

I have made my views on identity cards clear. Whether it is a matter for this Parliament depends on whether it is considered to be terrorism related. I do not believe that ID cards would have done anything to prevent the atrocious terrorist acts that took place on 11 September.

Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP): On the general campaign to combat the spread of terrorism, will the Scottish Executive impress upon the Westminster Government that the quickest, most effective step that it could take to ensure that there are no more recruits for terrorist acts over the next few weeks would be to ensure that Israel withdraws from the occupied territories?

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): I do not think that Mr Wallace is responsible for that.

Mr Wallace: Indeed. I do not think that that falls within my responsibilities.

Central Heating Initiative (Glasgow)

3. Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con): To ask the Scottish Executive how many homes in Glasgow have been fitted with central heating under its initiative to supply central heating to the homes of elderly people. (S1O-3934)

The Minister for Social Justice (Jackie Baillie): We anticipate that about 3,600 central heating systems will be installed in the homes of elderly people and tenants by March 2002.

Bill Aitken: I appreciate the anticipation in that answer, but is not the factual answer, "No—such central heating installations have not been installed in the homes of elderly people"?

Jackie Baillie: "Nonsense" is the word that I would use for Bill Aitken. I can advise him that if he happens occasionally to go to Glasgow, he will see that, from April this year, Glasgow City Council has been installing central heating systems in the homes of tenants, and—

Bill Aitken: How many?

Jackie Baillie: If Bill Aitken would allow me to finish—following the publication of guidance from Scottish Homes, housing associations have accelerated their programmes for central heating installation. Eaga Partnership advises me that it expects that provision will be made in about 1,000

homes in the private sector. Eaga is working to begin those installations over the next few weeks.

Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab): What measures have been taken to extend the central heating programme to those who are disabled? I am sure that the minister will appreciate that many disabled people are housebound and in need of an efficient central heating programme for the winter months.

Jackie Baillie: As Paul Martin will recall, we announced that we were accelerating the central heating programme for those in the social rented sector, so that all of them would be provided with central heating by April 2004, and that we were extending the programme to partial heating systems, with priority being given to the elderly and the disabled. The point that Paul Martin makes has been taken on board.

Mr Kenneth Gibson (Glasgow) (SNP): Will the minister confirm that the full central heating installation programme will be delivered in Glasgow, regardless of how tenants vote in a ballot on stock transfer, and that elderly people in Glasgow will have to wait no longer than pensioners in other parts of Scotland for the completion of the programme?

Jackie Baillie: If Kenny Gibson were to read the *Official Report* of debates in the Parliament, he would know that I have confirmed that many times before.

Multiple Sclerosis (Research)

4. Shona Robison (North-East Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what steps it will take to ensure that the chief scientist office actively seeks applications for research into multiple sclerosis. (S1O-3938)

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Susan Deacon): The CSO has received no research proposals on multiple sclerosis recently, although it has indirectly supported 12 MS-related projects. I take this opportunity to reaffirm the CSO's commitment to consider direct funding for research proposals on MS, provided that they are of a sufficiently high standard.

Shona Robison: The minister will be aware that, since 1990, the Multiple Sclerosis Society has spent more than £3 million on research. Does she agree that the society has a reputation in the scientific community for funding research of a high quality?

Given that reputation for quality, does the minister agree that it is no longer appropriate for the Scottish Executive to say that it will not fund research projects on MS on the ground of their lack of quality? Will the minister instruct the CSO to enter into discussions with the Multiple

Sclerosis Society, with a view to funding future research projects on MS, to give some hope to MS sufferers in Scotland?

Susan Deacon: First, I take the opportunity to record my recognition of the work of the Multiple Sclerosis Society—not just in research, but more widely in its work with the health service and, crucially, with individuals and their families—in helping us to make progress on this debilitating and sadly as yet incurable condition. Of course, as was demonstrated by my earlier answer, the CSO will support research, but it is important to remember that the research that we undertake in Scotland is part of a much wider national and international research effort in this important area.

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): The minister will be aware that in my constituency there is a particularly high incidence of multiple sclerosis. Will she indicate what additional service provision is being considered for MS sufferers?

Susan Deacon: I have taken a direct interest in this area for a considerable time. I am pleased to tell Jamie Stone that, working with the Multiple Sclerosis Society, we have been keen to monitor progress in the health service across Scotland, and indeed have done so in this year's accountability reviews of health boards. We asked specifically for reports on progress in this area. Progress has been variable, but I am pleased that in many parts of the country practical and positive steps are being taken to develop services and support to meet the needs of MS sufferers, to take up the Multiple Sclerosis Society's offer to develop, for example, MS specialist nursing, and to work continually, as we have discussed, to increase our understanding and awareness of this condition.

National Energy Efficiency Week

5. Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green): To ask the Scottish Executive whether, in support of national energy efficiency week, it will make representations to Her Majesty's Government in support of the rate of value added tax on do-it-yourself materials used to improve the energy efficiency of households being reduced from 17.5 per cent to 5 per cent. (S10-3951)

The Minister for Social Justice (Jackie Baillie): The Scottish Executive and Her Majesty's Government are frequently in touch on a range of issues, including taxation, which remains, of course, reserved to the Westminster Parliament. However, the implementation of Government-funded energy-efficiency measures, such as the warm deal, already attract the lower rate of VAT at 5 per cent.

Robin Harper: The minister will be aware of the

recent review of energy policy by the Energy Saving Trust, and the comment by its chief executive that the potential for energy savings is so great that no further nuclear power stations would be needed if the savings were achieved.

Does the minister agree that it is perverse that taxation on the consumption of energy is only 5 per cent, whereas taxation on measures for energy conservation in the public domain is much higher at 17.5 per cent? Does the minister accept that such pricing acts as a disincentive to investment in energy efficiency and thereby compromises the Executive's ability to deliver on its commitment to improve energy efficiency and end fuel poverty? Therefore, does she agree that the Executive has a legitimate right, if not a duty, to make representations to Her Majesty's Government to change this ridiculous situation?

The Presiding Officer: I think that we have got the point.

Jackie Baillie: I confess to losing count of how many times I was asked to agree with Robin Harper. We are on record as supporting the reduction of VAT on home improvements and repairs, and we acknowledge Robin Harper's point that accelerating improvements and repairs contributes directly to energy efficiency, whether by taking houses above the tolerable standard, improving health or securing more warmth. As Robin Harper will know, and has welcomed, we are committed to implementing a fuel poverty strategy in Scotland that will, within 15 years, eliminate fuel poverty once and for all.

Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab): Will the minister confirm that the Executive is committed to encouraging energy efficiency? Will she outline for us the measures that the Executive has introduced to encourage energy efficiency, and will she outline how the Executive intends to measure the success or otherwise of the programme?

Jackie Baillie: I am happy to do so. We intend to proceed with our commitment to energy efficiency in a number of ways. First is the warm deal programme, which is exceeding our warm homes target of 100,000.

There is also the central heating programme, which we have spent time on in the chamber today. Most important, there are the fuel poverty strategies. We will bring together in a comprehensive form the measures that we will take to end fuel poverty in Scotland. Those measures will be open to scrutiny by this Parliament, they will be time limited and they will be adequately resourced.

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): Following her earlier answer, does the minister agree that to broaden to house repairs generally the reduction

in VAT from 17.5 per cent to 5 per cent would both constitute an incentive towards carrying out necessary house repairs, including improvements to energy efficiency, and strike a considerable blow against the cowboy builders who are such a curse on the construction industry?

Jackie Baillie: It would indeed. That is why we have always argued that it would be of benefit to accelerate improvements and repairs more generally. Not only would that provide increased warmth and better health, but it would help people to remain in their own homes and contribute to energy efficiency. We are on record as saying that we would welcome a reduction of the VAT on such repairs from 17.5 per cent to 5 per cent.

Road Safety

6. Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive, in light of the new safety measures at the Ballinluig junction on the A9, what progress is being made to improve safety on other parts of the road. (S1O-3956)

The Minister for Transport and Planning (Sarah Boyack): Two schemes on the A9 at North Kessock junction and Bankfoot junction were included in the £680 million three-year programme of improvements to Scotland's motorway and trunk road network that I announced in March this year. In addition, I have commissioned a detailed accident analysis of the A9 and a report is due at the end of November 2001. The results will be examined to see whether there is any correlation between accident type and location, with a view to identifying whether further road safety improvements can be introduced.

Rhoda Grant: I welcome the work that is being done at North Kessock junction, which is another accident black spot on the A9. What progress has the minister made on addressing the problems on the A9 between Helmsdale and the Ord of Caithness?

Sarah Boyack: As members will recall, the strategic roads review in 1999 identified a number of options that we are now pursuing. We are paying particular attention to the option of online improvements between Helmsdale and the Ord of Caithness. That work is on-going.

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Having survived a recent experience driving up the A9, I ask the minister whether she will consider creating opportunities for overtaking on the 45-mile stretch of the A9 between Dalwhinnie and the Slochd summit. I have written to her several times on that issue. There is no opportunity for overtaking on that stretch.

Sarah Boyack: The safety work will involve a consideration of the accident rate on different stretches of the road. We are also reviewing the

route action plan for the A9. Together, those two pieces of work will enable us to consider priorities when rolling forward the trunk roads and motorways programme in future years.

Nurses (Training and Development)

7. Brian Adam (North-East Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it has any plans to fund fully nurse career development and training. (S1O-3920)

The Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care (Malcolm Chisholm): The Scottish Executive funds nurse training and the continuing professional development of nurses in a number of ways, including specific centrally funded initiatives such as ward sister and charge nurse development. The new national health service boards will be required to make plans for staff development. The new special health board for education and training that will be created on 1 April 2002 will take a proactive role in co-ordinating and overseeing educational support for health care staff, including nurses.

Brian Adam: Will the minister guarantee that the nursing summit that is to be held on 19 November will address career development and training for nurses? Will he outline the types of measures that he expects the convention will examine with the aim of offering concrete improvements in that area? Will he assure me that the new education board will remove the discrimination that exists between the professions in the NHS regarding access to paid study leave?

Malcolm Chisholm: We are strongly committed to the agenda of continuing professional development. This week Susan Deacon and I attended an important conference called "Still Learning Together", which considered career development and training across all NHS staff, with particular reference to nursing.

In preparation for the convention, we are considering recruitment and retention issues and we are working closely with the Royal College of Nursing, Unison and other relevant bodies. The convention will not be a talking shop, but a meeting that will lead to initiatives. The matters that Mr Adam referred to will be at its heart.

Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): Will the minister ensure that the health authorities perform better in the future than some of them do at the moment on the funding of training? A lot of burdens fall on nurses. For example, placements involve travelling and other costs that are often not reimbursed. Some health boards are extremely inflexible. Will the new system that the minister mentioned be more flexible and more helpful to nurses?

Malcolm Chisholm: The new health boards

must consider the matter to be a central part of their planning. We will monitor their performance as part of the new performance assessment framework. We will play our role, although the new special health board that I referred to will also have a role. The issues to which Donald Gorrie referred are under active consideration and will be discussed further at the convention in three weeks' time.

Dorothy-Grace Elder (Glasgow) (SNP): As the minister knows, some nurses—for instance, nurses who wish to specialise in caring for chronic pain patients—have to pay for extra training. Will the minister assure Parliament that he will end the injustice whereby nurses have to pay for training from their own pockets or pass the hat round charities?

Malcolm Chisholm: There is a range of funding sources for training. I am sure that Dorothy-Grace Elder welcomes that fact. Some funding comes from trusts and some comes from central initiatives. We gave £1.75 million in January for centrally funded initiatives.

It is right that there should be a range of funding sources. However, the issue to which Dorothy-Grace Elder referred is also under consideration and we want to make that an important part of the agenda. The commitments that we made at this week's conference were part of that process. New funding initiatives, such as the new partnership with the Scottish university for industry, were announced, which open up many new development opportunities for nurses and all health care staff.

Scottish Police College

8. Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con): To ask the Scottish Executive why spending on the Scottish Police College will fall from £12.8 million in 2002-03 to £11.7 million in 2003-04 as detailed in the draft budget for 2002-03. (S10-3922)

The Deputy Minister for Justice (Iain Gray): There are two reasons for the fall in planned expenditure. The first reason is the end of the period of increased training of probationers arising from the additional funding provided by the Scottish Executive to enable forces to employ higher numbers of police officers. The second reason is the completion of a major upgrading of the Tulliallan college's physical education block.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Does the minister agree that the Scottish Police College at Tulliallan is a centre of educational excellence and that, in the wake of the Chhokar case recommendations, it is imperative that maximum support is given to achieving the highest possible standards in police education and training to

maintain best practices and standards in Scotland and to increase police morale and keep numbers up to maximum strength?

Iain Gray: I can only agree with James Douglas-Hamilton that Tulliallan has established itself as a centre of excellence. It provides 80 per cent of police training in Scotland. The other 20 per cent is delivered in local police forces. The college's reputation is such that it attracts students from across the world. Its training provides one of our key opportunities to ensure that matters such as domestic assaults, children's welfare and crimes involving issues of race are dealt with sensitively by our police officers. That is why Tulliallan's underlying budget is increasing year on year.

Broadcasting

9. Richard Lochhead (North-East Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive whether discussions have taken place with the United Kingdom Government on the impact in Scotland of the forthcoming UK legislation on broadcasting. (S10-3921)

The Deputy Minister for Sport, the Arts and Culture (Allan Wilson): The Scottish Executive has been in discussion with the UK Government over the planned legislation of broadcasting since the communications white paper was published.

Richard Lochhead: Is the minister aware that there are potential threats to regional broadcasting and jobs in Scotland from the forthcoming UK legislation, which might open the door for one company to take over the whole ITV network?

A threat is also posed by comments such as those from the MP for Falkirk West, who says that there is too much Scottish news in Scotland—which, of course, fails to mention him. Will the minister undertake to fight Scotland's corner on the matter? Does he agree that the best way of protecting Scottish broadcasting is to put Scotland's Parliament in charge of it?

Allan Wilson: If the Scottish Executive and I are known for anything, it is for defending Scotland's corner. I am not familiar with the comments that Richard Lochhead attributes to Eric Joyce, but the Executive is concerned that Scotland's economic and cultural interests should be properly represented in the planned new arrangements. We do not favour a reduction in regional programming. I favour an increase in the quotas.

Mike Watson (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab): I am sure that the minister and many members will join me in welcoming the standard of the political and current affairs coverage that has developed on all channels since the Parliament was established two years ago. Does the minister agree that the regular attacks on "Newsnight Scotland" are wide of the mark? That programme provides a useful

service on the Parliament's activities. Will the minister consider giving evidence to the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, which I understand is to establish an inquiry into the matter early next year?

Allan Wilson: The bill team at Westminster has recognised the need for effective dialogue between Whitehall and the devolved Administrations. We will have the opportunity to respond to the formal consultation process early next year. Issues such as those that the member raised can be brought up then. The developing situation with the communications bill, the documented fall-off in ITN advertising revenue and the post-devolution settlement provides the best opportunity in a decade for stimulating and restructuring regional and national broadcasting.

The Presiding Officer: Question 10 has been withdrawn.

Schools (Dumfries and Galloway)

11. David Mundell (South of Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Executive what guidance it plans to give to parents and communities in Dumfries and Galloway regarding the local authority's schools option appraisal process and on what basis it will allocate funding to support the outcome of that process. (S10-3948)

The Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs (Mr Jack McConnell): Consultation with parents and communities about its review of school provision is a matter for Dumfries and Galloway Council. I understand that the council is continuing discussions with school boards and head teachers before reaching a view on the outcome of its review. Funding arrangements for school buildings improvements will be discussed with local authority leaders on 31 October.

David Mundell: Does the minister accept that it is extremely difficult for parents—including me—and pupils from Moffat Academy, some of whom are in the public gallery today, to make an informed contribution to the council's school review when they do not know the minister's position on the funding of small secondary schools and networks of rural primary schools?

Mr McConnell: The Executive and the local authorities of Scotland proudly fund such small secondary and primary schools throughout Scotland. It would be wrong of us to set financial limits for local authorities in advance of those discussions. It is right and proper that Dumfries and Galloway Council considers its school estate as a whole, consults locally on it and reaches conclusions. It can then plan improvements in the light of funding that might become available. It would not be right to set financial limits in

advance. The member would be wrong to persist in asking me to do that.

Alasdair Morgan (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP): The Executive has acknowledged the need to support the fragile communities in Dumfries and Galloway in the aftermath of the foot-and-mouth epidemic. Would a good way of delivering that support be to end the uncertainty that hangs over many excellent schools in those communities? Will the minister therefore commit himself to ending the process as soon as possible? The uncertainty is damaging to many people in those communities. [*Applause.*]

Mr McConnell: It is interesting that some SNP members cheered their colleague Alasdair Morgan. It would be wrong for a minister to instruct a local authority to end a consultation process. That would be hypocritical. It is important that the autonomous local authority of Dumfries and Galloway Council conducts its own consultation process, reaches its own conclusion and puts proposals to us. If we can fund them, we will.

The Presiding Officer: Question 12 has been withdrawn.

Housing (Glasgow)

13. Mr Kenneth Gibson (Glasgow) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what resources it will make available to Glasgow City Council for investment in housing should tenants vote against housing stock transfer. (S10-3929)

The Minister for Social Justice (Jackie Baillie): Should tenants in Glasgow vote against housing stock transfer, the housing will remain in the ownership of Glasgow City Council. In those circumstances, the council would continue to receive its share of the available housing revenue account resources.

