

# **MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT**

Wednesday 28 June 2006

Session 2

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## Scottish Parliament

*Wednesday 28 June 2006*

[THE PRESIDING OFFICER *opened the meeting at 14:30*]

### Time for Reflection

**The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** Good afternoon. The first item of business is time for reflection, as it is every Wednesday. Our time for reflection leader today is the Reverend Graham Carter, President of the Methodist Conference.

**The Reverend Graham Carter (President of the Methodist Conference):** Good afternoon. It is a great honour for me to address the Scottish Parliament as president of the Methodist Conference. I am especially proud to have been partly responsible for bringing conference, the governing body of the Methodist Church, to Edinburgh; this is the first time that it has met in Scotland.

It is our practice to take conference around the country to where people are. People matter to us, and that principle has been at the heart of Methodism since its inception. The driving force that motivated its founder, John Wesley, was a deep concern to share the love of God with people, especially those who had been excluded from the church of his day. He was convinced that God's love and justice are for everyone. His comment, "The world is my parish", reflected his desire to be people focused rather than geographically bound.

Wesley knew that it was no good preaching only in church, because the people he wanted to reach were just not there. So he went to where people were: the marketplace. Wesley's principles have continued to motivate the Methodist movement to focus on people, especially those at the edges of society.

In the class meetings of early Methodism, people learned how to express themselves. They learned of God's justice and righteousness, and they supported each other in putting that justice into practice. That is why Methodists were influential in such things as the development of trade unions. The influence of Wesley's people continued to change the scene in Britain throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Of course, not everything has been perfect in the Methodist Church. I could tell you many stories about how we have lost touch with ordinary people. Nevertheless, Methodists continue to give a high priority to such things as working with

asylum seekers, homeless people and others who are in need. Methodism gave birth to the charities NCH, the children's charity and Methodist Homes for the Aged, which works with elderly people. We support workplace chaplaincies, follow Wesley's lead in visiting people in prison, have played a leading role in debt relief campaigns, and we have our own small relief agency, the Methodist relief and development fund.

Significantly, we now seek to do all this in partnership with others. The expression of God's love is not restricted to one denomination, or even to the Christian church. If John Wesley was right in believing that God's love and justice are for all people, then it is up to us join forces with whoever is active in expressing that love and justice.

## Financial Governance and Outcomes 2005-06

**The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** The next item of business is a statement by Mr Tom McCabe on financial governance and outcomes 2005-06. The minister will take questions at the end of his statement, so there should be no interventions.

14:34

**The Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform (Mr Tom McCabe):** Presiding Officer, I am delighted to have the opportunity to address the Parliament today, and to reflect on some of what we have achieved during the past financial year.

Today is an appropriate time for this statement, as the provisional outturn figures for the 2005-06 financial year have recently become available. This will allow me to report the outturn position against the budget authorised by Parliament in the spring budget revision back in January.

Full details of the underspend for 2005-06, and the resulting allocations to portfolios that they can carry forward into the next financial year, have been set out in "End Year Flexibility 2005-06", the document that I have published alongside this statement.

Last year, with the agreement of the Finance Committee, we moved away from reporting our outturn against only those budgets in the departmental expenditure limit—commonly known as DEL—and moved to reporting our outturn against all the budgets that are authorised by Parliament. I will focus more directly on those figures in a few moments.

Financial year 2005-06 has been another successful year for the Executive, especially as regards our financial management. Last year, Parliament authorised a total budget of £26.5 billion, which equated to around £5,230 for each person living in Scotland. Since devolution, we have seen the largest sustained rise in public spending in living memory. In recent years, with those remarkable resources, we have achieved much of which we can be proud, including delivering record levels of investment in our public services the length and breadth of Scotland.

Our overall investment is focused on our priorities: growing the economy; delivering excellent public services; supporting stronger and safer communities; and developing a confident, democratic Scotland. The money is delivering results across those priorities and is benefiting every community in Scotland. All of that is underpinned by the Executive's pragmatic and sensible approach to public finances.

As I mentioned, the details of this year's end-year flexibility are set out in the document that I published today, copies of which are available for members in the Scottish Parliament information centre. However, before I explain the numbers, I think that it is worth reminding members why we have the EYF process.

The process originates from the parliamentary principle of authorising budgets annually. When the Parliament approves the Executive's spending plans, it does so only for the coming financial year. If we have not undertaken all the spending by 31 March, we need to return to Parliament to have that expenditure re-authorised in the following financial year. To put that in context, every business, local authority and individual carries forward their money in this way. No one rushes out to spend everything that they have in their bank account before 31 March each year—of course people carry the money forward. EYF simply allows the Scottish Executive to do the same.

The end-year flexibility supporting document shows that in 2005-06 the Executive spent £171 million less than the budget that was approved by the Parliament in the spring budget revision. Arm's-length bodies such as health boards and Scottish Water spent a further £64 million less than their approved budgets. Therefore, our total underspend, from a budget of £26.5 billion, is £235 million. That is the best set of figures since devolution began. The total underspend represents only 0.9 per cent of our total budget.

It is important to stress that those resources are not lost to Scotland. They will be carried forward into this financial year through the EYF mechanism, whereby they can again be approved for use by the Parliament.

If we look at how this year's figures compare with those of previous years, the underspend of £235 million compares well with last year's headline figure of £281 million. I repeat that this year's figure represents the lowest level of underspend since devolution began. If we look at last year's figures for the average level of underspending across all other United Kingdom departments, we see that the Executive's proportionate underspend this year is lower. However, as I have said many times in the past, we fully recognise that there is no room for complacency.

We have come a long way since the advent of devolution. In 2000-01, levels of end-year flexibility peaked at almost £700 million. Back then, we reported those figures in what is known as DEL terms. The equivalent figure that we are reporting today is £139 million. If the figure that we are reporting today is compared with the far larger figure that we reported for 2000-01, today's figure

represents just 20 per cent of the 2000-01 figure. That is another example of the steady progress that the Executive has made over the years.

I turn now to the resources that we currently hold at Her Majesty's Treasury. Over the last year, some people have severely misinterpreted that money and cruelly misled the public about how it will be used. I make it clear that the resources that are held at Her Majesty's Treasury are Scottish resources and that we will access them as and when they are required to deliver our commitments and programmes. We will neither rush headlong into excessive expenditure in advance of an election nor shrink from using the resources when they are required. Mr Swinney will be delighted to hear that over the next two years, following discussion and agreement with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the Executive will draw down in the region of £800 million. That will leave us sufficient headroom at Her Majesty's Treasury to deliver our ambitions and to cope with the challenges that the next spending review will bring. As is the case in the Scottish Parliament, the total budget for the Scottish Executive that the Westminster Parliament approves should be taut and realistic. With that in mind, we should draw down only the resources that we expect to spend—no more and no less. I further stress that the balance of the funding at Her Majesty's Treasury will be available to us to meet known pressures that have been identified by portfolios and for which resources have been set aside, and to help us to deal with the expected tighter 2007 spending review settlement.

What I have set out in my statement is good news not only for the Parliament, but for the good governance of Scotland. By effectively managing within last year's budget and having the ability to carry forward resources from last year into this year, via the EYF mechanism, we can deliver much more. Since 1998, we have been able to carry forward resources in this way and have ensured that our unspent resources remain ours to spend in Scotland and are not reclaimed by the Treasury.

As members will be aware, the 2006 spending review has been delayed for a year and preparation has started for the 2007 spending review. That review will set out the Executive's spending plans until 2011. As I have said, since devolution public spending in Scotland has been growing at an exceptional rate. It is unrealistic to expect that to continue indefinitely, but it is entirely realistic to expect that the 2007 spending review will consolidate the progress that we have already made. The remaining resources at Her Majesty's Treasury will give us the headroom that we need during that period of consolidation. The ability to use end-year flexibility in that way offers a tool for delivering effective financial management, allows

us to put in place sensible long-term planning and sets our finances in good order as we move towards the next spending review.

I look forward to hearing others' perspectives on these matters and will endeavour to answer any questions that members have.

**The Presiding Officer:** The minister will now take questions on the issues raised by his statement. I will allow up to 20 minutes for that process.

**Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP):** I thank the minister for his statement and for the advance copy of it that he made available to us today. I congratulate the minister on improving the Executive's ability to spend taxpayers' money. I say to him out of courtesy and consensus that he might find the experience of raising money just as enjoyable, if in the Scottish Parliament he had the powers of a normal finance minister.

The minister is quite right to contrast this performance with the lamentable performance in the early years of devolution. The year that he cited as the worst example, however, was 2000-01, when Mr McConnell was the Minister for Finance, so that was not a particularly career-enhancing move.

Will the minister tell us how much money that has not yet been allocated to public expenditure programmes is currently held by Her Majesty's Treasury on behalf of the Executive? Will he also say what plans he has to allocate the budget consequential that were made available by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and what consideration he has given to using some of that resource to tackle problems relating to the funding of free personal care in countless local authorities in the country? Finally, does the minister accept that, despite all his protests to the contrary, his plan to draw down £800 million from the Treasury over the next two years is just a crude and blatant attempt by the Labour and Liberal Executive to buy its way through the next election, and that that attempt is doomed to failure?

**Mr McCabe:** First, I thank Mr Swinney for his warm congratulations to the Scottish Executive on its excellent financial performance this year. I am sure that our colleagues in the press gallery will duly note those congratulations. It is a delight to recognise our consensual approach to such important matters.

Consensus now ends as I say to Mr Swinney that, if I tried to keep pace with the spending commitments of the Scottish National Party I would get an enormous amount of practice at raising money. Not a day goes by without the SNP spraying more money about with not a concern for our economy or where that money would come from.

The reason why our performance this year has been so acceptable is that our approach to the management of finances in Scotland is so different from the irresponsible approach adopted by the SNP. That irresponsibility is reflected in how it tries to deprecate the £800 million that will be applied to the betterment of services and the Scottish economy over the next two years. It is quite remarkable that in this day and age, someone could indicate that that amount of money will somehow be less than useful to our economy.

Earlier, I said that the remaining money held at Her Majesty's Treasury is Scottish resources. It is available when we need it; it will assist us as we cope with the next spending review; and it will ensure consolidation of the remarkable progress that has been made in public expenditure in the years since devolution.

**Derek Brownlee (South of Scotland) (Con):** I also thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. Those who are more cynical than I am might fear that the £800 million is a pre-election bribe. To lay our minds at rest, will the minister tell us about the timing of that spending and how much of it will happen before next May's election and how much afterwards?

Given the genuine concerns expressed by the minister about the cruel deception that I presume he attributes to Mr Swinney—I would be very disappointed if Mr Swinney were cruelly deceiving the Scottish people and I ask him to put that beyond doubt—will the minister clarify not just how much money is deposited with HM Treasury, about which he gave some figures to the Finance Committee last year, but will he provide in tabular format the changes in those figures year on year since 1999 and the uses to which the money has been put? Will he also clarify whether the Chief Secretary to the Treasury has any right to withhold that money, or whether it is entirely up to the Scottish ministers to draw it down as and when they see fit?

**Mr McCabe:** Mr Brownlee made a number of points. He asked for detailed information that I thought he might be aware of, as it has been published annually in the appropriate accounts documentation both at Westminster and in Scotland. If he refers to that documentation, published by the Public Accounts Committee at Westminster, he will find the information that he requires.

I said that we will draw down, over the next two years, in the region of £800 million. We will apply that as appropriate to meet our commitments over the remaining period of the current spending review. It is intended to meet the commitments that we have made and the programmes that are already set out.

I made it clear in my statement that we will not rush headlong into unnecessary expenditure before an election. We will do what is right for Scotland—we will spend money when it is right to do so and to the best possible effect.

**Christine May (Central Fife) (Lab):** I join John Swinney in congratulating the minister and the Executive on spending taxpayers' money, but I add my congratulations on spending it wisely, which I noticed Mr Swinney forgot to say.

In considering bids from the various departments of the Executive, will the minister look to encourage bids for measures such as the improvement of safety in our town centres so that we can once again make them strong and thriving places to which businesses will locate?

**Mr McCabe:** It would be wrong of me to give specific commitments in advance of our spending review discussions, but I can reassure the member that the thread of public safety runs through everything that the Executive does. I referred earlier to building safer, stronger communities, and public safety in our town centres and the smaller communities in our towns is extremely important to the Executive. Public safety and people's belief that they are safe in their own town and their own locality is central to what we are trying to achieve. The Executive has a range of initiatives—not least our antisocial behaviour initiatives—that are designed to address safety issues and provide increased reassurance to the population of Scotland. I give the member an absolute assurance that we will continue in the same vein over the period of this spending review and the next.

**Mr Andrew Arbuckle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):** I welcome the latest figures from the minister, which show that we are down to low levels of cash carryover. The minister highlighted the massive increase in revenue expenditure, but major capital projects are now coming to fruition, thankfully. Is there a danger of inflating costs, particularly in the construction industry, because of the large amount of capital works that are under way? I refer specifically to Scottish Water.

**Mr McCabe:** We do not think that that is the case, and we have taken specific action to try to ensure that it is not the case. One of the most notable actions is, of course, our infrastructure investment plan, through which we have tried to pull together, over a much extended period, the capital works that will be available to the market. We have engaged with major Scottish construction businesses and financial houses to ensure that the market is aware of the opportunities that are coming along and that it can gear up for them. We have also engaged with a variety of institutions south of the border. For example, we held a seminar last year at the headquarters of Ernst and



Young Global Ltd. We want to ensure that the market has the widest possible knowledge of the opportunities that are available because of the record levels of capital expenditure in Scotland. We are doing our best to ensure that the market can take the opportunities and prepare in a way that avoids the kind of situation that Mr Arbuckle highlighted.

**Mark Ballard (Lothians) (Green):** I am grateful to the minister for making his statement available to members in advance. Clearly, end-year flexibility is necessary for the good governance of Scotland, but I am concerned about the levels of demand-led underspend that are shown in the Executive's figures. The unclaimed £50 million that was allocated to common agricultural policy market support and rural development programmes certainly rings alarm bells. Can the minister ensure that, in order to reduce future underspends, appropriate steps are taken to ensure that potential recipients of that funding are not only aware of their entitlement, but have all the information necessary for making applications? Can he also ensure that the timing of the application process does not conflict with peaks in the farming calendar?

**Mr McCabe:** We have many problems in the Executive, but getting people to claim money is seldom one of them, particularly in the area to which Mr Ballard referred. However, I assure the member that we are as committed as anyone else to ensuring that the people who should receive the funding do receive it. We believe that we have had a good working relationship with the agricultural sector for a number of years, which continues. I am not aware of the specific circumstances behind the figure to which Mr Ballard referred, but I give the assurance that we will do all that we can to ensure that the maximum number of potential recipients make a claim for the money.

**Jim Mather (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** I would like to focus on the underspends in the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department and Scottish Water. Given the problems at Scottish Enterprise, what scope is there to avoid forced discontinuities of service and delays in venture funding, particularly given that the Executive is jointly and severally liable for the failure to get to grips with the resource accounting and budgeting system at Scottish Enterprise?

On Scottish Water, I note that the under-borrowing is less than in previous years, but I also note that there is still considerable carry-forward from prior years' underspend. Will that money be fully available to Scottish Water in the period 2006-10? Further, will the Executive respond to the latest paper by Jim and Margaret Cuthbert—it will be published in the Fraser of Allander institute's quarterly economic commentary

tomorrow—as it delivers yet more proof that the Executive and the water industry commissioner for Scotland contrived to have Scottish Water overcharge its customers, under-borrow, and understate its profits?

**Mr McCabe:** Mr Mather refers to a paper to be published tomorrow, so I am at a bit of a disadvantage. When we get the paper, we will consider what response, if any, we will give.

As Mr Mather knows, there is both a cash and a non-cash underspend at Scottish Enterprise. Under resource accounting and budgeting, that must be taken into account. The board of Scottish Enterprise has already indicated its plans for the next year. It has liaised closely with my colleague the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, and he has ensured as best he can that the priorities set by the Scottish Executive are being adhered to by the Scottish Enterprise board.

**Colin Fox (Lothians) (SSP):** I thank the minister for his statement, which—unlike other members—I did not see in advance.

The minister seems to be dressing up end-year flexibility as a cunning way of keeping our own money. The Executive's explanation of end-year flexibility suggests on the one hand that we are really obliged to return any excess to the Treasury—and I am sure that the people of Scotland will take a dim view of giving money back to London—and on the other hand that the Executive, fearful of wasting the money, should keep a hold of it for future years. Does the Executive not rather fail the acid test of effectively and efficiently spending money where the people of Scotland want to see it making a real difference?

The underspend of £235 million, announced this afternoon by the minister, follows a cumulative underspend over the past three years of something like £1 billion. Will the minister accept that there is no room for complacency, and will he therefore reconsider the answer that the First Minister gave me last week when I suggested that the Executive consider funding the national minimum wage helpline in Scotland? The helpline helps tens of thousands of people who, illegally, are paid below the national minimum wage. Reinstating the helpline would cost just £36,000.

When Mr McCabe was Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care, he told us repeatedly that Scotland could not afford the £40 million to cover the costs of the abolition of prescription charges. Does he now accept that that is utterly incorrect, given what he has said today? Is the minister really saying that money is not available to help the low paid, to help patients or to help children with, for example, free school meals?

**Mr McCabe:** Over the past minute or so, I have been convinced that Mr Fox has only a tenuous grasp of the issues. To say the least, the links that he makes between issues are strange.

