

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Thursday 9 October 2003

Session 2

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Scottish Parliament

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

Schools (Enterprise Culture)

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): Good morning. The first item of business this morning is a debate on motion S2M-467, in the name of Jim Wallace, on creating an enterprise culture in Scotland's schools, and three amendments to the motion.

09:30

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Mr Jim Wallace): As has been said before, growing the economy is the Executive's top priority because a successful economy builds better public services, opens up opportunities, creates wealth for all and enables us to pursue our social justice agenda. "Determined to Succeed: A review of enterprise in education" is another step on the road towards a more enterprising Scotland.

The debate is fundamentally about "Determined to Succeed". It is about a vision for our young people, their teachers and their schools. There is an urgent need to look at how we prepare our young people for their working lives as employees, employers and entrepreneurs. That is why "Determined to Succeed" and taking forward the Executive's response to that review are at the heart of our partnership agreement.

The Parliament is aware of the demographic challenges that we face. The number of under-16s in Scotland is forecast to fall by a fifth in little more than 20 years' time. At the same time, the number of older people will rise. Our labour force is shrinking dramatically, so we simply must ensure that our young people, who are tomorrow's work force, are given every encouragement to realise their full potential.

On business start-ups, we have to encourage more people in Scotland to think about establishing their own business. We want Scotland to be a place where people are not frightened to take that leap. As things stand, the figures suggest that Scotland lags well behind the other 30 countries that form part of the independent global entrepreneurship monitor project. For example, fear of failure prevents 40 per cent of our people from starting businesses, but the figure is only 34 per cent for our GEM competitors.

"Determined to Succeed" is intended to change the way in which young people learn so that they are helped to develop new skills, attitudes and behaviour. It is about being prepared to take sensible risks and to have a go. It is also about being able to face up to failure and see it as something from which to learn, from which to recover and on which to build future success. That is crucial to achieving our wider economic priorities.

What does "Determined to Succeed" offer a young person? It offers three sorts of experience: enterprise, vocational and entrepreneurial. It offers more enterprising learning so that every youngster will take part in an enterprise activity as an on-going and integrated part of their school life; it offers more vocational experiences and learning opportunities in the workplace; and it offers more chances for young people to work together by running their own mini-businesses in schools, for instance.

I acknowledge that significant progress has already been made. Although we will roll out the initiative in every part of Scotland, we will initially take it forward with a smaller group of local authorities. I am pleased to announce that plans for a majority of the initial projects are at a stage at which I can confirm in principle awards of funding. Those very substantial awards cover this year and the following two and amount to some £8 million. Of the 10 councils that have been identified to start projects this year, the six with which we have agreements in principle are: Argyll and Bute Council, which is to be awarded £689,000; Dundee City Council, which is to be awarded £800,000; East Ayrshire Council, which is to be awarded £787,000; East Renfrewshire Council, which is to be awarded £645,000; Glasgow City Council, which is to be awarded £3,009,000; and North Lanarkshire Council, which is to be awarded £2,073,000. I will make an announcement shortly about the four other local authorities that are to receive funding in the first phase. It is also worth reminding members that that funding comes on top of the major contribution that the Hunter Foundation has already generously made and which the Executive has matched.

That investment is absolutely essential, but it is made against a backdrop of existing good work and success that augur well for Scotland's future. Throughout Scotland, we already have excellent examples of the sort of work envisaged in "Determined to Succeed". In Oldmachar Academy in Aberdeen, pupils organised a citizenship conference for pupils and teachers from throughout the city, with all the planning, decision making, and individual responsibility that that implies.

In Glasgow, more than 1,000 pupils already benefit from the council's schools vocational programme, which allows them to get early exposure to the workplace and to develop the skills that employers need. With the help of cities growth funding, Glasgow City Council is now working with neighbouring authorities to help them to develop similar programmes.

Pupils in Portree Primary have gone back to the future to develop an award-winning record of local experiences of the second world war, and their product has been purchased by schools throughout Scotland. That is a first-class example of an entrepreneurial project that was developed in the community, was about the community, benefited the community and, above all benefited those who were engaged in it.

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): Has the Scottish Trades Union Congress been approached about involving the trade union movement in the world of work experience and in the creation of the entrepreneurial spirit? Obviously, good employers are those who recognise the trade unions.

Mr Wallace: I certainly accept that trade unionism has an important part to play. Indeed, as most members know, the Executive is regularly in contact and regularly engages with the STUC on a range of issues. I certainly wish the STUC to be involved as many of the projects are developed and taken forward.

In March this year, the First Minister and I launched the enterprise in education strategy. We talked then of the need for more of us in Scotland to see the glass as half full, rather than half empty. "Determined to Succeed" is about changing the culture of young people. It is about helping more of our young people to develop a can-do and will-do attitude.

If we are to make a real difference for our young people and help them to become enterprising pupils, we need enterprising teachers and enterprising schools. There are already excellent examples throughout the country. We intend to learn from and build on them. Let us be clear: "Determined to Succeed" is not about sending a young person into a classroom for a double period of enterprise. Our philosophy is intended to be embedded within and throughout the curriculum.

As I say, that is already happening. Enterprising physics is perfectly possible and is happening now—I wish that it had happened when I was at school. One example is the Scottish space school foundation, a partnership with NASA. Groups of young people from all backgrounds work on online modules, submit them and participate in science workshops. Some participate in a week-long school at the Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas.

We need to engage with parents and carers. We want them to see what we are doing and to carry forward that spirit at home. For example, we want them to view vocational options as the first-rate opportunity that they represent: a way of providing the right option for the individual young person.

Against this background—the need for action, and the scale of the challenge that we face—the Executive has rightly taken the lead in driving implementation of "Determined to Succeed". We are facilitating delivery locally, so I want to spend some time this morning reflecting on what has been done.

From the outset, we have recognised that our strategy will take root only if we work directly with those who are responsible for delivering it. Therefore, local authorities are at the heart of our approach. They must own "Determined to Succeed". They drive it forward in their schools. They must engage—more than that, enthuse—their teachers. The signs are good. There is every sign that we are building on fertile ground.

Local authorities are doing impressive work. The education for work and enterprise agenda has been active for some time, so we must be careful not to suggest that everything I am talking about is new. There are already teachers the length and breadth of Scotland who equip their students with enterprising skills and the confidence and self-esteem that flow from them and who have been doing so for years. I recall visiting Fortrose Academy during the summer. There, I met a number of teachers who, for a considerable time, have encouraged their pupils to engage in many enterprising activities.

During the summer, I also visited the Sir E Scott School on the Isle of Harris in the Western Isles. There, I met an extraordinary group of young people. Led by an inspiring teacher and guided by two enthusiastic business advisers, the youngsters formed a company—Beartas—that designed, patented and marketed the first Isle of Harris tartan. Beartas became the first Scottish winner of the young enterprise UK award and competed strongly against similar companies from across Europe in the European finals. It was well recognised that they did Scotland proud.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): The local examples to which the minister refers are all welcome. However, when I speak to employers, they tell me that they find that school leavers who come to them for jobs increasingly lack basic literacy, numeracy and communication skills. Will the minister outline what the Executive is doing to try to drive up standards in those areas?

Mr Wallace: I hope that Murdo Fraser would acknowledge that we are not talking about an

either/or situation and that developing the enterprise in education theme and tackling numeracy and literacy are both important.

We have undertaken a number of initiatives to improve literacy and numeracy in schools. The Executive is committed to raising standards as part of our national priorities for education. The early intervention programme is providing funding to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy in the early years of primary school. Between 1999 and 2001-02, we provided £12 million to support in-service training and development for teachers, with particular emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy from primary 6 through to secondary 2. There has also been investment in family literacy schemes and the provision of home-link teachers. I assure Murdo Fraser and employers that the Executive takes improving literacy and numeracy skills very seriously indeed.