Mr Gibson: Does the minister agree that, regardless of whether stock transfer takes place, housing debt in Glasgow should be dealt with by the Treasury? Will she press the Chancellor of the Exchequer for debt transfer without preconditions? Does she accept that tenants will see failure to do so as little more than a crude attempt at blackmail and proof that their interests come second to new Labour dogma?

Jackie Baillie: I find it astonishing that the SNP has such a confused policy position that Kenny Gibson can make statements of that kind.

The deal that we have made with the Treasury is exactly in line with arrangements that exist in England. People cannot have it both ways—there is not sufficient money to service the debt and to invest in new houses. People have to recognise that we have introduced a package of fairly massive investment in new homes in Glasgow. I

say to Kenny Gibson that this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform the face of housing in Glasgow. Indeed, the package does more than that; it regenerates the whole city.

Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): Is the minister aware that tenants in my constituency and elsewhere in Glasgow have expressed concern about the impact on any future investment plans of the possible demolition of houses? Will the minister outline what is being done to address those concerns?

Jackie Baillie: Demolition is part of the package that we are investing in Glasgow, which is in excess of £400 million. Tenants are right to want to be involved in the decision-making process as to which houses will be demolished, where new houses will be built and what the form and content of those new houses will be. Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Housing Association are progressing discussions with tenants. Where houses are lying empty and in areas where people do not want to live, it will be tenants who will decide on what gets demolished and what new homes will be built. We are clear about the fact that tenants are very much in charge.

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): Does the minister agree that Glasgow requires that investment regardless of whether a stock transfer takes place? Does she agree with the general secretary of the Scottish Trades Union Congress, who said that the £450 million Scottish Executive investment and the tying of wholesale stock transfer to debt write-off amounted to political blackmail?

Jackie Baillie: Tommy Sheridan and his party sound like a broken record. Thank goodness the ultimate decision on whether to transfer council houses in Glasgow does not rest with them. It rests with the tenants of Glasgow and that is where it rightly belongs.

People cannot have it both ways. It is not possible to take away the debt and simultaneously put in new investment.

Tommy Sheridan: Why not?

Jackie Baillie: Because we also want to build new schools and hospitals. We want to lever in the maximum amount of funding to ensure that people living in our communities have the best possible quality of life.

The Presiding Officer: Question 14 has been withdrawn.

Heart Disease

15. Elaine Thomson (Aberdeen North) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what progress is being made in improving the standard of treatment and aftercare for heart disease. (S10-3945)

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Susan Deacon): Fewer Scots are dying from heart disease than at any time in the past 20 years. That is thanks to a combination of better treatment and lifestyle changes, such as stopping smoking. Last week's report from the Clinical Standards Board for Scotland showed that overall Scotland's hospitals provide a good standard of care for those who have had a heart attack. By next spring, we will produce a national strategy to tackle heart disease.

Elaine Thomson: How will those new standards be implemented in areas such as Grampian? Will guidance be given on time scales that will benefit communities with severe health inequalities such as Middlefield in Aberdeen North, where the rate of heart disease is double that in the rest of Grampian?

Susan Deacon: I am pleased that the work of the Clinical Standards Board for Scotland, as it carries out its series of visits and review programme throughout Scotland, is already resulting in improvements. We are determined to ensure that that process of improvement continues; that will happen through the work of the standards board and the Executive. The new performance assessment framework is holding the NHS to account against performance in key priority areas such as heart disease. A key driver of progress will be patients themselves. One of the most radical and significant features of the work of the Clinical Standards Board for Scotland—the first national standard was published last week—is that it empowers patients and provides them with the questions to ask to ensure that they are getting the treatment and support they need and deserve.

Mr Andrew Welsh (Angus) (SNP): Will the minister ensure that the large sum of money gifted by the people of Angus for a stroke rehabilitation unit at Stracathro hospital is used for that purpose and no other? There is a tendency for gifts to the NHS to disappear into a general NHS resource; that must not be allowed to happen in the case to which I refer.

Susan Deacon: I am sure that all members share a desire to ensure that every penny that can go into providing good health care for people does so. It is of course a matter for the NHS locally to decide how best to allocate resources within a local area, but I am pleased that constructive dialogue and progress have been taking place in Tayside to ensure that the people of Angus and the Mearns and the rest of that area get high-quality services throughout the region in future.

Education (Looked-after Children)

16. Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what steps are being taken to ensure that looked-

after children are provided with an education that supports and encourages them in the realisation of their full potential. (S1O-3954)

The Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs (Mr Jack McConnell): On 22 October, I announced the establishment of a new fund to provide books, equipment and homework materials for the 11,000 looked-after children in Scotland, who will each benefit from between £500 and £2,500 worth of educational materials. The fund will help to address the anomaly that has previously prevented some of Scotland's most vulnerable children from benefiting from extra investment.

Mr McAveety: I thank the minister for that statement and the announcement of extra resources for looked-after children. If we wish genuinely to make a difference with that new resource, how will we ensure that we monitor the spend and where it is targeted, so that children in future do not face the difficulties that have been faced by looked-after children in the recent past?

Mr McConnell: The provisional allocations for local authorities have been placed in the Scottish Parliament information centre. The guidance that has been circulated to councils has been made available to members in the same way. Councils have been asked to provide us with further details of how the money will be spent and the exact numbers in their area by the middle of November. In that way we will be able to monitor that the money is going to those children at whom it is targeted. It is vital that the money reaches those children who need it most, particularly those in residential care and residential schools. I hope that the local authorities will support us in achieving that objective.

Maureen Macmillan (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): As someone who has taught looked-after children in a residential school and in mainstream education, I ask the minister to ensure that when looked-after children are placed in mainstream education—as they often are—their teachers are fully briefed on their needs and difficulties. Just as important is that any preconceptions or prejudices that teachers may have are dealt with fully, as it is important that we do not have lowered expectations of looked-after children.

Mr McConnell: I could not agree more. In St Philip's School, a residential school in Airdrie that I visited on Monday morning, two thirds of the young boys in the art class achieved a grade 3 at standard grade in their art examination last year. That sort of achievement from a group of children of whom people may have low expectations shows exactly why we need to challenge those assumptions. Our ambitions and aspirations should be at least as high for those children as they are for others. Part of our response over the

coming months to the local authorities' response to the "Learning with Care" report will be to address exactly the sort of issues that Maureen Macmillan describes, to ensure that teachers in mainstream schools are aware of the background difficulties of some children and are sensitive to the need to have high aspirations for those children.

Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD): One aspect that is sometimes neglected when we are dealing with looked-after children is domestic skills. I was shocked to speak to one young man who had come out of care and was living in the community, but who had never seen a recipe book. He had no idea how to cook for himself. That sort of practical skill is so important. [*Laughter.*]

The Presiding Officer: Order. That could apply to a number of us.

Mr McConnell: I see Ian Jenkins holding up his hand, probably admitting that he has never seen a recipe book either.

I agree entirely with Nora Radcliffe. It is critical for young boys to acquire such life skills. I do not want to labour the point about my visit on Monday, but I spoke to a group of five young boys at that residential school who had had serious problems in their lives and at school. They told me that their favourite class was home economics. They have an inspirational teacher, who is leading them in a course, using the new national qualifications access courses, to give those kids life skills that they will use for ever. That is important and we will be very pleased indeed if we can repeat that success elsewhere.

First Minister's Question Time

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Cabinet (Meetings)

1. Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP): My question will not be about recipe books, I assure you, Presiding Officer.

To ask the First Minister what issues will be discussed at the next meeting of the Scottish Executive's Cabinet. (S1F-1313)

The First Minister (Henry McLeish): I am happy to agree with John Swinney about stirring things up in relation to the previous question.

The Cabinet will next meet on 29 October, when it will discuss issues of importance to the people of Scotland.

Mr Swinney: I hear from the lunchtime news that the First Minister finds First Minister's question time a tough occasion, so I shall ask him a simple question today—it will be not be about numbers, as he does not seem to be very good with numbers. Why does it make sense for the Scottish Executive to have full responsibility for investment in Scotland's road network but not for investment in our rail network?

The First Minister: The settlement that was made under the devolution legislation gave substantial powers to Scotland in regard to our railways. In the light of recent events with Railtrack, I anticipate that there will be significant developments, which are long overdue and which will, I hope, return railways north of the border—and eventually south of the border—to some form of sanity. Rail transport is vital to Scotland, providing key links to the south as well as internal links. We must build on where we are, and I have no doubt that, as Sarah Boyack has outlined, we will have tremendous opportunities in the aftermath of the Railtrack fiasco.

Mr Swinney: Not for the first time, the question has not been asked. [MEMBERS: "Answered!"] The question was why this Parliament does not have the same powers over rail investment as it has over road investment. There is to be a £7 billion rail investment in the United Kingdom, but the chairman of the Strategic Rail Authority says that, on current plans, none of that investment will be made north of Watford. Will the First Minister give Parliament a guarantee that Scotland will get its fair share of that rail investment budget?

The First Minister: It often escapes the SNP that there may be some practical, rather than political, transport issues. Let us imagine a situation in which Virgin Trains and Great North Eastern Railway are operating on a UK basis and

that the powers that they seek are all contained within Scotland. What do we do then? Do we, as the independent nation that the SNP wants, argue with and cajole Westminster and then the private companies down there? We have a good package for railways that allows both Westminster and Edinburgh to work towards an integrated UK passenger transport service. That serves the interests of Scotland as much as it serves the interests of the United Kingdom.

Mr Swinney: I know that the First Minister was giving interviews at lunch time about how much he does not enjoy First Minister's question time, but today's lunchtime news also featured the head of Virgin Trains, the company that he has just mentioned, who said, "I would be quite happy if ScotRail owned the track in Scotland and we had a contract with them." The idea that it is impossible for a train to go over the border just as someone can drive a car over the border on a motorway is utterly bizarre. Does not that make the case for this Parliament to have the same responsibility for rail investment as it has for road investment? Would not that be, as the First Minister said, a triumph of pragmatism over ideology?

The First Minister: The references to First Minister's question time being tough certainly exclude the contribution from the SNP benches week in, week out. I never regard them as tough in any way.

The other point is that the SNP has its worst polling figures for the past 20 years. The SNP looks at every problem and seeks to come up with more constitutional changes and to wrangle endlessly over constitutional items.

In the aftermath of Railtrack, a much bigger opportunity exists than for ScotRail merely to have the track and for Virgin to be happy to run on it. There are tremendous opportunities. Until the SNP sees the benefits of devolution, there will continue to be a mishmash week in, week out whereby it tries to fool Scotland. The best of the union benefits the UK in total.

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): In his contacts with his colleagues south of the border, has the First Minister been made aware of the cancellation of the individual learning account programme? Is he aware of the concerns that I have expressed in questions on that subject? Will he reassess the responses to those questions? If there are abuses, will he find ways of correcting them? If he sees potential abuses in Scotland, will he deal with them?

The First Minister: I thank Phil Gallie for giving me prior notice of his concerns. I acknowledge and respect the fact that he has taken an interest in the matter.

In England, individual learning accounts have been suspended because massive fraud has been uncovered. The suspension in England does not automatically mean that we will suspend accounts in Scotland. However, over the next few days, I want to look closely at activities in Scotland. Like Phil Gallie, I want to send a message to anyone who wants to exploit individual learning accounts or commit fraud in respect of them.

There are more than 220,000 accounts—that is a massive reflection of Scots' appetite for such activities. More than 90,000 accounts are active. The accounts are one way in which individuals take ownership of their education and build their future. I reassure Phil Gallie that we will leave no stone unturned in identifying the extent of the problems in Scotland. If there are any, they will continue to be tackled. If we find that our programme is substantially robust, we will continue with it and not suspend it. I am grateful for the opportunity to record that in the *Official Report*.

Prime Minister (Meetings)

2. David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con): To ask the First Minister when he will next meet the Prime Minister and what issues he intends to raise. (S1F-1308)

The First Minister (Henry McLeish): I will meet the Prime Minister and leaders of the other devolved Administrations next week.

David McLetchie: Undoubtedly, there are many important issues that the First Minister will discuss with the Prime Minister. We have discussed some of those issues in the chamber yesterday and today.

An important issue that has not been aired relates to the First Minister's parliamentary office expenses. The issue calls into question the integrity and probity of the First Minister. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): Order. Members should sit down. I will not allow questions on internal matters of the House of Commons. Members would object if members of the House of Commons raised questions about activities in the Scottish Parliament. I do not care who such questions affect—the First Minister or anyone else. It is not in order to raise questions about matters that are internal to the House of Commons.

David McLetchie: Allegations have been made in certain quarters that the First Minister has been guilty of submitting fraudulent expenses claims and those allegations must be answered. If Scotland's First Minister is accused by some of submitting a fraudulent claim—irrespective of whom that claim is submitted to—it must be

relevant for his conduct to be questioned in the chamber. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order. I will clarify my ruling. It would be in order to make a passing reference to the matter, but it is not in order to ask a substantive question on a matter for which Mr McLeish is not responsible as First Minister of Scotland.

David McLetchie: The First Minister is responsible for his reputation. I protest. There is a situation—

The Presiding Officer: You may make a passing reference to his reputation, but it is not in order to ask a question about internal administration in the House of Commons.

David McLetchie: I sincerely hope that a First Minister who preaches open government and freedom of information will give the people of Scotland the explanation that they deserve and that he will stop hiding behind his spin doctors.

The First Minister: Sir David, I will give a dignified response to that question and, as you have done, express my concern at the tawdry tone that David McLetchie has taken.

As the Presiding Officer has said, the matter is not for the Scottish Parliament. Most colleagues will agree. However, I want to go on the record. I regret the error that I made. I responded immediately to the parliamentary authorities. There was no investigation by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, Mrs Elizabeth Filkin. She referred to the House of Commons fees office an inquiry made by the former shadow Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr Dominic Grieve, a Conservative member of Parliament.

As has been said all along, there has been no personal gain. The mutual agreement between the fees office and me to pay over the money was reported to Mrs Filkin. Mrs Filkin wrote to me on Tuesday afternoon to inform me of that. Sir David, the letter is very brief and I will not seek your indulgence or that of the Parliament much longer. She wrote:

"Thank you for your letter of 23 October informing me that this matter has now been resolved.

I reported to the Standards and Privileges Committee today that the Head of the Fees Office had informed me that the matter had been settled to his satisfaction.

I am grateful to you for keeping me fully informed on this matter even though there was no requirement on you to do so as you have ceased to be a sitting Member here.

With every good wish.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Filkin".

Both the House of Commons authorities and I now regard the matter as closed. I hope that Mr

McLetchie will accept that.

The Presiding Officer: I will intervene again. The answer was as out of order as the question. Let us change the subject. Mr McLetchie, do you have another supplementary?

David McLetchie: I have a hundred questions on that subject and I do not regard the matter as closed—

The Presiding Officer: Order. If the member will not respect my ruling I will have to move on to another question. The Speaker of the House of Commons would not allow questions on matters internal to the Scottish Parliament and I do not propose to allow questions on matters internal to the House of Commons. If Mr McLetchie has a question about something else, he may ask it.

David McLetchie: I hope that the First Minister will discuss with the Prime Minister the outcome of the inquiries into the Chhokar case that we discussed yesterday. Does the First Minister agree that those inquiries have, in part, been distorted by a constant attempt to examine issues by reference to the concept of institutional racism? Does he agree that it would be more constructive if we stopped bandying about that silly label? The term is deeply insulting to many police officers who regard it as a slur on them and their professionalism.

Should not we be addressing the more pertinent issues relating to the competence with which the case was handled and the sensitivity with which our criminal justice system deals with victims and their families? Should not we also ensure that, instead of pinning labels on people and organisations, our justice system treats everyone equally, regardless of race, colour or creed?

The First Minister: I do not agree with comments that could be offensive to those who suffer as a consequence of racism in any part of Scotland. I do not believe that the two reports that were published yesterday should be construed by our police services or by the officers of the Crown Office as anything other than a statement that institutional racism must be stamped out, no matter where it occurs—whether in government, the police or the courts. That was the message that the Lord Advocate gave without qualification yesterday when he presented the reports. I sincerely hope that, when David McLetchie reflects on that, he will realise that we, too, should support that message.

Let me also say that, subject to all the recommendations in the two reports, we intend not only to acknowledge institutional racism but to do a great deal more about it than we have done in the past. If every party and every member were to sign up to that action, we would send through the media the best message to every person in

Scotland: we will simply not tolerate racism, institutional or otherwise, in the 21st century in our country.

Educational Support (Looked-after Children)

3. Scott Barrie (Dunfermline West) (Lab): To ask the First Minister what steps are being taken to ensure that investment in books and equipment reaches all pupils, including children in local authority care. (S1F-1320)

The First Minister (Henry McLeish): I am conscious that Jack McConnell has been addressing this issue. In addition to the substantial general resources that authorities can use to invest in books and equipment, we have recently provided two special increases in funding for schools and have promoted books and equipment as a priority for that expenditure. In addition, this week we have announced a new fund of up to £10 million for this financial year to provide books, equipment and homework materials for every child in Scotland who is looked after by local authorities.