I do not think that, by any objective test, or by any “reasonable person” test, anyone would think that an underspend of £235 million, when set against an overall budget of £26.5 billion, is anything other than good and sensible financial management. We need a facility to carry money forward. Back in the dim and distant past, that facility was not necessarily available to Scotland, but it is now. Resources carried forward are held for us at Her Majesty’s Treasury. That is done for a very good reason: this is a devolved Administration and we have a part to play in the macroeconomic management of this country. We are happy and proud to play that part.

**Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab):** Sound financial management by the partnership between the Labour-led Scottish Executive and the Labour Government at Westminster has led to record amounts of money being spent on public services in Scotland. I welcome that; long may it continue.

When the minister considers bids from the various departments to reallocate the money, will he ensure that the Scottish Executive’s efforts to reach its targets for homelessness by 2012 are recognised and that money is made available for social rented housing?

**Mr McCabe:** It would be inappropriate for me to pre-empt the decisions of the next spending review. However, I assure the member that we will pursue with vigour the policies that we have set out—particularly with regard to homelessness.

**Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con):** I note that one of the significant expenditure shortfalls is in the justice account. More specifically, there has been a £33 million underspend on the prisons estate. Is that a tacit admission on the part of the Executive that the much-vaunted sentencing bill will not reduce but will increase the number of prisoners who are released early? If not, why was that money not committed?

**Mr McCabe:** It is a tacit admission that we are doing substantial and remarkable things with our justice budget. People in Scotland can see that substantial progress has been made on the reform of our court systems. In any situation that involves a capital programme, slippage can occur for a range of reasons, but the capital programme to which the member refers will be delivered.

**John Swinburne (Central Scotland) (SSCUP):** I congratulate the minister on his financial statement and on the fact that he has £235 million, more or less, to spend. I have just left a meeting of the cross-party group in the Scottish Parliament on

ME, which is a condition that costs the United Kingdom around £4 billion per annum. Will the minister consider using some of the surplus money to help to find a cure or a solution to what is an extremely vexed problem?

**Mr McCabe:** As I have said, we will consider all the bids that are made during the next spending review. I have no doubt that the Minister for Health and Community Care is as concerned as anyone else about people who are unfortunate enough to suffer from ME. Our health service has received record resources and is producing record results. I am sure that it is just as determined to tackle that condition as it is to tackle any other.

**Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD):** The minister must be aware that the amount of end-year flexibility is greater than the Scottish Executive’s entire budget for free personal care for the elderly. When the Executive’s policy was announced in Parliament four years ago, the amount that was to be spent per person per week on free personal and nursing care for the elderly was £210. The figure is still £210 today. Will the minister consider asking other members of the Cabinet to review the situation and to consider upgrading the payment so that it does not wither on the vine?

**Mr McCabe:** We must remember that before the introduction of free personal and nursing care, many individuals were already in receipt of such care. Some time ago, we decided to ensure that that benefit would be available to all. If the member thinks about the totality of expenditure on people who require nursing and personal care, he will realise that that figure is substantially in excess of the amount of underspend that I have announced today.

**Bruce Crawford (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** I am glad that the picture is improving, but what is the extent of the resources that remain available at the Treasury for the minister to draw on? He did not answer John Swinney’s question about that.

I think that the minister said that since devolution we had experienced the largest sustained rise in public spending in living memory. That might be down to the Barnett formula. What message does Mr McCabe have for those people south of the border, such as Joel Barnett the former Labour minister, who are trying to dismantle that formula? Over time, the Barnett formula will squeeze the amount of money that is available for public expenditure in Scotland.

**Mr McCabe:** It is already well known that about £1.4 billion is available at Her Majesty’s Treasury. I have announced today that we will draw down about £800 million. I am reluctant to give a specific figure because the process that goes on is

dynamic—there are transactions going on all the time. If I tried to pin down a specific figure, I would be in danger of misleading people, which I do not want to do.

The phenomenal increase in the provision of public resources that has taken place since 1999—a budget of around £17 billion in 1999 will have increased to £30 billion by 2008—is down to Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. The Labour Government is determined to ensure that there is stability and proper economic management and that people in this country will not have to face mortgage rates of 15 per cent or an unemployment figure of more than 3 million people. Those things have been eradicated. As a result of that financial management, we live in a country that has the highest levels of employment in a generation and the second highest number of economically active people of all the 25 countries of the European Union. That has come about as the result of prudent and sensible financial management by the Government at Westminster.

Finally, I turn to Mr Crawford's question on the Barnett formula. Anyone who stepped out of their particular political allegiance and made an objective examination of how Scotland is served by that formula would slip into the background and be a lot quieter than they have been over the past few days.

## Race Equality

**The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S2M-4601, in the name of Malcolm Chisholm, on race equality.

15:06

**The Minister for Communities (Malcolm Chisholm):** I am grateful for the opportunity to introduce the debate and to restate the Scottish Executive's continuing commitment to tackle racism and promote race equality. Members will be aware that, during 2004-05, the Scottish Executive undertook a review of race equality work in Scotland. Given that it is just over six months since we published the review recommendations, the time is right to update the Parliament on the progress that has been made since then and, in so doing, to give members the chance to debate the issues and contribute to the development of the Scottish Executive's national strategy and action plan for race equality in Scotland, which is due to be published later this year.

The Scottish Executive undertook a review of race equality work in Scotland to consider whether the focus and priorities of our work were appropriate within the context of the present time. The primary purpose of the review was to determine the best approach that is required to deliver tangible improvements in the lives of Scotland's diverse communities in addition to ensuring that resources are maximised and directed to best effect.

A great number of individuals and organisations with an interest in the area responded to the review. I am extremely grateful to them for their contributions, which have shaped our policy. Among other things, the review told us that the Scottish Executive should provide more strategic leadership and direction on race equality; that public bodies should accelerate the delivery of race equality and tackle racial disadvantage in key public policy areas; and that development and capacity building are necessary for the minority ethnic voluntary sector.

Having considered the issues and views that were expressed during the review process, we have developed a framework for action that will help to ensure lasting and effective change and, alongside the forthcoming national strategy and action plan, the delivery of race equality for all in Scotland. Later this year, we will publish the national strategy and accompanying action plan. The strategy will set out the vision, basis and direction for our future work on race equality and

the action plan will outline what the Scottish Executive will do.

Respondents to the review identified four specific policy areas that merit further work: ethnic minorities and the labour market; asylum seekers and refugees; Gypsy Travellers; and race equality in rural areas. Strategic groups comprising key stakeholders have been established to examine the issues and prepare the action plans that will inform the national strategy and action plan. I will say something on the first two policy areas in this opening speech and address the latter two in my closing remarks.

Even when class and qualifications are taken into account, we know that many people from minority ethnic backgrounds earn less for doing the same or a similar job as their white cohorts; are less likely to be in employment; and are still underrepresented in many occupations. That is why we set up a short-life project group, with membership from central and local government, the voluntary sector, the Commission for Racial Equality and employers' organisations. The group is chaired by Dr Charan Gill and both Allan Wilson and I attend its meetings. The group's overarching objective is to increase the number of people from ethnic minorities in the labour market and to address barriers to their participation. The group has three specific objectives: first, elimination of the ethnic penalty; secondly, reduction of the employment gap; and thirdly, reduction in occupational segregation. The group aims to produce an agreed action plan by the end of next month.

It has been three years since the Scottish refugee integration forum published its action plan, which sought to address the barriers that prevent refugees from playing a full role in Scottish society. I reconvened the SRIF in December 2005 and have chaired it since in order to produce a revised action plan that will address the new and emerging issues that affect refugees. The new action plan will examine, among other matters, specific issues such as health, housing, justice, young people, community development and positive images. It will seek to build on the essential principles of the original action plan and to fill any gaps that may have developed. We will publish the new action plan, following proper consultation, later in the year.

**Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP):** The minister said that he would deal with asylum seekers and refugees. Will he address the asylum seeker issue later in his speech?

**Malcolm Chisholm:** I have been dealing with it. When we talk about the Scottish refugee integration forum, we mean asylum seekers and refugees.

Since the dispersal of asylum seekers began in 2000, Scotland has learned a great deal about how to make new arrivals feel welcome and integrate into our communities. My belief is that effective integration is beneficial not only for refugees, asylum seekers and their immediate communities, but for Scotland as a whole. Refugees and asylum seekers bring useful and sometimes rare skills and knowledge to Scotland. If they integrate successfully they can bring huge benefits to the whole of society.

The Scottish refugee integration fund is a grant scheme that is used to support the SRIF action plan that I mentioned. Between 2003 and 2006 the scheme has provided more than £1.5 million to projects that take forward key actions outlined in the strategy. A further £600,000 to fund projects in the current financial year was allocated two weeks ago.

As well as providing essential advice and information to refugees and asylum seekers, the projects provide services that include befriending schemes, community volunteering projects, drop-in centres, translation and interpreting resources and awareness-raising activities. The projects are run by a variety of organisations that range from major United Kingdom charities such as the British Red Cross to small community organisations such as St Rollox Church of Scotland. The wide range of projects that is funded through the grant scheme reflects the range of issues that is addressed in the SRIF action plan.

In addition to providing support to develop the capacity of the minority ethnic voluntary sector, the review highlighted the pressing need to provide better support to communities. As a result, the Scottish Executive established the race equality, integration and community support fund. It will provide £2 million during 2006-08 to support projects that foster greater integration, understanding and dialogue between communities; provide support to tackle issues of inequality and integration; and encourage greater partnership working and improved engagement between minority ethnic communities and public sector bodies.

Just under a fortnight ago, I was pleased to announce awards from the new fund when I visited one of the projects that will receive funding at the sports medicine centre at Hampden park. The project, which is run by Glasgow Ansar, Glasgow Maccabi and Bellshill Athletic Football Club, brings together young people from across Glasgow to combat racism, foster integration, build friendships and promote diversity through a football-based fitness and training programme. I could give many other examples of projects we are funding that promote integration and race equality in a similar or related way.

I am aware that much of what I have discussed so far concerns new work associated with the outcomes of our review of race equality work. In the meantime, our programme of race equality, integration and community support work in other areas continues apace.

Our one Scotland, many cultures national anti-racism campaign is now in its fourth phase of activity. In order to spread as far as possible our message that there is no place for racism, we have continued our multimedia broadcasting strategy. We have targeted audiences using prime-time television and radio adverts and the internet. As part of the campaign, we have continued to fund a range of initiatives that raise people's awareness of racism and its effects. The Scottish Trades Union Congress's one workplace, equal rights project is mainstreaming equalities into the work of unions throughout Scotland. The project ensures that the key messages from the Executive's work to tackle racism and mainstream equality are sustained and fully implemented throughout Scottish workplaces.

We fund Show Racism the Red Card, which harnesses the profile of professional footballers to work with young people, schools, fans and Scottish football clubs to tackle racism on and off the pitch; the Heartstone project, which uses the media of photography and storytelling to raise awareness of the issues of racism and xenophobia; and Young Scot, the national information service for 16 to 26-year-olds. Most recently we supported the Scottish Refugee Council's refugee week, which acknowledged the positive contribution that refugees make to the country.

Throughout the Scottish Executive and its agencies, good progress is being made to mainstream race equality into our daily business and policy making. I have time to give only a couple of examples. The Scottish Executive Health Department has continued to build on the policy in "Fair for All", which was developed to tackle racial inequalities and ensure delivery of a culturally competent health service. The success of the approach has led to the document "Fair for All: the Wider Challenge", which encompasses initiatives on age, disability, gender, sexual orientation and spiritual care and includes specific actions that are to be undertaken by the Health Department and the national health service in Scotland to promote equality in the workplace.

It goes without saying that schools have a key role in the drive for race equality and in preparing young people to live in a multicultural and inclusive society. The Education Department has funded a number of resources that schools can use to tackle racism and discrimination and to promote equality and integration. The department is also

making progress with several equality initiatives in co-operation with schools and education authorities and with research on the educational experiences of children of asylum seekers in Scottish schools.

Tackling racism is not a matter only for Government or public bodies—we all have a responsibility to speak out against racism. In 2004-05 a total of 4,927 racist incidents were reported to police forces in Scotland, which was an increase of 29.6 per cent on the previous year. However, the Commission for Racial Equality estimates that as few as one in five racist incidents is reported. The level of racism and the increased number of racist incidents in Scotland are of great concern to the Scottish Executive. We are examining the development of a monitoring framework to maximise intervention and to tackle the underreporting of racist incidents.

In that context, it is only right that Parliament should devote some time to the recent reports of people and property being attacked for showing support for a football team. I am sure that members will join me in expressing outrage and disgust at those attacks, as will all right-minded people in this country. As the Minister for Communities, I will make perfectly clear the Scottish Executive's position on the events: we whole-heartedly condemn those acts of mindless violence, which the police are investigating as racist assaults. There is simply no place for racism in Scotland. Racism harms us all, wherever and however it manifests itself. Scotland cannot become the confident and successful nation that we all want it to be unless we rid the country of the scourge of racism, including anti-English hatred.

We are determined to establish a modern, dynamic Scotland that fosters integration but respects diversity. We want everybody to be able to help shape Scotland's future and to share in what the country has to offer. We want a country in which no one is held back because of their colour, race or background and where there is no place for racism, in whatever form it appears.

I move,

That the Parliament supports the development of a national strategy and action plan on race equality and welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the strategy; welcomes the significant funding provided to local projects through the Race Equality, Integration and Community Support Fund and Scottish Refugee Integration Fund and national projects like Show Racism the Red Card and Heartstone; supports Scottish Executive priorities to increase ethnic minorities' participation in the labour market, build more inclusive rural communities, provide better services to Scotland's Gypsies/Travellers, support refugee integration and continue to raise awareness of the issues through the One Scotland Many Cultures campaign, and supports the Executive's other work to help tackle racism and promote race equality in Scotland.

15:18

**Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP):** I will speak to the Scottish National Party amendment and my colleague Sandra White will address some of the specific initiatives that are referred to in the Government's motion, which we support. We will not support the Conservative amendment, because it would add nothing and is therefore unnecessary.

My speech will have three interwoven strands: the prejudice that some asylum seekers endure; the failure to allow asylum seekers to take up employment while their cases are being considered; and the deportation of valued immigrants, which may conform to the requirements of England, but not to those of Scotland, neither in principle nor in the context of the fresh talent initiative.

An article in *The Scotsman* yesterday described the experience of one asylum seeker, Ahlam Souidi, who is 43 and was a legal adviser in Algeria, but who fled after receiving threats from elements there who did not like her law work. She said:

"We had very bad ideas about Glasgow ... People said the weather was horrible, which wasn't a big problem for us, but they also said while the Glasgow people were friendly, they were also very racist."

The article continued:

"Sadly, their initial experience of the city did nothing to dispel that image ... The racial harassment started the night they moved in—verbal abuse, condoms through the letterbox and on the door handles, graffiti on their door referring to the numbers killed in the 9/11 atrocity ... While she can't excuse the racist behaviour she experienced in Nitshill, she does feel that the people there should have been better briefed before the immigrants started arriving".

I shall address that later. Five years on, and despite the fact that her children are well integrated, regard Glaswegian as their first language and are doing well at school, the Home Office is still to make a decision over their case.

Such racial harassment was corroborated in recent evidence to the Communities Committee on social inclusion. Anne-Marie Smith, a single parent, said in evidence:

"An incident happened a fortnight ago in my area of Pollok. The forum was trying to get people—teenagers—to mix with refugees. The situation ended up with the refugees and the workers having to get a police escort out of the area. There was a misunderstanding. This goes back to the relationships between the younger ones and the older generation. Nothing is put on for them but, all of a sudden, things are put on for the refugees. People ask, 'What are they getting when we're not getting anything?' That issue will come up a lot."—[*Official Report, Communities Committee*, 31 May 2006; c 3608.]

That was recounted not to blame, but to explain. It is as plain as a pikestaff that if we simply plant asylum seekers in deprived areas, those attitudes,

by some but not all—I will come to that in my concluding remarks—are predictable and therefore avoidable.

Of course, there is always Dungavel, where—on Scottish soil—the Home Office even imprisoned children. Between 150 and 200 people are there today, some of whom were ferried in from Northern Ireland. There has been criticism of Dungavel by Northern Ireland's human rights commission. After a recent visit to Dungavel, the chief commissioner, Professor McWilliams, said that the delegation was not impressed with the conditions. She said:

"The accommodation for men is in dormitories, with six to eight beds—that quite shocked me to see it in this day and age."

She went on to say:

"Women are in a separate centre. Families are located there as well."

Will the minister advise whether there are children at Dungavel? That quotation suggests that there are. That is despite Scotland's commissioner for children and young people challenging not only the detention of children but the manner in which they were deported: dragged from their beds in the small hours, in a country that was perhaps all they knew and which they regarded as home, their parents handcuffed by uniformed police officers. She challenged that with the withering words:

"Children are not a reserved matter."

All that—the racism; the humiliation; the forced unemployment, sometimes of consultants and doctors whom we desperately need—happens under a Westminster writ that runs here. According to Frank Field, former minister for welfare reform, the United Kingdom is becoming a "global traffic station" for migrants. He continued:

"There will be economic gains"—

from immigration—

"but I am just raising whether any country can sustain the rate of immigration we are now suffering."

Frankly, Frank, the answer is yes. Scotland's needs are not those of the UK; in fact, quite the contrary is true. To name but two examples, our Minister for Health and Community Care takes poaching trips abroad for health professionals and we rely on foreign construction workers.