What struck me about the young people whom I met in Harris was not just their creativity and enterprise in identifying a niche market, the determination with which they pursued that, or their maturity in managing a substantial operation that involved many people, but their self-confidence and assuredness—that shone through. They had a vision of the future as a series of opportunities. All of them were certain that the enterprise project on which they had worked had done wonders for them; they expressed that clearly.

It is clear that pupils who engage and are committed have the ability to succeed. The other key partners—the Executive, local authorities, teachers, parents and the business community—need to ensure that they give such pupils the best possible support.

Members will recall that, of our total provision for implementation of “Determined to Succeed”—some £40 million over three years—£5 million is available this year. It was clear that attempting to stretch that provision across 32 local authorities would have been a case of spreading jam too thinly. As I have indicated, we identified 10 local authorities to work with us in writing plans for immediate implementation. I have announced funding in principle for six of those today.

My officials are visiting directors of education and their staff in the remaining 22 authorities and inviting them to work with us in drawing up plans for funding that will come into effect next April. All 22 authorities will have been met by the middle of next month. So far, it is clear that authorities enthusiastically share our view of what “Determined to Succeed” is about and want to use the resources that we are making available to deliver it.

As well as the investment of millions of pounds, the Executive is taking a number of other steps to help to foster an enterprising culture. We have seconded to my department two teachers who, since the summer, have been working alongside a number of local authorities to help them to develop their plans. We have also brought on board two business people to enable us to engage more effectively with the business community. We need more help from businesses. We need more business people to make available places in which young people may experience the reality of work—not just through traditional work experience, but in work-based learning opportunities. We need more business people and schools to come together in partnerships that can offer much to both parties.

We are investing in other key areas. With the welcome help of the Hunter Foundation, we are investing in the teaching profession—we are drawing on the financial resource that the foundation generously made available at the launch in March. We need to continue to develop leadership skills so that those who deliver “Determined to Succeed” in schools have the tools that they need. With the Hunter Foundation, we are establishing a pilot leadership programme for head and deputy head teachers. We hope that some 100 such teachers will experience that training in the coming year. We are also considering how initial teacher education might be developed better to reflect “Determined to Succeed”.

We are determined to share our existing knowledge and best practice throughout Scotland, which will help schools, teachers and businesses that want to participate but are unsure how to do so. I am pleased to say that, shortly, we will launch a website with a core package for schools that introduces “Determined to Succeed” and on which we will signpost existing excellence in practice and provision. We will have sections that are designed specifically to meet the needs of parents, teachers, local authorities and businesses.

Brian Adam (Aberdeen North) (SNP): “Determined to Succeed” contains 20 recommendations, all of which the Executive has responded to. How many of those recommendations has the Executive implemented or how many does it have firm commitments to implement?

Mr Wallace: Brian Adam has done well to read “Determined to Succeed: A review of enterprise in education”. I also commend to him the Scottish Executive’s response, “Determined to Succeed: Enterprise in education”, which indicates how we are proceeding with each of the recommendations. As I am in my final minute, I cannot go through and read out all 20 of our responses to the recommendations. Our responses are there and,

what is more, the funding is available to back them up.

The dictionary defines enterprise as a “readiness to embark on new ventures; boldness and energy”

and as “initiative in business”. Those attributes are hardly new to us—many Scots have shown them throughout our history. We need to instil and nurture those attributes in all our young people, irrespective of their background. The awards that I have announced today, and those that we plan for all other authorities, will build on existing excellence and good practice. They will give more young people the chance to experience the learning that will let them take their place as the entrepreneurs and the enterprising employees and employers of tomorrow.

I move,

That the Parliament welcomes the “can do, will do” attitude the Scottish Executive’s strategy for enterprise in education aims to engender among young people; notes that it is a priority of the Partnership Agreement to deliver the strategy in partnership with local authorities and businesses, and looks forward to the *Determined to Succeed* strategy giving young people the skills they need to take an entrepreneurial spirit from the classroom into a confident and prosperous Scotland.

09:45

Jim Mather (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):

The “Determined to Succeed” initiative is a worthy initiative that deserves to be supported. We welcome the steps that the motion advocates, which are sensible and will help to prepare all our children for the world of work, by helping to raise their confidence, self-esteem and motivation. However, we also believe that more needs to be done to ensure that we are not training many youngsters to leave Scotland. That serious reservation has nothing to do with the intrinsic validity of the proposals, which I endorse wholeheartedly.

“Determined to Succeed” is a move in the right direction. In Scotland, the total level of national entrepreneurial activity is low. The low business start-up rate shows little sign of a major, lasting improvement, especially as we face a material decline in population numbers.

Population decline is a problem that is fast becoming a crisis. In July, the Registrar General for Scotland said in his annual report:

“population decline is often regarded as being symptomatic of poor economic performance and may even reduce confidence in the economy.”

In other words, Scotland stands on the cusp of further decline. That view was reinforced as recently as last Thursday, when Professor William Baumol said in Glasgow:

“If these trends continue you will have a problem of huge dimensions and the solution will neither be easy nor obvious.”

Although we understand the great need for the initiative, which will equip young people with key skills, we must also recognise the need for us to create conditions that persuade more youngsters to stay in Scotland. Until we do that, the jury will remain out on whether the initiative can help to deliver higher growth, more prosperity, higher productivity, improved competitiveness, higher living standards and, crucially, the stabilisation of our population.

The initiative should not simply be about economics or jobs; after all, we are talking about the young people of Scotland—our own children and grandchildren. For emotional, familial and social reasons, as well as for economic ones, we all want every young person to be all they can be. That is why “Determined to Succeed”, in as far as it goes, is getting the support that we are giving it.

It will certainly provide our schools and teachers with focus and a structured support link to the world of work. It will make education more relevant to all our youngsters, by helping them to see education as a powerful passport to a better future. For business, there is the chance to put something back, as Tom Hunter is doing, and to play a part in channelling new ideas and new energy, which will help to create a better Scotland. That will increase the likelihood of more customers with deeper pockets. For the trade unions, there is the prospect of creating more jobs in a higher-added-value, high-wage economy. For the public sector, there is an opportunity to showcase its role and to help to produce well-rounded young people. The voluntary sector can provide a rich training ground for new, young volunteers and help to create a new generation of more community-aware youngsters.

For Scotland as a whole, the initiative can play a constructive role in generating the sort of growth that the Registrar General was quietly clamouring for. Such growth will involve greater participation in work and prosperity; population growth, with more people staying in Scotland; increasing levels of self-reliance; and the release of a contagious self-confidence. However, as I have said, in the current climate, that release might be more than the Scottish Executive has planned for.

Tommy Sheridan: As the member knows, I agree 100 per cent with putting the powers of the Scottish economy fully in the hands of the Scottish people. Does he agree that we need much stronger employment protection laws than those we have at the moment, so that companies do not hire and fire at the drop of a hat or withdraw from Scotland, as Hoover announced that it would do only yesterday?

Jim Mather: I understand much of Tommy Sheridan's point, but the key issue is that Scotland must stay as flexible as it can be so that it is not painted into a corner. We are trying to catch up, so a balance must be struck. I understand the balance and the points that Tommy Sheridan makes.

The release that I am talking about might mean that more of our better trained and more entrepreneurial young Scots are drawn to faster-growing and more rewarding economies. Therefore, although we accept the good intentions and sound aspects of the Executive's initiative, we must have reservations.