Scott Barrie: I thank the First Minister for that response and welcome the announcement that the Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs made earlier this week. However, as the First Minister will be aware, statistics show that, after two decades, the educational attainment of looked-after children is abysmally low compared with that of other young people. Can he assure me that looked-after children, who are among the most disadvantaged in our society, will continue to be a priority for the Executive? Will he and his ministers explore other initiatives to improve the life opportunities for all looked-after children?

The First Minister: I am pleased to reply positively to Scott Barrie's questions. Part of our task is to provide mainstream provision, but it is also part of our task to top up provision, where we can, to reach children who suffer from a number of disadvantages. I know that it is Jack McConnell's wish that looked-after children should be a priority. He has given the figure of 11,309 looked-after children in Scotland. There are 1,585 in residential accommodation and 9,724 who are looked after at home or in the community. They will continue to be a priority.

Fiona McLeod (West of Scotland) (SNP): I would like to use Scott Barrie's question to consider the moneys for books and equipment for school libraries. I have to declare a registered interest, as I am an associate member of the Library Association.

Is the First Minister considering a similar special fund to ensure that the moneys meant for school library books get to the school libraries and are spent on school library books and equipment? This week, I was in a school library whose

capitation should have produced £3,400 per annum; for the past two years, however, it has received only £200 per annum.

The First Minister: I am making an instant decision, having looked at Mr Jack McConnell. He said to me quietly, "Watch this space." I suspect that, after discussions that he has had with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Mr McConnell may be on the verge of making an announcement.

Racism

4. Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): I assure the First Minister and Mr McConnell that we will be watching this space closely.

To ask the First Minister what action the Scottish Executive intends to take to address any allegations of institutional racism within its departments or any of the agencies for which it is responsible. (S1F-1305)

The First Minister (Henry McLeish): I will develop the same theme as I did a few minutes ago. Racism of any kind should have no part in Scottish public life. The Executive takes very seriously any allegations of institutional racism within its departments and its agencies. The race equality advisory forum, which the Executive set up two years ago, has just produced a challenging report. It sets out a number of recommendations for action by the Executive and other bodies. Those recommendations aim to help to eliminate institutional racism and other forms of racism in Scotland. We will set out a detailed response to that report early next year.

Alex Neil: I thank the First Minister for his response. I totally agree with his comments in reply to Mr McLetchie.

I draw the First Minister's attention to the contents of Dr Jandoo's report on the Chhokar case. It states:

"The Crown Office cannot be cleared of the charge of institutional racism. That however is a charge which can probably be levelled at almost any organisation in the country."

On the basis that prevention is better than cure, is not there a case for an anti-racist unit within the Executive to ensure that the recommendations are properly and adequately implemented?

The First Minister: Even though it is not named as such, I think that the equality unit covers those areas of concern. Alex Neil is right in the sense that there has been a general concern in England, Wales and Scotland that institutional racism could occur in any institution. However, we should not be shaken by that observation; instead, we should accept it as a challenge. For example, as an employer, the Executive will seek to do what it can

based on the forum's advice. We will also examine the whole governance of Scotland, including public bodies, quangos and local authorities. All in all, we are embarking on a very comprehensive plan to tackle racism.

I should also point out that very often we are dealing with issues of culture. Some people have deep-seated concerns that the problem has lingered for many decades. Now is the time for a 21st century Scotland, helped by devolution, to address the issue in a unified way and as seriously as we can. I am not convinced that that has been the case in the past; I hope that it will be the case in the future.

Brian Fitzpatrick (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab): On that point, will the First Minister recognise the keen commitment of those who undertake public service in the Crown Office? Such commitment rejects the antediluvian antics of the likes of David McLetchie and makes clear a determination to work in a public-spirited organisation that reflects all the people of Scotland, serves victims of crime and treats serious crime seriously.

The First Minister: I agree with Brian Fitzpatrick, because it is the people who work daily in Scotland whom we need most to help us. I know that police officers, Crown officers and those in the court system want to ensure that we have egalitarian policies that provide the same service for everyone, regardless of their race, religion or any other issue or characteristic. That means that we have to work together and not alienate organisations or individuals, but ensure that they are part of the team approach to tackle the issue.

National Cultural Strategy

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): We now come to the debate on motion S1M-2354, in the name of Allan Wilson, on the national cultural strategy, one year on, and two amendments to that motion.

15:33

The Deputy Minister for Sport, the Arts and Culture (Allan Wilson): I hope that the following words by Tolstoy will prove a fitting way to open this debate on a motion which, I believe, should command approval and unite members across the chamber:

"All art has this characteristic—it unites people".

I am delighted to announce the publication of our first report on the implementation of the national cultural strategy. The strategy, launched in August 2000, covers a wide-ranging agenda and provides a comprehensive framework of action to underpin the development of Scotland's cultural life over the four years following its publication.

The strategy was driven by the Executive's vision of a vigorous and diverse cultural life for Scotland as a country that is confident in its identity, keenly aware and proud of its heritage and eager to see its cultural life develop and flourish in the 21st century.

As the motion shows, we have three key purposes in calling this debate. First, we are launching the report, which fulfils the commitment in the strategy to tell Parliament annually about progress towards its implementation. Secondly, we want to give members the opportunity to discuss their aspirations for further action to drive the agenda on to its next stage. The third important reason for having the debate is to acknowledge and congratulate success and to exhort people to greater effort.

I was delighted to assume responsibility for this portfolio and I acknowledge the hard work, enthusiasm and commitment of my predecessor, Rhona Brankin. I remain enthused by the challenges and opportunities that the strategy presents for Scotland's present and future cultural development. I hope to convey that enthusiasm today, tomorrow and hereafter.

It is also critical that I acknowledge the long list of partners who have a key role to play in making our shared hopes for Scottish culture a reality. The report mentions a host of agencies, individuals and organisations that have contributed. Although much has been done, there is still more to do. The report describes action at the strategic level, but we should never forget that underpinning that

action is the colossal contribution of countless artists, performers, writers, curators and many others who provide the work that inspires us and adds greatly to our quality of life.

The Scottish arts scene continues to deliver shining examples of success, such as the triumph of "Gagarin Way" at this year's Edinburgh international festival; world-leading exhibitions at our national galleries, including "Rembrandt's Women" and the exhibition of our own Scottish colourists; "Daddy's Girl", which picked up the top short film prize at Cannes; and Scottish Opera's highly acclaimed Ring cycle. We thank all those who are responsible for showing us what can result when they

"ascend
The brightest heaven of invention".

We are rightly proud of Scotland's traditional culture. I am gratified that the excellent traditional music and tourism initiative that was launched by visitscotland and the Scottish Arts Council has, since 1998, successfully promoted traditional music to our visitors, making their experience of Scotland so much richer.

We have a vision for how our national cultural strategy can make a real difference to people's lives. Its four strategic objectives challenge us all. They are to promote creativity; to celebrate Scotland's cultural heritage; to realise culture's potential contribution to enhancing people's quality of life; and to assure an effective national support framework for culture. Those important challenges embrace activity of many kinds, from the exhilaration of the world stage to an exciting and life-enhancing range of local community initiatives.

So what has been achieved since August 2000? Today's report lists achievements right across the cultural agenda, of which I shall mention just a few. There was a record increase in the resources allocated to the arts and sport in last November's spending review. That means that, for example, in April, National Museums of Scotland was able to abolish entrance charges to the main national collections. The increase also gave valuable support to the drive to encourage excellence in the traditional arts and to support and attract major events to Scotland. Additional funding is being provided for a £3 million strategic change fund for non-national museums. With the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, we have set up a joint working group to consider how local authorities can best strengthen their contribution to the strategy, and we have provided £250,000 for an audit of the collections and services in our museums and galleries. I was pleased to launch the audit last April and I can announce that the Scottish Museums Council is publishing an interim report today.

There is much more that I could mention, such as the setting-up of the new literature forum for writers and publishers; the Scottish Museums Council's guidelines for promoting social justice, which encourage the sector to promote active citizenship, lifelong learning and social inclusion; and the welcome boost—by a further £1 million—in our support this year for Gaelic education and broadcasting.

I am also delighted to announce that I have secured additional resources of £3.5 million from the overall underspend in the Executive, which is to be allocated to a range of priority needs across all areas of my portfolio—the arts, sports and heritage. Those additional resources, which are for this year only, will ensure that sportscotland can increase its programme of necessary repair and maintenance work at the three national sports centres; will provide some relief against income lost by properties that are managed by Historic Scotland as a result of foot-and-mouth disease; and will ensure that we are better placed to respond to the needs of local museums and galleries and to undertake new work in key areas of the arts that are of central importance to the themes of the cultural strategy and social inclusion.

So, what are we focusing on in year two? I shall identify the Executive's special priorities for the next stages. We have a priority to celebrate excellence—the excellence of our home-grown cultural products—and we can be justly proud of the best that we have to offer from Scotland's traditional and continuing cultural output. That is why we are developing a programme of events to celebrate the outstanding and enduring legacy of Robert Burns and his place in Scottish and world culture.

David Mundell (South of Scotland) (Con): The minister's commendable commitment to Burns, which he has taken as far afield as Atlanta, is most welcome. Does he agree that, within the arts establishment—the so-called luvvies—there is an unwillingness to embrace Burns and give him his proper place in Scottish culture? What will the minister do to ensure that that place is assured in Scotland as well as outwith Scotland?

Allan Wilson: I pay tribute to the member's record of commitment to the cause of the promotion of Robert Burns. It gratifies me to say that, since I made my announcement, I have come across no one who has in any way tried to talk down the importance of Burns as a cultural icon or of exploiting his international renown for economic development and tourism. I hope to promote those elements in the months and years ahead as we allocate additional resources to the planned programme of events.

Glasgow's flair for realising the cultural and

social benefits of its time as European city of culture in 1990 is widely considered as a glowing example and other European cities have sought to emulate it. The Executive applauds the new confidence and determination that have inspired Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the local enterprise network and their partners to seek to develop a Highland bid for designation as European capital of culture in 2008. We are pleased to offer the partnership our support towards the costs of preparing the bid, to the extent of £50,000, both this year and next. In mounting its bid, I am sure that the local partnership will seek to reflect the rich diversity of Highland culture and will engage the widest possible range of local and national organisations and agencies as contributors.

We have a priority to advance social justice across Scotland—that is a key priority of the Administration. I want local arts and sporting initiatives to meet local needs and to assist local employment. Matthew Arnold said:

“The men of culture are the true apostles of equality.”

Those men—and women—are uniquely equipped to assist in the regeneration of our local communities.

We also have a priority to promote our creative industries, to boost future economic prosperity and to extend lifelong learning. Scotland has a wealth of talented people and it is critical to the strategy to combine those creative attributes with enterprise skills. As Brecht said in “The Caucasian Chalk Circle”:

“Mixing one's wines may be a mistake, but old and new wisdom mix admirably.”

Our review of Scottish Screen will seek ways in which to maximise the contribution of the creative industries and we must ensure that key agencies such as Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish Arts Council work together to make that happen.

The more culturally astute members will have recognised that my speech so far has been liberally littered with literary references.

Mr Kenneth Gibson (Glasgow) (SNP): Say that again.

Allan Wilson: That is easy for you to say.

I am delighted to announce today that we will provide funding this year to develop a writers factory. This exciting new writing initiative takes its inspiration from the golden age that we are currently experiencing in Scotland, with writers from Ian Rankin to John Burnside and from Douglas Dunn to Ian Pattison, by way of Liz Lochhead. Scottish literature has a fine pedigree, rooted in our wonderful story-telling tradition. The principles of that tradition will be taken forward

with the versatility required in this post-modern age. The project will be initiated by the Scottish Arts Council and will involve Scottish theatre, broadcasters, the universities and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. I am sure that Parliament will welcome that announcement.

We are committed to developing a cultural co-ordinators initiative in Scottish schools.

"Beauty surrounds us,
but usually we need to be walking
in a garden to know it".

Those words, from "Story Water" by the Islamic poet Rumi, remind us that we need exposure to beauty and art. Education systems fail our young people if they fail to acquaint them with those delights, which also introduce our children to new cultures and combat ignorance and prejudice.

We want more people to experience the full richness and variety of Scottish culture and it gives me particular pleasure to announce that we will fund the development of two initiatives to contribute to social inclusion in the arts. Aspects that have impressed me greatly are the encouragement of public art in disadvantaged areas and audience development initiatives that find innovative ways of bringing people into contact with the arts. Examples are seen in the work of organisations such as Art in Partnership and the Audience Business. We want to discuss with the Scottish Arts Council putting further work in the hands of those organisations. I am certain also that public access to cultural experience will be promoted to greater effect by the Centre for Contemporary Arts in Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street. The CCA reopens today following an £11 million investment.

The joint implementation group, which is under my leadership, will drive future action on the national cultural strategy, including the implementation of the projects for which I have announced additional funding today. The group's approach will be highly inclusive. I expect its core membership to engage, consult and involve other organisations and practitioner bodies whose role will be important in implementing our shared goals.

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP): Will the minister give way?

Allan Wilson: I am sorry; I am concluding.

I am proud of what has been accomplished this year. This time next year, I expect to report progress in all the priority areas that I have mentioned.

I move,

That the Parliament welcomes the first report on the implementation of the National Cultural Strategy; notes the progress that has been made in the key priorities of the

strategy and the actions that are proposed for further implementation; recognises the vital contribution of many agencies, individuals and bodies to ensuring that Scotland's cultural life matches the aspirations of all Scotland's people; believes in particular that culture has a vital role to play in delivering social justice throughout Scotland, in our schools, in lifelong learning and in the further development of our tourism industry, and therefore urges all relevant agencies, individuals and bodies to work effectively together in partnership to ensure that the potential of Scotland's cultural life is fully realised at home and proudly promoted abroad, further encouraging the continuing pursuit and celebration of excellence and the widening of opportunities to participate in the development of Scotland's cultural life.

15:46

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP): I welcome some of the announcements that the minister has made, although I am disappointed at the lack of other announcements, to which I shall come shortly.

To support the bid by Inverness to become the city of culture is sensible. Glasgow was highly successful as city of culture, although not much of it rubbed off on Mr McAveety. Let us hope that more of it will rub off on the people of Inverness. If they succeed in the bid, they are likely to have a highly successful year.

I also welcome the commitment to the writers factory. To start investing in Scottish writers and Scottish literature is sensible. There has been substantial underinvestment in that area. I hope that investment in Scottish writers will also mean investment in Scottish publishers. There is no doubt that Scottish publishers are underachieving, but that there is great talent in the sector.

I welcome the opportunity to debate the first annual report on the strategy. I would welcome it more had the report been made available at the same time as the motion was lodged. The motion celebrates the contents of the document, even though there is not much to celebrate in it—I will come on to that—but unfortunately the report was available only at 20 minutes to 11 this morning. That is 18 hours after amendments to the motion were required to be submitted. It is clearly impossible to accept a motion from the minister that welcomes the contents of a document that none of us has seen.

I give the minister the benefit of the doubt. I do not think that the situation was a deliberate slight on the Parliament. It was the type of incompetence in the Scottish Executive to which one has become used, but it should not happen again.

Having the report in one's possession is more dispiriting than not having it in one's possession. The name of only one creative artist appears in the report and it is not Allan Wilson, who wrote the introduction; the name Robert Burns occurs twice

in the report. Nothing is wrong with that—I too am a member of the Burns Federation and support the promotion of Burns—but if in the whole of the Scottish cultural strategy and the report on its first year, there is room for the name of only one creative artist, and he is mentioned twice, at the least we must say that something may not be right with the strategy.

The reality is that there are strong doubts, reservations and disappointments throughout the cultural communities in Scotland with regard to the national cultural strategy. The existence of the progress report does not in any way diminish those doubts, reservations and disappointments.

The basic flaw in the Executive's policy lies with the original cultural strategy. At least the cultural strategy documents have come down in size—that is something to be said for the annual report. The problem is that the faults of the original strategy and the way in which it was put together damage fatally any possibility of having a visionary and sensible cultural policy.

The strategy document is not a document of vision. It is a management and micro-management document for the arts in Scotland. It has unfortunately been distilled into a micro-management document about aims and objectives for a cultural strategy, which means little. The document is sprinkled with words such as “will”, “might” and “possible”. It says little about what has happened.

Let us consider the original strategy document. It contains 64 key objectives. My colleague Irene McGugan asked 64 parliamentary questions about each one of those objectives in the late spring, only to be told by the minister that he would report today on what progress had been made.

Allan Wilson: Will the member give way?

Michael Russell: In one moment. The reality is that three of the 64 objectives have been met in part. My disappointment about one of the three objectives on that very small list of what has been achieved is that the minister has not mentioned what will happen with the national theatre. Does he wish to intervene to tell me about his response to the request from the Scottish Arts Council for additional theatre funding? If the minister wishes to say something about that, I shall sit down.

Allan Wilson: As ever, I am happy to respond to that invitation—I never miss an opportunity.

If the member is familiar with the terms of the representations that the Scottish Arts Council made to us, he will know that I have responded to a number of them in the announcement that I made today. As I reported to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee only this week, ensuring that our present theatre infrastructure is

maintained and making progress on the national theatre raises a number of important and interlinked questions. I shall discuss the detailed arrangements with the Scottish Arts Council in the next few days. As the First Minister has said, it is a question of watch this space.

Michael Russell: Even I would not go so far as to call the deputy minister a space.