The First Minister launched the fresh talent initiative, the success of which the Executive is very coy about. Although there have been only 586 applications since the scheme was launched in 2005, the initiative is laudable. However, it is grimly ironic, given that we allow Westminster to deport mature and young talent from Scotland. With a falling population, Scotland needs immigrants. The Minister for Health and

Community Care and the First Minister have demonstrated that. What could be plainer than that we should not deport families who have lived here for years? What could be plainer than letting those who seek asylum work while they are here and be assessed for residency? What could be plainer than the fact that introducing asylum seekers into areas in which communities are already struggling daily to get by can be a recipe for racist revenge? What could be plainer than the fact that we need our own immigration policies that are tailored to Scottish needs?

I shall finish with a heartening quotation from Maureen West, who gave evidence to the Communities Committee. We were talking about food, and she said:

"It is true; a lot of people do not know how to cook food. I got involved with some of the refugees in our area—I must have a friendly face—and they were asking, 'What's this?' They had come from villages and been dumped in the middle of Castlemilk. They did not know where the post office was and what the food was in the supermarket. They had never seen that stuff in their lives before because the food in their country is different.

We tried to organise classes to show them how to do mince and potatoes. We had a cross-cultural event where they brought all their African food and we brought mince and potatoes, haggis and turnip, potato scones and tea cakes, and it all went like snow off a dyke; it was brilliant."—[*Official Report, Communities Committee*, 31 May 2006; c 3625.]

That is the authentic voice of Scotland. This is a migrant nation—80 million of our descendants live in foreign countries. We migrated and, in most cases, were made welcome. That is a voice that should be heard more loudly with our own policies, for our own people, for our own needs.

I move amendment S2M-4601.1, to insert at end:

“, condemns however the treatment of asylum seekers who after years in Scotland, often with children born in Scotland, can still be deported and while living here are prevented from seeking employment despite their wish to do so, and considers that this situation completely contradicts the Fresh Talent initiative and the culture of an inclusive Scotland which the Executive quite rightly seeks to promote.”

15:25

**Dave Petrie (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I apologise for the state of my voice. I assure members that it has nothing to do with the world cup. It gives me great pleasure to open this important and worthwhile debate on behalf of my party. The Conservative party has always recognised the value of immigration and migrant communities.

It is a common characteristic of the British, and of the Scots in particular, to mix and integrate with people from different cultures. Just look at the

historic popularity of Italian ice cream parlours, the multitude of multicultural restaurants that we all frequent on a regular basis and the wonderful mix of people from various ethnic backgrounds who now populate our schools, workplaces and universities.

The ethnic communities in our society are a direct consequence of historical links with a wealth of nations. On 15 June, I delivered a speech to this chamber on migration in the Highlands and Islands and praised the existence of an increase in migrant workers, particularly from Poland, who are contributing to our society and helping to maintain the Scottish economy in the region that I represent. However, I also drew to members' attention the need to put in place a structure that will encourage integration and help race relations.

In this wonderful country in which we live, it is a shame that a minority of misguided individuals show a darker side to Scottish culture and attitudes. If we are to encourage immigration into Scotland—which we must do, for the cultural and economic benefits that it brings—it is important that the Executive takes a lead in the development of a national strategy on race equality.

I welcome the fact that the strategy has been introduced. However, I would like to point out that racism and bigotry are aimed not only at the colour of someone's skin. As Malcolm Chisholm said, the recent world cup distractions have done a lot to highlight how much more is still to be done. However, they have also highlighted a somewhat half-hearted approach on the part of certain members of the Executive. I cannot help but feel that certain comments that have been made have stoked the flames of bigotry towards our nearest neighbour and have legitimised many of the attitudes that we are trying to fight. That reached its lowest point with the attacks on England supporters in Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Although those attacks were wholly unrepresentative of Scottish society, they illustrate an underlying and pernicious blot on our society that is stubbornly resistant to change. I urge all members not to go down that route and to fight against any discrimination, whether it be anti-English or anti-any culture. I hope that, in the future, the Executive will maintain a more joined-up approach to race relations. That will have to happen if it is to have any success in that regard.

The Conservative party, being a party of localism, is pleased to see that the Executive has invested a large amount of money in local community projects through initiatives such as the race equality, integration and community support fund. The most effective way of solving a problem is through action at base level, rather than through a top-down approach that is controlled and directed straight from the Executive offices. I urge

ministers to continue and to make greater use of that approach, tapping into the huge resource that is available through schools, community groups and the media to spread the word.

Above all, integration is the most important way in which to protect against bigotry and racism. We should encourage all parties to see what mutual benefit can be gained from one another through constructive dialogue. History has taught us that, when two communities co-exist side by side without integration, that breeds mistrust and paranoia. We have seen that in many of the old industrial cities of northern England. I am pleased that initiatives such as the Scottish refugee integration fund are addressing that issue.

When we welcome people to our country, we have to demonstrate that spirit throughout our communities. I would go further by urging the Executive to support access to English language lessons as the surest way to true integration. Figures for 2004 suggest that more than 150,000 people in Scotland are in need of English language support. A Scottish Executive strategy was introduced in 2004 but, regrettably, its implementation has been slow. Urgent action is needed. Language barriers can present a major health and safety concern in the workplace. Many migrant workers, particularly from eastern Europe, are coming to Scotland to work as labourers, and if managers cannot properly explain to them the health and safety rules, many of which are a lot more comprehensive in this country, that presents a danger to the migrant workers themselves and to their co-workers. It is therefore essential that the Executive makes language its number 1 priority in promoting integration and better race relations.

There are areas in which the Conservative party applauds the efforts that the Executive is making, but there are also areas in which we disagree. To disagree with policy to improve race relations does not, however, put us in opposition to the overall aim, which is a common misconception. We are concerned about such expensive drivers as the fresh talent initiative, which assigns a huge amount of taxpayers' money to encouraging people to come here. As Christine Grahame said, the results have yet to prove that investment's worth. Instead, we should invest in creating a healthy economy, as opposed to one that lags behind that of the rest of Britain. We should cut red tape and provide affordable housing and public services for our communities. If we do that, we will be spoilt for choice with applications to move here, and we will have provided a healthier economy for the people already living here.

In support of the motion, I praise the Executive's efforts, and I commit my support to any possible means of effectively improving race relations in Scotland. The fact that only 57 per cent of minority

ethnic working-age people are in employment, as opposed to 73 per cent of non-minority ethnic people, suggests that there are still a lot of barriers to be broken down and a lot of issues to be tackled.

Without wanting to steal a much-used new Labour catchphrase, I believe that education is the key: education in our schools; education of non-English-speaking immigrants; and education in society, through such initiatives as the one Scotland advertising campaign, which I applaud. That will aid integration and understanding, and will bind communities together into a cohesive Scotland, with everyone striving for the same goals. I urge members to support the amendment in my name.

I move amendment S2M-4601.2, to leave out from "supports Scottish Executive priorities" to end and insert:

"welcomes the intention to support improved integration and understanding between all groups in the community, and urges the Scottish Executive to deliver tangible improvements in the lives of Scotland's diverse communities whilst ensuring resources are maximised and directed to best effect".

15:32

**Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD):** The Parliament and the Scottish Executive have a responsibility to provide leadership in the fight against racism and in the efforts that are needed to eliminate racial disadvantage and inequality. The commitments in the Executive parties' partnership agreement on equal opportunity, particularly on tackling racism, demonstrate that the Executive views those policy areas as a priority. That voluntary prioritisation is backed by the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which places a general statutory duty on the Government and other public bodies to promote race equality.

The Executive's race equality scheme was published in November 2005, and it sets out arrangements for meeting the statutory duty to promote race equality. Prior to that, between June 2004 and February 2005, the Scottish Executive conducted a comprehensive review of race equality work, with its primary purpose being to determine the best way

"to deliver tangible improvements in the lives of Scotland's diverse communities whilst ensuring resources are maximised and directed to best effect."

That was reiterated by the Minister for Communities this afternoon, and those words are also used in the Tory amendment. The conclusions of that review included a need for more strategic leadership and direction on race equality from the Executive; a need to accelerate the delivery of race equality by public bodies, which should be getting to grips with racial



disadvantage in key policy areas; and a need for development and capacity building in the minority ethnic voluntary sector.

Respondents to the review identified four specific policy areas that merited further work: ethnic minorities and the labour market, asylum seekers and refugees, Gypsy Travellers, and race equality in rural areas. The Executive has responded by setting up strategic groups in which key stakeholders will examine the issues and prepare action plans. The minister outlined some of the specific themes that are to be focused on by the working groups, and those will inform the national strategy and action plan, which we hope to welcome in the summer.

If a spur to action were needed, the Commission for Racial Equality briefing for the debate outlined a range of indicators that demonstrate that Scotland is still a long way from achieving race equality. For example, the working-age employment rate for non-white people in Scotland is 57.9 per cent, compared with 73.8 per cent for white people. Ethnic minority pupils in Scotland's schools say that they experience everyday racism. Only 1 per cent of local councillors are from an ethnic minority background and there are no visible ethnic minority members of the Parliament. Thirty-one per cent of people believe that there is a danger of race riots occurring soon in Scotland. However, as outlined in the Executive motion and in the minister's speech, significant funding is being provided to tackle racism, and much good work is being done.

I am concerned that the Commission for Racial Equality briefing highlights a lack of adequate data on which to base policies and monitor progress. Good information is essential. I hope that the Executive's strategy and action plan will focus on that fundamental issue.

I find it particularly interesting that the Commission for Racial Equality now deals mainly with cases that involve indirect or institutional discrimination rather than direct discrimination. I hope that that means that we have the mechanics broadly right and in place. However, even if that is the case, we are left with the much more difficult battle to win hearts and minds and change attitudes.

The one Scotland, many cultures campaign was a good and positive opening salvo in the battle. I also mention the Heartstone project, which breaks down prejudice by opening people's minds through their eyes. In its photographs, Heartstone shows us that people are people, whoever and wherever they are, and that we all—as human beings, living out our lives—have more in common than divides us.

Gypsy Travellers were identified in the race equality review as a group who are particularly

susceptible to harassment and discrimination. The Equal Opportunities Committee has revisited and pursued the recommendations on Gypsy Travellers that it made in its report in the first parliamentary session.

**Ms Maureen Watt (North East Scotland) (SNP):** Does the member agree that we should condemn campaigns that harass Gypsy Travellers, such as that by one of our local evening papers?

**Nora Radcliffe:** Absolutely and utterly. That newspaper has been reported on the standard of its behaviour, which is disgraceful and reprehensible.

Concern is felt about the slow progress that is being made, but there is good news, too, such as the excellent video that young Gypsy Travellers have made about their lives. There is also good news in the north-east, in the work of the Traveller Education and Information Project. We have some of the best and some of the worst in my bailiwick.

The last point that I will take from the CRE briefing, which I endorse whole-heartedly, is that promoting race equality means promoting equality for everyone. Scotland should be

“shaping a different future beneficial to all its inhabitants.”

Liberal Democrats welcome the diversity of modern Scottish society and seek to ensure that everyone—regardless of ethnicity, sexuality, gender, disability or age—is treated on an equal basis. Contemporary Scotland is right to be proud of its distinct heritage and of the new cultures, faiths and traditions that it continues to embrace. I hope that we all want the modern dynamic Scotland that the minister spoke of, which fosters integration but respects diversity, and where all can help to shape Scotland's future and share in what it offers.

To achieve that, we must lead by example as parliamentarians and individuals—by sharing mince and tatties, exchanging mealies and mealie puddings, and welcoming and valuing the contribution that in-migration makes to our community, our culture and our economic well-being. I commend the Executive motion to Parliament.

15:39

**Mark Ballard (Lothians) (Green):** I think that it is agreed that equality is fundamental to any civilised society and that we cannot afford to deny people life opportunities on the basis of bigotry and prejudice. We may feel that we in Scotland have less of a problem with prejudice and discrimination, but we must remain aware of all the marginalised groups that are present in our nation and the conditions that they face.

Christine Grahame described well how we in this country still treat people who have fled persecution in their countries. I will therefore support the Scottish National Party's amendment and urge other Greens to do so. Dungavel is a blot on Scotland and it must be closed down.

I agree with Malcolm Chisholm's condemnation of the recent attacks on people in Scotland because of the football strips that they were wearing. Such attacks having nothing to do with football—they are racist thuggery and should be condemned as such.

I do not agree with David Petrie. I have always been partisan in who I support on the football field—I will happily support anybody who plays against Manchester United—but we cannot assume that such partisanship can be translated into a legitimate reason for racist thuggery off the football pitch. Partisanship and racist thuggery are two entirely separate things. Whether a football excuse or any other excuse is made for racist thuggery, we should say that it is racist thuggery pure and simple.

I will focus on a specific group that is mentioned in the Executive's review and in the motion, and the direct and indirect discrimination that its members still face in Scotland. Like Maureen Watt and Nora Radcliffe, I condemn newspapers that still think that attacking Gypsy Travellers is legitimate and that do not recognise that such attacks are a form of racism. Around 2,000 people identify themselves as Gypsies or Travellers in Scotland. They live on council sites, privately owned sites and in unauthorised locations. A further, unknown number of Gypsies and Travellers have moved into conventional housing but still see themselves as part of the Gypsy or Traveller community.

Scottish Gypsies and Travellers are one of the most discriminated and marginalised groups in our nation. At the moment, they are not even properly legally recognised as a distinct racial and ethnic group. The Commission for Racial Equality is right to argue that that in itself is discriminatory.

**Linda Fabiani (Central Scotland) (SNP):** I wonder whether Mark Ballard shares a concern that I have. In the first session of the Parliament, either in 2001 or in 2002—I see Cathy Peattie nodding—the Equal Opportunities Committee carried out a major study into discrimination against Gypsy Travellers but, sadly, that group's perception is that nothing has changed since then. We should take action to address that community's problems.

**Mark Ballard:** I strongly agree with Linda Fabiani. In preparing for this speech, I read about the good work that the Equal Opportunities Committee has done on the issue and I share its

disappointment about the lack of progress, which it outlined in its recent report.

I want to mention some points that are made in that report. Gypsies and Travellers are still routinely unable to access services that the majority of us take for granted. The British Medical Association has reported that they are the most at-risk health group in the United Kingdom. A survey of young Gypsies and Travellers carried out by Save the Children reported that not only had the vast majority of them experienced discrimination, but 84 per cent of them thought that the level of racial discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers had stayed the same or was even getting worse. I therefore support the call in the motion to

"provide better services to Scotland's Gypsies/Travellers".

The promises that the Executive made in 2001 to improve the lives of Gypsies and Travellers in Scotland have not been taken far forward. I hope that the Equal Opportunities Committee's review of progress will be listened to to ensure that we get more than good words from the Executive—we want to see real action.

I will give another example from the Equal Opportunities Committee's report. Since 2003, the number of all-year Gypsy Traveller council pitches has been reduced from 560 to 480. Despite all the Executive's good words and everything that the Equal Opportunities Committee and the Parliament have said, Gypsies and Travellers have still not been properly included in housing strategies. I understand that eight councils still have no dedicated strategy for Gypsies and Travellers. We have to get real. We must move beyond kind words and create a real obligation on councils to provide safe, suitable and sufficient land for Gypsies and Travellers. Gypsy and Traveller sites have to be safe and protected in public planning. Gypsies and Travellers must have the same rights to security in their accommodation as anybody else.

Gypsies and Travellers are still discriminated against. We talk about them, but we still fail to act properly. Society as a whole does not recognise the extent of the discrimination and often does not recognise that Gypsies and Travellers are a racial group that faces racism. We need to tackle racism and prejudice across Scotland. We need to move beyond the overt, direct racism—the racist attacks—and consider, as Nora Radcliffe said, the institutional racism. We must recognise the needs of the most marginal groups—the asylum seekers, the refugees and the Gypsy Travellers—who are often forgotten when we talk about tackling racism and prejudice in Scotland.

I commend the motion and the SNP amendment as part of the process of ensuring that we have one Scotland that is open to all.

15:46

**Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab):** I welcome this debate and the minister's commitment to race equality. I, too, will address issues relating to Gypsy Travellers.

Since the Equal Opportunities Committee's report on Gypsy Travellers in 2001, progress on its recommendations has been slow and inconsistent from one local authority to another. There has not been enough sharing of good practice between local authorities and other service providers. Poor accommodation, poor education and poor health continue to be major aspects of social exclusion for Gypsy Travellers. The biggest single issue is accommodation. Until we resolve it, poor education and poor health will continue to be major difficulties.

Most Travellers do not have safe and secure places to stay that they can call home. We still lack accurate, up-to-date information about sites and accommodation needs, but we know that the current provision of sites is inadequate. Significantly, the police have a presumption of non-prosecution for unauthorised camping where there is inadequate camping accommodation. Adaptations for disabled and elderly Gypsy Travellers are denied because site rents are paid to general funds rather than to housing revenue funds.

Participation, development and the monitoring of services are hampered by the lack of Gypsy Traveller liaison officers, as most local authorities did not take up the Equal Opportunities Committee's 2001 recommendation, which would have made a significant difference.

In education, high levels of bullying and racist abuse are suffered by Gypsy Traveller pupils who do not hide their identity. Many Gypsy Travellers in the settled community are afraid to say that they are from Gypsy Traveller families. The secondary curriculum does little to encourage more Gypsy Travellers to attend, and little is done for those who do not or cannot attend regularly.

In relation to policing and criminal justice, there is evidence of clear understanding and commitment at senior level, but there is still a need to deliver the message throughout all the levels of the service, and not just the message about unauthorised encampments.

Good work in areas such as Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire is being undermined by unacceptable and irresponsible reporting by the local media.