There is plenty of evidence that our taxpayer pounds are enriching other economies, as talented young Scots, intellectual property rights and fledgling companies migrate to economies that are doing better than is Scotland's. We must acknowledge that an enterprise culture in schools is only part of the solution. The other and most important part can be tackled only when the Parliament recognises that our economic problems are all symptoms of a deeper problem—our status as a branch economy without the powers to compete. That analysis gains acceptance daily and faces flat rejection only in the chamber. That response surprises many people in Scotland and abroad who understand cause and effect and recognise a chain reaction when they see one.

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): Mike Rumbles is in favour.

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Jim Mather: We can prove—to Mike Rumbles's satisfaction—that lacking the ability to compete is at the root of most of Scotland's social and economic problems, as it causes the Scottish economy to be smaller than it could be, the loss of headquarters, and the low spend on research and development. It makes average Scottish incomes lower than those elsewhere and causes our historically diffident attitude to entrepreneurialism.

However, experience has now persuaded us that we need new generations of multitalented youngsters who are well able to compete and to start businesses; who dare to fail, but are also more likely to succeed outrageously; and who can take Scotland back to the top of world league tables.

To achieve that end, the Parliament must play a crucial catalytic role. It simply must create the conditions to help businesses to compete, by grasping the power to set taxes and having the wisdom to set them at lower rates than those in London and south-east England.

George Lyon (Argyll and Bute) (LD): In the unlikely event that the Parliament was given extra powers or that Scotland separated from the rest of the United Kingdom, would Jim Mather advocate the Irish model of very low taxation and no investment in public services such as a national health service, or the Finnish model?

Jim Mather: That is the debate that we must have. The key issue is that that beautiful balance can be achieved in a virtuous circle when wealth is being created. At the moment, we are in a vicious circle of taking lower taxes and having a declining population. That model is crazy. We should be a bit expansionist and imagine that we can have the best of both worlds. Other countries can achieve that.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Executive, which George Lyon supports, is tackling the new competitive global environment by sticking to an economic strategy that is unique in the free world. It is not really a strategy at all, as it has no target for growth and involves a housekeeping allowance from another Parliament. The strategy takes no control of tax rates, controls only spending and has no mechanism to increase or maximise Government revenue. The strategy is condemned to perpetuate a false-hope syndrome that locks Scotland into a powerless position in which it is unable to match the performance of economies that have the power to compete.

I call again for common sense to prevail and for the Parliament to demand more power, without which sound initiatives such as the "Determined to Succeed" initiative will produce the opposite effects to those that the Executive wants. We must address the core problem of competitiveness to create and retain wealth and talented people in Scotland.

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): Will the member give way?

Murdo Fraser *rose*—

Jim Mather: I have taken a few interventions so I will crack on.

Last week, Kirsty Wark opened the new Allander series of lectures by suggesting that she sees a desire for us to pull together across the political boundaries. Perhaps that was triggered by Wendy Alexander, who was instrumental in making those lectures happen and who has called for a proper debate on the economy. She has gone so far as to say:

"A convincing case can be made for matching constitutional federalism with more flexible fiscal arrangements."

She is right and deserves congratulations on doing the right thing by Scotland. The Parliament must listen to those words, or we will neither confront

nor solve our population crisis. That would be tragic, for a solution is available, but only if we act quickly and decisively. Otherwise, William Baumol will be right—the situation will deteriorate and the eventual solutions will be neither easy nor obvious.

I am aware that many members might still not accept that argument, in private or in public, and that others have some way to go towards conversion, but their conversion is just a matter of time, for no alternative is available. As evidence and personal experience grow, the people of Scotland will increasingly accept that powerlessness will not crack Scotland's problems.

Robert Brown: Is independence Mr Mather's sole cure for the problems that we are debating? Is he prepared to use his considerable economic expertise to engage with the propositions that the Executive made this morning on entrepreneurship, which is an issue regardless of whether independence, federalism or the current set-up prevails?

The Presiding Officer: Although Mr Mather's remarks are in order because his amendment deals with control of the economy, I remind him that the debate is about enterprise culture in Scotland's schools.

Jim Mather: I am mindful of that. I merely point to the hole in the bucket through which talented people and wealth can haemorrhage out of Scotland. That is the clear and present danger of the current strategy, of which our competitors will increasingly take advantage. In the long run, that will create a remembered hurt even for the generation that we are trying to help, because it will see a lost opportunity.

It is time to implement initiatives such as the "Determined to Succeed" strategy, but it is also time to address the core problem. It is time for Scotland to start catching up with competitor nations and to be able to control, protect and build a more prosperous and fairer Scotland.

I move amendment S2M-467.1, to leave out from "take" to end and insert:

"have full rewarding lives and the entrepreneurial spirit required to take up and create rewarding options in a new and increasingly competitive Scotland, which has full control of its own economy."

09:56

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I am pleased that we are debating how to create a stronger enterprise culture in our schools. I hope to address this vital topic in due course. Creating an enterprise culture is essential for our young people's prospects and our country's prosperity. A recent survey that I believe the University of

Strathclyde conducted showed that the Scots are the people in the UK who are most jealous of others' success. That is the sort of attitude that we must change. Every step in the right direction—even one from the Executive—is welcome.

Experiencing a more enterprise-based ethos in school is worth while for young people. Moreover, creating an enterprise culture is a vital investment in tomorrow's entrepreneurs. It is essential to turn around our economic decline, but we can do so only if our people are prepared to meet the challenge of becoming wealth creators. I am sure that all members are aware of the statistics on poor economic growth in Scotland, which is far lower than in the rest of the UK. That shows the scale of the problem that we must deal with.

I go so far as to suggest that the left-of-centre political consensus in Scotland does not help us to create a nation of entrepreneurs. Mr Mather did not refer to that—perhaps he was watching his back in his party—but he might agree with me.

Entrepreneurs who are successful in business make money. Scots have a fantastic history of succeeding in business throughout the centuries, but we have a culture and a media that try too often to pull such people down. We must deal with that problem.

Christine May (Central Fife) (Lab): Does Murdo Fraser deny that the left-of-centre political consensus that he just decried has, for the first time in a generation, developed an economic strategy that is suitable for Scotland and is implementing that not only in business, but in the important area of education? That is a long-term strategy to deliver economic success.

Murdo Fraser: Yes, I deny that. I think that by your fruits you shall be judged. We will wait and see. So far, little sign of any economic progress has appeared. If the strategy delivers results in 10 or 20 years' time, I will welcome that, but we will believe it when we see it.

Brian Adam: Does Murdo Fraser accept that Scotland's low growth rate relative to the UK and the European Union—and to small European nations in particular—was just as bad under the Tories as it is under the Labour Party? Does he also accept that that is because we do not have control, so we cannot make changes?

Murdo Fraser: I thought that we were discussing enterprise in education and I will try to stick to that issue, but I remind Brian Adam that, for a period in the early 1990s, Scotland's economic growth outstripped that of the rest of the UK. Of course, we had a Conservative Government at that time.

I have examined the recommendations in the Executive's report, many of which are welcome

and some of which may help to create an enterprise culture. However, as usual with Executive publications, although the document contains a lot of target setting, initiatives and aims to work towards, I wonder how much meat is in it.

I recently looked at the Executive's enterprise in education website, which can be found at www.enterpriseineducation.org, to see how well the Executive is doing in promoting its strategy. I was amused to find that Nicol Stephen is still the Deputy Minister for Education and Young People and that the report that we are discussing has still to be launched—the website has not been updated since March. If the Executive is serious about encouraging enterprise in education, perhaps the minister should look at that website and decide that it is time to bring it up to date and put his house in order.

Our amendment talks about what the business community looks for. For the business community, enterprise in education is all very well, but it is not the priority. The business community's priorities are simple: it wants school leavers who have basic skills in literacy and numeracy, who turn up on time and who have enough communication skills to allow them to pick up a phone and be polite and clear in conversation. Those are simple demands. It is all very well trying to create an enterprise culture in schools, but if those basic skills cannot be fostered, groups such as the Federation of Small Businesses, with which I discussed the issue only last week, can rightfully ask, "What is the point of the strategy?"

