

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 16 May 2007

Session 3

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Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 16 May 2007

[THE PRESIDING OFFICER *opened the meeting at 10:00*]

Business Motion

The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson): The first item of business is consideration of business motion S3M-14, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme. I ask any member who wishes to speak against the motion to press their request-to-speak button now.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Wednesday 16 May 2007

10.00 am Business Motion

followed by Selection of the Parliament's nominee for First Minister

Thursday 17 May 2007

11.15 am First Minister's Motion to appoint Scottish Ministers

followed by First Minister's Motion to appoint Junior Scottish Ministers

(b) that the period for lodging First Minister's Questions for First Minister's Question Time on 31 May 2007 should end at 4.00 pm on Thursday 24 May;

(c) that the period for Members to submit their names for selection for General Question Time on 31 May 2007 should end at 4.00 pm on Thursday 17 May; and

(d) that the period for Members to submit their names for selection for General and Themed Question Times on 7 June 2007 should end at 4.00 pm on Thursday 24 May.—
[Bruce Crawford.]

Motion agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: Under rule 4.1.3 of standing orders, a period of 30 minutes must elapse between the closure of nominations for First Minister and the start of the voting period for selection of a nominee. The nomination period is now closed, so I suspend the meeting until 10.30, when the voting period will commence.

10:00

Meeting suspended.

10:30

On resuming—

First Minister

The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson): The next item of business is the selection of the Parliament's nominee for First Minister. I have received four valid nominations for appointment as First Minister. In alphabetical order, the nominations are: Annabel Goldie, Jack McConnell, Alex Salmond and Nicol Stephen. I ask all candidates to make themselves known to the chamber.

Copies of the announcement that was published in today's *Business Bulletin*, explaining the procedures to be followed this morning, have been placed on each member's desk. I will ask each nominee in turn to speak in support of their candidacy for up to five minutes. After all nominees have spoken, members will be asked to cast their vote for their preferred candidate. A separate vote will be called for each candidate.

Once all the voting has been completed, there will be a short break of a few minutes while the result is verified. I will then announce the result of the voting. A candidate will be elected if an overall majority is obtained. If no majority is obtained, the candidate or candidates with the smallest number of votes will be eliminated and we will proceed to a further round of voting.

I ask members to note that, if we have a vote between only two candidates, all that is required for success is a simple majority for one of those candidates. Members may wish to record an abstention. Under rule 11.11.2, no account of those votes will be taken in establishing whether a simple majority has been achieved.

We now enter the selection process.

10:32

Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con): This is a new and young Parliament, but today represents a watershed in its development. For the past eight years, the political regime has been characterised by a condition that some may argue was consensus, but which, to others, was cosiness. It was an incumbency where the ruling politicians felt in control, unchallenged in their political administration. Consensus had become complacency.

The recent election shattered that mould. Some would say that a fresh wind has blown through the Parliament; some would say that pragmatism has entered the Parliament, as well as realism. I may stand here as a candidate for First Minister, but Scottish Conservatives are realistic: I do not expect to become First Minister—yet. The

assumption is that Alex Salmond, as the leader of the largest party in the Parliament, will be selected as First Minister to lead a minority Government.

I think that the prospect of a minority Government is exciting. Almost a year ago, I broke another consensus—the consensus that coalition was the only way to form a Government in this Parliament. I pointed out that a single-party minority Administration was also an option. I said then—and I hold to this view now—that that could provide greater transparency and sharper political focus, and that there would be less political distortion and greater candour with voters. However, such an Administration brings with it great challenges, not just for the incumbents, but for the whole Parliament. A fresh wind can quickly become a chill one. Pragmatism can easily be replaced by paralysis.

I am quite clear about what Scotland is looking for at this time from her Parliament. She wants the political parties in this place to act on principle, and she wants posturing and petty playground antics to be left at the door. I understand that, and we in the Scottish Conservatives will respect it. We shall support a Parliament that decides issues on their individual merits, week by week; a Parliament that pursues the real goal of constructive agreement, not the charade of a contrived consensus; and a Parliament that strives for the highest political common denominator, not the lowest.

Scotland today needs a Government that recognises that delivery—not divorce—is the only way forward. It needs a Government that measures its success not by how much it can spend, but by how much it can achieve. We need smaller government, more focused government, far less legislation, fewer rules and regulations and a dramatic cut in state interference.