Frustration that nothing had changed was clear in last year's review, especially in the evidence from the young Gypsy Travellers who took part in the original inquiry. We cannot go back in four

years' time, ask the same questions and hear the same answers. We need to move forward.

Following the publication of the early findings of our review, the final report now awaits the report of the Executive's short-life working group on Gypsy Travellers. It is not true to say that nothing has happened. I welcome the fact that that group—which includes Gypsy Travellers—is considering our recommendations in addressing issues relating to Gypsy Travellers. I hope that the group will lead to stronger, clearer direction from central Government.

It is clear that generic race policies and programmes have not been effective in including Gypsy Travellers, and that specific, highly targeted work is needed so that Gypsy Travellers can be mainstreamed into such generic policies and programmes. We need to push the agenda so that it becomes a natural part of what we do. We need to build on our policies, strategies and systems and deliver consistency across Scotland.

Of course, Gypsies and Travellers might be better protected against the extreme discrimination that they face if their ethnic minority status were afforded formal recognition in law. At the very least, that might discourage sections of the media from the worst excesses of discriminatory reporting that we have seen in recent times and, indeed, witnessed at the Equal Opportunities Committee. However, it seems unlikely that that will happen for the time being. We will have to wait for a test case under the Race Relations Act 1976. I therefore feel strongly that we need to urge the Executive to do everything within its power to change the law. I welcome the minister's undertaking to enter into a dialogue on this matter with his relevant Westminster colleagues.

The Scottish Parliament's commitment to social inclusion has raised the hopes and expectations of the socially excluded, not least those of Gypsies and Travellers. We must ensure that we do all that we can to address those hopes and fulfil those expectations. We have to do it as soon as we can, so that we do not come back in four years to find that the situation is still the same.

15:51

**Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con):** During the past 50 years, there has been a dramatic change in Scotland's ethnic make-up. For example, when I was a child, a black face or a sari-clad woman would have been a matter for comment. Nowadays, they are simply manifestations of a much more diverse society. Many thousands have come to Scotland, and we are the better for it. Those who have come from south Asia, for example, have contributed significantly to my own city of Glasgow. Law abiding and invariably hard

working, they have been an example to some sections of the indigenous community.

We can never be complacent but, at the same time, we can take pride in the fact that Scotland has generally good race relations and that it compares favourably with certain other regions of the United Kingdom, and most definitely with certain other countries within the European Community.

When we are discussing any race relations strategy, we have to consider several elements. First, as we do with everything else, we have to find out what works and what does not. If it works, we build upon it; if it does not, we discard it. We should not be afraid to discard things that do not work.

We must consider the barriers to integration, a principle one of which is difficulty with language and communication. Surely there can be no greater impediment to getting a job than not speaking the language. Not only are there health and safety issues, as Dave Petrie mentioned, but the basic fact is that someone is unlikely to get a job if they do not speak the language. Action is necessary to ensure that those who do not speak English have the appropriate language training.

At the same time, any race relations strategy has to be fair and—as with any other form of justice—has to be seen to be fair by everyone. Sometimes, when there are problems, it is because a strategy is not seen to be fair. I have no difficulty in accepting the truth of what Christine Grahame said about the incidents in Nitshill in Glasgow, but one of the problems was that when they saw the asylum seekers coming, many people in Glasgow thought—rightly or wrongly—that they were getting something that they themselves were not going to get, and there was understandable resentment. Any strategy must be fair.

Racist incidents are unacceptable but, at the same time, we and Scotland's ethnic communities have to recognise that sometimes when people come into conflict it has nothing to do with race. The number of times I have fallen out with other people in this chamber is not necessarily indicative of any personal animosity.

**Linda Fabiani:** Will Mr Aitken accept that when he does it is generally his fault?

**Bill Aitken:** In an uncharacteristic demonstration of good will, I concede that it is sometimes my fault, but certainly not always.

Within certain sections of the ethnic community, I think that there is a degree of oversensitivity that is perhaps encouraged by an attitude that has been brought into the debate, whereby we are so determined to be fair that we are sometimes a little

bit more than fair. To go in that direction is to be unfair again.

**Mark Ballard:** I am concerned that Bill Aitken seems to ignore the history of vicious racist and homophobic attacks that have happened and that continue to happen in Scotland. Given the history of such attacks, surely it is better to be oversensitive rather than insensitive.

**Bill Aitken:** I do not in the least underestimate the impact of such attacks, which are utterly and completely deplorable. At the same time, oversensitivity can sometimes result in consequences that are quite the reverse of what was intended. We need to be fair and balanced. For example, why is it that when an offence involves a racial element but the court is given no evidence to that effect, the instruction of the Crown Office is that the racial element should not be deleted from the charge at the conclusion of the Crown case? That is quite wrong. It is left to the sheriff or magistrate to delete that element at the end of the Crown case. That would not happen in other instances. The practice is quite wrong and we need to watch it.

One of the major pressures on race relations has been the events of the past seven or eight years or so, during which we have seen a massive increase in the number of asylum seekers. Frankly, the Blair Government bears a great responsibility for that. The fact is, if the matter had been properly handled at the time we would not have experienced those pressures and we would not have seen situations of the type to which Christine Grahame referred. Basically, unless we have a controlled immigration process—of course, we need immigrants—we will increase pressures on the system.

**Christine Grahame:** Does Bill Aitken concede that the population pressures south of the border are completely different from those in Scotland, which has a falling population and shrinking skills base? We need more people—to give just one reason—to provide the pensions for our pensioners in the future. Should we not have a different policy in Scotland to suit Scottish needs?

**Bill Aitken:** Obviously, immigration policy is controlled by the UK Government, and I do not believe that we should diverge from that—the matter is not within our devolved powers. Christine Grahame would expect me to say that. However, I am sure that she in turn will agree that, if a large number of immigrants arrive simultaneously without any infrastructure to support them, there will inevitably be difficulties.

This has been a good and measured debate and I have learned from some of the contributions. For example, I did not appreciate the pressures that Gypsy Travellers are under—those are a matter of

considerable concern. I have a better understanding as a result of some of the speeches.

I think that we can move onwards with the issue. Frankly, our difficulty with the SNP amendment is that, yet again—understandably, given the political perspective of its members—the SNP is attempting to introduce into the debate the issue of asylum policy, which is not within our devolved powers.

15:59

**Linda Fabiani (Central Scotland) (SNP):** We have had many parliamentary debates on race equality since the Parliament was reconvened. However, although an awful lot of good things are said and people are terribly well intentioned in such debates, we have tended only to talk about the issue. We say all the right things, but the question is what we are doing to achieve greater race equality in our society.

A few members have already referred to the extremely useful briefing from the Commission for Racial Equality. The briefing states clearly:

“progress towards race equality in Scotland is still not happening fast enough”.

It also reiterates one of my concerns, which is that progress

“remains patchy and often relies on isolated initiatives.”

The lack of a big picture worries me somewhat. An awful lot of grand initiatives are under way, and some of them are wonderful—Dave Petrie talked about the many community initiatives that are aimed at delivering different elements of the strategy. However, we perhaps sometimes miss the big picture of what we are trying to achieve.

Racial discrimination is varied. There is the direct discrimination that some members have spoken about, and a couple of members have mentioned the absolute racism of England supporters being beaten up. It strikes me that those incidents have received a large amount of publicity, given that every blooming day people suffer direct racial abuse because they happen to have a brown face or do not have English as their first language. As racist events, such incidents do not receive nearly as much publicity. That is not to downplay the horror of the other occasions that have been mentioned, but there is a kind of indirect racism in our society that does not accord the same importance to what happens daily as it affords to incidents involving people whose ethnicity is English, Welsh or European generally. Sadly, the colour of people's skin is an issue.

Indirect discrimination happens all the time. It is inadvertent—people do not even realise that they are guilty of it. We must raise awareness of that

kind of racism, just as we must keep ensuring that institutional racism is stamped out. That is still an issue, despite the Chhokar case and the Lawrence case in England. We are not yet free of institutional racism. We must continue to monitor the issue and to work towards improving the situation.

Stereotyping is something else that we do. I had a wry smile on my face when Dave Petrie referred to the arrival of the Italian community and how much we all loved its ice cream parlours. What a stereotype that is. I say to him that we started in chip shops and moved on to ice cream parlours—he should get his facts right next time. I am not trying to get at Dave Petrie. The Italian community has internalised the stereotype and turned that kind of humour on itself, for various historical reasons that I do not have time to go into. I often think of myself as a third-generation Italian. I do not suffer racism, but if I were third-generation African, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Chinese, I would suffer racism because of how I looked and spoke. That is inherently wrong.

What are we going to do about it? I am glad that the minister is looking to develop further the Scottish Executive's one Scotland strategy. My concern is that it focuses very much on direct racism. I would like the final documentation that will come out over the next few years to be expanded to address the more hidden types of racism that also exist.

The minister focused on three main themes: employment, the Scottish refugee integration forum and mainstreaming. I am glad that he put on record the fact that the forum covers asylum seekers, because there is some confusion about that. The ethnic minorities and the labour market strategic group that Dr Charan Gill is heading up will look at labour issues. As some members have rightly pointed out, non-white people from ethnic minorities are less successful in the labour market. I have heard some mutterings about what the group's findings will be. Will the minister clarify whether the data that are being used to formulate the report, which will appear at the end of next month, are specific to Scotland? Do we have sufficient data to back up the report, or do we merely have extrapolated UK data, because much of what is involved—employment legislation, for example—is reserved? If we are serious about moving forward in this area, we need to know that the base data from which we start are absolutely right. We know that it is no longer true that ethnic minorities constitute 2 per cent of the population of Scotland. We need to update that figure, which came from the 2001 census.

I ask the minister what representations he has made to the Home Office on the specific issue of reinstating the right-to-work concession to asylum

seekers in Scotland. Under a European directive, it is perfectly acceptable for asylum seekers to work. In fact, if a decision on an asylum seeker's status has not been made a year after their arrival, they should have the right to work. What representations are we making to ensure that level of equality?

I note that, although the Scottish refugee integration forum action plan is expected later in the year, it is already late—we were promised it before then. I ask the minister to be more specific about how much later it will be. There are also concerns about funding. I do not deny that admirable work and consultation are involved in the new action plan and that some really knowledgeable people are contributing, but we need to know when the action plan will be published and that budgets will be set for the beginning of 2007 so that we can move on.

Many Executive departments are still not carrying out proper race equality impact assessments in the mistaken belief that their initiatives and policies do not have a racial dimension. Absolutely everything has a racial dimension, just as everything has a gender dimension. I would like to hear from the minister that impact assessments will be mainstreamed properly across Government departments.

I finish with the SNP amendment. It is crucial that asylum seekers are granted equality with everyone else in our country and are not regarded as being somehow basic. The destitution of asylum seekers is horrendous. How does the Executive measure that, so that we can truly do something about it? Is the minister considering reintroducing an education maintenance allowance for the children of asylum seekers? Children of asylum seekers go through school—it is not as if they get a decision quickly—and want to go into further and higher education, but they cannot do that without an education maintenance allowance. Will the minister also consider changing the terms of the bursary regulations, which might ease the problem as well?

I have asked many questions, which I know the minister will try hard to answer. If he does not do so today, perhaps he will get back to me at some point in the future.

16:07

**Marlyn Glen (North East Scotland) (Lab):** I am pleased to have the opportunity to take part in this Executive debate on race equality, an issue that we in Scotland cannot ignore.

It is important to reiterate that when the Scottish Executive launched its one Scotland, many cultures campaign, it was a first for the UK. The campaign aimed to make people realise that

discrimination and bigotry have no place in modern Scotland and that positive, essential work continues. I welcome the co-operation of the voluntary sector with the Scottish Executive to address those long-term aims and to produce an agreed method of measuring the progress of the campaign. Changes are being made and action is being taken, but there is no magic bullet. We are striving for a shift in culture and that will take time.

The major legislative changes that are taking place in the UK will impact on race equality work in Scotland. The establishment of a unified body in the form of the commission for equality and human rights, the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation that covers religion, sexual orientation and age, and the new public duties to promote disability and gender equality will significantly alter the framework within which we operate. Those developments will foster closer collaboration and joint working across equality strands.

Although work on race equality will need to reflect that new environment, it will need to do so without detracting from the agenda of delivering a racially just Scotland. It is important to retain an individual focus, but it is fundamentally important that we acknowledge the difficulties faced when a person suffers multiple discrimination.

We need a monitoring system to record racist incidents, to develop effective intervention policies and to tackle the underreporting of racist incidents. We need to work with the police and the CRE to improve police-community relations and to continue the work of the one Scotland, many cultures campaign to emphasise the positive contribution that all communities make.

I also welcome the plans to work with local authorities, youth organisations, teachers and education bodies to raise awareness of racial equality among young people and to provide for the development of school-based activities to promote it. In this area, as in many others, early intervention is important. I applaud the Executive's plan to convene a network of academics, researchers and practitioners to consider how to improve public discourse on key race issues and I warmly welcome the provisional plans to hold a major symposium at the end of the year to stimulate discussion—I look forward to the debate.

The timing of this work is vital. We need a robust system in place because this is a time of change. The welcome, increasing numbers of migrants continue to diversify Scottish society—although, as has been said, that has been happening for generations. However, without adequate systems of integration, migrants risk being ostracised and alienated, which creates difficulty and disharmony. As the CRE outlines, Scotland has one of the fastest-growing foreign-born populations in the UK. London attracts the highest total number of

new immigrants, but parts of Glasgow and Aberdeen have had a greater change in the composition of their population than London has.

Any new strategies that are developed must be dynamic and apply equally to all minority communities. The established communities with which we perhaps tend to have regular contact, such as Muslim groups, Chinese organisations and Sikhs, are being joined by recent immigrants from the accession countries. Although the groups are culturally diverse, they experience similar difficulties.

I take the opportunity to ask the minister to give prominence to a national language strategy in the proposed action plan. Dave Petrie highlighted the importance of language, and I share his view. All our citizens must be aware of their right to free translating, interpreting and communication support, which can allow them proper access to services and help them to achieve full integration. However, for a language strategy to work well, there must be adequate and appropriate training and awareness raising, and proper funding.

I am aware that all the public bodies have comprehensive equal opportunities policies, but it is now time to ensure that those policies help our public bodies to represent the public they serve. I am proud of the efforts that have been made so far and of the plans for the future, but we still have a long way to go.

16:12

**Alex Fergusson (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con):** Any debate on the subject of racial equality is worth while because the absence of racial equality leads to racial inequality and abuse. Like every member present, I utterly abhor racism in any shape or form and I warmly applaud each and every action that is taken to address it successfully.

It is a tragedy that racism remains a problem in the so-called civilised society in which we live. After all, we pride ourselves on being an all-embracing multicultural society. Nevertheless, we are debating an on-going problem that should have no place whatever in our society. Clearly, something is still wrong.

As one or two members have said, it is the tiny minority who tarnish the mostly justified reputation that we Scots have as a welcoming, open people. However, that minority can have an alarmingly high impact and can surface in unexpected places. Racism is by no means confined to our urban areas or limited to a simple white-versus-coloured formula, as recent experiences in my quiet rural constituency have shown. I want to draw attention to two issues about which we must not be complacent, lest they get out of hand.

The first, which other members have touched on, will not be a popular topic. It is the growing anti-English feelings that have been much in the news recently, although they are by no means a recent phenomenon, nor just football related. I recall making a speech as a candidate for the Parliament back in 1998 in which I posed the question: what sort of Scotland do we want to live in post devolution? The speech was prompted by the death of a teenager here in Edinburgh. He was attacked by three others for one reason only—he had a very obvious English accent. The fact that he was born and bred in Scotland was of no consequence at all. He was killed because of his accent, and not by some ignorant louts; indeed, one of the perpetrators was the son of a very high-ranking police officer.

On another occasion, I attended a public meeting in a small community in what later became my constituency. The meeting had been called to discuss the problem of timber being loaded on to boats in the small harbour at all hours of the day and night. At night, heavy goods vehicles were disturbing an otherwise peaceful village community. Halfway through the meeting, someone suggested that if it was not for all the so-and-so white settlers, there would not be a problem. I took the Presiding Officer's guidance on whether I could expand on that "so-and-so" and was told that it would be unparliamentary language. Indeed it was. The meeting was quite heated, but at that comment half the audience got up and walked out and the other half were worryingly supportive of the sentiment that had been expressed.

I hoped that devolution would give us the confidence—I was interested that the minister used that exact word—to become more tolerant and welcoming, particularly towards our nearest neighbours. We cannot and should not blame them for coming to live here when we constantly tell them what a wonderful country it is. However, I fear that devolution is sometimes having the opposite effect.

In many of our more attractive areas, property prices have been lifted way beyond the means of local people by buyers from other constituent parts of the UK. That is often deemed to be their fault, but it is not. The answer is to build more houses, not to abuse, verbally and physically, those who may have bought existing ones.

My final point on this aspect of racism concerns the son of a close friend of mine. He is studying engineering at the University of Edinburgh and a requirement of his course is to do some practical work. This summer, he took a job with a building firm. Such is the racist treatment that has been meted out to him because of his English accent that he has been forced to quit the job. Blatant

racism is alive and well in Scotland today and is as disgusting as it is abhorrent.

The second phenomenon that I want to draw to members' attention is perhaps more recent. In a scenario that will be familiar to many members, my constituency is witnessing a massive increase year on year in the number of European workers—often eastern European—who are taking a variety of jobs, especially during the summer months. Almost without exception, they are absolutely charming people and extremely hard workers. Not only are they contributing massively to our local economies, but they are able to support their families at home in ways they could only dream about if they did not undertake such work in Scotland. However, in many rural communities, resentment is growing about the impact of this seasonal immigration on housing, local employment and more generally.