The attainment figures for five to 14-year-olds that were published last December show that more than half of pupils fail to meet the basic standards in English reading. The figures for mathematics and English writing are also disappointing. Those statistics back up the anecdotal evidence from employers about young people who turn up for their first day at work unable to read, write or communicate properly.

We believe that young people should have more opportunities to get involved with further education colleges, training centres and work placements. I appreciate that such initiatives already exist, but we need longer programmes that involve contact of more than one day a week or one week a year and which would produce real achievements. We also want specialist schools such as the technology colleges that exist down south, in which enterprise cultures are embedded in the curriculum.

I was happy to find among the 20 recommendations in the Executive's report the Conservative policy of allowing 14 to 16-year-olds the opportunity to undertake courses at FE colleges and training centres.

Christine May: Will the member take an intervention on that point?

Murdo Fraser: I am sorry, but I will run out of time shortly.

That policy is one of the best ways in which to create an enterprise culture among our young people, especially among children who are disillusioned with the curriculum in their schools. Where trials of the scheme have operated, they have proved highly successful. Nevertheless, the recommendation in the report does not go far enough. I call on the Executive to extend the scheme to allow wider access to FE colleges rather than the basic one day or half day a week that is available at present. FE colleges have a key role in the delivery of enterprise education, and not just through giving school pupils access to vocational training. Many colleges offer taster courses for young people.

Mr Wallace: I want to set the record straight. Mr Fraser will be aware that the partnership agreement mentions the extension of further education college places to pupils who are over 14. I put it on the record that, in the academic year 2001-02, 58,000 young people under the age of 16 attended college for part of the week and pursued a wide range of courses, many of which addressed the kind of skills that Murdo Fraser considers necessary.

Murdo Fraser: I am obliged to the minister for that clarification. No doubt the figures are correct, but the point that I was trying to make was that, rather than keep the existing situation, in which most pupils go to FE colleges for only a day a week, we should consider extending that experience and making it available more widely.

There is already in schools a range of programmes that schoolchildren can take up. Those programmes, such as young enterprise and the Duke of Edinburgh's awards, aim to increase the skills we are talking about. Although the recommendations in the report are useful, they will interest only children who are already involved in enterprise programmes. I wonder whether children who do not take up existing opportunities will want to take up new ones.

I think that it was George W Bush who said that he could not do business with the French because they did not even have a word in their language for entrepreneur. Although we all, I hope, want more entrepreneurs, we must be aware that we cannot create them through Government action. Rather than try to educate school pupils to be entrepreneurs, the Executive would do our economy a better service if more of our school leavers could spell the word "entrepreneur". The message from the business community and from existing entrepreneurs and wealth creators is

simple: we should concentrate on improving basic skills in education before we try anything fancy. If the Executive does that, it will do more to help our economy than any number of glossy reports and recommendations will.

I move amendment S2M-467.3, to leave out from "welcomes" to end and insert:

"recognises the necessity of creating an enterprise culture in Scotland in order to help reverse our economic decline; welcomes any moves to encourage young people to become more entrepreneurial but understands that what the business sector primarily looks for from school leavers are skills in literacy, numeracy, communication and timekeeping, and accordingly calls upon the Scottish Executive to take steps to reduce the unacceptable number of school pupils failing to meet basic standards in reading and writing, widen access to vocational courses at further education colleges for 14 and 15-year-olds, and increase opportunities for school pupils to experience work placements."

10:06

Shiona Baird (North East Scotland) (Green):

The debate raises two questions: what do we want from children after their 12 years in education; and what do we expect from their teachers? How and what we teach our children should reflect our expectations of them not only as citizens and members of communities but as employees or, potentially, as self-employed entrepreneurs. Above all, education should be concerned with the development of the individual. The ultimate aim must be to enable each child to achieve his or her potential and to equip each child with the tools and skills to enable him or her to make their own choices about their future.

The focus of the debate is wrong because, obviously, the most important element in education is the child. If we turn round the emphasis to put the child, rather than enterprise, at the centre, we might begin to realise the potential of each child, which, we all agree, is the future on which Scotland's economy relies. If we equip and enable each child to grow in confidence and to have a can-do attitude, we will do more to prepare them for living in the wider world than we would if we were to equip them with the ability to run a business, which should come later. That is what the education system is all about. Each stage should deal with the appropriate development of the child.

Education is about more than simply increasing young people's skills for employability and self-employment. My concern is the emphasis that is placed on enterprise in schools. The review group's report states:

"The ultimate goal of Enterprise in Education must be the creation of successful businesses, jobs and prosperity."

Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Shiona Baird: I was just coming to my crunch point. [*Laughter.*] Now that I have members' attention, I point out that the review group's comment sounds as if children are robots or mere machines whose task is to grow the economy.

Fiona Hyslop: I appreciate the member's point. Does she agree that enterprise is also about creativity and ideas and that, in educating for enterprise in schools, creative subjects such as music and drama might produce self-confidence and assuredness, which the minister said are key to encouraging enterprise?

Shiona Baird: I was coming to that point in my next paragraph. Children are enterprising; they love making things and playing instruments. Schools have always encouraged learning through creative activities and such activity is to be encouraged. Children make and sell things for school events and learn that profits can be used to help to fund school activities. Does that part of their education need to be more formal, particularly at primary school? In secondary school, I would prefer greater emphasis on general skills training in citizenship, social obligation and a proper understanding of the implications of real sustainability.

An equally important point is that we need more emphasis on technical abilities and on subjects that enable pupils to make decisions about their skills and abilities. The wider the choice that pupils get in school, the wider will be their horizons when they enter the labour market. Widening horizons to give real choice is what education is about, not moulding children to fit the working world of today. That was all part of the curriculum not that long ago.

I have deep reservations about this aspect of the education system being influenced by some companies that have less than ethical intent. ICI is on the list of donors, but last year the company was ranked by Friends of the Earth at number 4 in its top 10 list of planet trashers. A Scottish oil and gas company that is mentioned in the schools enterprise programme was only last month dropped from the FTSE4Good index. The index, which is run by the FTSE Group, aims to reflect socially responsible corporate behaviour.

Where in the list of companies mentioned in the schools enterprise programme that provide support for the initiative are local, community-based companies or voluntary groups? Could it be that they do not have sufficient resources to be able to play their part in showing children that there is a wider meaning to the word "enterprise"?

Real creative entrepreneurial thinking is often found in socially sustainable environmental businesses. Dealing with all the waste and pollution that we create has to be the fastest

growing business sector in Scotland. Developing the right attitude to that begins in schools with the teaching of citizenship and social obligation—creating awareness in children of the impact that they have on the planet today.

We must not allow money from businesses in schools. “Determined to Succeed: A review of Enterprise in Education” recommends that the Executive,

“with partnership funding from the business community”—

I will take a drink of water before I finish the quotation, if I have time.

Alex Neil: Will the member take an intervention?

Shiona Baird: No. I am nearly finished and I am running out of time. We get only six minutes, not 10 like the other parties.

The recommendation in “Determined to Succeed” says that the Executive must

“provide financial resources for appropriate experiential entrepreneurial activities in all primary, secondary and special schools.”

I hope that the schools have good English teachers to work that one out. The plain English interpretation of that statement worries me. That sort of input is not done from a philanthropic point of view, as businesses will be looking for a return for their money.

If we keep money out of the programme, we will help to level the playing field for small businesses that cannot compete in terms of money and resources. This is an important educational matter and as such should be funded by the Executive. Children are our future.