This Parliament and this minority Government must understand and respond to people's priorities. The Scottish Conservatives, as a principled and robust Opposition with a clear sense of what those priorities are, will argue relentlessly and tirelessly for more police on our streets; more drugs rehabilitation; more measures to cut crime; more affordable homes; more regeneration for our town centres; more real effort to cut costs for our small businesses; more determination to stand up for Scotland's families in child care, health care and wealth care; and more help for our older pensioners by cutting their council tax bills in half now.

I know that those are the real challenges and that they are the people's priorities. Those are what we shall fight for. If our new minority Government does the same, we will back it; if not, we shall oppose it and be vehement in that opposition.

Members should be under no illusion: there is no mandate for constitutional turmoil. Scotland did not vote for it and Scotland does not want it. If the minority Administration does not recognise that, it will have the Scottish Conservatives to reckon with.

I recognise and respect the principle of minority government and I recognise and respect Scotland's demand for change. However, every MSP in this Parliament must respect the voters, who have had enough of posturing, politicking and process and who, instead, want policy, purpose and progress. I do not think that that is too much to ask. The Scottish Conservatives will do everything that we can to meet that challenge. The next four years are about delivery, not divorce.

10:36

The First Minister (Jack McConnell): I am delighted to accept my nomination for the vote today. Given recent events in Scotland, I sincerely hope that the four members who voted twice in the vote on Monday were all members of either the Scottish National Party group or the Green group and, today, have some problems with the electronic machines. However, as that might be unlikely, I am happy to set out the position of my party and myself in this vote for First Minister.

The Labour group in the Parliament is the second largest group, by one member. We represent a majority of the constituency members. We achieved more votes in the election two weeks ago than we did in 2003. That position reflects a divided Parliament, which, in many senses, reflects a divided nation. This morning, I reflected on the words of the leader of the SNP when he spoke at the election of the first First Minister, back in 1999. He reminded Donald Dewar that this was, indeed, "a Parliament of minorities", and that leadership in the Parliament had to reflect that position. I remind him, as he reminded Donald back then, that seven out of 10 voters in Scotland did not vote for constitutional change, turmoil and conflict. I hope that he reflects on that in the weeks and months ahead. The people of Scotland have voted for a balance of power in this Parliament. The SNP has an opportunity to govern, but it is not an opportunity that is unconditional.

In 2001, when I first stood for First Minister, I said that I wanted to harness talent across Scotland, unlock potential, find solutions to Scottish problems and build a future for our country. I believed that the job of First Minister was to improve lives and speak for Scotland; I did not believe that it was a part-time position. Five and a half years on, our economy is stronger, our population is growing, our wages are rising faster than wages in the rest of the United Kingdom, we are closer to full employment than we have ever

been, crime is falling and our health and education services have improved dramatically.

Through speaking for Scotland—not through creating conflict for its own sake—and tackling long-standing issues in this country, we now have a ban on smoking in public spaces on which we can build, a fresh talent initiative on which we can build an increasing population, the decline of sectarianism in society and Scotland being promoted abroad in our own interests and in the interests of others.

Today, the challenge for us is to determine what comes next in the third session of the Parliament. I noticed that, at the weekend, Mr Swinney said that the SNP's flagship policies were perhaps doomed and that the manifesto and the 100-days document were perhaps now a guide. I would like to remind not just the nationalists but everybody in the Parliament what Nye Bevan said. We know what happens when people get stuck in the middle of the road: they get run over. I do not think that there can be any excuses for not bringing the proposals of each of the parties in the Parliament to the chamber, having open debate and open scrutiny, and then making the best resolutions for the people of Scotland.

There will be areas where we can work together in the months and years ahead—on the environment, on class sizes and on raising the smoking age to 18, for which I think there is broad cross-party agreement. However, we should also debate the issues that matter to Scotland. All parties have a duty. The SNP may claim a moral authority to govern, but all of us have a moral responsibility to bring our manifestos and our policies to the chamber, to have those debates and to ensure that the best decisions are made for Scotland. When Labour does that, we will have three key elements at our core.

First, a strong economy is vital for Scotland and for hard-working families across our nation. Scotland is succeeding again. We will bring forward proposals that will help to improve our economy, but we will oppose proposals that would damage our economy. We agree with Jim Mather when he says that rises in income tax would be entirely wrong in a knowledge-based economy. We will oppose a local income tax because of the damage that it would do to hard-working families and Scotland's economy.