I hear worrying anecdotal evidence of increasing friction between different groups in normally peaceful rural communities. That is highly perplexing and, if we are not vigilant, I fear that the friction could spill over into something altogether more serious. If the unspeakable were to happen in a very rural area, the police cover, and the resources required to deal with the situation quickly and effectively, simply would not be in place. I do not want to be overdramatic, but I believe that a growing problem is bubbling just below the surface. I am not convinced that we are satisfactorily equipped to cope if it ever boils over.

This is a worthwhile debate because the subject is worrying. I have no doubt that all members need to and will work together to rid our country of all types of racism.

16:19

**Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD):** This has been a good and measured debate; everyone has contributed some useful points. I will not go through the speeches and award everyone marks out of 10. Everyone has quite good marks.

I will try to sum up some of the themes. The first is ignorance. I usually say that most troubles are caused by drink. That is true—a lot of violence is caused by drink—but problems of racism are basically caused by ignorance, quite often on both sides. There is the feeling—which I suppose is natural—that anyone who is strange or different or from somewhere else is dodgy, cannot be trusted and should be disliked. That seems to be deeply ingrained in people. If someone looks and sounds different, they are regarded as a potential enemy. We must get over that by ensuring that the necessary education is provided formally in schools and informally in venues such as youth clubs, where people are more likely to pick up

attitudes that will guide them than they are at school.

We should aim our work at younger people because many older people's racialism, in common with any other defects that they may have, is too deeply ingrained to do much about. Young people can be persuaded to adopt a more civilised attitude to all our fellow citizens. We must have an extremely positive education policy to counter the effects of the media, which, as in almost all areas of life, are totally destructive. Some parts of the media are guilty of misrepresentation and stirring up hatred. That is a significant problem, which must be countered through the provision of accurate information and education.

I agree with the members who stress the importance of incomers learning English. I once dealt with a family of Poles who had come over after the war. One member of the family was an elderly woman who had lived in Edinburgh for 20 or 30 years, but who could still not speak English. What sort of life did that person have? We are not doing such people any favours by failing to teach them English. Pressure must be put on incomers to learn English. They can continue to speak their own language and to have their own customs, but we must get them to speak English.

Various members have made the point that we must have a system of negotiation, both locally and nationally. A variety of issues can arise. For example, people in a certain area may feel that the incomers are taking the jobs or are getting preferential treatment when it comes to housing or benefits. If such a feeling exists, it must be tackled by holding discussions with and explaining the facts to the groups concerned. If there is unfairness in either direction, it must be sorted out. We need a continuous United Nations-type of effort to resolve problems.

That applies not just to problems that arise locally, but to those that arise nationally. In some communities, the men treat their women in ways that traditional, old-fashioned Scots—or however we would be described—do not think women should be treated. Such issues should be confronted, but not in a combative way. There should be proper discussion between the various ethnic groups to encourage the understanding that people should be allowed to enjoy their own customs and ways of doing things, but should also have to conform reasonably to what the country as a whole thinks is a civilised way of behaving.

My view is that we must accept that there will always be prejudices. Although it is not possible to remove people's prejudices, we can try to diminish them. We want to prevent those prejudices from spilling over into violence. It is one thing for a pub full of Scots to cheer if another country's team



scores a goal against the England team—that might not be a good thing to do, but it is understandable—but it is another thing altogether if someone from the pub goes off and hits the nearest Englishman. The important thing is that no harm is done. We must combat the violence. The two morons who attacked the boy and the person in a wheelchair because they were wearing English shirts thought that they were being patriotic Scots when, in fact, they were destroying Scotland's good name. They must have that shown to them. That takes us back to the point about education; whatever someone thinks, they should not get violent.

The question of the English is a difficulty. There are a whole lot of reasons why the English collectively get up the noses of the Scots, as well as the Welsh and the Irish. Again, we must accept that if an individual is living in Scotland, they are part of our country and we should treat them in a decent fashion. If anyone gets a grip on the English sporting press and persuades it to be less chauvinist, we might all behave ourselves better. There is an issue about the English and we will never get over it: there are too many of them and they are too near us. We have to live with that—this is the world as the Almighty made it. We will never remove the prejudice, but we can control it as well as we possibly can.

I had the interesting experience of helping my eldest son to get elected as a Liberal Democrat councillor in London. There I saw real multiracialism of the sort that simply does not exist in Scotland. They seem to cope quite well. We can learn from other parts of the country that deal with the issue in a better fashion than we do.

Many good ideas have surfaced in the debate. I hope that the minister will take them on board. I also hope that all of us will genuinely co-operate to tackle the issues that we are confronting today.

16:26

**Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** No one can argue that racism is anything other than ugly and wrong. The Conservatives recognise the Scottish Executive's efforts to promote race equality in this country. Any initiative that promotes race equality should be welcomed.

However I found a number of areas of concern in the summary of the race equality review. One such concern is the grant of £2.3 million—the largest named sum of money—to support public agencies in meeting their legal responsibilities. I have nothing against public agencies meeting their legal responsibilities, but why is the largest sum of money that is being granted under the strategy being spent on meeting bureaucratic targets that are imposed by the Government? There are those

who might cynically say that the Executive promotes strategies and then creates the jobs that will ensure that the strategies are met. They might go on to say that those jobs will be filled by like-minded people who become dependent on yet more Government strategies for their work to continue. Of course, that is the cynic's approach, but what we do not need, in any strategy that promotes race equality, is too many managers and not enough people doing the job on the ground.

At present, we are seeing a lot of immigration from the new countries of the European Union, especially Poland. We welcome the workers from those countries, as they are contributing to the economy all over Scotland. In the Highlands, following requests that were made at a local population summit, Inverness library now stocks the *Polish Express*, which allows Polish immigrants to keep up to date with the news from home, and the Highland Council library service is printing leaflets on its services and how to access them in Polish, Russian, Bengali, Arabic and Chinese. That was done in response to the needs of local communities. Although it may seem a simple thing, all too often such examples of good practice are stifled by bureaucracy or prejudice. I recognise the initiative that Highland Council library service has shown and its welcoming attitude.

I am not sure whether Executive strategies can ingrain such a welcome into the fabric of Scottish life, but that is what is needed. Visitors should be welcomed, whether they are visiting for days, weeks, months, years, or indeed for the rest of their lives. In the Highlands and Islands, we have a phrase that is translated from the Gaelic: there are no strangers here, only friends who have not yet met. I like that approach.

We recently witnessed the encouraging example of many Shetlanders campaigning vigorously to prevent the deportation of Sakchai Makao, who was arrested and detained and has now been released on bail. Sakchai is widely accepted as a Shetlander and has even competed as a Shetlander in the island games. It is outrageous that the immigration system is so shambolic that a person who has lived in Scotland for 13 years—most of his life—and who is integrated in the community should be told, "You're no longer welcome. Go back to where you came from." That is dreadful. I hope that the Westminster Government will see common sense and rescind the order to deport Sakchai Makao.

There must be something wrong with the immigration system under Labour, if it is necessary to make dawn raids on people who have been living peacefully in Glasgow for more than five years, who have integrated into communities and whose children have integrated

into schools. If the system was fair and efficient, such situations would seldom arise, but unfortunately there has been a series of Westminster Government blunders on immigration and asylum under Charles Clarke, who presided over 1,000 cases of wrongful release.

I recently saw a film that was made by the Scottish director and actor Peter Mullan and Robina Qureshi of Positive Action in Housing, which followed the deportation of the Vucaj family from Glasgow to Albania. It is a harrowing and informative film, which opens eyes to the results of a failed Government immigration and asylum policy that brings desperate unhappiness to young children whose lives have been firmly rooted in their Scottish homes. I feel strongly that innocent children have become the victims of bad policy. We cannot put up with that in Scotland; we must work for a fair policy in Westminster.

Too many racist incidents take place in Scotland. I am alarmed by attacks on football fans who have shown support for England during the world cup. Although most people condemn such attacks, especially the vile attacks on the seven-year-old boy and the disabled man, some people are not so quick to condemn the sentiment behind the attacks. How would Scots feel if we were attacked by the English for wearing a Scotland football shirt or for displaying the saltire? Surely any UK flag should be tolerated with good humour throughout the union. However, the English seem to be fair game for a vocal minority in Scotland, which includes people who are in positions of influence, whose inappropriate remarks give credibility to racist views. Sometimes when I read articles or listen to commentators' remarks about the English, I think that if "English" were replaced with any other nationality or race, the Commission for Racial Equality would investigate the matter. Fortunately, the English take such slurs with good humour for the most part, but the phenomenon concerns me because it shows a lack of respect for our closest neighbours, on whom we depend for the major part of our tourism industry and much of our other business. It is not a good example to young Scots and could easily result in anti-Scottish sentiment in England, which would be detrimental to the Scottish economy and to the welfare of the Scots and the welcome that they receive when they visit England.

I am glad that Malcolm Chisholm's motion mentions Scotland's Gypsy Travellers. During the inquiry that led to the Equal Opportunities Committee's report on Gypsy Travellers, I visited many sites and learned about the problems to do with health, education and security that Gypsy Travellers encounter. Gypsy Travellers have been part of the Scottish culture for a long time and their problems are just as important as those of anyone else who lives in this country.

It is important that we send a clear message that the Scottish Parliament thinks that it is unacceptable to attack or bully anyone. I support the sentiments of the one Scotland, many cultures campaign. We have a multicultural society in the UK. Our society might not be perfect, but since Cromwellian times we have had a history of tolerating the beliefs and habits of the people of different cultures who make their homes here. We are a happier country than France, where I lived for a short time. There, the attitude is, "You can have any culture you like, as long as it is French."

The first responsibility of our Governments is to protect law-abiding citizens of all cultures. That can be done only if we have a fair and transparent immigration and asylum system, which aids immigrants who want to contribute to improving the quality of life in the British isles.

I support the amendment in Dave Petrie's name.

16:35

**Ms Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP):** I thank Jamie McGrigor for his speech. I was at the meeting with Robina Qureshi to which he referred in the St Francis Centre in the Gorbals. There were some raised eyebrows when Jamie McGrigor was introduced as a Tory MSP, but his sentiments went down well. I am sure that he is most sincere, particularly on the issue of children. I thank other members for their speeches, too.

I completely abhor any form of racial discrimination or violence. I am proud to be a member of the Equal Opportunities Committee. As Jamie McGrigor and Linda Fabiani pointed out, more people are assaulted in this country just because of the colour of their skin and while they are walking about the streets than all the other people who are assaulted. If we wish to go down the road of mentioning particular nationalities, we should also mention Muslims, Jews, Scots and Sikhs. Donald Gorrie summed up the matter when he said that it is ignorance that makes people do that. It is not inherent in the Scottish race that we are violent people who attack others simply because they have a strange accent or a different colour of skin. Jamie McGrigor mentioned some measures that Highland Council has taken to welcome people into the area. We should celebrate some of the positive attitudes in Scotland and the measures that we have taken to welcome people here. I include refugees, whom I find to be a fantastic bunch of people who love Scotland, particularly the Glaswegians. Glasgow is not known as the friendly city for nothing. I will speak about that more in a moment.

I turn to the motion on race equality in the name of Malcolm Chisholm. I welcome much of what the minister said, including his comments on the

development of a national strategy—I look forward to its publication. I also welcome the race equality, integration and community support fund. Malcolm Chisholm mentioned a sum of £2 million. I welcome the fact that the fund is targeted locally and designed to support cross-community integration, which is important for communities. Jamie McGrigor mentioned that we want to act not from the top down but from the bottom up, which is what targeted community initiatives help to do. Such initiatives help not only to bring people and communities together but to tackle racism and promote equality. That fund is to be applauded.

The Scottish refugee integration fund is also most welcome. It has been strengthening support for refugees, asylum seekers and communities since, I believe, 2003—I am sure that someone will correct me if that is not right. The fund supports more and more projects—21 projects now benefit from it, which is to be admired. I give the minister credit for the expansion of that fund, but we need to examine the funding and expand it even more.

Linda Fabiani mentioned data collection, with which some people are not happy. I would like improved collection of data on racial inequalities in the labour market. The minister said that a group was to be set up on the labour market. I want to know whether it will consider data collection issues, by which I mean not just collecting data in Scotland, but saying exactly what the data mean and monitoring and totalling them. That is something that is lacking. I have asked questions on that issue previously. We need data to know exactly what is happening in our society, particularly in relation to inequalities and racial issues in the labour market.

Dave Petrie and, I think, Nora Radcliffe compared the percentage of people from ethnic minorities who are employed to the percentage of people from other racial groups who are employed. We need to pay attention to that, but we need the appropriate data to do so. Businesses also need to understand the benefits and advantages of racial equality in the workplace. If we had the data available, we could provide information to businesses to encourage them to employ more people of different ethnicities, which is important. I ask the minister whether the group that he mentioned will consider data collection issues.

Many members have mentioned education, which is important, not only for people from ethnic minorities but for others who live in our country. We need greater involvement in schools by ethnic minority parents, but we must encourage them to get involved. I know what it was like when I ran a play scheme. Trying to involve people who came from two streets away was difficult. Those people

were not from ethnic minorities; they were people who lived in the area. If it was difficult for parents to make that one step, it is even more difficult for people from an ethnic minority background to do so. Schools and parents must encourage ethnic minority parents to have greater involvement in schools. We can work together on that.

Cathy Peattie, Nora Radcliffe, Mark Ballard and others have mentioned Gypsy Travellers. As Cathy Peattie and Linda Fabiani said, the issue has been going on for years. Something must be done. We have heard some tragic stories. Young Gypsy Travellers have told us about the life that they led and what was expected of them—or what was not expected of them, which was the saddest part. They had confidence, but nothing was expected of them. We should consider that issue. I am glad that Maureen Watt, a list MSP for North East Scotland, mentioned Gypsy Travellers because it shows that representatives of the Aberdeen area are not frightened to raise the issue. The media must be told that it has a responsibility to society. As others have said, there has been some ridiculous newspaper coverage of Gypsy Travellers; for example, apparently rubbish was put in the middle of a roundabout and blamed on the Travellers, yet they did not even live there. That is terrible.

I cannot speak in the debate without mentioning an issue that has been mentioned in the SNP amendment and by other members, which is asylum seekers and immigration. I remind Bill Aitken that Catalonia, which is not yet independent, has control over immigration. We will see how it gets on. It has given leave for asylum seekers to remain in Barcelona, in particular. That benefits not just asylum seekers, who cannot now be used as cheap labour, but the economy too, because those people are now paying taxes and there are no underground, hidden workers. I congratulate countries such as Catalonia that have done that.

I am sure that the minister is aware of the issue that I am about to mention. I attended a meeting last night in Pollokshaws in Glasgow, where it was standing room only. It was about the new national asylum support service contracts in Glasgow, 20 per cent of which are going to be privatised. Some people in Pollokshaws have been there for five or six years, and have three, four or five children and no money whatever. Last night, I stayed behind to speak to various people. My surgery was full today, simply because NASS has said that people must accept the accommodation that is offered to them. If they do not accept the accommodation, their benefits will be taken away. They were offered a YMCA in Glasgow, which is a soft Dungavel, because people are not allowed visitors, they have to sign in and there are no washing machines. What frightened the asylum

seekers even more is the possibility of having 300 asylum seekers in one high-rise tower block, where it would be easy for NASS to come along and deport them. Some of those people have been living in communities in Pollokshaws for six years and their kids are integrated into the school. The issue of integration is mentioned in the motion. The communities into which those people and their kids are integrated will be destroyed by what is happening.

I praise Labour councillors Stephen Curran, from Pollokshaws, and Irene Graham, who sent out a letter and, through the media and through various meetings, such as the one that I attended yesterday, managed to get three months' grace for the asylum seekers. Some of the councillors at Glasgow City Council are doing good work to promote the cause of the asylum seekers. We now have three months to fight the issue and to ensure that those people stay in Pollokshaws.

**Bill Aitken:** Does Sandra White agree that the nub of the matter is that it has taken such an extraordinary length of time to determine the asylum applications that it has caused all sorts of problems for the city authorities in Glasgow and other agencies? Does she agree that that delay is cruel in its import in respect of the applicants?

**Ms White:** I agree with Bill Aitken that that is cruel, but I point out that it is not only the present Government that has had such immigration laws. I think that the policy was started by Mrs Thatcher and other Tories—in saying that, I note that Jamie McGrigor and others have genuine feelings with regard to this subject. It is unfortunate that those policies have been continued by Tony Blair and will be continued by his successor, who will probably be Gordon Brown, regardless of his coin to celebrate the union of 1707 and his flying of the union jack. Perhaps we might have something to say to him.

The fact of the matter is that the dispersal system, which was started down south, has not worked. I would genuinely like the Scottish Executive to have control of immigration policy. I acknowledge the good work that the Executive has done in relation to immigration. The voucher system was stopped in Scotland because of the pressure that was applied by the Scottish Executive and MSPs from all parties. We managed to get the three-month period turned around through the work of Labour MPs, MSPs, Labour councillors and members of the SNP and the Scottish Socialist Party. We worked together and achieved that.

I do not understand why people such as the doctors, nurses, engineers and scientists to whom I spoke last night and to whom I have spoken over the years cannot work in this country and have to languish in unemployment with no money and five

or six children. It is inhumane—not just disgraceful—to treat people like that. Basically, they are being shunted about to enable other people to make profits. I do not want to be part of a Government that does that type of thing. That is why I think that immigration should be within the powers of the Scottish Parliament. Immigrants should be allowed to work in Scotland and Dungavel should be closed.