I urge the Executive to consider our amendment, rethink its review and look at the pressures that it may be putting on teachers to fulfil the review’s recommendations, which are quite onerous. The Executive should question the consequences of the partnership arrangements that it has already established and broaden out the ethos of enterprise in a smart, successful, sustainable Scotland.

I move amendment S2M-467.4, to leave out from “welcomes” to end and insert:

“considers that the *Determined to Succeed* strategy should strive to deliver the development of self-confident, skilled young people with a “can do, will do” attitude who can create environmentally and socially sustainable businesses and shape successful communities; requires that enterprise be fully integrated with teaching on citizenship, social obligation and sustainability, and calls on the Scottish Executive to ensure that locally-based voluntary and social enterprises play a full and equal part alongside other businesses in helping young people to develop ideas and skills.”

10:13

Mike Watson (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab): Labour believes that our education system is crucial to the development of young Scots and Scotland’s economy. That is why earlier this year we committed ourselves in our manifesto to building a culture of confidence and aspiration in our schools by ensuring that every pupil has the opportunity to learn the skills of entrepreneurship at school. In response to Murdo Fraser’s comments, I say that we want every young Scot to be equipped with the skills and confidence that they need to make their way in the world—that is, all skills. Members may have noticed that that commitment has been written into the partnership agreement.

That commitment ties in with our strategy to create a smart, successful Scotland and our commitment to lifelong learning. That is why the Executive gave such an enthusiastic response to the report of the education for work and enterprise review group earlier this year. Given his remarks, Brian Adam seems to have missed that.

Every local authority is to be asked to develop enterprise in education plans for schools in their area. Those plans will be developed with local economic forums, which will provide an important link with business. The key element is what happens in schools and their ability to foster and nurture creativity among pupils.

That said, I have to say that I was disappointed that the Deputy First Minister mentioned the word “creativity” only once in his speech and did not refer to “Creativity in Education”, which is a document that I will say more about shortly. The review group did not mention that document either, in the references that it provides—I think there are seven in total—at the end of its report.

It has been said that

“The principal goal of education is to create people who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what others have done.”

That is one of the comments in the report, “Creativity in Education”—it is not exactly a pocket-sized document—which was produced two years ago by Learning and Teaching Scotland and the IDES network. It deserves much wider exposure than it has so far received.

Another of the report’s self-evident truths is:

“Unless more people leave formal education with an enhanced capacity to engage in, and make an active contribution to, innovation, much of what we label creativity and inventiveness and entrepreneurship and enterprise will remain unexploited to the detriment of both individuals and society.”

This debate may be entitled “Creating an Enterprise Culture in Scotland’s Schools” but I suggest that it is about creativity, because if

creativity is not understood in education—by head teachers and classroom teachers—attempts to develop an enterprising or entrepreneurial culture will struggle to succeed.

Creativity might be defined as bringing into being something that was not there before. As Tom Bentley of the Design Council stated:

“Creativity is one of the most contested and misunderstood concepts”.

It is often the case that creative people are regarded as a bit odd and a bit different from the rest of us. They are seen as being a bit strange in some way, but there is no reason why that should be the case.

Those concepts, and many more, are opened up for discussion in “Creativity in Education”, which is a fascinating report that I recommend all members should read. It is aimed at teachers, whose behaviour it rightly describes as the biggest single influence on the atmosphere in any classroom. Teachers should surely be able to create and model creative behaviour. In so doing, they should encourage and empower young people rather than coerce them. That is why I was pleased to hear the Deputy First Minister talk about encouraging local authorities to enthuse their teachers. He also mentioned putting resources into a leadership programme for head teachers and deputy heads. I suppose that we could ask why such a programme is necessary. How on earth did heads and deputy heads reach those positions without understanding leadership or, I suppose, the need to pass it on? Nevertheless, we are where we are.

As “Creativity in Education” states, just as good teachers foster creativity in their pupils, so good schools foster creativity in their teachers. I know from experience that many teachers feel strongly that constraints and pressures tend to inhibit the creative abilities of young people and those who teach them. Teachers often feel that there is insufficient flexibility within the system—that is, at a senior level in schools, in the subjects taught by those teachers—to allow them to develop creative thought and activity with pupils. That fundamental problem will have to be faced up to and resolved if we are to progress to a point where enterprise and entrepreneurship are effectively developed in our schools.

Another quote from the excellent “Creativity in Education” report is:

“The teacher’s job is not only to help children to do better in school; it is to help them do better in life.”

That is hardly radical—it is basic, undistilled common sense. It is an idea that we should be able to grasp and an ethos that we should be able to instil in the way in which we develop education and the curriculum.

I welcome the commitment that the Deputy First Minister gave to putting serious money into developing enterprise in education. Spending plans for the next three years show that £7 million will be spent this year and £13 million will be spent the following year, rising to £22 million in 2005-06. I assume from the Deputy First Minister’s comments that by that time all local authorities will benefit from those resources.

I have already stressed the importance of the Deputy First Minister’s comments on the role of local authorities. However it is also important to state, particularly in the light of Murdo Fraser’s comments, that without the sustained commitment of the business community in Scotland, enterprise in education as a slogan will not be effective. MSPs are regularly contacted by business organisations, which are not slow to tell us as individuals what they expect from us, or the Government what they expect from it. The Confederation of British Industry Scotland, the Federation of Small Businesses, the Forum of Private Business and the chambers of commerce might take a lead from a comment made some time ago by a famous statesman, John F Kennedy, and ask themselves not what the Government can do for them but what they can do for the Government, particularly in this regard.

The review group that produced “Determined to Succeed” recommended that the business community should match the funding set aside by the Executive over the full three years of the programme. There is not much evidence of that happening so far. It is pleasing to see the Hunter Foundation come forward with £2 million, but a lot more needs to be done. I hope that business will put its money where its mouth is and work with the Executive to contribute to the development of the next generation of creative and enterprising young Scots. If schools begin to put creativity at the heart of the curriculum now, today’s generation will play a much more influential role in building Scotland’s economy than happened with previous generations.

10:20

Susan Deacon (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab): Time and again, I am struck by the fact that, when we press people in local and national circles on what they think is the biggest change that we could make to create a more successful country, they use the word “confidence”.

For example, when the Enterprise and Culture Committee had its away day in the summer, we met key business leaders and discussed both that issue and Scotland’s business birth rate. We pinned them down on the question, “What is the one thing that can make a difference?” and they

replied, "More confidence." If one speaks to people in sports, the arts and in schools, we return again and again to the word "confidence".

The importance of confidence is being increasingly recognised: books on the subject are appearing; there are articles aplenty in the press and elsewhere; and more conferences on confidence are being held. If we could edge a bit further forward today to address how we can build confidence in this country, we would do something significant.

Christine May: Does Susan Deacon agree that it is important that that work starts in primary school and not, as the Greens suggested today, in secondary school? Will she congratulate those teachers who have been trained in enterprise education? There are 250 such teachers in Fife and a similar number throughout the country.

Susan Deacon: I agree with Christine May about the importance of primary education and that it is wrong to focus only on secondary education. However, I go even further. The significance of the tremendous growth in and development of nursery education in this country is that that sector will bear enormous fruit in the future. That is the main point that I make today. If we are serious about building confidence, then, as Jim Wallace said, that task is not about two periods of enterprise education, where the pupils are taught how to run a business and given the toolbox to do that—although that is an important element of such education. In every aspect of what goes on in our schools, we must work to ensure that confidence is developed in our young people.

I welcome Mike Watson's comments—I wish that I had known what he was going to say, because he articulated effectively some of the wider points that must be made in the debate. Those points are missing from the Executive's documentation and, dare I say it, from the minister's opening remarks. If we are to build confidence in our young people, we cannot just talk about what goes on in the formal classroom environment or in what might be described as enterprise education. It is every bit as important that pupils get access to music and drama, to opportunities to speak publicly, to learn to express themselves, to build their self-esteem and to have the confidence to do things in life—in the world of work or elsewhere—in a way that fulfils their true potential.