We will support investment in transport infrastructure, investment in skills and town centre trusts to revitalise our town centres. For those who have contributed to our economy throughout their working lives—our pensioners—we will support the reduction and then the abolition of water rates, with the poorest pensioners benefiting the most.

Secondly, because education and learning have to be our national priority, we will ensure that the Parliament has a chance to debate the raising of the school leaving age, a discipline code, skills academies, and nursery education for two-year-olds, and we will ensure that, each year, in our budget, there is a proposal before the Parliament for over-the-rate-of-inflation increases in education at every level.

Thirdly, we will oppose any attempt to roll back progress on crime and antisocial behaviour. That will be our programme.

Today, I ask the Parliament in voting for First Minister to set a tone that allows each of us in the years to come to make our proposals, to have those debates and to determine that the third session of the Parliament was one that took Scotland forward and did not take Scotland back.

10:43

Alex Salmond (Gordon) (SNP): I have taken the opportunity over the past few days to reread all the nomination speeches for First Minister. We have had a lot of them, because of the changes in Parliament and the changes of First Minister, but absolutely the best—and, indeed, the briefest—was the speech from Donald Dewar in 1999, which was far better than the speech I made that day. The reason it was the briefest and the best is that he refused to rehash the election battle and talked about the future of Scotland. I want to embrace that approach today.

Every party leader entered the campaign looking for overwhelming support for their mandate. That is the stuff of politics—making an argument based on conviction and seeking a mandate from the people to implement that manifesto. On one level, the election has delivered an historic change: it is the first election that the Labour Party has lost for 50 years in Scotland, and it is the only election that the SNP has won, in terms of the popular vote.

But this is not Westminster. This Parliament is a proportional Parliament. It is a Parliament of minorities where no one party rules without compromise or concession. The SNP believes that we have the moral authority to govern, but we have no arbitrary authority over this Parliament. The Parliament will be one in which the Scottish Government relies on the merits of its legislation, not the might of a parliamentary majority. The Parliament will be about compromise and concession, intelligent debate and mature discussion.

That is no accident. If we look back, we see that it is precisely the Parliament that the consultative steering group—the founding fathers of this place—envisaged. Section 2 of its report, on key

principles, from a committee that was chaired by Henry McLeish, who was later First Minister, said:

“the Scottish Parliament should embody and reflect the sharing of power between the people of Scotland, the legislators and the Scottish Executive”.

In some ways, therefore, the Parliament that we have today is more typical of Scotland than those that have gone before. More important, although it may not be what any of us planned, this Parliament has been delivered by the people, and our overwhelming responsibility is to work together in the people’s interest.

The days of Scottish Government imposing its will on the Parliament are behind us, although I daresay that there might be days in the near future when I come to lament their passing. My commitment today is to reach across the parties and try to build a majority, issue by issue, on the things that matter to the people of Scotland. I will do so through necessity, certainly, but also through a genuine belief that it is the right and best way to govern Scotland.

No politician, however new or experienced, can fail to be moved by the immense privilege of national leadership. Each and every member of the Parliament who took the oath last week took an oath to share in that leadership and responsibility. What I ask for today is the support of the Parliament to begin a new chapter in Scottish democracy and in Scotland’s story.

10:47

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Nicol Stephen): I speak in this important debate as the first Liberal Democrat to be formally proposed for the post of First Minister, although I am conscious that Jim Wallace served as acting First Minister with great dignity and credit.

I am proud to stand on the basis of Liberal Democrat values: fairness, decentralised power, individual freedom and justice. Liberal Democrats have proposed a full and costed programme for government. We want to get things done and make a difference to people’s lives.

This morning, Liberal Democrats have lodged motions to move our policies into action: to support the Edinburgh airport rail link and the Edinburgh trams projects, and to promote a commitment to 100 per cent renewable energy in Scotland. We have lodged a motion calling for Scottish business rates to be reduced to below those in the rest of the United Kingdom to give a competitive advantage to our businesses, and we have also lodged a motion calling for expanded free nursery places and a free playgroup place for all two-year-olds. We have lodged a motion to identify funding for and to prioritise the

development of 100 new local health centres in Scotland. We have launched a proposal for a member’s bill to abolish the graduate endowment for Scotland’s students and a motion for the next spending review to meet in full the bid for funding from Universities Scotland. We have also lodged a motion to double the Executive’s international aid budget and a motion on a new target for an hour of physical activity a day for every child in Scotland and the extra physical education teachers and sports coaches to make that happen.