I ask the minister to speak to Glasgow City Council regarding the present situation. It is dire at the moment and we have three months in which to rectify it. I would be pleased if the minister would give the council a phone and find out from Irene Graham and others exactly what is going on.

16:46

**Malcolm Chisholm:** No one can dispute that, all too often, racism, harassment and discrimination are a feature of life for many people living in Scotland today, as highlighted by Christine Grahame at the beginning of her speech. That is not acceptable. Neither is it acceptable that a climate of fear is generated around established policies such as the dispersal of asylum seekers to Glasgow—evidence of that is borne out in research that was published earlier this month by the Institute of Public Policy Research—or that heightened international tensions and recent events closer to home are exploited to encourage and foster Islamophobia. The tragic events of 7 July last year in London—and, indeed, 9/11, which Christine Grahame referred to—have cast a long shadow across community relations throughout the UK, and Scotland has not remained unaffected. That is why I have made it a priority to meet representatives from Muslim and non-Muslim communities across Scotland and hear about issues of concern and the impact of the attacks on their communities.

One of the interesting findings of the recent research on attitudes to asylum seekers in Scotland, which was published last week, was that attitudes to asylum seekers are more positive in the communities in which they live than in communities in which they do not live. That was one of the most encouraging findings of that research and backs up the point that Dave Petrie made about the fact that integration is the most important way in which to take action against bigots.

The theme of integration has run through today's debate. As I said in my earlier speech, we believe in fostering integration and respecting diversity. By integration, we do not mean assimilation. We do not distinguish integration from multiculturalism, as some people do; we view them as being two sides of the same coin. Scotland is richer because of its

diverse cultures but, of course, we want integration to be part of that.

Dave Petrie was right to remind us that racism and bigotry are not aimed only at the colour of someone's skin, although the remarks of Linda Fabiani in that regard were highly pertinent. It is right that there has been some talk of anti-English hatred. I was slightly uneasy when Linda Fabiani suggested that that was indirect racism. We do not want to overstate the problem, but, when it arises, we have to challenge it and condemn it. Racism is racism; there cannot be a hierarchy of racism. I did not agree with Dave Petrie when he referred to certain comments stoking the flames. Which football team people support is completely different from the issues that we have been talking about in the debate—the question is completely irrelevant to it.

There has been a lot of discussion about the importance for integration of access to English language classes. That was mentioned by several members: Marlyn Glen, who asked for a national language strategy, which is coming soon, Donald Gorrie, Bill Aitken and Dave Petrie. As it happens, I was speaking at a conference yesterday about English as a second language in connection with citizenship. The conference covered the many innovative pilot projects that seek to combine citizenship education with English as a second language.

We have recently put £4.5 million extra into English as a second language. Over and above that, the Scottish Executive's adult ESOL—English for speakers of other languages—strategy is now in the final stages of development, and we hope to launch it later this summer. Following the launch, one of the key early tasks will be the development of a national ESOL curriculum framework. A coherent framework is to be developed for ESOL learning, teaching and assessment across the full range of publicly funded sectors, including articulation from schools programmes. We have discussed that important issue in relation to the refugee integration forum. One of the actions in the action plan will involve this area.

Christine Grahame was rather disparaging about the fresh talent initiative, but I point out to her that the establishment of the UK's first relocation advisory service has now helped more than 10,000 people, directly and indirectly, and has provided more than 300,000 people with information over the internet about living and working in Scotland. Scotland's special leave to remain scheme, which started in June 2005, has resulted in more than 1,800 successful applications to date.

Linda Fabiani asked questions about the various groups. She and Sandra White asked about data in relation to the strategic group on ethnic

minorities and the labour market. We are actively seeking Scotland-specific data, and the CRE is assisting us with that work, which we are aware is absolutely necessary.

Linda Fabiani also asked about asylum. In terms of the Scottish refugee integration forum, actions will be outlined in our report. We will also take up issues with the Home Office. Linda Fabiani referred to destitution, about which, as discussed at the meeting on Monday, there is great concern. We will take up that issue as part of the finalisation of our action plan. The issues around the right to work will feature in that context. I will hold a meeting with the new Home Office minister with responsibility for those matters in the fairly near future.

Sandra White raised issues concerning the new NASS contract. I pay tribute to the work of Glasgow City Council and to Irene Graham in particular for helping to make progress in that regard. I understand and share the concerns that Sandra White expressed on the subject.

Various members spoke about Gypsies/Travellers, including Nora Radcliffe, Mark Ballard, Sandra White and Cathy Peattie, who, of course, has a detailed knowledge from her years as convener of the Equal Opportunities Committee. One of the other strands that was identified by the review was the need for further work with Gypsies/Travellers. I am of course aware of the considerable concern in Gypsies/Travellers communities about the inequalities that they face in all areas of life: access to appropriate accommodation, health care, education and other services. A group was established in October last year to consider the issues and develop an action plan to enable the provision of more accessible, co-ordinated, good-quality services.

The Equal Opportunities Committee has been conducting a second inquiry into the situation of Gypsies/Travellers. The committee's interim report has shown that progress on the issues in this area has been too slow. Johann Lamont acknowledged that in her evidence to that committee. The interim report raises many issues about services for Gypsies/Travellers that are feeding into the discussions of the group that I mentioned. Regular meetings have been held; the last meeting took place yesterday and the action plan will follow in due course. Concerns were expressed—by Linda Fabiani, I think—about the timescale for that group and others, but all the action plans will be completed within six months. That is reasonable, given the level of engagement and the involvement of interested parties that we have been determined to have as part of the process.

Nora Radcliffe emphasised the importance of dealing with indirect and institutional

discrimination, as did Linda Fabiani. Since the publication of the Macpherson report when the Parliament was established, we have responded quickly by establishing national forums, the Lawrence steering group and the race equality advisory forum. The thinking about institutional discrimination has informed our race equality work ever since.

Jamie McGrigor complained that £2.3 million would be spent on race equality work in the public sector, but that sum of money is described in the report that he has received from us as covering new development work with the community and the voluntary sector, as well as work to support good existing projects such as Show Racism the Red Card. Some money is supporting new public sector initiatives, but it may reassure Jamie McGrigor to know that the amount is not £2.3 million.

I do not have time to go through all the new initiatives to support race equality in the public sector, which is an important feature of the work on the review. For example, some money will go to the national resource centre for ethnic minority health and new posts will be created to support race equality work in regeneration. We are also funding a couple of posts at the local government Improvement Service. Some money is—rightly—going into the public sector to support this work.

The one strategic group that I have not mentioned is that which considers race equality in rural areas, which I promised to mention. We know that people from minority ethnic backgrounds who live or work in rural areas can, because of the small minority ethnic populations in those areas, often feel much more isolated than those in urban areas. That issue has been brought more into the spotlight recently with the arrival of migrant workers, many of whom choose to work and settle in rural communities. I am glad that Dave Petrie and others welcomed that. That group will produce a report in the next few months.

It is in all our interests that Scotland should be at ease with its increasing diversity. By taking the action—and more besides—that is outlined in the motion, the Scottish Executive has committed itself to fostering integration but respecting diversity and to laying the infrastructure for a time when all can help to shape Scotland's future and to share in what it has to offer.

The Scottish Executive has a duty to show leadership to the public, private and voluntary sectors in tackling the damaging impact that prejudice and discrimination can have in the workplace, in schools, in our public services and on our streets. Our national strategy and action plan will address organisational, business and employment practices and how public services are delivered.

Scotland has produced great thinkers. Its people have demonstrated enterprise and innovation and contributed to the world in many significant ways. Scotland has also benefited from the contribution of the many people who have visited and settled here over the centuries. We continue to do so today. The Scotland of the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs that innovation, interchange, energy and dynamism to continue. There is no place for small-minded prejudice or narrowness of vision if we are to be a successful nation. Racism undermines and clouds that vision. If we do not tackle racism, we let ourselves and Scotland down. Everyone can help to create a climate in which racism is unacceptable. That is a big challenge, but for Scotland's sake, we must not fail.

Later this summer, we shall set out our plans for how the Scottish Executive will take further action to tackle head-on racial inequality and disadvantage and to deliver tangible improvements to the lives of minority ethnic communities in Scotland. I do not underestimate the hard work that lies ahead of us in the coming months and, as ever, I do not propose that we have all the answers or can achieve the desired results on our own. Our approach will therefore be to work in partnership with a range of interests to secure improvement and change. We will continue to emphasise that the agenda is about not just minority ethnic communities, but all communities. The agenda is evolving and we will build flexibility and reviews into all that we do.

I am sure that I can count on members' continued support as the Scottish Executive works towards a Scotland in which there is justice, equality and respect for all.

## Business Motions

**The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S2M-4633, in the name of Margaret Curran, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, on suspension of standing orders. The motion follows discussions in yesterday's bureau and relates to tomorrow evening's members' business.

17:00

**The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Ms Margaret Curran):** The reason for suspending standing orders and revising tomorrow's business is to allow a debate tomorrow morning on the legislative consent motion on the Compensation Bill, which was discussed in the context of the legislative statement that I made last week. I thank all members for their co-operation in scheduling the debate at short notice and, in the light of the work that he has done, I thank Des McNulty for agreeing to withdraw his motion for tomorrow's members' business debate. I hope that that co-operation will be picked up in the debate on the legislative consent motion.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees that Rule 5.6.1(c) of Standing Orders be suspended for the purposes of Members' Business on Thursday 29 June 2006.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S2M-4626, in the name of Margaret Curran, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a revision to this week's business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees the following revision to the programme of business for Thursday 29 June 2006—

(a) after,

9.15 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

delete,

*followed by* Executive Debate: International Development / Malawi

and insert,

*followed by* Stage 1 Debate: Tourist Boards (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Legislative Consent Motion: Compensation Bill – UK Legislation

(b) after,

2.15 pm Themed Question Time—  
Health and Community Care;  
Environment and Rural Development

delete,

2.55 pm Stage 1 Debate: Tourist Boards (Scotland) Bill

and insert,

2.55 pm Executive Debate: International Development / Malawi

and (c) after,

5.00 pm Decision Time

delete,

*followed by* Members' Business—[Ms Margaret Curran.]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S2M-4627, in the name of Margaret Curran, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Wednesday 6 September 2006

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Executive Business

*followed by* Business Motion

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 7 September 2006

9.15 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Executive Business

11.40 am General Question Time

12 noon First Minister's Question Time

2.15 pm Themed Question Time—  
Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning;  
Justice and Law Officers;

2.55 pm Executive Business

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business—[Ms Margaret Curran.]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S2M-4628, in the name of Margaret Curran, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a timetable for legislation.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the timetable for completion of consideration of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1 be extended to 24 November 2006.—[Ms Margaret Curran.]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:03

**The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** The next item of business is consideration of 14 Parliamentary Bureau motions. I ask Margaret Curran to move motion S2M-4629, on the establishment of a committee, motion S2M-4631, on suspension of standing orders, motion S2M-4630, on a Parliamentary direction under rule 11.8.3, motions S2M-4615 to S2M-4620, on committee membership and substitutes, motions S2M-4621 to S2M-4624, on approval of Scottish statutory instruments, and motion S2M-4625, on the designation of a lead committee.

### *Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees to establish a sub-committee of the Justice 2 Committee as follows:

Name of Committee: Justice 2 Sub-Committee;

Remit: To inquire into and report to the Justice 2 Committee on—

- The extent of information which local communities should receive on child sex offenders within their locality;
- The way in which housing is allocated to sex offenders;
- Whether steps need to be taken to distinguish sexual offences against children from such offences against adults;
- Whether changes need to be made to the way in which sexual offences against children are considered and disposed of by the courts, and in particular, whether adequate sentencing options exist.

Duration: Until the end of December 2006.

Convenership: The Convener will be a member of the Labour Party and the Deputy Convener a member of the Scottish National Party.

Membership: Jackie Baillie, Alex Fergusson, John Home Robertson, Mr Kenny MacAskill, Jeremy Purvis.

That the Parliament agrees that, for the purposes of debating motion S2M-4634 (Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM(S2) 8.1) relating to the Compensation Bill - UK legislation) on Thursday 29 June 2006, the second sentence of Rule 9B.3.5 of Standing Orders be suspended.

That the Parliament directs that, for the purposes of its consideration of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Bill at Stage 2, the Communities Committee may vote using the electronic voting system, in accordance with Rule 11.8.3 of Standing Orders.

That the Parliament agrees that Chris Ballance be appointed to replace Robin Harper on the Procedures Committee.

That the Parliament agrees that Robin Harper be appointed to replace Eleanor Scott on the Audit Committee.

That the Parliament agrees that Mr Mark Ruskell be appointed to replace Eleanor Scott as the Scottish Green

Party substitute on the Environment and Rural Development Committee.

That the Parliament agrees that Eleanor Scott be appointed to replace Chris Ballance as the Scottish Green Party substitute on the Audit Committee.

That the Parliament agrees that Shiona Baird be appointed to replace Robin Harper as the Scottish Green Party substitute on the Finance Committee.

That the Parliament agrees that Chris Ballance be appointed to replace Shiona Baird as the Scottish Green Party substitute on the Communities Committee.

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Scotland Act 1998 (River Tweed) Order 2006 be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Human Organ and Tissue Live Transplants (Scotland) Regulations 2006 be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005 (Supplementary Provisions) Order 2006 be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006 (Consequential Modifications) Order 2006 be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Local Government and Transport Committee be designated as lead committee, and that the Procedures Committee be designated as secondary committee, in consideration of the Transport and Works (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1.—[*Ms Margaret Curran.*]

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



## Decision Time

17:03

### The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):

There are nine questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S2M-4601.1, in the name of Christine Grahame, which seeks to amend motion S2M-4601, in the name of Malcolm Chisholm, on race equality, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

### FOR

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)  
 Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West) (Ind)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (Ind)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinburne, John (Central Scotland) (SSCUP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Turner, Dr Jean (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Ind)  
 Watt, Ms Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

### AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 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 (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)  
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gordon, Mr Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (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)  
 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)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McMahan, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)  
 Petrie, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)  
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 34, Against 77, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S2M-4601.2, in the name of David Petrie, which seeks to amend motion S2M-

4601, in the name of Malcolm Chisholm, on race equality, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**FOR**

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Petrie, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)

**AGAINST**

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West) (Ind)  
 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, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)  
 Glen, Marilyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Gordon, Mr Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (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)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)

Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (Ind)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McMahan, 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 (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)  
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)  
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinburne, John (Central Scotland) (SSCUP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Watt, Ms Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

**ABSTENTIONS**

Turner, Dr Jean (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Ind)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 15, Against 96, Abstentions 1.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S2M-4601, in the name of Malcolm Chisholm, on race equality, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament supports the development of a national strategy and action plan on race equality and welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the strategy; welcomes the significant funding provided to local projects through the Race Equality, Integration and Community Support Fund and Scottish Refugee Integration Fund and

national projects like Show Racism the Red Card and Heartstone; supports Scottish Executive priorities to increase ethnic minorities' participation in the labour market, build more inclusive rural communities, provide better services to Scotland's Gypsies/Travellers, support refugee integration and continue to raise awareness of the issues through the One Scotland Many Cultures campaign, and supports the Executive's other work to help tackle racism and promote race equality in Scotland.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S2M-4629, in the name of Margaret Curran, on the establishment of a committee, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees to establish a sub-committee of the Justice 2 Committee as follows:

Name of Committee: Justice 2 Sub-Committee;

Remit: To inquire into and report to the Justice 2 Committee on—

- The extent of information which local communities should receive on child sex offenders within their locality;
- The way in which housing is allocated to sex offenders;
- Whether steps need to be taken to distinguish sexual offences against children from such offences against adults;
- Whether changes need to be made to the way in which sexual offences against children are considered and disposed of by the courts, and in particular, whether adequate sentencing options exist.

Duration: Until the end of December 2006.

Convenership: The Convener will be a member of the Labour Party and the Deputy Convener a member of the Scottish National Party.

Membership: Jackie Baillie, Alex Fergusson, John Home Robertson, Mr Kenny MacAskill, Jeremy Purvis.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S2M-4631, in the name of Margaret Curran, on the suspension of standing orders, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that, for the purposes of debating motion S2M-4634 (Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM(S2) 8.1) relating to the Compensation Bill - UK legislation) on Thursday 29 June 2006, the second sentence of Rule 9B.3.5 of Standing Orders be suspended.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S2M-4630, in the name of Margaret Curran, on a parliamentary direction under rule 11.8.3 of standing orders, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament directs that, for the purposes of its consideration of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Bill at Stage 2, the Communities Committee may vote using the electronic voting system, in accordance with Rule 11.8.3 of Standing Orders.

**The Presiding Officer:** I propose to put a single question on motions S2M-4615 and S2M-4616, on membership of committees, and on motions S2M-4617 to S2M-4620 inclusive, on substitution on committees. If any member does not agree, they should shout "Object" now.

The next question is, that motions S2M-4615 and S2M-4616, in the name of Margaret Curran, on membership of committees, and motions S2M-4617 to S2M-4620 inclusive, in the name of Margaret Curran, on substitution on committees, be agreed to.

*Motions agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that Chris Ballance be appointed to replace Robin Harper on the Procedures Committee; and

That the Parliament agrees that Robin Harper be appointed to replace Eleanor Scott on the Audit Committee.