Carolyn Leckie (Central Scotland) (SSP): Susan Deacon made reference to the importance of nursery education in creating that confidence. Does she agree that central to creating confidence is the contribution that nursery nurses make, and that their claim for regrading should be upheld to help them to make our children confident?

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Murray Tosh): I think that we might be straying away from the purpose of the debate. Let us stick to the motion and amendments.

Susan Deacon: The important point is that all professionals—in any sector—who are involved in developing and working with our young people have a vital role to play. That is why we must ensure that we take steps to recruit, retain and train effectively an array of professionals.

Today's debate focuses on developing an entrepreneurial spirit in our schools, but what goes on in our communities is equally important. I would welcome any comments from the minister on my next point, which is about the links that need to be forged between our schools and communities.

Schools do not exist in a vacuum and young people do not grow up in a vacuum. Various people have mentioned the wider role of parents and families, but increasing activity in our communities provides the wider opportunities for young people to develop. New community schools are a good example of where the links have been made effectively.

I am bound to make a point to which Murdo Fraser paid scant regard with his spelling test: it is not a million years since we had a Prime Minister who said that there was no such thing as society. That led to the fragmentation of communities and to many people—not least our young people, who grow up in those communities—losing self-confidence and self-belief. The work that is under way in Scotland and throughout the UK to rebuild confidence in our communities and to give our young people an array of experiences that will make them confident adults is all part of rebuilding that sense of community.

Today I applaud the initiative taken by the Executive but, like other members, I want us to take a broad perspective on the matter. We can always do more to ensure that, in every way, we build confident young people. MSPs can take a lead today. There are far too many "buts" in our debates—people agree that something is a good thing that needs to be done, "but"; then we look for areas of disagreement. In this debate, there are areas of genuine agreement and if we work together we can make a difference. It will not happen tomorrow, but in 10 and 20 years we will have a better country as a consequence.

10:26

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): The purpose of the debate is to make a positive contribution to and suggestions on enterprise development in Scotland, an area with which I have been involved for more than 20 years—ever

since I was 15. [Laughter.] I notice that the minister was quick on the uptake there.

I point out two things to the minister and to the chamber. First, a group of people in Scotland has been promoting enterprise education for the past 30 years and I have been trying to persuade Scottish Enterprise and the wider enterprise network to provide support to that group so that it can participate in the International Society for Business Education. Last year, I attended the society's conference in Frankfurt, at which representatives from more than 70 countries participated to share the experience of enterprise education in places as diverse as France, Poland, America, Canada and Australia. The conference was extremely useful and I ask the minister to look into how that organisation can be developed and supported in Scotland.

Secondly, I draw the chamber's attention—and the attention of the two new members of the Enterprise and Culture Committee in particular—to the *Official Report* of the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee's meeting on 18 March this year. In this chamber, we debated the schools enterprise programme for three hours with young entrepreneurs from schools, Tom Hunter, Chris van der Kuyl and two entrepreneurs who had received support from the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust. I will make three points about that meeting, of which I suggest that members read the *Official Report*, because it makes for good reading on the subject.

The major point that was made by the people from the schools, as well as by Tom Hunter and Chris van der Kuyl, related to the need for some limited form of micro-credit for the businesses that are set up in schools. I suggest that the minister considers the idea. One of the key features of any successful entrepreneur is the ability to manage real money. The minister did not outline in detail exactly what the money that he has committed to enterprise education is being spent on. It would be useful to hear that information in the wind-up speech from Peter Peacock—although I have never heard a speech from Peter Peacock that was not a wind-up.

My second point relates to the need for matching funding, which Mike Watson mentioned. I asked Chris van der Kuyl and Tom Hunter whether they could follow the example of the PSYBT. I speak as the founding executive director of the PSYBT, which combined the Prince's Youth Business Trust and the EFY scheme, which was not called after Effie from Ayrshire, but stood for Enterprise Funds for Youth. Those two programmes were merged way back in 1988 to form the PSYBT. It so happened that the 40th birthday of the Prince of Wales—I know that this

will appeal to the Scottish Socialist Party—fell in that year.

We set a target of raising £40 million across the United Kingdom. Lord Young, who was the minister with responsibility for enterprise at the time, said that if we raised £40 million from the private sector he would match it pound for pound from the public sector and we ended up with a fund of £80 million across the UK. That was a revolving fund for investment in young people's new businesses. If I may say so—and I do not say it because the trust was set up by me—the PSYBT has been one of the most successful enterprise development agencies in the whole of the UK.

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD) *rose*—

Mike Watson *rose*—

Alex Neil: I shall take both interventions.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You have only one minute left.

Mike Watson: I acknowledge what Alex Neil says about the PSYBT's success, but does he recognise that, whereas in the case that he cited businesses had to raise the money before the Government came up with the share that Lord Young had promised, the order is the other way round for the programme that I was talking about? The Executive has come up with the money and is now asking business people to put their hands in their pockets.

Alex Neil: I am coming to that.

Mr Stone *rose*—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I think that you have time to deal with only one intervention, Mr Neil.

Alex Neil: If Mike Watson reads the *Official Report* of the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee meeting on 18 March 2003, he will see that I asked Tom Hunter and Chris van der Kuyl whether, if the Executive put money into the programme, they could guarantee that the private sector would match it pound for pound. They gave a commitment that it would, as is recorded in the *Official Report*. I suggest that the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning goes back to Tom Hunter and Chris van der Kuyl, and to others in the entrepreneurial exchange and elsewhere, to set them the challenge of matching pound for pound not only the £5 million that is being spent this year but the £40 million that is being spent over the next three years.

My final comment is about what the Green party has said. I have to confess that, when it comes to economics, I have always regarded the Greens as being wired to the moon. That was confirmed this morning, because to say that there should be no

private money in the programme is utter nonsense. That is telling Tom Hunter to go and fish with his money and not to invest in the programme. That would be absolute madness of the first order.

10:33

David Mundell (South of Scotland) (Con): I have to say that my heart sank when I first saw the motion for today's debate. I worry when jargon such as "can do, will do" is trotted out. I have sat at too many business meetings where people have announced that we will have a "can do, will do" initiative, as if that will somehow solve the problem. If we carry on with that train of thought, the next thing that we will hear is the Executive announcing that it will remove all the rocks from the runway of the Scottish economy, get its ducks in a row and all that sort of nonsense. One thing that we have to learn is that jargon and glib phrases will not resolve the underlying problems that we face.

A lot of those problems are cultural. Amazingly, I found myself, at least for five minutes and eight seconds, agreeing with Susan Deacon, and even, for one or two minutes, agreeing with Mike Watson. Alex Neil drew our attention to the meeting on 18 March 2003, which was an illustrative event from which we can learn a lot. I took two main points from it. First, the presentations by the school children from Cathie Craigie's constituency were excellent, until one of the little girls who had made an excellent presentation was asked what she wanted to do when she left school. She gave what I think is the typical Scottish answer—and this is no fault of hers—that she wanted to go into medicine. In our schools culture, we still have a philosophy that leads people who are doing well towards the professions. If we go round Scotland asking parents what they want their children to do, we find that they want them, if they are doing well at school, to go into the professions. We have to be prepared to break that culture.

My second point about that meeting relates to the general issue of role models. Our children live in a soap-opera culture. How many soap operas are there in which we see successful business people? We see portrayals of businesses where people have no customers but are somehow supposed to be operating a business. At least there is one thing that children who are interested in business can learn from the Liberal Democrats—if they have a useless product, no matter how slick their marketing, they will always be found out in the end.