However, if I do not get a late swing in this election and Scotland is not to enjoy its first ever Liberal Democrat First Minister for the next four years, I have a commitment to make: the Liberal Democrats will be an adventurous Opposition. We will be prepared to work with and support the Government on some of its key policies—scrapping the council tax, tackling climate change and introducing tough new community sentences—but we will be prepared to take on the Government, even if nobody else will, if it falls for the same old story of blaming and demonising young people, if it shows lazy thinking on renewable energy or if it struggles for the radical edge on the environment, switching investment away from public transport projects, as it threatens to do.

I made a commitment in the election campaign to be part of a Parliament that delivers and gets things done for families and for children. My party will work across the chamber to ensure that imaginative and exciting changes can take place in Scotland.

The renewable energy revolution needs determination. Scotland will not be transformed into the renewables powerhouse of Europe if ministers turn off wind power or rely simply on research prizes to develop wave and tidal power. That will not be good enough.

On young people, we need to see real commitment and real funding to employ more teachers and reduce class sizes.

So, constructive and positive, bold and adventurous, we stand ready to be part of Scotland’s future, promoting a fair, free and open society in which no person is held back by poverty, ignorance or conformity. We exist to champion freedom, to foster diversity and to celebrate creativity.

It is a privilege to have the opportunity to serve in this Scottish Parliament and a privilege further to build on Liberal Democrat values and deliver radical policies for the good of each individual and the benefit of every community throughout Scotland.

The Presiding Officer: I thank all the candidates for their speeches.

We move on to voting. Members should ensure that their card is inserted correctly in their console. I remind members that they must vote once only and must use only their yes button. If any member casts more than one vote, their votes will be treated as spoiled. Members who wish to record an abstention will have an opportunity to do so at the end of voting for candidates. As usual, members will have 30 seconds in which to cast their vote.

The first vote is for Annabel Goldie. Members who wish to cast their vote for Annabel Goldie should vote yes now.

Members voted.

The Presiding Officer: Voting time has ended. There will be a slight delay between each vote.

The second vote is for Jack McConnell. Members who wish to cast their vote for Jack McConnell should vote yes now.

Members voted.

The Presiding Officer: The third vote is for Alex Salmond. Members who wish to cast their vote for Alex Salmond should vote yes now.

Members voted.

The Presiding Officer: The fourth vote is for Nicol Stephen. Members who wish to cast their vote for Nicol Stephen should vote yes now.

Members voted.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes the votes for all candidates. The next vote is for any members who have not yet voted and who wish to record an abstention. Members who wish to abstain should vote yes now.

Members voted.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes this round of voting. There will be a break of up to five minutes while the votes are verified.

In the first round of voting in the selection of Parliament's nominee for First Minister, the number of votes cast for each candidate was: Annabel Goldie 16, Jack McConnell 46, Alex Salmond 49, Nicol Stephen 16, Abstentions 1. There were no spoiled votes.

VOTES FOR ANNABEL GOLDIE

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Brocklebank, Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothians) (Con)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, John (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)

McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Elizabeth (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

VOTES FOR JACK MCCONNELL

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gordon, Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Kerr, Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahan, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

VOTES FOR ALEX SALMOND

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Ahmad, Bashir (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Western Isles) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Ochil) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Livingston) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee West) (SNP)

Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Christopher (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McKee, Ian (Lothians) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Gordon) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Govan) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Tymkewycz, Stefan (Lothians) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Bill (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)

VOTES FOR NICOL STEPHEN

Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Hume, Jim (South of Scotland) (LD)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney) (LD)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 O'Donnell, Hugh (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 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)
 Tolson, Jim (Dunfermline West) (LD)

ABSTENTION

MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: Accordingly, as no candidate has received an overall majority of the votes cast, and as Annabel Goldie and Nicol Stephen have received the fewest votes, Annabel Goldie and Nicol Stephen are eliminated from the election and a further round of voting will take place with the following candidates, in alphabetical order: Jack McConnell and Alex Salmond.