It is extremely important that the Scottish theatre community knows what is likely to happen with requests for moneys equivalent in a sense to the Boyden money south of the border and with the national theatre. I reiterate the point that I made to the minister on Tuesday. The Scottish Arts Council has called the establishment of a national theatre and the funding of Scottish theatres a “virtuous circle” and has said that one will not flourish without investment in the other, but it is not an either/or. I have confirmed with Scottish theatre communities today that they are not looking for an either/or; they are looking for across-the-board investment.

I do want to be accused of being entirely negative in the debate.

Mr Murray Tosh (South of Scotland) (Con): Go on.

Michael Russell: Mr Tosh is indicating that it is unlikely that I would be entirely negative anyway and I accept that generous intervention.

It would be tempting simply to point out the failings of the documents—and there are many—but the minister is keen to ensure that cultural matters flourish in Scotland. I do not think that he has the tools with which to do the job—he certainly does not have the tools in terms of the cultural strategy—but there are indications of areas that might benefit from the attention of the Executive.

Before I come to those, it is quite obvious—in the light of amendment S1M-2354.2—that nothing will be forthcoming from the Conservative party that will assist the dialogue. The dialogue on such matters will have to be between the Scottish National Party and the Executive. It is absolute economic and cultural illiteracy to argue that state subsidy for the arts should always be resisted. Mr Monteith's amendment is termed in such a nonsensical way that it does not bear debate.

Let me come to the important issues that require action. Over the past 12 months, the major stushies in the arts world in Scotland have been about direct funding of the arts and, in particular, a previous minister's penchant for supporting Scottish Opera not simply by attending its performances, but by handing it cheques.

The national companies are in a different position from many other clients of the Scottish Arts Council. We should debate whether funding

to the national companies should be direct, not channelled through the Scottish Arts Council, which would refocus the Arts Council on a much wider range of clients and on the propagation of creativity and energy within the arts. Cathy Peattie and I have debated that in private and we disagree on it.

There should be a debate about the Arts Council—it is not enough for it to review itself. There should be a debate about whether, in the 21st century, it is the best way of distributing money to the arts in Scotland. The arm's-length principle that arises from gentlemen sipping sherry in Oxbridge common rooms and exchanging grants is outmoded. There needs to be more direct engagement. The Government does not need to be involved in that, but there are better ways to administer the system. We could examine some of the European models, for example academies and involving working artists in developing other artists.

Developing creativity throughout Scotland needs to be considered, because the present structure is bureaucratic and difficult to access. There are ways of ensuring that the structure works more enthusiastically. I have referred to theatrical issues. There are issues in literature and publishing, which I am glad the minister is beginning to tackle. There are touring issues—a lack of money for Scottish companies to tour abroad concerns every Scottish artist. There are museums issues—the funding of museums is crucial and I look forward to reading the interim report. There are the issues surrounding the national companies and the management of such companies, in particular Scottish Ballet, which has been appallingly mismanaged in recent months.

All those issues need to be carefully addressed, but the biggest overall need, and the place from which we should start this debate, relates to how we excite and release the creative energy of everybody in Scotland. That is the purpose of a cultural strategy. The Executive's document does not give us any sense that there is any energy and excitement.

I was impressed with the minister's list of quotations—I compliment him on them. I think that the most important one for the Executive's document comes from the poet Roger McGough. He said:

"I have read your manifesto with great interest, but can find nothing in it about singing."

That is the reality of the Executive's arts documents: there is a lot of management, but no culture in them at all.

I move amendment S1M-2354.1, to leave out from "notes" to end and insert:

"regrets that the report is not available to MSPs or the public until 25 October 2001; notes that of the 64 strategic objectives, key priorities and supporting actions in the National Cultural Strategy document *Creating our Future: Minding our Past*, very few appear to have been progressed significantly; continues to express concern that the Scottish Executive's present cultural policy, as expressed in its National Cultural Strategy, lacks coherence and vision, has failed to engage the support and enthusiasm of the Scottish community in general, and the arts communities in particular, and is unlikely to help fulfil the potential of Scotland at home and abroad or to widen opportunities or assist in delivering social justice; observes that funding crises and other operational difficulties continue to be the daily norm for most publicly subsidised arts bodies, museums and others within the arts and heritage sector, despite the Scottish Executive's relentless self-congratulation about its own actions, and therefore calls upon the Scottish Executive to reconsider its policy and to begin to deliver on some of its promises, including a properly funded National Theatre within a clear and reasonable time-frame based upon a better supported theatre sector in Scotland."

15:56

Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife)

(Con): On the last couple of occasions on which I have addressed the chamber in response to an Executive motion, I have been able not only to support the Executive, but to speak to an amendment that added to the motion and that was, to the surprise of many, accepted by the Executive.

It will no doubt please many members to hear that, on this occasion, I cannot support the Executive motion. The Conservatives not only question the progress made on the Executive's cultural strategy, but fundamentally question the strategy itself. As I have said previously, Scotland's culture belongs to the people, not to a Government minister or agency and, no matter how long the arm separating the two, that is the reason for our lodging our amendment.

We do not believe that audiences are clamouring for seats in the Traverse, the Playhouse or the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall because of the cultural strategy. Artists have not read the document and become enthused and inspired to create work—be it in the visual, performing or dramatic arts. It is therefore justifiable to have an amendment to point out the weaknesses in the cultural strategy in its present form.

Allan Wilson: I will follow Mr Monteith's theme of the failure of public investment in the arts. Does he welcome my announcement of public investment in audience development, which approaches from the market perspective the funding problems of a number of theatre and national companies?

Mr Monteith: I believe that the minister and Mr Russell both misinterpret the point that I am

emphasising. I will hopefully be helpful in explaining the subtlety of my argument. I am saying that it is justifiable for the state to be involved in culture, in as much as it should preserve what we hold dear and what shapes us. Together with independent bodies such as the National Trust for Scotland, the state should help preserve our natural environment, our archaeological sites, our archives and such national treasures and artefacts as give us not only a valuable identity, but a source from which to draw. The state should help with the production and presentation of our literary, visual and performance arts.

We do not dispute that. We are concerned, however, to ensure that having a cultural strategy does not mean having a wish list or a checklist to determine what that culture is. That would be the road to ruin. We believe that culture is owned by the people and that it is for the people to develop that culture, for good or ill.

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): The end of the Tory amendment reads:

“and expresses confidence that Scots culture will continue to flourish without the intervention of the state as it has since 1707.”

I would be interested to hear a definition of “intervention” from Mr Monteith. If the funding that comes from the state was taken away from Eden Court Theatre or from Grey Coast Theatre, for example, those theatres would die.

Mr Monteith: Again, I need to help with an explanation of our amendment, as Mr Stone and a number of other members are having some difficulty with it. If we are to have a culture that is owned by the people, that will not be determined by the funding of the state, but by the genius of the people who bring forward that culture. I will move on and, from the rest of my speech, the member will understand the point that I am making.

The state, through its other activities, particularly in education, may also enable individuals and groups to learn about Scottish and other cultures. It can, for instance, through the expansion of music tuition in schools, allow greater participation in, and appreciation of, classical and contemporary music. But to prepare a wish list, as the Executive has done, is to flirt with the idea that it can pick and choose what our culture should be, make that culture happen and, by necessity, pick cultural winners and losers.

Michael Russell: Will the member give way?

Mr Monteith: No, I must carry on. I have taken a number of interventions.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): You have about two minutes, Mr Monteith.

Mr Monteith: If colleagues do not accept that line of thought, let me take them back. Did not Sam Galbraith pick Scottish Opera for special help not just once, but twice, without debate in the chamber or elsewhere? Will the Deputy Minister for Sport, the Arts and Culture consider what is happening with the proposals to change Scottish Ballet’s output, contrary to the wishes of its audience and performers? Will he depart from his cultural strategy without the merest consultation if that change is to happen?

If colleagues require further evidence, I ask them to consider the members who have been appointed to the cultural strategy implementation group. They are all the usual suspects. They are all from public bodies and not one person is from the voluntary arts. There is not one artist. Until the Executive involves the voluntary sector and the private sector, which provides a great deal of our art and culture, I will take a poor view of our cultural strategy. If culture is to be truly democratic, it should, as George Davie argues, be chosen by the Scottish people through their actions and interactions, and through the choices that they make.

Among the many plays and performances that I attended at this year’s Edinburgh International Festival, the two most notable were Gregory Burke’s “Gagarin Way” and Ian Heggie’s “Wiping My Mother’s Arse”. Last year, there was also Ian Heggie’s “King of Scotland” and Liz Lochhead’s “Medea”. Whether those plays are staged by publicly subsidised theatre or written by publicly subsidised writers, they cannot be seen as the fruit of the cultural strategy, nor will any such excellent plays that those writers and Scottish actors perform in the future. Indeed, plays such as “King of Scotland” show how art is often a reaction to our political culture, rather than a reflection of it. It is individual genius, and the creative response to emotion, tragic events, the injustices of life and, indeed, social injustice, that shape our culture for good or bad.

I will close by addressing the issue of the Scottish national theatre company. The Education, Culture and Sport Committee voiced its support for a national theatre company. The Executive gave its support and announced £2 million over two years to facilitate the national theatre’s introduction. By the way, that could have been done without the cultural strategy. Miraculously, the Federation of Scottish Theatre has reached a consensus among competing Scottish theatres for a national company, based on the model of the Edinburgh International Festival, that will commission work from existing theatres. That brought an about-turn from the Scottish Arts Council, which was previously opposed to such a company. A working group was set up, and its detailed report has been delivered.

We have a problem, however. The Federation of Scottish Theatre and the Scottish Arts Council now say that existing theatres need additional funding, which is the point that the minister addressed. Let me make it plain that the view of Conservative members is that we have gone too far in building considerable consensus around a national theatre company for it to be sacrificed now. If the Executive is able to make additional funds available for theatre, I will support that, but if the question is one or the other—and that is what some people are saying is the choice that the minister faces—he should press on with the national theatre company and must, under no circumstances, use the money that he has already set aside to give additional help to existing theatres.

In conclusion, Presiding Officer—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: It had better be quick.

Mr Monteith: Sadly, the cultural strategy is nothing other than gesture politics. It is an example of performance art, and a bad one at that.

I move amendment S1M-2354.2, to leave out from “notes” to end and insert:

“but regrets that the Strategy has failed to evoke any substantial response from the people of Scotland who are the ultimate and only source of Scottish culture; notes that the most recent achievements of Scottish culture such as the dramas “Gagarin Way” and “Wiping My Mother’s Arse” owed nothing whatsoever to the Cultural Strategy, and expresses confidence that Scots culture will continue to flourish without the intervention of the state as it has since 1707.”

16:04

Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD): I had not intended to get into the quoting business, but Shelley said:

“Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.”

Allan Wilson certainly is a legislator, but I remember a poem that he delivered on poetry day, and I can tell members that he is definitely not a poet.

I rise to welcome the report on the progress of the cultural strategy, but I say to Allan Wilson that, to be honest, it is difficult to know whether I welcome the contents of the report, because I did not see it until midday.

When I was thinking about what I wanted to say in the debate, I was unable to refer to the details that the minister has now given us. I welcome the announcements that he made about Inverness, the writers factory and the additional money from end-year flexibility. However, because I did not have the report in front of me, I decided to look

around the area that I represent to see what is happening there.

I see good things happening. Support is being given to local silver bands, which have received grants for uniforms, instruments and improvements to facilities. There has also been support for local theatre groups. In both cases, youngsters and adults are being provided with education and recreation in a way that benefits both them and the community.

On a larger scale, I see the development of facilities such as the Eastgate arts centre in Peebles, which will encourage local participation in cultural activity and which will benefit theatre groups. The centre will offer venues for visiting companies so that high-quality productions can be put on in the Borders in a way that was not previously possible. It will make possible events that will draw tourists and visitors to our area and will create a virtuous circle that will help the economy. A small recording theatre has also been developed in the Borders, which is a new departure.

The region stages local events, such as the music festival on both sides of the Tweed, the Innerleithen music festival and jazz festivals. It is not all high-brow stuff, although Opera for All visits the Borders. When it comes to fostering excellence, there has been support for individual artists, such as Savourna Stevenson, under the SAC’s creative Scotland awards.

On the basis of my observations and of what the minister has said today, I believe that progress is being made.

Michael Russell: I join the member in celebrating the things that are happening in his constituency in the Scottish Borders. However, we need to ask whether those things would have happened without the national cultural strategy, whether they were happening anyway, and whether far more would be possible with a much more creatively focused set of proposals than these.

If we look around the public gallery, we will see that this occasion, on which we are debating Scotland’s cultural strategy, has not pulled in the Scottish artistic and cultural community so that it might engage with us. The only member of that community whom I see in the gallery is Mr Michael Fry, who may be having a pleasant time after his long lunch. I congratulate him on the launch of his new book today. We are not engaging people like that, because many of the things to which Ian Jenkins referred would have happened without the cultural strategy.

Ian Jenkins: Thank you for that speech. I do not disagree entirely with what Michael Russell has said. The strategy is important because it creates

a climate. We must work together to create a climate in which the arts can be fostered and kick-started. The cultural strategy is not the whole context in which we do that. A number of strands are being drawn together, and I hope that they will produce good things. I am not convinced that all those things would have happened without the strategy.

In the short time available to me, I would like to make one or two other points. I welcome the work that has been announced with the social inclusion partnerships. That will enable us to get to the right places and to provide access to the arts. I want the cultural co-ordinators in schools to get in on the ground, to start to produce results and to disseminate good practice. I believe that they have a worthwhile function and should be rolled out across the country. Like Brian Monteith, I want us to move more formally towards providing free music tuition in schools. Music tuition at an early stage can lay the foundations for lasting enhancement of the lives of individuals and those around them.

I celebrate the decision to remove charges from the national museums. That is a big step, not just a symbolic act, which will break down a barrier to inclusion. I await with interest the result of the museums audit, which will be an important document. How it is progressed will be very important for the culture of the nation.

I am pleased that the minister will seek to build on the potential of Robert Burns as a catalyst for cultural tourism. The Education, Culture and Sport Committee wants to consider the important role of cultural tourism, not just in attracting tourists, but in sustaining our traditional and other cultures. Michael Russell talked about a virtuous circle; cultural tourism would form another virtuous circle if we could get it to work properly.

The motion mentions "the celebration of excellence". Excellence comes into many of our discussions, especially those on the national companies and on the role of the Scottish Arts Council. Throughout the country, audiences are becoming more discriminating. They recognise and embrace excellence and increasingly they will not settle for less. For that reason, I want to place on record my support for the national companies in their quest for excellence and their wish to raise standards to an international level. We can discuss funding, but the companies must have and achieve that aim if they are to be worth keeping.

That subject leads me to the national theatre. I agree with the statements that were made; we should not have an either/or situation. The creation of a national theatre on the pattern that has been suggested would give an aspirational quality to our lively and vigorous theatre community.

I want to consider some next steps for the cultural strategy. The document mentions major events. Perhaps on the cultural side we lack high-profile events such as the Ryder cup and the European football championships. I hope that the minister will recognise that the opening of the new Scottish Parliament building will be a hugely important moment in the cultural life of Scotland. I hope that the building will be special, as it has an important purpose. In that moment we can draw together examples of excellence in the art and culture of Scotland. I hope that the minister will consider a way in which we can have examples of visual art, sculpture, music, theatre and creative writing to make that occasion memorable in the life of the nation and turn it into a major art and cultural event and an international festival.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We now move to open debate. Four minutes is the maximum for speeches, but a couple of around three minutes would be helpful.

16:12

Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab): People's culture is the cement of communities. It is our past, our future, our voice and our traditions and it enriches our lives and communities. It must be nurtured, valued and celebrated. Therefore, it is appropriate that the Parliament should put so much importance on culture.

The document, "Creating our Future: Minding our Past" lays out a number of objectives. I welcome it as a good start, but many members are concerned that the strategy is too wide and that it will be difficult to monitor its progress.

I welcome, therefore, the first annual report, although—like others—I have not read it yet. However, I hope that the cultural strategy will produce reports over the years that will allow the strategy to evolve and develop. I welcome the minister's invitation to discuss aspirations for further action to drive us to the next stage.

I will pick up on one or two points that I think are important. The first concerns cultural tourism. We should be proud—rightly—of our traditional arts, which have grown from an indigenous culture in Scotland. Our music is enjoyed all over the world. We should build on the traditional music and tourism initiative of visitscotland and the Scottish Arts Council.

Supporting our traditional arts is vital. I particularly highlight the work of those committed volunteers who organise festivals throughout Scotland in the summer, with a mixture of workshops to encourage people's participation in the arts and education for young people. Those festivals also act as a showcase for many of our wonderful performers.

I also praise the work of those who work with young people in the fèis movement and of people such as Sheena Wellington and Nancy Nicolson, who take traditional arts—music, storytelling, song and dance—into our schools.

We should acknowledge also the key role that Scottish local authorities play in the arts, adult education, writing, community education, performing arts, libraries, museums and sport. They are key partners and we forget sometimes the role that they play.

Over the summer I visited Plockton, which has a school of excellence working alongside a local comprehensive school. It was wonderful to see the commitment of the co-ordinator, Dougie Pintock, and the sheer enthusiasm and talent of the young people. That is an excellent example both of what can be done by nurturing our culture and of what young people can achieve from the arts by building their confidence and using their skills. I urge the minister, as others have, to ensure that music tuition is available in all our schools.