To return to a serious point, in the soap-opera culture in which young people operate, there are very few positive role models of whom people can

say, "I'd like to be that person; that's a successful person." That is particularly relevant for children between the ages of 12 and 16. As Susan Deacon and Mike Watson said, the point also applies in other aspects of children's activities. In our primary schools, we find lots of youngsters who are interested in sport, but somewhere along the line, in the 14 to 16 age group, other cultural pressures come to bear on young people. That was one of the points that Chris van der Kuyl made at the meeting of the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee. I shall quote him in full. He said:

"On the gap between primary school and secondary school, it is obvious that, when kids become young adults or teenagers, they desperately want to fit in. Kids run a risk of being ostracised for anything that is seen as out of the ordinary or a bit weird. They want to be wearing the same clothes as the others and so on. If children do something that is not seen as obvious, or is not something that everyone does or thinks about doing, then it becomes akin to a minority sport and can drift off into oblivion ... We can change that only by encouraging every child to think that entrepreneurial behaviour is a natural thing."—[*Official Report, Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee*, 18 March 2003; c 3181-82.]

That is absolutely key to this discussion.

Jim Mather: David Mundell is making a fine job of identifying the different outcomes of Scottish educational aspirations for career and life. Has he made a similar analysis of the structural differences between Scotland and other nations where those attributes do not pertain?

David Mundell: I do not think that children at school think about structures as much as the SNP does. They think about the things and the culture that they see around them. Within that culture, which is what they see on the television and in the magazines that they buy, they are not getting positive business role models.

The initiatives that can be promoted within schools are to be welcomed. I have participated since the 1990s in many excellent business exchange initiatives, including a fantastic one linking children in Ayrshire secondary schools with children in Georgia in the United States. However, if the general culture in the country is not right, we will run into difficulties.

As a final brief point, I mention one more issue that was discussed at the meeting on 18 March. It relates to transition and the need to create an appropriate approach in schools. Youngsters cannot just leave with nothing to take forward. Peer pressure encourages them either to go to university or to earn decent money, but there has to be some middle step in that process if we are truly to succeed.

10:39

Mr Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab): I welcome today's debate, as it highlights the fact that a smart, successful Scotland must also be a confident Scotland. Much has been said about making Scotland a more confident nation—Susan Deacon referred to that—but too often that is discussed in terms of asserting cultural identity or of constitutional reform, rather than of how we encourage Scots to be confident individuals and how we grow our economy to be enterprising.

We are all aware of the problems that Scotland has had in encouraging business start-ups. The enterprise networks have new targets for direct assistance to new businesses, but we must take a longer-term look at how we engender a culture of enterprise in Scotland. A wealth of research over the past 25 years has pointed to risk aversion and a fear of failure in the Scottish population. The right strategy is to encourage Scots to have self-belief from a young age, so that they are equipped with the vital skills that enable them to be enterprising and to start their own businesses.

When I was a student representative at the University of Aberdeen, I was fortunate enough to be involved in the steering committee for the centre for entrepreneurship. The centre is continuing its excellent work to encourage enterprise in the higher education sector. Last night, Jennifer Ng, a student from Aberdeen, won the most enterprising student in Scotland award, as part of the excellent Shell technology enterprise programme, which is successfully involving students in enterprise and industry. Enterprise is also being encouraged by staff in the further education sector, where education-business partnerships enable college students and teachers to obtain industrial and business experience.

The Executive has rightly identified a need to encourage younger pupils to be engaged in enterprise. I welcome the £40 million that has been earmarked for enterprise in education over the next three years and I welcome in particular the £5 million that has been invested in the schools enterprise programme. It is encouraging that, while there are excellent initiatives in secondary education, such as work-based learning opportunities for over-14s, the strategy is starting in primary schools.

It is impressive that the schools enterprise programme has a three-year target to involve 120,000 pupils in enterprise activities. It is also important that the programme goes as far as it can to achieve its overarching goal, which is to ensure that all primary pupils and secondary 1 and 2 pupils have the opportunity to participate in three enterprise experiences as part of the five-to-14 curriculum.

The partnerships that are involved in developing the strategy rightly involve people who have been successful in business, business organisations, trade unions and local authorities, as well as representatives from Young Enterprise Scotland, which has been engaged with that work since 1977. The work of the review group has been invaluable in ensuring that the strategy has the right focus.

We have heard about some of the enterprising activities and initiatives—such as work-based learning—in which pupils have been involved. Teaching staff have been given support to enable pupils to take part in such initiatives. The enterprise in education strategy must be part of schools' broader efforts to ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to play their part in building a smart, successful Scotland.

If we are to compete in the global marketplace, greater emphasis must be placed on learning modern languages. I understand that progress on that is being made at primary school level, but that must be carried through so that further progress is made in secondary education. We need to encourage more pupils to take up science and I hope that the Executive will continue to award the science enterprise challenge awards—the science Oscars—to schools. The most recent award was won by Harris Academy in Dundee. A great deal of the Executive's current work on the creation of intermediary technology institutes emphasises the need for scientific expertise, so it is essential that pupils are encouraged to engage in science subjects at school.

We must do more to ensure that all pupils gain the right information technology skills from as early an age as possible. I was heartened to hear yesterday that the Executive is investing £3 million to encourage toddlers to gain computer skills. I admit that I dread to think what I might have done to a computer if I had been presented with one at the age of three, but I am sure that the policy of encouraging children to gain computer skills at an early age is right.

Eleanor Scott (Highlands and Islands) (Green): Does the member agree with me and with the child development expert—I cannot remember his name—who writes in one of today's newspapers that children at that early age need interaction with other human beings? We will not build smart, successful pupils by sitting them in front of machines from the age of three. They need human interaction.

Mr Baker: I agree—I do not think that anyone would disagree—that human interaction is the priority in the education of children of that age. However, surely the idea is that teaching children about IT will involve human interaction, as children will be in an environment in which they are

encouraged by teachers. It is important that children learn those skills and are aware of those technologies from as early an age as possible, as Susan Deacon said.

In conclusion, I am sure that there is wide agreement in the chamber that encouragement of enterprise skills from an early age is the right strategy in the context of teaching the other skills that are required for Scots to succeed in the global marketplace. That strategy shows that the Executive is thinking beyond the short and medium term in encouraging economic success in Scotland. I welcome a strategy that will help young Scots to have the skills, talent and self-belief to ensure that the Scotland of the future is a smart, successful Scotland with a prosperous economy that is based on the achievements of enterprising citizens.

10:45

Fergus Ewing (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP): I might not be as young as my sprightly 35-year-old colleague Alex Neil but, like him, I spent 20 years in business. I spent 15 of those years running my own business, which gave me the opportunity to participate in a small way in the precursor to the scheme that we are discussing this morning. The earlier scheme was run by the CBI; John Ward and especially Charles Skene took a particular interest in it. I am well aware of the huge efforts that people such as Charles Skene and Tom Hunter have made—through genuine belief and not to drive personal benefit as was suggested by the Green speaker—to instil in our children the importance of enterprise.

Like my colleague Alex Neil, I would like to be relentlessly positive about the issue. The 20 recommendations in “Determined to Succeed” should be implemented; they are the result of a lot of hard work by the panel members and they have been commended by almost every party in the chamber. I will suggest five additional ways in which they might be taken forward. Perhaps my suggestions are implicit in the 20 recommendations.

First, there should be many more work placements to allow children, especially at secondary school, to spend time seeing what different walks of life and business are like. Secondly, for children of a slightly older age, shadowing is important. We already have shadowing in the Parliament, including people shadowing our work as MSPs. That practice should be widely extended into the private sector.