That the Parliament agrees that Mr Mark Ruskell be appointed to replace Eleanor Scott as the Scottish Green Party substitute on the Environment and Rural Development Committee;

That the Parliament agrees that Eleanor Scott be appointed to replace Chris Ballance as the Scottish Green Party substitute on the Audit Committee;

That the Parliament agrees that Shiona Baird be appointed to replace Robin Harper as the Scottish Green Party substitute on the Finance Committee; and

That the Parliament agrees that Chris Ballance be appointed to replace Shiona Baird as the Scottish Green Party substitute on the Communities Committee.

**The Presiding Officer:** I propose to put a single question on motions S2M-4621 to S2M-4624 inclusive, in the name of Margaret Curran, on the approval of Scottish statutory instruments. If any member does not agree, they should shout "Object" now.

**Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West) (Ind):** Object.

**The Presiding Officer:** In that case, we will take the motions individually.

The next question is, that motion S2M-4621, in the name of Margaret Curran, on the approval of an SSI, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**For**

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)

Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 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)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)  
 Glen, Marilyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gordon, Mr Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (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)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)  
 Petrie, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)  
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinburne, John (Central Scotland) (SSCUP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Turner, Dr Jean (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Ind)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Watt, Ms Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

#### AGAINST

Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West) (Ind)  
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (Ind)  
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 106, Against 5, Abstentions 0.

#### *Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Scotland Act 1998 (River Tweed) Order 2006 be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S2M-4622, in the name of Margaret Curran, on the approval of an SSI, be agreed to.

#### *Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Human Organ and Tissue Live Transplants (Scotland) Regulations 2006 be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S2M-4623, in the name of Margaret Curran, on the approval of an SSI, be agreed to.

#### *Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005 (Supplementary Provisions) Order 2006 be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S2M-4624, in the name of Margaret Curran, on the approval of an SSI, be agreed to.

#### *Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006 (Consequential Modifications) Order 2006 be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** The final question is, that motion S2M-4625, in the name of Margaret

Curran, on the designation of a lead committee, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that the Local Government and Transport Committee be designated as lead committee, and that the Procedures Committee be designated as secondary committee, in consideration of the Transport and Works (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1.

## James Clerk Maxwell

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Murray Tosh):**

The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S2M-4337, in the name of Alex Fergusson, on the anniversary of the birth of James Clerk Maxwell. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

*Motion debated,*

That the Parliament acknowledges the 175th anniversary of the birth of James Clerk Maxwell on 13 June 2006; recognises his great achievement in discovering the nature of electromagnetic waves which opened the way to the invention of television, radio, radar and the mobile phone; applauds his work on colour perception which enabled the successful development of colour television and colour photography, and believes that he is worthy of greater recognition throughout Scotland, given the acknowledgement of Albert Einstein, who said that "the special theory of relativity owes its origins to Maxwell's equations of the electromagnetic field", and of Ivan Tolstoy, who wrote "Maxwell's importance in the history of scientific thought is comparable to Einstein's (whom he inspired) and to Newton's (whose influence he curtailed)".

17:11

**Alex Fergusson (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con):** To get this subject into the short time available is a task that would probably be beyond James Clerk Maxwell himself, but I am honoured to have the opportunity to try to do so.

Some 8 miles south of my home in the stewartry of Kirkcudbrightshire lies the small, but very beautiful village of Parton, which is well-known to many of us locally as the site of the most unlikely 30mph restriction in Scotland. Some years ago, in an effort to slow down in recognition of that speed restriction, I first noticed the tourist board sign at the edge of the village that marks it as the burial place of James Clerk Maxwell. I suspect that my initial reaction would be mirrored by most Scots if they were asked what they knew of James Clerk Maxwell—"James Clerk who?"

There is no real shame in that because even in the world of physics and engineering, there is a glaring and widespread ignorance of anything other than his name among those who could speak at length on the life, works and theories of Newton, Einstein and Faraday. Clerk Maxwell's most recent biographer, Basil Mahon, described how, as an engineering student, he found that James was often introduced during lectures as "the great James Clerk Maxwell". Through those lectures, it gradually became apparent that his influence on the physical sciences was all-pervasive, but he was scarcely known in the wider world, even to Basil Mahon's friends and colleagues who knew all about Einstein, Newton and Faraday.

So who is this great James Clerk Maxwell and why is he the subject of the motion before us this evening that calls for greater recognition of him throughout Scotland? He was born at 14 India Street, Edinburgh, 175 years ago, on 13 June 1831. Although the family moved very shortly afterwards to their home and small estate at Glenlair near Corsock in Galloway, James returned to Edinburgh at the age of 10 to attend Edinburgh academy, just two years after the death of his mother.

There, while staying with two different aunts, he became a gifted scholar, showing a particular aptitude for science, especially physics and mathematics. At the tender age of 14, he wrote a paper on oval curves that was read to the Royal Society of Edinburgh by no less a figure than James Forbes, the professor of natural philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, at which James enrolled in due course, studying courses in philosophy, physics and mathematics. In that, he was hugely encouraged by Professor Forbes, who seems to have spent a great deal of his own time reading Clerk Maxwell's papers to the Royal Society when the author was too young to do so himself.

In 1850, when he was still only 19, James went up to Cambridge where he was reunited with his old friend, P G Tait. He carried on where he had left off in Edinburgh and continued his studies of light and colour, which culminated in him reading at last his own paper to the Royal Society, on the detection and combination of colour. It was during that time that his interest in electromagnetism developed and, in 1855, he produced a paper that mathematically described Michael Faraday's observations on electric and magnetic fields. In so doing, James Clerk Maxwell showed how electricity, magnetism and light could be unified into a single theory of electromagnetism. The fact that it was not until eight years after his death in 1879 that the theory was emphatically verified by Heinrich Hertz proves just how far ahead of his time Clerk Maxwell was.

I do not have enough time to catalogue the incredible achievements of the man, so suffice it to point out that in 1856 he was appointed professor of natural philosophy at Marischal college in Aberdeen, where he both won the Adams prize for his work on Saturn's rings and married the principal's daughter. That was a good move, one might well think, but it did not save him when the amalgamation of Marischal college and King's college meant that only one professor of natural philosophy was required. It was not to be James Clerk Maxwell. He applied for a similar position in Edinburgh but was pipped at that post by his old friend, James Tait. However, fate must surely have intervened when, in 1860, he succeeded his former mentor, James Forbes, and was appointed

professor of natural philosophy at King's college, London. For the next five years there, his interest and work expanded beyond electromagnetism to take in, amongst others, kinetic theory, thermodynamics and the elastic properties of solids. Remarkably, in 1861, he demonstrated the first projected colour image—a colour photograph, as it were—at the Royal Institution. Although I understand that an element of luck was associated with that piece of work, several decades passed before colour photography was any more fully understood.

In 1865, he retired to his beloved Glenlair in Galloway, where he wrote extensively and continued his research before being tempted back to the world of academia. He returned to Cambridge as professor of physics and, importantly, as the first director of the Cavendish laboratory, which he both designed and supervised. It was entirely his doing that the Cavendish rapidly rose to the position of pre-eminence that it still enjoys today. During those years, he spent as much time as he could at Glenlair before he contracted the same form of cancer as his mother. He died after quite a swift illness in 1879, at the age of 48. The 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death was noted in a parliamentary motion by our colleague Dr Elaine Murray.

That brief sketch of James Clerk Maxwell's life might suggest that he was the archetypal nutty professor, hiding himself away in a world of papers, theories and experiments. Nothing could be further from the truth. He was a witty, loving and outgoing individual who always ensured that his family enjoyed the warm, close relationships that had characterised his own childhood. He also took his duties as laird of Glenlair very seriously. He introduced policies of best practice to the farm and he did his utmost to improve the estate wherever possible. He designed and supervised the alterations to the house before his family moved into it. Even as he was dying, he campaigned against the closure of the local school—some things do not change in Dumfries and Galloway—and he offered at no charge some of his own land on which to build a new one. However, he died before that came to fruition.

His humour always shone through. Among other talents, he had a great bent towards poetry. At the age of 26, he wrote a ditty that he sent to his friend William Thomson, who was a consultant with the Atlantic Telegraph Company, which had run into difficulties with an undersea cable-laying operation. Clerk Maxwell wrote:

Under the sea, under the sea,  
No little signals are coming to me.  
Under the sea, under the sea,  
Something has surely gone wrong,  
And it's broke, broke, broke;

What is the cause of it does not transpire  
 But something has broken the telegraph wire  
 With a stroke, stroke, stroke,  
 Or else they've been pulling too strong.

That shows his nice, gentle sense of humour.

James Clerk Maxwell was quite a remarkable man in many respects. He is the father of—to name but four—radar, colour television, computers and the mobile phone. He was years ahead of his time and he died when he was just getting going. Perhaps that is why he is almost forgotten. He did not live long enough to witness his theories being proved and verified by others.

I must pay tribute to some who have absolutely refused to let him be forgotten and who have done so much to raise his profile, especially over the past few years. In particular, I mention Basil Mahon, who has recently published a wonderful biography—called “The Man who Changed Everything”—and who has given a series of lectures this year, one of which I was lucky enough to attend, in Rockcliffe in my constituency, on the date of James Clerk Maxwell’s birthday.

I should also mention the James Clerk Maxwell Foundation, which acquired his birthplace in India Street in 1993. The house, which now has an increasing amount of material on display, is dedicated both to raising public awareness and to encouraging Scottish students to study the sciences. That is surely an incredibly worthwhile effort, given today’s announcement that the numbers of such students are falling dramatically. In addition, the Royal Society of Edinburgh is working with a number of organisations to celebrate the anniversary. I should also mention Captain Duncan Ferguson, who is the current owner of Glenlair, who formed the Maxwell at Glenlair Trust to preserve the Glenlair house, which was ravaged by fire in 1929.

Last, but by no means least, I cannot talk about James Clerk Maxwell without mentioning the remarkable Sam Callendar of Parton village. He has become a walking encyclopaedia on James Clerk Maxwell and provides a wealth of knowledge to visitors who come to see the man’s grave. He is a true and utterly devoted individual, and I am delighted that he has been able to join us this evening, along with representatives of the charities that I have mentioned.

We cannot continue to ignore this incredible son of Scotland. We must ensure that his work and its impact is taught in our schools, so that today’s pupils do not grow up in the ignorance that has led to the requirement for tonight’s debate. Einstein said:

“One scientific epoch ended and another began with James Clerk Maxwell”.

I hope that we can say that an era of ignorance has ended tonight and that a new dawn of recognition begins tomorrow.

17:20

**Alasdair Morgan (South of Scotland) (SNP):** I congratulate Alex Fergusson on securing tonight’s debate. As he said, James Clerk Maxwell was and is a huge figure, especially in the field of electromagnetism and thermodynamics. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were many such figures, even in Scotland, including Lord Kelvin.

The recognition of his importance is encapsulated in two of the quotes in Alex Fergusson’s motion. I will add another two to those. Max Planck, the father of quantum physics, said that Clerk Maxwell “achieved greatness unequalled”. Richard Feynman, who won the Nobel prize for physics in 1965, said:

“the most significant event of the 19<sup>th</sup> century will be judged as Maxwell’s discovery of the laws of electrodynamics.”

As the motion says, Clerk Maxwell needs more honour in the country of his birth.

Although I studied natural philosophy—which has now transformed itself into physics, perhaps in an attempt to make it more attractive—at Glasgow University, I was not really aware of Clerk Maxwell. Perhaps Glasgow was prouder of Lord Kelvin, its own son. However, I heard that the unit of magnetic inductance was named after Maxwell. Even that has been dropped with the move to SI units and has become the henry—whoever Henry was. Gradually, I became more aware of Clerk Maxwell. When I first moved to Aberdeen, I lived on a street called Boyd Orr Avenue, which was named after the famous physiologist and nutritionist from Aberdeen University. However, the next street was Clerk Maxwell Crescent, because, as Alex Fergusson said, Clerk Maxwell was professor of natural philosophy at Marischal college. Subsequently I holidayed just outside Parton and was aware of the granite stone in the churchyard commemorating Clerk Maxwell.

As Alex Fergusson said, Maxwell was clearly a bit of a wit. On moving to Cambridge University and being told that there would be a compulsory 6 am church service, he apparently said:

“Aye, I suppose I could stay up that late.”

Alex Fergusson quoted one example of his verse, which he was in the habit of accompanying with his own guitar playing. He based one of his poems on “Comin thro’ the rye”. It starts:

“Gin a body meet a body  
 Flyin’ thro the air,  
 Gin a body hit a body,  
 Will it fly? And where?”

As the motion suggests, we need to do more to recognise him, as we need to do more to recognise all our famous Scots. Clerk Maxwell Crescent is the only street in Scotland—there is only one other in the United Kingdom—that is named after him. I know that that is not the minister's responsibility, but perhaps local councils could be a bit more imaginative in their street naming and name streets after some of our famous Scots, rather than naming them after trees that have never grown in Scotland, or whatever else takes their fancy.

I hope that the efforts of the consortium that is running Maxwell year 2006 are successful. Alex Fergusson alluded to the drop in the figures for people who are taking science subjects at university, about which we heard yesterday. That trend has existed for some time. It is important for the future of us all that we reverse it. One way in which we could contribute to that would be to talk about the achievements of scientific pioneers such as Maxwell, to convey the sense of excitement that was around in science in those days, when people were making groundbreaking discoveries.

I conclude with a quote from Max Planck. He said:

"If anybody says he can think about quantum problems without getting giddy, that only shows he has not understood the first thing about them."

Of Clerk Maxwell, he said:

"His name stands magnificently over the portal of classical physics, and we can say this of him; by his birth, James Clerk Maxwell belongs to Edinburgh, by his personality he belongs to Cambridge, by his work he belongs to the whole world."

17:25

**Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab):** I congratulate Alex Fergusson on being the first person to lodge a motion on this subject when a number of people thought that it would be useful to commemorate the anniversary of James Clerk Maxwell.

One of the websites at which I looked described Maxwell as being one of the three most influential physicists, the other two being Newton and Einstein. It said that, unlike the other two, James Clerk Maxwell was well known only among physicists. Alex Fergusson said that he was not even well known among physicists, although I have come across lots of Maxwell laboratory buildings and at least three of the labs in which I have worked have been attached to Maxwell buildings—one of them was irreverently or affectionately known as Maxwell house.

The fact that James Clerk Maxwell is Scottish is not the reason why he is not so well known; it is possibly because no soundbites are associated

with his work. Everybody recognises the Newtonian concept that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction and people know Einstein's equation,  $E=mc^2$ . Even if people do not understand the physics, they know the soundbites. James Clerk Maxwell's work, however, is less easily encapsulated in the public imagination.

I will briefly describe what James Clerk Maxwell did to develop understanding of the nature of electromagnetic radiation, or light, as it is more commonly known. His work is an illustration of how science progresses and the way in which the contribution of great scientists such as Maxwell or Einstein is not in inventing something new but in taking the results and theories that are under debate in the scientific community and interpreting them in a novel way that radically improves our understanding of the world about us.

Newtonian physics was modelled on particles and the way in which they behaved when subjected to external factors. Newton believed that light was made up of particles, which was why shadows were sharp replicas of the object that caused them.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a physicist called Thomas Young noticed that if one shone a beam of light through a very narrow slit, the shadow produced looked like the waves on the surface of a pond, suggesting that light travelled like a wave and not a particle.

Maxwell transformed the way in which the nature of light was understood. He took four observations: when electric charges move, they produce an electric force; magnetic monopoles do not exist, or there is no north pole without a south pole, because they exist in pairs; changing electric forces produces a change in magnetic forces; and changing magnetic forces produces changes in electric fields. That last is the principle of the dynamo—when one cycles along with moving magnets, one is able to produce an electric current that puts the light on.

Maxwell put together all those equations that describe such phenomena and showed mathematically that waves consisting of oscillating magnetic and electric fields could travel through empty space at the speed of light—just over 300,000km per second. That model of electromagnetic radiation, to which Alasdair Morgan referred, was suggested by Michael Faraday about 20 years earlier, but it was James Clerk Maxwell who had the mathematical ability to "prove"—a word that scientists always put in inverted commas—that it was a substantial hypothesis.

Einstein went on to bring together the work of Newton and Maxwell. Another physicist, Max Planck, to whom Alasdair Morgan referred,



suggested prior to Einstein that light could behave like a moving particle—so Newton was not altogether wrong—and that the energy of those particles was related to the frequency of the light, or the rate at which those oscillating electromagnetic fields that Maxwell spoke about related to the energy of those light particles.

Einstein went on to develop that work to show that light could be considered to have mass, which was related to its energy, and that because it has mass, it could be affected by electromagnetic fields, which he famously proved during an eclipse of the sun.

James Clerk Maxwell's theories therefore influenced future developments in understanding physics as well as chemistry, affecting our understanding of the atom and the way in which atoms interact with light and with each other. His work influenced many scientists and enabled the development of many instruments and gadgets that we now take for granted.

Isaac Newton said:

"If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants".

It is clear that James Clerk Maxwell was one of the giants on whose shoulders others, including Albert Einstein, stood. It is therefore fitting that we in the Scottish Parliament record the contribution that this Scottish physicist made to international science.

17:30

**Stewart Stevenson (Banff and Buchan) (SNP):** I congratulate Alex Fergusson on bringing this topic for debate, but I must correct his initial statement that it would be impossible to put all the material into the time available. The point is that Clerk Maxwell laid the basis for Einstein's later work, which of course showed that to get the material into the time available one only needs to move close to the speed of light. Therefore, Alex Fergusson was entirely wrong, thanks to Clerk Maxwell.