Like others, I support the development of a national theatre. The Education, Culture and Sport Committee has received presentations about that. I am keen to ensure that that national theatre takes nothing away from local and community arts and that it enriches community arts. That is vital. Community arts can develop future artists and are vital. I ask the minister to consider that in the development of a national theatre.

Arts promote social justice. They can be used at community level to encourage participation and active citizenship. They are a good way for people to find their voice. It is positive to be involved in such work. When the Arts Council is reviewed, I would like a refocusing to ensure that work and money reaches grass roots. Monitoring should be conducted to ensure that that happens.

I ask the minister to consider representation from the music industry and from Voluntary Arts Scotland on the joint implementation group. That is vital. As far as I am aware, the group does not have such representation.

I look forward to the possibility of being involved in the development of the cultural strategy, and, as Michael Russell said, to having an opportunity to debate our cultural strategy in more detail.

16:16

Fiona McLeod (West of Scotland) (SNP): I must declare a registered interest again this afternoon, as I am an associate member of the Library Association and I will concentrate on the library content of the national cultural strategy.

I will begin by quoting to the minister from one of his glossy documents on the national cultural strategy:

“The roles of the public sector include giving direct support to a framework of agencies, institutions and services”.

The National Library of Scotland's budget this year is £9.23 million. That is a 78 per cent cut since the 1998-99 budget. There has been a cut of more than £2 million. How is that declining sum compatible with some of the key priorities in the first annual report?

I warn the minister that, unlike everyone else who has spoken, I have read the first annual report since 12 o'clock. I refer him to key priority 3.2, on developing

“wider opportunities for cultural access”.

The report says that the Executive will:

“Progressively improve access to museum, gallery and library collections for all groups”.

Cutting the National Library of Scotland's budget by £2 million does not provide extra access to that library. I also refer the minister to key priority 2.2, under which the Executive says that it will:

“Support the National Library of Scotland ... in its aim to become a 'hybrid library' ... to meet the demands on a modern library of national and international importance”.

I will give an example of how the minister has failed miserably. At the beginning of October, it was announced that the Scottish science library and the Scottish business information service would close as soon as practicably possible, as a direct result of the cuts in funding to the National Library of Scotland.

The Scottish science library's Causewayside building was opened in 1989 to international acclaim and the library has continued to receive international acclaim for its work. Last year, the library received 8,500 personal visits. Last year, the Scottish science library and the Scottish business information service received nearly 17,000 inquiries. Those services meet the key priorities of the minister's national cultural strategy. They also meet priorities in other Executive strategies—the science strategy, the enterprise strategy, the digital Scotland strategy and the knowledge management strategy. You name it, the Scottish science library meets the Executive's requirements. Those services cannot be provided by anyone else.

One principle in the national cultural strategy is that

“Decisions about public funding of culture should be informed by valid and reliable evidence and based upon clearly understood criteria.”

The minister must agree that 8,500 personal visits last year and more than 17,000 inquiries are reliable evidence that the Scottish science library is necessary and delivers its work efficiently. Will the minister give us a commitment today that, in

line with the key priorities and principles that are set out in the document, the Scottish science library and the Scottish business information service will not close through lack of funds?

16:20

Alex Johnstone (North-East Scotland) (Con): In common with the minister, culture has become something of a speciality of mine. However, I should add the slight proviso that I normally tackle agriculture.

First of all, I want to say a few words about Allan Wilson's speech. I also want to ask him a question that he may—or may not—want to answer. It is becoming increasingly obvious that his speeches to the Parliament have become works of art in their own right—today's speech must be commended. If he is writing his speeches himself, he is one of Scotland's premier authors. If not, he might wish to inform us later who is doing so.

While I will be disagreeing with the motion, I have to agree with one or two things that the minister said. He said that Scotland's culture is vigorous and diverse and that description could not be more accurate. Scotland is as culturally diverse as it is geographically diverse. For that reason, we must be careful about how we interpret culture and how we apply the principles that are contained in the document. In common with other members, I have not had time to read it.

Because Scotland is so diverse, it is essential that we think about how we support culture across the country as a whole. Where Governments seek to take a lead with a strategy document it is clear that the strategy will be coloured by the views of the Executive or Government that supported it in the first place. That is why the Conservatives believe that culture should always be a bottom-up event rather than a top-down one. There is always the danger that the strategy is used to reverse that.

I agree with a criticism made by Mike Russell, that the strategy is too concerned with management and micro-management. The analogy that I would make is that in the strategy we cannot see the wood for the trees. Because of the detailed nature of the way that it covers certain issues, it is essential for us to understand that the strategy is so focused and targeted that it might miss unknown cultural diversity that is waiting to explode in a new area of Scotland. That said, I should repeat that I have not read it all.

I am trying to be brief, but the minister might like to consider one further issue. It was covered, to a limited extent, in a reply that the minister gave to a question earlier today. I want to raise the issue of the place of broadcasting and its underpinning of culture across large areas of Scotland where

populations are rather more sparse and the opportunity to mix and generate new aspects of culture can be more limited.

There are those who may be trying to spread scare stories about the ability of Scottish broadcasters to continue to foster local issues and priorities. Many of those stories focus on news and current affairs. We should never forget that broadcasting plays a key role in the support of culture. Should local broadcasting be threatened, local culture is in its own way threatened. As I said earlier, I believe that those scare stories have been spread unjustifiably. Will the minister consider the role of broadcasting in supporting Scottish culture in future and what might be done to encourage that aspect of cultural support?

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Patricia Ferguson): We are a little short of time and I encourage members to keep their speeches to between three and four minutes from now on.

16:24

Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab): Thank you for that guidance, Presiding Officer.

I welcome what the minister has said this afternoon. I recognise that the document is a work in progress and that, over the next few years, many things in it will need to be developed and fleshed out. I welcome the fact that Mr Russell has returned to the chamber to listen carefully and see how the erudition and learning of the city of Glasgow can impact on a citizen such as me—a poor humble man from the backwoods of Springburn.

I want to comment on two areas. The first is how culture in its broadest sense can redefine and change institutions and organisations in any part of our country. The second is popular music, which has not so far featured in any real sense in the statement or the strategy. Popular music should be included, as it can make a genuine difference.

If anyone had said, 20 years ago, that by the beginning of this century Glasgow would be redefining itself through cultural tourism, investment and activity, they would have been sent away for treatment for a considerable period. Labour visionaries such as Jean McFadden and Pat Lally—we do not often hear their names together in this context—committed Glasgow City Council to cultural expenditure when other parts of Scotland were reducing theirs, because they recognised the significance of culture to the city and to its confidence and redefinition. They helped to redefine, re-image and regenerate the city.

One of the key debates I remember in local

government was whether we should charge for local galleries and museums. There was a passionate defence of a non-charging policy, not because it was popular—as it no doubt would have been—but because in social terms it was right that people who had already paid for access to collections should have free access to them. It is tremendous that, in the first couple of years of the Parliament, we have abolished charging for entry to some of our national museums and galleries.

Glasgow also developed the effective use of cultural activity to tackle social exclusion. Members of all parties have identified the importance of that. I welcome the fact that Mike Russell has returned. He said that we should not be curmudgeonly. I would hate to caricature Mike as the new Provost Pawkie of Irvine, but in his curmudgeonly speech he criticised much of the central thrust of the document. I notice that he did not rise to the challenge of the minister, who included six quotations in his speech. Mike is a young man who has still to learn the craft of public debate. We look forward to that.

Our use of popular music is important—I hope that the minister can take that on board over the next year or so. I am a member of the Scottish Parliament's cross-party group on popular music. It is not about the state trying to run popular music as an industry, which is what Brian Monteith implied. It defies logic that Iain Duncan Smith could come up with a tune—other than military band music—that would be of interest to people. The importance of popular music lies in the confidence issue. I am talking about building a definition of Scotland through international bands such as Travis or Texas, and international promoters.

It is tragic that this week Scotland lost one of its international promoters, Stuart Clumpas of DF Concerts. I extend an offer to Mike Russell to get away from an obsession with 16th and 17th century choral music and to visit, for the first time in his life, King Tuts Wah Wah Hut on St Vincent Street in Glasgow. Stuart Clumpas was a pioneering figure in the development of T in the Park. He has moved on for a variety of reasons, one of which is the failure, in his opinion, of other folk to share his can-do philosophy, which was about trying to deliver a dynamic change that reflects the popular culture of this country.

Unlike Brian Monteith, I do not think that the cultural strategy is performance art. It strikes me that we are in the prologue for a story that, hopefully, we will be able to tell in future—a story that lasts a long time. That is the nature of the debate that has been generated on the national cultural strategy.

16:28

John Farquhar Munro (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD): I am pleased to take part in the debate and to respond to a welcome document on the national cultural strategy.

What do we accept, promote or even claim to be Scottish culture? As individuals, we have been conditioned to accept and encourage the traditions, customs and culture in our respective communities, which—I am pleased to say—have been sustained and nurtured over many years, in spite of 19th century Government attempts to oppress and destroy our proud heritage.

I am delighted to support the aims and objectives in the national cultural strategy document. I hope that those initiatives and aspirations will be properly resourced, so that we can retain and sustain a diverse and proud national identity.

It will be no surprise to anyone in the chamber to hear that I have a particular interest in promoting the heritage of Gaeldom through its language, its music and its history. I do that in co-operation with our Celtic neighbours. A lot has happened. Much remains to be done and we must progress with diligence, commitment and sincerity.

The foundation of any culture or heritage is rooted in the language. Gaeldom's historical background stems from the language. Its culture and traditions have survived through the daily use of the language. Gaelic is a precious jewel in the heart and soul of Scotland.

Michael Russell: I concur entirely with what John Farquhar Munro has just said and I commend him for those remarks. Will he reflect on the fact that although page 10 of the progress report says that

"Gaelic-medium education is a cornerstone"

of the Executive's support for Gaelic, the Deputy Minister for Sport, the Arts and Culture and the Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs admitted at the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on Tuesday that the allocation for Gaelic-medium education is not set to rise for any of the next three years? In other words, with inflation, it will actually fall. I do not think that John Farquhar Munro or I would regard that as support for the cornerstone, would we?

John Farquhar Munro: I thank Michael Russell for that intervention. I agree entirely with his sentiments about Gaelic-medium education. That is a campaign that is continuing. Although what he said about three years hence disappoints me, I have aspirations that might accelerate that programme.

We must ensure that Gaelic is given a place

among the national priorities of the Scottish Parliament and that Gaelic is afforded a secure and equal status to English, particularly in our education system. Gaelic-medium education should be available at all stages of children's learning years, wherever it is requested on their behalf.

The national cultural strategy should attempt to make parents aware of the advantages of Gaelic-medium education. The trail is not at all smooth. Teachers are scarce, teaching resources are scarce, money is scarce and, unfortunately, there is a lack of courage and commitment to Gaelic. If it is to be successful, the national cultural strategy must attempt to counter those endemic problems and attempt to build bridges between this Parliament and the Gaelic organisations.

We have Gaelic signage in the Parliament: "Pàrlamaid na h-Alba" on the door, "Doras a' Phobaill" next door, and "Seòmraichean Comataidh" down the road. However, that is tokenism and makes a museum piece of us unless the language is spoken and used.

Language is the most important element in any society. Where we have a strong, vibrant language, culture and heritage will develop and follow.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Two members have indicated that they want to speak. I will be able to accommodate them if they limit their speeches to three minutes.

16:33

Mr Kenneth Gibson (Glasgow) (SNP): In his opening speech, the minister mentioned exposure to beauty. I wonder whether he was influenced by having that vision of male beauty, Frank McAveety, sitting so close behind him.

Alex Johnstone talked about a bottom-up strategy. I wonder whether it was such a bottom-up strategy that influenced the name of the drama that is mentioned in the Tory amendment.

Several members have welcomed the cultural strategy, but they have also said that they have not read it. I find that somewhat perplexing. However, I have looked at it. The aim of key priority 2.2 is, apparently,

"To conserve, present and promote interest in and knowledge of Scotland's history and cultural heritage",

but does anyone actually believe that? Despite the gobbledegook of the Executive's glossy report, we all know that even basic Scottish history remains untaught in Scottish schools. A nation of inventors, medical pioneers, explorers, economists—

Mr Stone: What is he talking about?

Mr Gibson: I am talking about Scotland's

contribution to world civilisation. I have two children at school and I can assure Mr Stone that they are not taught Scottish history and culture.

When will Scotland be taught about its flourishing medieval Baltic trade? When will Scots children be taught about the tobacco lords or about the contribution of the Scottish cotton and sugar trades, warts and all? When will they be taught about the development of political economy, geology and conservation? Will Scottish children ever be taught across the board about the Scottish enlightenment? Scottish children must know where we are from before they can know where we are going.

Many children grow up in depressed parts of Scotland and do not know that 120 years ago Scotland was the richest nation per capita on earth. They think that we are a wee, backward country on the edge of Europe that has never contributed anything to the world. We have contributed much and still have much to offer.

Mr McAveety: Will the member give way?

Mr Gibson: I have only three minutes, otherwise I would give way.

Under successive unionist Governments, Scotland has slipped from first to 20th position in the world economy. In economic terms, we are now more like Arbroath than Celtic, which Frank McAveety would no doubt like us to be. If Scotland is ever to reach its full cultural and economic potential, it must be taught everything about its culture. Perhaps certain unionist politicians do not want Scotland to reach its full economic and cultural potential because it might then be realised that Scotland can best be served by being an independent state.

To digress somewhat, I want to mention Glasgow museums, about which there was a members' business debate not long ago. Glasgow's museums are much more popular with the public than are Edinburgh's museums, but they are clearly discriminated against in terms of funding. Glasgow's museums—such as the Burrell collection—are of national importance. I hope that the minister will explain why they are discriminated against and what he intends to do about giving Glasgow its fair share of resources for its museums.

16:36

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab): I commend the Executive for having a cultural strategy, which has given the Parliament a focus for debate and action. We would not be having this debate if there were no strategy.

I want to record in the *Official Report* my support for Allan Wilson and the launch of the popular

music strategy at the Arches at the beginning of the year. The launch was in my constituency but, unfortunately, I could not attend it. Allan Wilson got a lot of street cred for the launch. The Arches is one of Glasgow's trendiest venues.

I want to speak in my capacity as convener of the cross-party group on contemporary music and to develop a theme that Frank McAveety has mentioned. The cross-party group has been a successful forum for bringing together politicians and industry experts. Again I want to record in the *Official Report* my thanks to my colleagues Ken Macintosh, Frank McAveety and Lloyd Quinan, who have convened sub-groups to enable work to go ahead. Frank McAveety convened the group on live music and Ken Macintosh convened the group on broadcasting. Tom Coyle said that I should tell Frank McAveety that his is the final group that has to meet.

When we set up the group, support grew among an amazingly wide group of people. It was said that we would never get the three big music promoters in a room at the same time for discussions—that we did so was historic. We have brought together musicians, song writers, educationists, small record labels and IT companies. The meetings are dynamic and supported by the Scottish Arts Council and Regular Music, for example. In its first year, the forum has been successful.

A year ago, I spoke about my disappointment that popular music did not get a mention in the strategy document despite the fact that I and other MSPs made a fairly substantial submission on behalf of industry activists. It is more disturbing that there are no industry experts on the joint implementation group. That makes us a wee bit suspicious that we are not wanted in the main stream of the strategy.

I have skimmed through the annual report. I note that it exists—which is progress—but the minister should say why there is no industry expert on the joint implementation group.

I do not have much time left, so I want to address why popular music is central to the strategy. Ensuring that our definition of culture is in the main stream of the strategy is a key to social inclusion. Popular music involves many people of all ages and classes. It will do more for social inclusion if it is central to what we mean by culture. People may prefer live music, playing music or collecting music—that is an obsessional pastime for someone I know—but music is an expression of individuality. For some people, it is their only experience of creativity.

For thousands of young Scots who ardently follow their musical tastes, popular music is part of a policy that can attract them—and it can be a

stabilising influence. Furthermore, for artists involved in the industry, this is not just about Texas or Travis and other big bands; it is about the right of smaller artists to contribute their creativity and to make a modest living out of it. That is why we must consider the big picture and the small picture.

I know that the minister has made an informal offer to come along to the group. We would welcome his attendance. We know that he is committed to it, but we would like to address how the issue can become part of the mainstream strategy.

16:40

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): As the first member to wind up the debate, I make the following point: the Scottish Parliament does some things very well. I believe that the current debate is one of those things. It contrasts with the unfortunate episode that took place earlier today. We should be proud of the way we conduct ourselves. For that reason, I say to Mike Russell that I enjoyed his speech. It was characteristically good stuff. I do not agree with the points that he made, but I do like the probing way in which he examined the exact meaning of the strategy document. I see it as a kind of irregular audit, which is a good thing. It makes sense to do that.

The minister has announced good news, which I shall touch on in a moment, but my earlier question about the Conservative party's amendment still stands. Brian Monteith has explained privately to me that I misunderstand what he is saying apropos the Eden Court Theatre and Grey Coast Theatre. I accept that in the gracious manner in which it was offered. I still think that there is some confusion in the wording of the amendment. However, we will let that lie; now is not the time for partisan politics.

I associate myself with Fiona McLeod's remarks about the National Library of Scotland, which is a distinct problem. We are rapidly going electronic, but not everyone is able to do so and there is still a place for real books on real shelves. I think that that is what Fiona McLeod was driving at.