The first vote in the second round of voting is for Jack McConnell. Members who wish to cast their vote for Jack McConnell should vote yes now.

Members voted.

The Presiding Officer: The next vote is for Alex Salmond. Members who wish to cast their vote for Alex Salmond should vote yes now.

Members voted.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes the vote for all candidates.

The next vote is for any members who have not yet voted and who wish to record an abstention. Members wishing to abstain should press their yes button now.

Members voted.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes this round of voting. Again, there will be a short break of up to five minutes while the votes are verified.

In the second round of voting in the selection of Parliament's nominee for First Minister, the number of votes cast for each candidate was as follows: Jack McConnell 46, Alex Salmond 49, Abstentions 33.

VOTES FOR JACK MCCONNELL

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gordon, Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Kerr, Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahan, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)

Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

VOTES FOR ALEX SALMOND

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Ahmad, Bashir (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Western Isles) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Ochil) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Livingston) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Christopher (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McKee, Ian (Lothians) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Gordon) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Govan) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Tymkewycz, Stefan (Lothians) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Bill (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Brocklebank, Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothians) (Con)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Hume, Jim (South of Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, John (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney) (LD)

McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 O'Donnell, Hugh (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Smith, Elizabeth (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 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)
 Tolson, Jim (Dunfermline West) (LD)

The Presiding Officer: As the result is valid, and as Alex Salmond has received more votes than the total number of votes for all the other candidates, I declare that Alex Salmond is selected as the Parliament's nominee for appointment as First Minister. [*Applause.*]

As required by the Scotland Act 1998, I shall now recommend to Her Majesty that she appoint Alex Salmond as the First Minister. I take this opportunity to record formally my congratulations to Alex Salmond on his appointment.

11:11

Jack McConnell: On behalf of the Labour group, I congratulate Alex Salmond on his election as First Minister. I wish him and Moira the very best. It will be a tough gig, but I hope that he will show wisdom in his decisions and will fill the post with distinction. When he does so, he will have our full support.

We look forward to scrutinising and challenging the new Government. Voltaire once said that Governments need both shepherds and butchers. Alex Salmond may need to be more of a shepherd than a butcher in his new role, when trying to secure majorities for his policies from this flock. He will have our support when his decisions are right. We will not oppose for opposition's sake, but we will bring to the chamber for robust debate the policies in which we believe.

I am proud to lead the largest, most experienced Opposition that the Parliament has ever had; I look forward to that job. It has been a privilege and an honour to have been First Minister of Scotland. In 2001 I said that the task ahead was to make

"Scotland tomorrow better than it is today."—[*Official Report*, 22 November 2001; c 4155.]

Five and a half years on, there have been significant improvements in the economy, public services, our population and other matters that

have brought our country to where it is today.

I did not make decisions or achieve that progress on my own. As I have the chance to do so on this occasion, I record my thanks to the ministers from both the Labour Party and the Scottish Liberal Democrats who served with me; to the special advisers who served me; to the civil servants who worked with me; to the people outside the Parliament and the Executive who contributed so much to so many of the initiatives in which I have been involved; to the MSPs from all parties who have given me support in different ways at different times; and, in particular, to the Labour Party, my constituency and my family.

I say occasionally to young people in Scotland that if the son of a sheep farmer who had no political background in his family and no real political patronage could become First Minister of Scotland, anything is possible for them. I hope that in the past five and a half years I have given that message to young people in Scotland. I look forward to doing so as the MSP for Motherwell and Wishaw and as the leader of Labour in opposition in the Scottish Parliament.

11:14

Annabel Goldie: At this time it would be churlish for me not to pay tribute to the previous First Minister, Mr McConnell. I may have had my political differences with him, but I never doubted that he had the best interests of Scotland at heart. He fought his corner with passion and discharged his role with dignity. I extend to him the best wishes of the Scottish Conservatives for the future.

This is a proud day for Alex Salmond. Politically, it is a day of great significance; a huge responsibility rests on his shoulders and those of his colleagues. On behalf of the Scottish Conservatives, I congratulate him and wish him well.

I am aware that Mr Salmond's wife and sister are in the gallery. I say to them, "If you are not around to keep this man in check, there is another woman who will do so."

11:15

Nicol Stephen: My party and I congratulate Alex Salmond on his election to the post of First Minister. I also associate myself with Jack McConnell's generous remarks about ministerial colleagues, colleagues on the back benches and civil servants. It has indeed been an honour to serve the Parliament and the Government.