There are many interesting aspects to the subjects of natural philosophy and mathematics. I remember the excitement and enjoyment I felt, as a spotty-faced young lad at secondary school, on being charged up by the Van der Graaf generator and going along the corridor and shaking hands with the first victim I found. That was the sort of primitive piece of science that engages the mind and starts to make young people think about the world around them.

Clerk Maxwell's contribution to the world was to explain some of the phenomena that we can see and experience. He attended Marischal college in the University of Aberdeen, where I went as a

student. I was an extremely indifferent student, so when I finally graduated my mother gave my girlfriend a present because she knew that the fact that I had finally graduated was nothing to do with me. When I was at the university, the professor of natural philosophy was R V Jones, who said that Clerk Maxwell made

"one of the greatest leaps ever achieved in human thought."

R V Jones was, of course, famed for his work on radar during the second world war, which depended utterly on Clerk Maxwell's earlier thinking.

Natural philosophy it was when I was at Aberdeen. My studies were in the arts faculty rather than the science faculty because it is about thinking and a philosophy with which to see the world. I think that that is important.

It has also been said that Clerk Maxwell's contribution was that he curbed Newton's influence. He certainly avoided descending into the sequence that Newton did at the end of his life, when he spent some 10 years pursuing the chimera of alchemy and thus in many ways devalued his contribution to world thinking.

The reality is that we now understand that what we can see and touch is perhaps only 4 per cent of the universe; another 24 per cent is said to be dark matter; and the rest is energy, which is far and away the biggest part of the universe. We have today, through the work of Clerk Maxwell, an explanation that covers much of the universe that we are unable to see.

The Scottish Parliament is perhaps particularly fortunate in that all the major parties, with the exception of the Liberals, have mathematicians represented here—even the First Minister is one. We now have five mathematicians in the Parliament. Therefore, I hope that the Parliament is a great place in which we can do thinking well. Clerk Maxwell changed the world by pure thought, which was an important contribution to the modern world.

17:34

**Sarah Boyack (Edinburgh Central) (Lab):** I congratulate Alex Fergusson not just on bringing the debate to the chamber but on making a speech that justified the purpose of members' business debates, which is to enable us to raise issues such as the current one. I thought that the level of Alex Fergusson's speech set a high standard for the debate. Indeed, I almost decided to cancel the flashing light on my console as I sat and listened to colleagues explain the significance of James Clerk Maxwell. I thought that Elaine Murray's speech was particularly effective in that regard.

I am not one of the five mathematicians in the Parliament. I am somebody whom science passed by at school, although I did biology, which I always think of as a science. However, from speaking to scientists, I know that not all of them agree that it is—I am not going there.

It is entirely appropriate that we now celebrate the birth of James Clerk Maxwell 175 years ago. It is also appropriate that work has been done to ensure that his house at 14 India Street is accessible. I would encourage people to visit it. The house should be added to our tourism literature, because Edinburgh should be proud of it. Maxwell should be part of the story of Edinburgh. Many scientists made their name in Edinburgh—Charles Darwin for example—and it is hugely appropriate that such people should feature in our adverts for the city and in our education about the city.

I want to congratulate the steering group that was set up to celebrate the anniversary of James Clerk Maxwell this year. I have met its members and attended one of its meetings; it is a very distinguished group. Its work covers wider issues than just this evening's debate; a whole series of events, lectures and discussions will take place this year in Edinburgh and throughout the rest of Scotland.

**Alex Fergusson:** Sarah Boyack represents a part of Edinburgh and I wonder whether she supports, as I do, the efforts of the president of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in championing the erection of a statue to James Clerk Maxwell in the city.

**Sarah Boyack:** I was going to come on to that. Alasdair Morgan pointed out how few streets in Scotland are named after James Clerk Maxwell. We in the chamber could collectively address that issue. It would be highly appropriate if one or two squares in Edinburgh were named after James Clerk Maxwell, and possibly some streets. A statue would give a physical entity to the man who was James Clerk Maxwell—as long as it had a little plaque beside it, as long as it became part of a tourist trail, and as long as it became part of the formal recognition of the contribution of James Clerk Maxwell. We could do a whole number of things.

I ask the minister to consider the tourism implications and the worthwhile suggestions relating to schools that a couple of colleagues have raised. We are all trying to build a smart, successful Scotland, but we have not sufficiently emphasised the importance of James Clerk Maxwell. This debate could raise awareness and add weight to the ideas of the steering group.

Much could come out of today's debate and it is important that we mark the anniversary in

Parliament. From an e-mail that I received earlier this week, I note that 100 MPs in the House of Commons have signed a similar motion in the name of my colleague Mark Lazarowicz, whose constituency contains India Street.

Let us think about how we can take today's debate forward. It will be an important footnote in the history of this Parliament and will help us to focus on where we might go from here. I look to the minister for some ideas.

17:38

**Brian Adam (Aberdeen North) (SNP):** I would like to develop some of Sarah Boyack's ideas, especially those on tourism and art in the Parliament. Like Alasdair Morgan and Stewart Stevenson, I should declare my interest, although I do not want anybody to think that my character was formed by an electric shock from a Van de Graaf generator, as Mr Stevenson's clearly was. However, my first encounter with James Clerk Maxwell was probably the same as Stewart Stevenson's. His might have taken place in his natural philosophy lectures; mine took place while sitting as a student in the Mitchell hall in Marischal college at the University of Aberdeen, where a wonderful plaque on the wall tells people about James Clerk Maxwell.

I agree that a statue is a good idea, but I suggest—perhaps more to the Presiding Officer than to the minister—having a plaque in the Parliament. Parliament should take a lead in such matters. We have an active policy on art, but much of it is contemporary. We could address that by celebrating our distinguished scientists—for example, by having appropriate plaques on the walls within the Parliament. The Parliament building is heavily visited—in fact, it is one of the most heavily visited buildings anywhere in Scotland. If we had plaques like the one to James Clerk Maxwell that is on the wall of the Mitchell hall, it would help to spread the message about our scientists.

Scotland has been extremely fortunate to have had a number of distinguished physicists. My colleague Mr Stevenson referred to R V Jones, who served at the University of Aberdeen relatively recently. We have also had physicists who have done well by building on the kind of work that James Clerk Maxwell did some time ago. The magnetic resonance imaging scanner was invented by John Mallard, who was a professor of medical physics at the University of Aberdeen. I have sought to get appropriate recognition for some of our near-contemporary scientists by making the same suggestion that I have just made in connection with James Clerk Maxwell.

We have much to celebrate in the field of science, and if we are to encourage Scots and visitors to know that, we must demonstrate that it is the case. The best way to do that is to mark the achievements of Scottish scientists in the places that people visit. I commend to members who are involved with the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body the suggestion that we should do that in the Parliament.

The inventor of ultrasound was associated with the University of Glasgow. We can be proud of the significant contribution that scientists who have worked in Scotland have made to much of medical physics.

For tourism purposes, we must have the plaques, the street names, the squares, the statues and the art objects, but why are we not encouraging our scientific community to organise conferences on the history of science? Mr Stevenson and I were contemporaries at university and we just avoided the compulsory history of science course. Perhaps that explains why we are not as proud of the history of our science as we ought to be.

It is up to scientists in Scotland to encourage conferences to take place here that celebrate the history of science as it relates to this country; the conferences that are held should not just be about progressing current science. Tourists come to conferences. Given that we already host a significant number of conferences, why are no efforts being made to organise conferences on James Clerk Maxwell, which would play a positive role in acknowledging and developing awareness of his achievements? By linking knowledge of the achievements of the past to awareness of contemporary science, we would encourage young people to get involved in and be excited about science.

17:43

**Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green):** I want to reflect briefly on James Clerk Maxwell's time at the University of Aberdeen. Three of the members present are graduates of that university. Like Stewart Stevenson, I have an indifferent degree. The ordinary degree is a lovely degree, as part of which both science and arts are studied. I studied philosophy and natural philosophy while R V Jones was in Aberdeen. R V Jones's teaching was heavily based on James Clerk Maxwell's approach.

When I went to the University of Aberdeen, there was a story about the east coast universities. It was said that when a lecturer addressed his class at a 9 o'clock lecture at the University of St Andrews, his "Good morning" would receive no reply because the students would all be asleep or

not there. At the University of Edinburgh, the students would give a bright "Good morning" to the lecturer's greeting. When a lecturer came into the lecture theatre and said "Good morning" at the University of Aberdeen, the students would write it down. It is clear that the situation was not much different 150 years before I went to the university.

In his inaugural lecture, stating the way in which he would approach his teaching, James Clerk Maxwell said:

"My duty is to give you the requisite foundation and to allow your thoughts to arrange themselves freely. It is best that every man should be settled in his own mind, and not be led into other men's ways of thinking under the pretence of studying science. By a careful and diligent study of natural laws I trust that we shall at least escape the dangers of vague and desultory modes of thought and acquire a habit of healthy and vigorous thinking which will enable us to recognise error in all the popular forms in which it appears and to seize and hold fast truth whether it be old or new."

R V Jones certainly taught in that style. He wanted to encourage people to think; the absence of which is a feature of our education system today—much concern is expressed on the subject. If we want to pay the full tribute to James Clerk Maxwell's contribution to science and teaching, his thoughts and achievements should be recognised and kept alive in our education system, as well as be remembered by way of statues. Although the teaching of science underwent a revolution after the Newsom report, and there is good teaching and much experimental science in our schools, some schools still teach towards exams. James Clerk Maxwell was considerably worried about that 150 years ago.

James Clerk Maxwell spent a short time at the University of Aberdeen—he was there for four years. Alex Fergusson referred to his work on Saturn's rings. It is interesting to note that, by a process of mathematical and statistical modelling, he dismissed the idea that the rings were solid or fluid and concluded that they had to be dust rings. He also came up with an idea of what they would look like and set out the wave motions that would run through them. When Voyagers I and II went past Saturn in the 1980s, more than 100 years later, they found exactly what James Clerk Maxwell described, which shows the brilliance of his mind. He made that discovery in 1856, well ahead of any other thinking. The paper that he gave on the subject was delivered in a hall that is now the University of Aberdeen music hall.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** One minute.

**Robin Harper:** The music hall was built for a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and is one of the university's major buildings. Would we build something like that now for a meeting of the British

Association for the Advancement of Science? Sadly, I think not.

Sadly, James Clerk Maxwell was quickly forgotten at Aberdeen. He left for Cambridge when Marischal and Kings colleges were brought together. Instead of being given the job, another professor—Crafty Thomson, as he was known, the professor of natural philosophy at Kings—got it. Happily for the University of Cambridge, James Clerk Maxwell went down there. Communications that the University of Aberdeen received in his name about the music school, to which he continued to contribute, were returned to the senders marked “unknown”. James Clerk Maxwell became unknown to the university almost as soon as he left it.

We need to teach the history of science in science teaching, so that people who study science have role models to look up to. Earlier this afternoon, I was talking to a young woman who was sitting in the gallery. She told me that she knew the Archimedes principle, but had no idea who Archimedes was. Nowadays, who knows who Volta or Ampère were? How will people know those things if we do not teach them about the real people and how they experimented and came to their conclusions? We should teach thought in our schools.

Have I got a couple of seconds, Presiding Officer?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You have a couple of seconds, but you are two minutes over time.

**Robin Harper:** I am terribly sorry, Presiding Officer. I have kept everyone here for far too long.

My remarks are about the teaching of history as well as the teaching of science. We should incorporate the history of science and the history of thought in the teaching of history. I wish that the Minister for Education and Young People was also here for the debate. Again, I apologise for going over time, Presiding Officer.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** In the circumstances, you are forgiven.

17:49

**The Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Allan Wilson):** It is a pleasure to be in the company of the well-read and studious colleagues who surround me. I join them in congratulating Alex Fergusson on securing the debate and in paying tribute to James Clerk Maxwell.

The debate comes a few days after the anniversary of James Clerk Maxwell's birth, but at an opportune time, given that this week his birthplace of Edinburgh is honoured to host the

10<sup>th</sup> European particle accelerator conference, which is being attended by around 1,000 physicists from all over the world.

James Clerk Maxwell was one of the world's greatest scientists and many people speak of Maxwell, Einstein and Newton in the same breath. As members have said, his work inspired many people and laid the foundations for some of the most significant scientific and technological advances of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the consequences of which are interwoven into our daily lives. As members might expect, I will focus on the contemporary importance of Maxwell's work.

In Scotland, we have always taken particular and justified pride in our education system and our strong history of scientific discovery and innovation. Scottish science has given birth to many innovations, such as the telephone, anaesthesia, penicillin, television, tarmacadam and tyres. Without the scientific endeavours of great scientists such as Maxwell we would live in a very different world. Their legacy is great and their inspiration lives on in the groundbreaking work that goes on today in our scientific institutions.

For example, at the University of St Andrews, Professor Wilson Sibbett works on ultra-fast lasers—laser pulses so fast that as many could be squeezed into a second as there have been hours since the big bang. Such work is opening the way for exciting new applications in medical imaging and communication, which will revolutionise diagnosis and treatments. We will be able to see what is happening at the core of diseased tissue and understand the impact of a new drug without damaging surrounding tissue.

Professor Walter Kolch, at the University of Glasgow, is working on proteomics, the new science of protein function. He is undertaking world-leading research on the molecular mechanisms of cancer development, heart disease and infection and his work is expected to bring real benefits to sufferers of such conditions in the coming years. I could give many other examples.

Never before has science been so important as a key driver of not just our global economy but our quality of life.

**Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP):** Given that the minister has responsibility for enterprise, he will acknowledge the importance of the future development of our knowledge economy. Does he agree that a bridge to help to build the knowledge economy might be provided by a public relations exercise that makes science sexy and ensures that people know about the history of science in Scotland, including the work of James Clerk Maxwell and others?

**Allan Wilson:** Indeed. I thought that the couple of incidental references that members made to the

current position of science in our institutions masked the overall position, which is rather better than is portrayed, not least in the news. The number of Scottish first-year undergraduates who chose science degrees increased by 19 per cent between 2001-02 and 2003-04, whereas there was a 1 per cent decrease in the number of non-science first-year students.

In that context, I was intrigued by Sarah Boyack's comments about what constitutes science. There has undoubtedly been a shift towards applied subjects and there have been significant increases in the proportion of students who study biological sciences and subjects allied to mathematics and medicine and a decline in the number of students of pure sciences such as physics and chemistry, although the number of such students has increased again slightly since 2001-02.

The progress is much better than it is sometimes portrayed in the media. Our science strategy for Scotland acknowledges that point. It also takes into account the excellence of our science base, which is disproportionately strong in its quality and breadth, relative to the size of the country's economy.

**Stewart Stevenson:** The minister is talking about acquiring knowledge, which is of course essential, but knowledge becomes obsolete over time. Does the minister agree that, if the education system in its broadest sense fails to teach us to think and therefore to be able to acquire new and updated knowledge, it does not serve the whole purpose that we require of it?

**Allan Wilson:** My point was precisely that our education system is teaching contemporary students to think, hence the fact that, per capita, we rank third in the world on research publications and citations, ahead of the United States of America and Germany. We produce 1 per cent of the world's published research with only 0.1 per cent of the world's population. Therefore, if we have room for improvement, it is not necessarily in our ability to think through research, but in our ability to commercialise it and roll it out for wider social and economic benefit. I believe that more could be done on that.

More than half of Scotland's research is rated as internationally excellent. Our key strengths lie in the life sciences, medical research, biotechnology, informatics, energy, nanotechnology and environmental science. Scotland attracts 20 per cent of all United Kingdom research funding in bioscience, which is the highest percentage of any of the UK's regions or countries. That reflects our ability to put the money to good use. Scottish research is also internationally connected, not least to institutions such as Stanford University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Scottish research continues to provide a lead for the UK in several areas. The cloning work at the Roslin Institute is internationally renowned. We also have the national e-science centre at the University of Edinburgh, which is a partnership with the University of Glasgow; the Wellcome Trust biocentre at the University of Dundee; the mineral and mining engineering work at Heriot-Watt University, which is also in Edinburgh; the Beatson Institute for Cancer Research in Glasgow, which is world renowned; and the institute for gravitational research at the University of Glasgow.

**Alex Fergusson:** The developments that the minister points out are all highly worthy of applause, but does he agree that the researchers and scientists of tomorrow will be more inspired if they are fully aware of the deeds of some of their predecessors? To get back to the point of the debate, does the minister agree that we are not doing that process any favours if we continue to undervalue the incredible work of James Clerk Maxwell? Does he agree that it would be hugely beneficial in the process of inspiring tomorrow's researchers if we were actively to educate them through the education system about the work of that great man?

**Allan Wilson:** Indeed, but I put it to the member that the two processes are not mutually exclusive. As well as celebrating the work of our past scientists, we should also celebrate the work of the contemporary scientists who are making such inroads and scientific advances and, in the process, inspiring new generations of students. As a science nation, we aim to promote a culture that inspires young people to get involved and to see science as a promising career option and scientists as highly respected members of society. Undoubtedly, we can do that by paying due tribute to scientists such as James Clerk Maxwell and the contribution that they have made to our contemporary society.

In that context, all of the suggestions that have been made in the debate about the various means by which we could have a more contemporary focus on his contribution—whether by naming streets or squares or by having statues or anything else—will be referred to the appropriate departments of the Scottish Executive for officials to study and respond to. I give a commitment to ensure that those responses are conveyed to Alex Fergusson and to every other member who has made a suggestion about the most appropriate way in which the contribution of James Clerk Maxwell and others who have made an internationally renowned contribution to scientific research can be more properly reflected in our contemporary society.

*Meeting closed at 18:00.*



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