The minister has talked about the abolition of entrance charges, which is a good thing and it has been widely welcomed throughout Scotland. He also talked about the writers factory and the extra £3.5 million. He has talked about a subject close to my heart—Inverness as European city of culture. One criticism of the debate is that, apart from John Farquhar Munro, I have not heard as much as I would have liked about diversity.

I had a problem with the debate about the Scots language that took place some months ago. It

failed to recognise that the Caithness dialect, or the east Sutherland dialect, is fundamentally different from the Scots language as it is spoken in Lanark, Peebles or Glasgow. We must build on what we already have, but we must remember that the bricks are different. I make the same plea that I made a year ago—let us not forget that Scotland is a diamond but the facets are different. If we lose individual diversity, we will be losing something very special. The matter is more complicated than Scots versus Gaelic. It is about the different forms of Scots as spoken in different parts of Scotland.

Finally—this will come as no surprise—I associate myself strongly with Ian Jenkins's comments on the new Scottish Parliament building. As members know, I am passionate about that truly wonderful building, which I believe is, in itself, a statement about art and culture that this generation can be proud of and for which people will thank us in many years to come. I know that I will be proved right about that and I am glad that I am gradually bringing all my friends round to my point of view.

I commend the motion to the chamber.

16:44

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I start with the good news: I welcome the minister's support for Inverness's bid to become the European city of culture. As an Invernessian, I am sure that the citizens of Scotland's newest city will look forward to displaying their wares to the rest of Europe. Sadly, I cannot give a more general welcome to the rest of the minister's speech or to the strategy report.

Frank McAveety and Pauline McNeill referred to popular music. Every Sunday afternoon throughout the year, hundreds of thousands of Scots tune into Radio 1 to listen to the top 40 show. That is real popular culture. The pop chart represents perfectly the desires of the music-listening population. The ranking of records is not done by a committee of ministers, civil servants or quango appointees and not a penny of taxpayers money is spent. The ranking is done entirely on the basis of record sales, so the chart reflects what is popular.

As we know from the many nostalgia programmes such as "I Love 1985" that use popular music as the backdrop, which are watched by sad people such as me who are trying to recreate their youth, popular music becomes the culture of the day. We do not need a culture strategy to create popular culture. Real culture comes from the grass roots up; it is not dictated top-down by Governments.

I will give an example from closer to home. The biggest cultural event in Scotland in terms of ticket

sales is the Edinburgh military tattoo. It attracts tens of thousands of visitors to Edinburgh and Scotland every summer. This year, every ticket for the entire run was sold before the first show commenced. I say to Ian Jenkins that there is no finer example of cultural tourism than the tattoo. Visitors and locals alike pack the castle esplanade—underneath the union jack, which flutters proudly above the castle—to watch an unsurpassed display of Scottish and international culture. The tattoo reflects our military past, our imperial past and Scotland's role in the empire, which is also celebrated today with the publication of a new book, "The Scottish Empire", by my good friend Michael Fry. The tattoo also brings aspects of international culture to a Scottish audience. It does all that without a penny of subsidy and without the need for a culture strategy from ministers.

The amendment lodged by Brian Monteith notes that the Scottish people are the only source of Scottish culture—not politicians, civil servants, or so-called experts.

Michael Russell: Will Murdo Fraser give way?

Murdo Fraser: Forgive me, I am short of time and have been told to be as quick as possible.

Michael Russell: It is about Michael Fry.

Murdo Fraser: I am sorry, but I have no time to take an intervention.

Mr Monteith's tastes are somewhat more expansive than mine. I do not remember seeing any of the productions to which he refers in his motion. I am sure that my mother is pleased to hear that. Scottish culture, in whatever form, has thrived and will continue to thrive without culture strategies.

The problem with the document—as Kenny Gibson said—is that it contains no initiatives to promote Scottish history in schools. It misses what should be the only role of Government in relation to culture: the preservation and promotion of our historical traditions, records and artistic achievements, which might otherwise be lost to the world. I say to John Farquhar Munro that that includes Gaelic culture.

Governments should not be in the business of picking winners and losers in the arts.

Ian Jenkins: Will Murdo Fraser give way?

Murdo Fraser: Forgive me. I will not take an intervention due to time constraints.

Governments should not be picking winners and losers. That is the business of the market, whether it affects the pop music charts or the tattoo. That is why the Executive's strategy is flawed and why Scottish culture will flourish regardless of what the Executive does.

16:48

Irene McGugan (North-East Scotland) (SNP):

There has been no evidence of progress on the majority of the key pledges and this report confirms that there is no evidence of progress in the majority of key priority areas.

Today, we are discussing an outline of what various agencies are doing in certain sectors. They are initiatives that they would for the most part have undertaken anyway. There is little evidence of strategic thinking or commitment from the Executive. What we need is commitment and action; what we have got is a joint implementation group, which met for the first time a year after the launch of the strategy; press coverage from all over Scotland about industrial museums closing; and a lack of support for companies such as Theatre Babel, which produced performances of the highest quality.

Grass-roots theatre, music and the arts are struggling to survive while the Executive produces glossy documents full of non-actionable pledges.

I am especially disappointed that the minister did not feel able to make a funding announcement about Scottish theatre today. Some companies face a critical situation: they are not able to plan even for next season's performances. This debate was surely the most appropriate time to make an announcement, unless the minister had very good reasons for not wanting the issue to be examined today.

In his summing up, I would like the minister to explain the implications of key priority area 4.3:

"The SAC is reviewing the potential integration of Lottery and voted funds".

Are we to be reassured when we read on page 5 that

"Ministers are reviewing networking opportunities for creative dialogue with the cultural sectors including the possible role of high-level fora such as lecture series and showcase debates bringing together key players from Scotland and beyond"?

I do not think so.

Ian Jenkins mentioned one area where I feel there has been real lack of progress. The £750,000 cultural champions for schools pilot project seems to be caught between the education and culture departments and nothing has yet been achieved. The minister told us this week that he does not like the term "champions" and has replaced it with "co-ordinators", but many in the arts education sector disagree. What started off as a title that had some sense of passionate engagement with the arts has been finessed into an administrative function.

The SNP was opposed to the idea when it was first proposed on the basis that ideally there

should be scope for creativity and flexibility in the implementation of any policy interface between culture and education. That would allow schools and authorities to reflect local situations where, for example, there is already good practice in partnership working by teachers, art officers, musicians and traditional arts workers or where schools have encouraged and invited artists and companies to contribute to the curriculum. I wonder whether the minister is even aware of the work of arts education officers across Scotland.

Cultural distinctions have played a major role in keeping Scotland alive as a nation for many centuries and much more needs to be done to foster not only our distinctive culture but the aspects that join us to an international world. A good example that was eloquently outlined by John Farquhar Munro and mentioned by Jamie Stone is language. It is a fact that other small European countries such as Finland support their languages and culture much better than does Scotland. The one language enterprise that was heralded by the Executive in its strategy document was an institute for the languages of Scotland, but the minister has said:

"The Executive ... has no funding available to support such a centre."—[*Official Report, Written Answers*, 4 April 2001; Vol 11, p 373.]

Not even the fact that the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages has now been ratified seems to make any difference to that attitude. I happen to have documents outlining details of the application of that charter from Hungary, Finland, Croatia, the Netherlands and Liechtenstein. Even Liechtenstein, where there are no minority languages, has managed to produce a document outlining its stance and circumstances. Allan Wilson is on record as stating that the Executive does not consider any action necessary to comply with the charter in respect of the Scots language.

The SNP believes that a viable arts policy for Scotland must be based on diversity, minimum bureaucracy, sustained levels of investment, the development of excellence, wide access, encouragement of creativity and a transparent and accountable funding structure. Does the Executive believe the same?

We want to encourage the Executive to engage in meaningful debate and discussion about the arts and culture in Scotland instead of offering self-congratulatory statements that achieve nothing and profoundly disappoint the cultural sectors across the country.

16:54

Allan Wilson: As I am aware of the pressures on time, I will try to restrict my speech as much as

I can to the time available.

Picasso said:

“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.”

Today’s debate has been anything but dry or dusty; in fact, it has been highly cultured.

Some members would like to see more action, more rapid implementation and even more funding devoted to the arts in Scotland than the £3.5 million extra that I announced today. My colleagues made many of those comments, and I understand their concerns, but the report sets out a raft of actions that have already been taken or are at the planning stage. I make no apologies for the fact that there is still work to do. Much has been done but there is more to do.

The strategy sets out a framework extending over four years. We have just completed year one. I therefore say to colleagues such as Frank McAveety and Pauline McNeill, who have sounded notes of impatience, that they would do well to remember the words of Horace:

“To have begun is half the job”.

We have made a start on incorporating contemporary music into our strategy and I look forward to developing that work with colleagues.

The arts have fared well in recent funding settlements. The 2000 spending review was a record for the arts and sport. There will always be winners and losers, but what matters is the fact that the available funding is not allocated arbitrarily. The Scottish Arts Council will look carefully at all applications for funding that are made to it against the framework of the national cultural strategy and, where it is possible, true excellence will be rewarded.

I say to Mike Russell and his colleagues that it is no mistake that the strategy is couched in general terms. Culture is not a single project or even a set of projects. It was the objective of the strategy to get away from that perception. Many aspects of Scottish life are contributing in some way to this agenda, and people and organisations are investing in all those areas.

I welcome the fact that Murdo Fraser does not support what I said earlier—that is a bonus. I say to Brian Monteith that money is not everything. When Thor Hansen opined that culture is something that cannot be bought and cannot be imported or produced at will, he meant that culture is not a commodity, but something organic that evolves from a nation’s traditions and its experience of daily living. That is absolutely right.

Michael Russell: The minister says that culture is not something that can be reported. How does that square with 36 pages of graphs and details of the report in the document? Have we just wasted

the past hour and a half just as the minister has wasted the past year?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Before the minister responds, I ask for order in the chamber. The background noise is becoming fairly loud.

Allan Wilson: The quotation, with which Mike Russell is obviously not familiar, says that culture is something that cannot be imported—not reported.

It is equally important that resources that are devoted to culture are channelled correctly. Fiona McLeod mentioned the reduction in the budget of the National Library of Scotland, as reported. That reduction reflects the end of a period of capital building spend. Running costs for the library are actually on the increase. However, I share her concern. We must recognise the fact that the science library and the business service are not the only providers in Scotland, but part of a wider network.

Fiona McLeod *rose*—

Allan Wilson: I am sorry, but I have very little time. I shall meet the director of the National Library of Scotland next week to develop our plans.

I also look to the social inclusion partnerships to exploit the regenerative potential when planning their local strategies. Culture should not be an optional extra in social inclusion partnership areas; it is too important for that. In response to requests from colleagues, I shall visit more social inclusion partnership projects over the coming year to see exactly how the arts and sport are helping to tackle exclusion and disadvantage.

If I have been disappointed by anything in the debate—with the honourable exception of the previous speech—it has been the lack of reference to the key role of local authorities. We are working with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to explore the potential contribution that local authorities can make. We cannot overstress how critical that contribution will be. I plan to meet local authorities to continue to discuss it.

Several members mentioned Scottish Ballet. I have full confidence that the board of Scottish Ballet, in discussion with the Scottish Arts Council, will make the correct decisions for the future of the company. Ballet in Scotland is enjoying a resurgence. The Scottish Arts Council is developing an integrated dance strategy and audiences for dance are on the increase and showing real and growing interest in contemporary programmes. There are also excellent training facilities and new initiatives are to be found throughout the country, including Dance Base in Edinburgh, Scottish Dance Theatre at Dundee

Rep, the Scottish School of Contemporary Dance at Dundee College, New Moves in Glasgow and City Moves in Aberdeen. I am heartened to learn of dance companies extending outreach programmes to our schools and I look forward to Scottish Ballet continuing to make a contribution to the cultural life of Scotland.

Points were made about the joint implementation group. We want industry and voluntary arts bodies to participate. The group will take a highly inclusive approach and industry and voluntary arts bodies will be invited to share in the discussions. I have met representatives of those groups in that regard.

I thank Alex Johnstone for his kind words about my speech. Like all great works, it is the result of collaboration. Members will know that I always like to conclude on a positive note, whereas we have heard mean, negative and narrow-minded contributions from members of the Opposition, Alex Johnstone excluded. To uplift our spirits, therefore, I will quote from a Taoist proverb. For the benefit of Alex Johnstone, I will say that that is a Chinese religion.

"Unobscure your eyes and the result is sight. Unobscure your heart and the result is joy".

I say to our Tory and nationalist opponents that they should unobscure their eyes and embrace the Executive's vision. If they unobscure their cold hearts, the result will be cultural bliss.

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): There are four Parliamentary Bureau motions to consider, S1M-2351, S1M-2350, S1M-2349 and S1M-2348.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Rural Development Committee is designated as Lead Committee in consideration of the Fur Farming (Prohibition) (Scotland) Bill and that the Bill should also be considered by the Justice 1 Committee and the Justice 2 Committee.

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee is designated as Lead Committee in consideration of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Bill and that the Bill should also be considered by the Justice 2 Committee.

That the Parliament agrees the following designation of Lead Committee—

the Health and Community Care Committee to consider The Feeding Stuffs and The Feeding Stuffs (Enforcement) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2001, (SSI 2001/334).

That the Parliament agrees that the following instruments be approved:

the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning) (West Coast) (No.6) (Scotland) Order 2001 (SSI 2001/316);

the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning) (East Coast) (Scotland) Order 2001 (SSI 2001/317); and

the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning) (West Coast) (No.7) (Scotland) Order 2001 (SSI 2001/322).—[*Euan Robson.*]

Point of Order

17:02

Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): On a point of order. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): I have a point of order myself: could members please settle down.

Fiona Hyslop: I refer to the unfortunate spectacle involving the First Minister and David McLetchie that we witnessed during today's First Minister's question time.

Is it the case that, had David McLetchie phrased his questions properly under rule 13.3 of the standing orders, he could have questioned the First Minister?

Is it the case that, having refused the question on the basis that he did, the Presiding Officer had the opportunity to provide equal treatment to the First Minister?

The First Minister went on to give a personal statement without having requested to be allowed to do so under rule 13.1. He gave what I thought was a pale imitation of a personal statement, which consisted simply of reading out a letter. Is it the case that, if the First Minister wants to end further speculation, he is still able to make a personal statement with comment under rule 13.1 and that the appropriate way for that to be done would be through a request to the Presiding Officer?

The Presiding Officer: On the last issue, the member might have a point, but the fact is that rule 13.1 on personal statements has never been used in this chamber. It is perfectly open to any member at any time to ask my permission to make a personal statement and I would make a judgment on any such request.

On whether David McLetchie's question could have been framed in another way, I cannot answer hypothetical questions. I must deal with the question as it was put.

Rule 13.3.3(b) states that questions to the Scottish Executive must

"relate to a matter for which the First Minister, the Scottish Ministers or the Scottish Law Officers have general responsibility".

I interpret the last part of that to mean a general responsibility to this Parliament. The fact is that members are not answerable in this Parliament for what they did or did not do in another Parliament. Soon after my election, I discussed this matter with the then Speaker of the House of Commons, Betty Boothroyd. We agreed that we would be extremely vigilant to ensure that the rights of each

Parliament were not trespassed on by members. That agreement has been taken seriously at that end and I am obliged to do the same at this end.

On whether the answer was inadmissible, I have already said that the question and the answer were equally out of order.

Decision Time

17:05

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): There are 13 questions to put as a result of today's business.

The first question is, that amendment S1M-2344.1, in the name of Sarah Boyack, which seeks to amend motion S1M-2344, in the name of Andrew Wilson, on railway investment, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Etrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McMahan, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)

Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 63, Against 32, Abstentions 18.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The second question is, that motion S1M-2344, in the name of Andrew Wilson, on railway investment, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Annesland) (Lab)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
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 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McMahan, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine)

(LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
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 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
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 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 66, Against 2, Abstentions 46.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Parliament welcomes the desire of the Minister for Transport and Planning to increase investment in Scottish railways; notes that it has been a difficult time for the railway industry since the tragedy at Hatfield a year ago and welcomes the steps that the Executive is taking to meet the needs of Scotland's rail users; calls upon the Executive to continue its programme of record investment in the railways and its work to make sure that projects for enhancements to the rail network go ahead, building on the good partnership that exists across the railway industry in Scotland; also notes the recent placing into administration of Railtrack plc and the opportunity that this presents to re-examine the organisation of rail services across the UK; welcomes the Executive's commitment to work closely with Her Majesty's Government to ensure that Scotland has a full and proper input into the restructuring of the UK rail industry, and calls upon all concerned to develop an ownership and investment framework for Railtrack assets that maximises both public and national interest.