Many challenges lie ahead and I wish Alex and Moira Salmond well. The Liberal Democrats will be constructive in our approach to the new minority

Government in Scotland. We recognise the responsibility on each and every one of us in the chamber to make it work effectively.

Scotland, rightly, has great expectations, which now, rightly, rest on Mr Salmond's shoulders. We wish him well.

11:16

Alex Salmond: Presiding Officer, I thank you for your best wishes. I will address, in turn, the party leaders who have spoken.

I thank Annabel Goldie for her congratulations. People in the chamber will not know that I recently toasted Annabel at the scouts and guides Burns supper in the great city of Glasgow. Such was the excellence of her reply to the toast to the lassies that night, I was sorely tempted to vote for her today—tempted, but not seduced.

As Annabel pointed out, my wife Moira and my wee sister Gail are in the gallery today—I say to Annabel that it is a good job that my big sister is no here—and I thank them and the rest of my family for their support. My dad is also here. My father has never seen me in a parliamentary chamber, because he has always refused to set foot in the Palace of Westminster. Some people say that I should have heeded his advice.

I thank Nicol Stephen for a typically gracious speech and his congratulations. Earlier, he listed all the policies in which the Liberal Democrats believe. I am not sure that the Government can afford all his manifesto commitments, but we will certainly try our best.

Lastly, I thank Jack McConnell for his good wishes. He once said that the job of a First Minister was to leave Scotland better than they found it. With the ban on smoking and the campaign against sectarianism in society, he has certainly done that. I applaud his efforts in those directions and I hope to continue them. I thank him very much and wish him and Bridget every good wish for the future.

As we should remember, the Parliament was created by the people of Scotland in a referendum. It is bigger than any of its members or any party. I believe that Scotland is ready for change and ready for reform. We are a small nation, but we have a big future. We also face some big challenges.

Earlier on, it was said that Scotland is a divided nation. Given the closeness of the election result, I understand why people might feel that way. However, it is not the case; we are not divided. Certainly the gap between rich and poor is far too great; we need to grow the economy faster; we need to heal the scars of the past; we need to be greener; and we need to be smarter still—but we

are not divided. We have a sense of ourselves, a sense of community and, above all, a sense of the commonweal of Scotland.

In some ways, we are not even a divided Parliament. Of course, those in this part of the chamber seek independence and equality for Scotland. I am told that not everyone in the chamber agrees with that policy, although some members do. However, there is a broad consensus for the Parliament to assume greater responsibility for the governance of Scotland, as well as an understanding that we are engaged in a process of self-government and an awareness of the distance that we have already travelled.

In 1961, Bashir Ahmad came to Glasgow to drive buses. In 1961, the very idea of a Scottish Parliament was unimaginable. In 1961, the idea of a Scots Asian sitting in a Scots Parliament was doubly unimaginable, but Bashir is here and we are here. That part of the community of Scotland is now woven into the Parliament's tartan and we are much stronger as a result. We are therefore diverse, not divided.

The nature and the composition of the Scottish Parliament in its third session make it imperative for this Government to rely on the strength of argument in the Parliament rather than on the argument of parliamentary strength. Despite all the challenges that that will mean, I welcome the chance to develop a new and fundamentally more reflective model of democracy in Scotland.

The days since the election have been dominated by questions about the structure of the Government. Will there be a coalition or will there be a minority Government? I say to the whole Parliament that the structure of the Government matters less to the people whom we represent than what all of us achieve on their behalf.

All of us in the Parliament have a responsibility to conduct ourselves in a way that respects the Parliament that the people have chosen to elect. That will take patience, maturity and leadership on all sides of the chamber. My pledge to the Parliament today is that any Scottish Government that is led by me will respect and include the Parliament in the governance of Scotland over the next four years.

In this century, there are limits to what Governments can achieve, but one thing that any Government that I lead will never lack is ambition for Scotland. Today I commit myself to leadership wholly and exclusively in the Scottish national interest. We will appeal for support across the chamber policy by policy. That is the Parliament that the people of Scotland have elected and that is the Government that I will be proud to lead. *[Applause.]*

The Presiding Officer: I thank everyone for making this a successful selection process.

Meeting closed at 11:23.

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