The Presiding Officer: The third question is, that amendment S1M-2347.3, in the name of the First Minister, which seeks to amend motion S1M-2347, in the name of John Swinney, on Scotland and the current international situation, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)

Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 McMahan, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)

Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 78, Against 33, Abstentions 3.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The fourth question is, that amendment S1M-2347.2, in the name of David McLetchie, which seeks to amend motion S1M-2347, in the name of John Swinney, on Scotland and the current international situation, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McMahan, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)

Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 18, Against 96, Abstentions 1.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The fifth question is, that amendment S1M-2347.1, in the name of Dennis Canavan, which seeks to amend motion S1M-2347, in the name of John Swinney, on Scotland and the current international situation, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)

AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 McMahan, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)

Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 11, Against 77, Abstentions 26.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The sixth question is, that motion S1M-2347, in the name of John Swinney, on Scotland and the current international situation, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)

Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Etrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 McMahan, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

AGAINST

Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)

Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

ABSTENTIONS

MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)

McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)

Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 106, Against 6, Abstentions 3.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Parliament recognises the significant impact of the current international crisis on our domestic security, on our economic prospects and on our Muslim community in Scotland and calls upon the Scottish Executive to continue to bring forward proposals to deal with these matters; supports the international community's desire to bring to justice the perpetrators of the acts of terrorism in the United States of America on 11 September 2001, and agrees that any military action in Afghanistan must, as the Prime Minister has asserted, be accompanied by an effective humanitarian operation which meets the desperate needs of the innocent Afghan population.

The Presiding Officer: The seventh question is, that amendment S1M-2354.1, in the name of Michael Russell, which seeks to amend motion S1M-2354, in the name of Allan Wilson, on the national cultural strategy, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)

Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)

Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)

Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)

Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)

Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)

Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)

Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)

Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)

Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)

Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)

Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)

MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)

MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)

Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)

McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)

McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)

Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)

Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)

Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)

Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)

Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)

Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)

Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)

Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)

Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)

Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)

Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)

White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)

Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)

Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)

Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)

Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)

Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)

Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)

Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)

Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)

Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)

Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)

Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)

Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)

Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)

Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)

Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)

Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

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

Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)

Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)

Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)

Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)

Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)

Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)

Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)

Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)

Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)

Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)

Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)

Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)

Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)

Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)

Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)

Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)

Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)

Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)

Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)

MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)

MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)

Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)

McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)

McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)

McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)

McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)

McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)

McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)

McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)

McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)

McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)

McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)

McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)

Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)

Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)

Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)

Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)

Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)

Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)

Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)

Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)

Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)

Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)

Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 33, Against 82, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The eighth question is, that amendment S1M-2354.2, in the name of Mr Brian Monteith, which seeks to amend motion S1M-2354, in the name of Allan Wilson, on the national cultural strategy, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)

Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McMahan, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)

White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 14, Against 95, Abstentions 2.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The ninth question is, that motion S1M-2354, in the name of Allan Wilson, on the national cultural strategy, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Etrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McMahan, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)

Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

ABSTENTIONS

Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 65, Against 48, Abstentions 2.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament welcomes the first report on the implementation of the National Cultural Strategy; notes the progress that has been made in the key priorities of the strategy and the actions that are proposed for further implementation; recognises the vital contribution of many agencies, individuals and bodies to ensuring that Scotland's cultural life matches the aspirations of all Scotland's people; believes in particular that culture has a vital role to play in delivering social justice throughout Scotland, in our schools, in lifelong learning and in the further development of our tourism industry, and therefore urges all relevant agencies, individuals and bodies to work effectively together in partnership to ensure that the potential of Scotland's cultural life is fully realised at home and proudly promoted abroad, further encouraging the continuing pursuit and celebration of excellence and the widening of opportunities to participate in the development of Scotland's cultural life.

The Presiding Officer: I will put the next four questions separately, despite the fact that the motions to which they refer were moved together.

The 10th question is, that motion S1M-2351, in the name of Tom McCabe, on the designation of a lead committee, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament agrees that the Rural Development Committee is designated as Lead Committee in consideration of the Fur Farming (Prohibition) (Scotland) Bill and that the Bill should also be considered by the Justice 1 Committee and the Justice 2 Committee.

The Presiding Officer: The 11th question is, that motion S1M-2350, in the name of Tom McCabe, also on the designation of a lead committee, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee is designated as Lead Committee in consideration of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Bill and that the Bill should also be considered by the Justice 2 Committee.

The Presiding Officer: The 12th question is, that motion S1M-2349, in the name of Tom McCabe, also on the designation of a lead committee, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament agrees the following designation of Lead Committee—

the Health and Community Care Committee to consider The Feeding Stuffs and The Feeding Stuffs (Enforcement) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2001, (SSI 2001/334).

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S1M-2348, in the name of Tom McCabe, on the approval of Scottish statutory instruments, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament agrees that the following instruments be approved:

the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning) (West Coast) (No.6) (Scotland) Order 2001 (SSI 2001/316);

the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning) (East Coast) (Scotland) Order 2001 (SSI 2001/317); and

the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning) (West Coast) (No.7) (Scotland) Order 2001 (SSI 2001/322).

Ocean Recovery

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): The final item of business today is a members' business debate on motion S1M-2279, in the name of Tavish Scott, on the Edinburgh declaration for ocean recovery.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament notes the Edinburgh Declaration for Ocean Recovery to be put to WWF's Oceans Recovery Campaign conference on 23 October 2001; agrees that our seas are in urgent need of sensible and sensitive management if they are to support abundant fish stocks, viable populations of marine wildlife and thriving coastal communities, and calls on the Scottish Executive to work with Her Majesty's Government, devolved bodies and all stakeholders to develop a co-ordinated stewardship strategy for our seas.

17:17

Tavish Scott (Shetland) (LD): I thank colleagues from across the Parliament for supporting the motion, following Tuesday's historic—I believe that that is the appropriate word—World Wide Fund for Nature oceans recovery summit, which was held here in Edinburgh. I also thank the Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development for finding time in what is no doubt a very busy week to attend and speak at the summit. Indeed, she is quoted in the document that was produced following the summit. There is a rather fine series of contributions from distinguished individuals in what is an important document for our oceans and seas. I am pleased to have the brief opportunity to raise these matters in Parliament today.

The future of Scotland depends to a large extent on the debate generating a determination to tackle the problems that the seas face. Scotland is an island nation and our coastal communities make a living from the sea: from fishing, tourism, offshore oil and gas and marine transport. Our future depends on the future of the sea. It follows that, if we let the sea suffer, those who depend on it will suffer. I contend that this is not a be-nice-to-the-environment, cuddly debate, but a hard debate about the future of all those who depend on the sea.

For too long we have exploited the seas with too little thought for their future. We have ignored the warning signs that have been showing for some time now. The evidence of our mistreatment of the seas grows year by year, no more so than in the form of fishing stocks. A WWF report reveals exactly that. It says:

"Between the mid-1960s and 1999, total UK landings by the UK fishing fleet declined by 55 per cent and the value of these catches was reduced by 77 per cent – a decline of £684 million."

That must be of extreme concern to anyone with an interest in such matters, particularly those of us who represent constituencies with strong fishing interests.

For many years, fishing policy has continued to hammer white fish stocks, with more efficient nets and more powerful boats as well as the move into deep water and the targeting of new species, such as monkfish and the more exotic orange roughy.

Because the need to regulate fisheries by international agreement has been acknowledged—fish do not recognise international boundaries—the politically expedient but crude tool of quotas has been adopted. Quotas work for single species and fisheries, such as herring and mackerel, but it is fair to say, and many accept, that there have been conservation disasters with those species in the mixed white fish fishery. The policy of quotas has led to the scandal of the wasteful discarding of marketable, over-quota fish, so I welcome the fact that the European Commission, in its green paper on the future of the common fisheries policy, accepts that the policy has failed and must change for the better. The result of the policy has been that our cod stocks are at an all-time low. Further scientific analysis of that has been published this week. Many of us worry that we are overfishing the deep-water species as well. For example, the annual catch of orange roughy has plunged from 3,500 tonnes to fewer than 500 tonnes in only 10 years.

The result has been a crisis in our fishing ports, which must be addressed. The crisis has had one welcome result—if I can put it that way—in that it has built a partnership between fishermen and the environmentalists, who now recognise that they share many of the same aims. I cannot be the only member of a political party who has been pleased to share a platform at party conferences with the Scottish Fishermen's Federation and environmental organisations, led by WWF Scotland. I congratulate them on their joint work and I congratulate the Government on the way in which it has responded to that work. I hope that more can be done in that area.

Productive steps have been taken. Technical conservation measures are being developed and introduced, which I welcome. The record funding that was announced earlier this year for decommissioning is also welcome. Of course, more needs to be done. The Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development will not be surprised that I say that, given my constituency. I do not just want fish stocks to be conserved; I want fishing communities to be conserved. I do not just want fish stocks to be viable; I want those who depend on them to be viable. There is a need to examine closely—particularly as I do not doubt that there will be more cod closure areas next

year—the need for compensation to help fishermen while stocks recover, so that we can have recovering stocks and viable fishing communities.

Important aspects of the declaration deal with pollution of the seas. I will focus on the extremes of pollution. The seas around my constituency have been the cleanest in the UK, but they are not as clean as they should be. I and islanders round me remember well the terrible sight of the Braer spewing oil into the sea at Garths Ness in January 1993. That was an horrific warning of the dangers of oil pollution, but even though that oil was light crude, and sustained storms did much to disperse it, Shetland suffered severe environmental and economic damage. Cost cutting by shipping companies cost Shetland dear. I pay tribute to those such as Jonathan Wills who campaigned so hard to get to the bottom of those events. Their work is important.

The experience of the Braer made me determined that action should be taken to tackle the pollution of the sea. Some steps have been taken. Due to forthright work by Shetland Islands Council, we now have a full-time salvage tug on station in the area. I acknowledge that commitment, but more action is needed. As a councillor in Shetland, I fully supported campaigns to ensure the highest environmental standards. We called for oil from fields to the west of Shetland to be piped ashore, so I am pleased by BP's decision this week that the oil from the Clair field will come ashore to Sullom Voe by pipeline.

I will go from the specific to the general and conclude by offering my full support for the Edinburgh declaration on ocean recovery and its call for the forging of new partnerships and the development of new ways to manage our seas. In the past, the various stakeholders with an interest in the seas have tended to fight their own corners while ignoring their common interests, and the seas have suffered as a result.

I draw the attention of the Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development to the call in the declaration for an oceans act. Will she examine the wide range of regulations—some of which are devolved, but some of which, I accept, are reserved—that cover shipping, coastal protection, fishing and habitats? Does she agree that there is a need for a co-ordinated oceans act to replace those regulations or pull them together to achieve the joined-up government that we so often talk about? We should work with colleagues at Westminster to provide that joined-up regulation and protection for our seas. That is a challenge that we must face up to. It is a challenge that we cannot shirk.

The time has come for change. The declaration that was made at this week's summit is a useful

start. There is much to be done. However, WWF's ocean recovery summit has provided politicians from all parties with an opportunity to progress these issues. I hope that the chamber will seize that chance today.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): We now move to open debate. Eight members have asked to speak, so speeches will be limited to three minutes.

17:25

Bruce Crawford (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): I would like to take up Tavish Scott's challenge. Hopefully we can move on to bold action from today. I congratulate Tavish Scott on his timely motion, which I am glad the Parliamentary Bureau accepted for debate this evening. The motion has been put together well and I agree with many of the sentiments that it expresses.

I managed to attend only the early sessions of the summit, but it was clear from what I heard and saw that the concept of the summit, which featured high-profile, eminent people, was a great idea. WWF deserves congratulations on putting it together as it did. I know that the minister has already signed the Edinburgh declaration. I, too, took the opportunity to sign it on the morning of the summit.

The signing of a declaration is all well and good. However, Michael Grade, who chaired the summit, was right when he said that political leaders needed not just to make bold statements, but to take bold actions. There can be no question but that bold action is required around the seas of Scotland. We do not have to look far to see where that bold action is required. I know that the minister is personally committed on many issues, but infraction proceedings have been initiated against Scotland in a number of areas to do with the seas. Some of the proceedings relate to bathing water directives, others to habitat directives and eutrophic waters. That can only be of concern, particularly because of the problems that we have with agricultural diffuse run-off and the blooms that it creates. Bold action is required to deal with those problems.

The plea from the summit was loud and clear: Governments must be bold in their action and they must take a much more strategic and holistic approach if we are to deliver the environmental benefits and improvements that are so desperately required for this most important part of the world's ecosystem.

At the summit, Robert Napier, the chief executive of WWF-UK, provided us with some poignant statistics. Seventy-five per cent of Scotland's sovereign territory lies in the seas. Fifty

per cent of the world's wildlife lies in the planet's seas, but—remarkably—less than 1 per cent of the UK's seas are protected. The minister signed the Edinburgh declaration, which was a good move. However, it is now time for bold action—action that will bring Scotland into line with its international obligations and that will reduce pollution from oil-related activities or chemical output. We should follow the lead of nations such as Australia, which has taken a holistic and strategic view on the issue.

Finally, we need bold action to sort out the scandal that is Sellafield, which is casting a nuclear, radioactive shadow over not just our nation of Scotland, but our international neighbours in Ireland. It is time for us to stand full square with the Irish in their fight with the UK Government to have the mixed oxide plant at Sellafield closed and to stop radioactivity flowing out of it, which is ridiculous. It is time for bold action to stop the dumping in our seas. I wish the minister all the best in that.

17:29

Maureen Macmillan (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): I come from a part of the world where the sea sends long fingers into the land—the Inverness firth, the Cromarty firth and the Dornoch firth. In my area, there is strong interaction between land and sea.

The greater Moray firth area has a diverse economy, all sectors of which impact on the sea—farming, fishing, oil rig fabrication and engineering, for example. In addition, it has spectacular wildlife sites, including coastal flats and bird sanctuaries. It has a seal colony and, most famous of all, a school of dolphins, which are at the northernmost limit of their range and are suffering stress from, it would appear, the pollution in the marine environment.

The Moray Firth Partnership is a voluntary organisation and a coalition of organisations and individuals including local authorities, environmental organisations, businesses, industrial interests and local communities. The partnership covers the 800km from Duncansby head in the north to Fraserburgh in the east and it aims to make people aware of how their lifestyles and businesses might impact on the marine environment. It shares best practice across local authorities and interacts with national research initiatives. It raises issues, holds workshops, provides a forum for debate and encourages public involvement in solutions to environmental problems on the Moray firth coastline.

The partnership is made up of people who genuinely want to proceed together and I encourage more industries and individuals to take

part in it. In particular, I urge the fishing industry to take part, because so far none of its representatives has joined the partnership—their presence is sorely missed.

The Executive supports the Moray Firth Partnership through funding from Scottish Natural Heritage and the partnership draws money down from other sources. However, those funds are less than the partnership needs to fulfil its ambitions. I ask for support for the partnership from public or private funds or through legislation because I believe that to preserve our marine environment we must engage the whole community, not just environmental specialists—although they, too, are needed.

The Moray Firth Partnership is, in many ways, a grass-roots organisation. Although, as has been said, legislation is welcome and necessary, nothing compares with working on the ground and along the shore with local communities. I believe that that is the way forward; it must be encouraged if we are to make a difference to pollution in the marine environment.

17:32

Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I commend Tavish Scott for lodging the motion and I commend WWF for its ocean recovery campaign summit, which I attended on Tuesday to support the WWF declaration.

I will consider Tavish Scott's motion first from the viewpoint of the Scottish fishing industry, particularly as the talks on the cod recovery plan are due to begin on 29 October. A key area on which to focus is found in the recent communication from the European Commission that states that all the measures employed so far under the banner of the cod recovery plan will constitute no more than 20 per cent of a solution to the cod problem. The remaining 80 per cent is being sought from a combination of decommissioning and effort restraint or limitation.

Many in the fishing industry believe that the only real method of conservation is effort limitation, but at the moment the Executive will not accept that, because it would have to pay money for a tie-up scheme for fishing boats for periods of the year. However, the decommissioning scheme closes to applications on 31 October. I ask the Executive to tell Parliament what proportion of the £25 million specifically set aside for decommissioning has been taken up. If significant money is left over, will the Executive ensure that that money stays within the fishing industry? Will it reconsider the possibility of a funded tie-up, which has found favour in Parliament in the past? I agree with Tavish Scott's comment that conservation of fishermen and their families is as important as

conservation of fish stocks.

A closed season on the cod spawning grounds is an essential element in the recovery of that important fish stock, but if fishermen simply diversify into areas where they catch too many young haddock, the whole exercise becomes self-defeating. I urge the Executive to take a fresh look at the idea of including a subsidised tie-up as part of the conservation plan.

It is good that we are beginning at last to look at our oceans in the same way as we look at our landmass. It is also good that there is a realisation that many diverse incomes could be brought into our coastal areas under intelligent and imaginative management.

I recently attended two other fisheries conferences, one in Edinburgh and the other in Oban in Argyll. On both occasions I listened to Doug McLeod of the Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers put forward a paper on an interpretation of integrated coastal zonal management. ICZM is a concept that puts great value on our estuarine waters and sea lochs and gives a vision of great varieties of fish and shellfish being farmed sustainably with different types of sea plants and weeds. Mussels, scallops, oysters, lobsters and crabs, as well as fin fish, all have their place.

The concept of combining different species in a polyculture originated 1,000 years ago in ancient China. Aquaculture production in China reached a staggering 18.6 million tonnes in 1996. That was 31 per cent higher than China's wild catch and accounted for more than 63 per cent of global aquaculture production.

Lately, our Scottish salmon farming industry, which provides vital jobs in outlying areas and a large percentage of Scottish food exports, has been severely attacked. The wheel grinds slow, but it is coming down too hard on the sector now. If the industry were accepted in the same way as terrestrial agriculture is, it would receive the necessary encouragement to allow it to deal of its own accord with many of the perceived problems.

The industry has the answers and the scientific knowledge. In a healthy and successful industry, conservation falls into place, but that will never happen in an industry that is forced to hang on by its fingertips. In the words of Jamie Lindsay of Scottish Quality Salmon, the industry wishes to live in sustainable co-existence with other sea loch users. Proper scientific advice coupled with imaginative practices would lead to a system with far more diverse sea farming than the monocultures that exist.

I agree that our sea lochs and coastline hold enormous potential value. I urge the Executive to use all means in its power to harvest that value to

sustain local coastal populations, while maintaining the reputation for clean and pollution-free waters for which Scotland is famous. I urge the Executive to maximise economic, social and ecological benefits from our coastal waters for the Scottish people.

17:36

Stewart Stevenson (Banff and Buchan) (SNP): I congratulate Tavish Scott on initiating the debate.

Newton's third law says that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. If only the complex ecology of the oceans were so simple and we could see that one action had an identifiable side effect. Of course, the matter is not simple.

I share Tavish Scott's view that conservation of our coastal communities is an important objective, but paramount and underpinning a future for our planet is conservation of the oceans. For many years, we have heard our forests referred to as the earth's lungs. I suggest that our oceans have been used by the human race as the earth's kidneys and by industry as the earth's bowels, much to the oceans' disbenefit.

Bruce Crawford referred to Sellafield and the MOX plant. By coincidence, I brought a group of seven Norwegian teachers to the Parliament today. They sat in the VIP gallery during question time this afternoon. The first question that they asked me was on my reaction to the new Norwegian Government's intention, stated in today's press, to sue the UK Government over contamination of the North sea from Sellafield. I suspect that we in the Scottish public are playing catch-up with our Norwegian friends over our concerns for the ocean.

Occasionally, a bit of serendipity comes into play. During the recess, I had a pleasant visit to my local distillery—yes, it was very pleasant, Winnie. I discovered some interesting information. Whisky is the basis of an important rural industry—that I knew. Malt mash is a by-product of the brewing process that leads to the distillation of whisky—that I also knew. However, I did not know that malt mash is increasingly being converted into fish food. About 20 per cent of farmed salmon eats the waste product of Scotland's other excellent product, whisky. That is displacing the primary source of feeding for salmon in farms—fish-meal that is prepared from industrial fishing in the North sea, mainly for pout and sand eel. They are the food stocks on which cod depend.

Mr McGrigor *rose*—

Stewart Stevenson: I am running out of time; I would love to give way.

The whisky industry is helping to save the cod. I

say to Jamie McGrigor that I have been told that 5 tonnes of industrial fish yield only 1 tonne of salmon, so it is good that whisky by-products are being used. In the whole food chain, the malt that we grow for whisky helps to reduce CO₂ in the atmosphere. Whisky and cod are helping each other.

17:39

Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD): My colleague Tavish Scott has covered eloquently and comprehensively the issues around fishing, fishing communities and pollution—the areas where man interacts with the sea.

I want to underline how fundamentally important the oceans are as a part of our environment. For a start, as any schoolchild could tell you, the sea covers more of the earth's surface than does the land. Even using that basic measurement, the importance of the marine environment is evident.

Mankind has exploited and, in some cases, devastated the land resource. Mankind has also done so with the seas around our shores in a way that is literally careless. Damage might sometimes have been done through ignorance, but that does not make it any less damaging or in any way more reversible.

At least we are starting to care a bit more and to be more aware of the effect of our activities on our basic life support system. Until we know more about our oceans and understand them better, it behoves us to restrict our activities and avoid making any potentially damaging impact—from self-interest, if not from a moral standpoint. The ocean's effect on the earth's climate is recognised, but it is not fully understood. We could be teetering unknowingly on the edge of catastrophe.

The deep oceans are the last wilderness on earth. We know very little about them, their ecosystems and the plants and creatures that live there. However, we do know that a rich biodiversity exists in the seas around our shores. If anyone should be taking the lead in tackling the way in which we regulate our activities to protect that biodiversity, it should be Scotland—a country with a marine environment that is described in a WWF parliamentary briefing as

“staggering in its size and richness.”

There are encouraging signs, such as the increasing dialogue and co-operation between the fishing industry and marine scientists and the honesty of the European Union's admission that the common fisheries policy has failed. However, there are also warning signs, such as the depredation in recent years of deep-sea fish species. There is no time to waste.

I add my support to Tavish Scott's request that

the minister should review the existing plethora of regulations and begin to work towards co-ordinated, comprehensive and effective oceans legislation to replace them.

17:42

Richard Lochhead (North-East Scotland) (SNP): I welcome the opportunity to make a few comments. I congratulate Tavish Scott on lodging the motion and the WWF on its campaign. However, I will not thank the three members who have stolen most of my speech.

The issue is important because it concentrates the minds of people and, more important, the decision makers, on how important the oceans are to Scotland. We know that that is the case partly because of the many high-profile fishing issues. If we cast our minds back a few years, we also recall how consumer power and the Brent Spar issue activated people power. People used their consumer power to take on a multinational and the United Kingdom Government because they did not want to see their oceans used as a dustbin.

The WWF strategy is good and a huge step forward. It recognises the environmental and social role of the oceans. Time and again, it has been said that the fishing industry and the environmental lobby now share common objectives and that they are singing from the same hymn sheet. In common with Tavish Scott, I am heartened how, each year at my party conference, the WWF and the Scottish Fishermen's Federation share the same platform.

A massive step forward has been taken. Both organisations share the same agenda. The fishermen need healthy seas because healthy seas mean healthy fish stocks, which allow them to sustain their livelihoods. The environmental lobby now recognises that it has to work closely with the fishing industry and other sectors that make their livelihoods from the oceans.

The social role of fishing is important. In Stewart Stevenson's constituency of Banff and Buchan, it is reckoned that 33 per cent of jobs are dependent on the sea. In other constituencies across the country, in particular the Shetland islands—represented by Tavish Scott—a fifth of jobs may be dependent on the oceans.

Mr McGrigor: Does the member agree that at the moment, because of draconian European measures, some people in the fishing industry are losing their livelihoods? I am thinking of the scallop industry.

Richard Lochhead: Yes. I can certainly identify with those comments.

We can do much to help our oceans. Our fishermen need to get on board alongside the

environmentalists by adopting sustainable fishing methods. That is one area where they have led throughout Europe. The Scottish fishing industry has adopted more sustainable fishing methods.

There are indirect measures that we should take. Let us remember the overall impact of climate change on the oceans. The fuel that we fill our car with might have an impact on the oceans; that in turn has an impact on fish stocks. Cod stocks, for example, are moving further north because of the change in temperature. That has implications for our white fish fleet.

We cannot leave everything to Westminster. The Scottish Executive has to take the lead. Westminster too often sees the ocean as something from which we can extract a valuable resource: oil. We do not really put anything back into the ocean—we must change that attitude. The oceans are much more important to Scotland than they are to the UK. The Scottish Executive must take a lead and adopt sensible policies.

The tie-up scheme is one area where the environmental movement and the fishing industry were singing from the same hymn sheet. They saw a compensated tie-up scheme as an important tool to help the oceans to recover, yet we found out a couple of days ago that the Executive was running a £25 million underspend at the time when it was rejecting the fishermen's plea for £5 million for a tie-up scheme. We need the Scottish Executive to get on board now.

17:46

Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green): I want to raise a number of concerns to which I do not expect the minister to reply today. However, when she comes to address those concerns, I can assure her that she will have my enthusiastic support.

First, I take issue with Jamie McGrigor's remarks on decommissioning. I support the Executive in its decommissioning scheme. Reducing fishing effort by decommissioning is the only safe and sure way to reduce fishing effort in the North sea. I heard an extraordinary figure the other day: the 30 biggest boats that operate in the North sea at the moment exert the same pressure as did 10,000 boats in the 1850s. There should be another round of decommissioning, focused entirely on the largest boats, so that our inshore and near-shore fisheries, and the small ports that they support, can begin to prosper.

The minister recently revealed in the chamber that black fish landings have increased over the past year. That is a matter of considerable concern; it must be of concern to the fishermen who keep to the rules. I urge the Executive to do everything that it can to reduce that breaking of

the rules. The response that I received to another issue I raised suggested that the Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency does not enforce engine size regulations—it does not come under the agency's aegis. Where boats break the European Union engine size regulations, they are unlikely to be caught, yet I have an estimate that between 20 per cent and 30 per cent of all the boats that fish in EU waters are breaking engine size regulations. That allows them to exert extra pressure on fisheries.

Mr McGrigor: Does the member agree that fish that are put back are dead anyway? Stopping black landings will not conserve fish stocks.

Robin Harper: I cannot possibly agree. The black landings are not necessarily just discards; black landings are when people are going over their quota. To say that we should accept black landings is to say that we should accept people breaking the quota rules.

Richard Lochhead: Will the member give way?

Robin Harper: No.

I disagree with the quota rules—quota rules and total allowable catches should all go. However, we have regulations, and that is one way of doing things. We cannot allow people simply to break the law willy-nilly.

There is another important matter that I have raised previously. I hope that the Executive will campaign in Europe to ensure that the reduction in fishing effort here is not simply exported, so that we start raiding the coast of Africa, virtually decimating stocks and robbing people there of their birthright.

Furthermore, it has come to my attention that at least some salmon feed used in this country—I do not know how much—is made from perfectly good fish, which could be used for human consumption, raided from the Peruvian and Chilean coasts by large factory ships.

One of the biggest pollution problems that we are likely to face in future is the dumping of ballast water. I draw the minister's attention to that.

17:50

Mr Kenneth Gibson (Glasgow) (SNP): As we all know, life emerged in the seas. In the past half billion years, there have been six major extinctions on the planet. The best known is the extinction of the dinosaurs some 65 million years ago, which wiped out some 65 per cent of all species on the planet. One of my great concerns is that we are now going through the seventh great extinction, which is being inflicted on the planet by humanity itself. We have already exterminated many species on the planet, such as the Caspian tiger,

the great auk and the Caribbean monk seal. I would not want to see other species of sea mammal, fish or coral go the same way.

In bringing the debate to the chamber, Tavish Scott has done the Parliament a tremendous service and I welcome what he said. However, we must look beyond Scotland as far as possible—not just to Westminster or even to Europe. If we are to ensure a long-term, sustainable future, not just for our children and grandchildren, but for ourselves as a species over the centuries and millennia, it is important to have an international regulation of life in the sea that is as tight as possible.

Over recent weeks, many of us have been absolutely captivated by the TV series, “The Blue Planet”, which has been a fascinating exposé of life in the deeper oceans. Although half of all known species are in the sea, 97 per cent of the planet’s biosphere is below the surface of the waves. As Nora Radcliffe said, it is interesting to note how much of that has still to be explored.

Stewart Stevenson made a significant comment about the lungs, kidneys and bowels of the planet. I am concerned that industrial waste, sewage and munitions have been poured willy-nilly into the seas over many years. Indeed, Beaufort’s dyke contains huge quantities of munitions from the second world war and since. The entire Minch area should be designated as a particularly sensitive sea area by the International Maritime Organisation. I would like to hear the minister’s view on that.

Humanity can work together to clean up the seas and ensure a sustainable future. The hole in the ozone layer has been reduced by strict action on chlorofluorocarbons, and that should be a model for international co-operation. We will not be held in high regard centuries from now if we bequeath not only a devastated landmass, but polluted seas denuded of the fish that we hope will be the main food source for our species over future generations, as well as providing so much life for the rest of the planet.

I whole-heartedly support Tavish Scott’s motion.

17:54

The Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Rhona Brankin): I share many of the concerns highlighted at the WWF oceans recovery campaign conference on Tuesday and in the debate today.

The Scottish Executive recognises the importance of a co-ordinated approach to protecting our marine environment. The picture is a complex one, involving international, UK and Scottish regulation. Although an oceans act is appealing in its simplicity, it would be difficult to achieve and could delay action on the ground.

However, the Scottish Executive is wholeheartedly committed to working with others, nationally and internationally, and is already making progress in developing an integrated approach to the management of the marine environment. We must continue to do that.

In its green paper on the reform of the common fisheries policy, the European Commission highlighted the need to secure a better balance between fishing effort, fleet capacity and available fisheries resources. It also emphasised the need for an environmentally based approach to fisheries management.

With Ross Finnie, I have responsibility for fisheries and the environment in the Scottish Executive and I fully support that approach. Indeed, I chaired a seminar at the recent Scotland week in Brussels to help focus Commission thinking on key issues.

The majority of fishermen share our concern about securing a sustainable ecosystem with healthy fish stocks. A reformed CFP must win the support of fishermen by being more inclusive and regionally based. The Executive is working to ensure that the Commission’s proposals reflect that.

The Scottish Executive is leading the way with our decommissioning package. In March this year, I announced a £25 million decommissioning scheme, which is currently under way. It aims to assist in the reduction and restructuring of the Scottish white fish fleet by up to 20 per cent. The WWF recognised the contribution of that significant package to ensuring healthier fish stocks in its report, “Now or Never—the cost of Canada’s cod collapse and the disturbing parallels with the UK”, which was published last week.

The Executive has been an active participant in the development of cod and hake recovery plans, which were worked up in conjunction with fishermen’s representatives. Other plans will follow. We recognise the need to manage carefully the exploitation of deep water species that are increasingly becoming targeted as traditional stocks decline. Many of us have watched the wonderful “The Blue Planet” series on television and I feel particularly strongly about that issue.

The Scottish Executive is committed to meeting its environmental targets in the programme for government and our UK, European and international commitments. We are contributing to the planned UK marine stewardship report, which will set out an agreed vision and strategy for the marine environment. I hope that that will respond to some of the concerns behind the call for an oceans act. As part of the consultation process, I will hold a workshop involving key Scottish stakeholders next month. I hope that members with an interest will be able to attend.

Recently, I answered a number of parliamentary questions from Tavish Scott. He has a great interest in pollution in marine waters around Scotland and beyond. We are keenly aware of the fragility of the oceans, but it is important that actions are based on good, sound, scientific evidence. For that reason, the Scottish Executive is undertaking work that will address concerns and fulfil international obligations. We have also decided to commission an independent review of the scientific work that is available. All findings will be made publicly available.

Much attention has been focused recently on aquaculture—including in Parliament. We are committed to addressing concerns about management and environmental impact through our consultation on a long-term strategic framework for aquaculture. That will set out the key principles within which the industry must operate and where the public sector will intervene, either as a sponsor or regulator.

I am conscious of the contribution that local communities can and do make to managing the marine environment. Through the Scottish coastal forum, the Executive and many other organisations are working to produce a strategy to implement an integrated approach to coastal zone management. I recognise the work that is being done by the Moray Firth Partnership in that area.

It is equally important to engage with other areas of industry. In Orkney, we are working to support a project that is aimed at establishing a marine energy test centre to capitalise on the sea as a clean energy source.

We are achieving a great deal for nature conservation in the marine environment through selecting and managing a network of protected areas. There are 60 special protection areas for birds and proposals for 31 special areas of conservation under EU directives. The recently discovered Darwin mounds in the Faroe Shetland channel are likely to become the first UK SAC beyond 12 nautical miles. We will be closely involved in drawing up a management regime for that area. Through the UK review of marine nature conservation we are addressing what more must be done to protect our marine and natural heritage.

I will respond to some of the specific points that have been made. I have addressed Maureen Macmillan's point about the Moray Firth Partnership. I spent most of my adult life living in the Moray firth area and I am happy to lend my support to that project.

Jamie McGrigor asked about compensated tie-ups. Given the number of application forms for the decommissioning scheme that have been submitted to date, we expect it to be oversubscribed.

Richard Lochhead also mentioned the possibility of underspend being spent on tie-ups. A revised autumn budget will be presented to the Parliament shortly. That budget will propose the allocation of £44 million, which will be made up of the underspend and some extra resources obtained from the centre. Those will be additional resources for rural development budgets in 2001-02. However, the extra £44 million includes formal provision for the decommissioning scheme that I announced earlier in the year. We are not able to spend that money twice. At the risk of repeating myself, we believe that decommissioning represents a better value-for-money approach than compensated tie-ups. The European Commission shares that view.

Stewart Stevenson: Will the minister take an intervention?

Rhona Brankin: I will take a brief intervention.

Stewart Stevenson: The minister just said that the £25 million for the decommissioning scheme is being provided for out of the £44 million underspend in the rural affairs budget. However, I believe that she first made that announcement in March. At that time, was it her intention to fund the decommissioning scheme from a projected underspend?

Rhona Brankin: When we announced the £25 million in March, we said that we would work up the proposals for the decommissioning scheme as quickly as possible. In the event, the decommissioning scheme is now open for bids—we will open the sealed bids in November. Until we see those bids, it is difficult to project the amount of money that is to be taken up. I emphasise that the £25 million is clearly for decommissioning—that money is safe.

Richard Lochhead: Will the minister give way?

Rhona Brankin: I am just about to conclude.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There is one minute left before I must close the meeting—I am bound by the time.

Rhona Brankin: An important aspect of improving the health of the marine environment is that of forging new partnerships between those who are most closely concerned at local, Scottish, UK, European and international levels. Therefore, I was pleased to be able, by participating in the WWF conference and by responding to the debate, to demonstrate the commitment of the Scottish Executive to working with others to ensure the recovery of our seas and their future stewardship.

I congratulate Tavish Scott on securing the debate.

Meeting closed at 18:03.

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