Thirdly, and perhaps most important, if we are to inculcate the importance of enterprise in order to ensure that the business of Scotland is business—

in the same way as the business of America is business—our leading entrepreneurs must go into schools. I am thinking particularly of those entrepreneurs who are so public spirited that they give hugely of their time and effort to convey the importance of enterprise. It is not enough for the programme to be delivered solely by teachers, although I welcome their input, provided that training is in place, as is implicit in one of the recommendations.

Kids respond to leadership, inspiration and the example of people such as Tom Hunter, Brian Souter or Sean Connery—indeed, once Scotland is independent, I am sure that Sean Connery will tour many of our schools to that end. We want business people to go into schools to explain how they succeeded and to transmit their success, inspiration, force and determination to succeed. They would do so not for financial gain—that is where the Greens go so wrong—but because they want to grow business for the benefits that it creates, such as employment and opportunities for young people, and because they want to help Scotland to grow, flourish and achieve her true potential.

Mr Stone: I rise to my feet not to disagree with Fergus Ewing but to ask him a question. Some businessmen will be role models and will take part in these things out of the goodness of their hearts. However, does the member think that we need some sort of encouragement process or carrot to make that happen still further?

Fergus Ewing: I am genuinely not sure what the question is, but if Jamie Stone is asking whether I am suggesting that business people should be paid for doing such work, my answer is, “Most certainly not.”

Mr Stone: No, no.

Fergus Ewing: I thought that that was what the member meant. Business people will do the work because they feel that it is right and because they want to do it. Like volunteers in the mountain rescue service or the fire service, they would blanch at and probably get angry about the idea that they should receive financial benefit. That is not what it is about.

I have two other brief suggestions. Every child now seems to be computer literate, but how many of them can type? Typing is an important skill to many businesses; it is a key and a gateway to success. Should we not consider including it as part of the programme? I realise that that may not be appropriate at primary school level because, apart from anything else, the hands of children of that age are too small to be able to use a qwerty keyboard. However, typing opens up a huge new vista. It is not a robotic skill; it is a gateway to

opportunity in the arts, sport, business and everything.

I want the enterprise programme to be brought back to the Parliament. Members might remember that, early in the first session of Parliament, we experimented with the business in the chamber event. The result was a bit shaky, but I thought that such an event should take place at least yearly. Why should we not have children in the chamber, particularly secondary school children who have participated in enterprise programmes? We could have them in the chamber—or down the road, if we ever get there—on the first anniversary of the start of the programme to say what they did in the programme, what they got from it and what they understand about business. Let us have business people here as well and let us congratulate them all.

Shiona Baird suggested that businesses might get involved in the enterprise in schools programme for what they could get out of it. With respect, I fundamentally disagree with that attitude. She referred to companies from the FTSE index, such as oil companies, as if they are somehow bad per se. Such attitudes are obstacles to the success of the enterprise in schools project. Oil companies have their warts, but throughout the 20th century they released the potential for people to live a life of comfort and ease that would have been unimaginable in the social conditions of the 19th century. Without the oil companies we would not be here with the lights on.

Shiona Baird *rose*—

Fergus Ewing: I am sorry, but I cannot take an intervention. I will have to speak to the member later.

Without the oil companies, we would not be here with the lights on. Without the power that the industry produces, we would not have central heating or any modern conveniences. Cannot we just highlight the positive role that successful businesses have played in our lives? If we cannot, excellent ventures such as enterprise in schools will never succeed.

I hope that the minister will take up some of my five suggestions, which I proposed in a spirit of co-operation.

10:51

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): I believe that the subtext of all the speeches is that members support the motion. I know from my own family of the good things that have been done. For example, my eldest daughter, Georgina, took part in a school enterprise project that was hugely beneficial for all involved.

I will follow on from what Fergus Ewing, Brian Monteith and Mike Watson have said. My interest is in placements in businesses, which involves taking young people out of school and giving them a day or two in our business sector. I remember from my involvement in enterprise in Tain Royal Academy that it was sometimes hard to persuade businesses to take young people in. However, it could be done. The situation has improved and, as Fergus Ewing said, businesses offer help in many ways and for the best of reasons.

Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I am a bit concerned that Rab McNeil might mistake David Mundell for me and vice versa. To clarify the point, David Mundell has contributed to the debate but I am still to be heard.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Possibly.

Mr Stone: The Scottish Parliament could set an example. We tell business that it must contribute money and offer placements, but I wonder just how good we are about getting involved. Local enterprise networks play a vital role in engaging with business and assessing what businesses can do to help young people to learn about enterprise, but how many young people get a day or a week with an enterprise company? I am not sure how many do, but perhaps there are some.

Other examples of organisations that could offer placements are area tourist boards and—this will appeal to our Green friends—organisations such as Scottish Natural Heritage and RSPB Scotland. There are many other such organisations. Dare I mention political parties? Do the Liberals, Labour, the SNP and the Tories take young people in? Maybe they do and maybe they do not. One thinks also of 121 George Street and the Church of Scotland in this context. One even thinks—dare I say it?—of such wonderful institutions as the Scottish Arts Council and Sir Timothy Clifford and the National Galleries of Scotland.

We have direct or indirect influence over all those organisations and we could encourage them to engage with everything that the minister talked about. Dare I go further and suggest that even the civil service could be involved? Does the civil service engage with our young people through offering placements?

Let us, as members of the Scottish Parliament, consider ourselves. We all have interns—or at least some of us do. However, do we bring in fifth-year or sixth-year pupils from secondary schools in our constituencies to work in Parliament? Some of us do, but many of us do not. Do the parliamentary staff engage with young people in that manner? I think that we can offer a great deal. I have often said in the chamber that we can use the Parliament's business exchange mechanism

more fully. I want it, too, to assist in promoting the Executive's enterprise idea.

An old theme of mine is that the failure in some quarters to engage with and be constructive about young people is indicative of the failure by so many in Scotland to take our young people seriously. There are organisations such as pupil councils and youth parliaments and I look forward to the day when community councils the length and breadth of Scotland engage with young people by taking two, three or four of them on board and giving them voting rights. That would prove that we were taking young people seriously and it would allow us to show business what can be done. We must give young people the opportunity to learn about enterprise culture through placements.

Tain Royal Academy eloquently made a point to me today, which is that the minister is wise to involve two teachers in the Executive's initiative. However, we could go further. Many teachers in staffrooms the length and breadth of Scotland would welcome the opportunity to go out and spend a week with a business. That could work both ways and it would help to engender the enterprise culture within our staffrooms.

Fiona Hyslop: Jamie Stone might not be aware of the fact, but a large number of companies in Edinburgh have exchange programmes with teachers. However, if the Greens had their way, the money for such programmes would be withdrawn and the teachers would not have that experience.

Mr Stone: I thank the member for the good news about the exchange programmes. Let us hope that the rest of Scotland can learn from that example.

Shiona Baird *rose*—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No. Mr Stone is in his last minute.

Mr Stone: There is sense in what Tommy Sheridan said earlier. Why should not the STUC and the unions offer placements? Business in its widest context is about not only management, but the people who work for businesses. I find myself agreeing with Tommy Sheridan in this instance, which may seem odd to members.

I am being deliberately partisan in urging the ministers, when they roll out the next list of councils in the enterprise programme, to consider Highland Council. Great things could be done in schools such as Thurso High School and Wick High School, which are in my constituency. I beg members to support the motion.

10:57

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): At heart, the debate is about ideology because the motion refers to creating an enterprise culture in our schools. Fergus Ewing's speech perhaps went to the heart of the issue because he said that without oil companies we would not have light or power and that we should be thankful for the oil companies' contribution to society. I think that what he means is that without oil we would not have those things. The truth is that we do not need companies to create power. What we need is an association of men and women organised to extract the power and supply the energy.

Fergus Ewing *rose*—

Tommy Sheridan: I will take an intervention once I have developed my point.

There are members in the chamber, including those from the Scottish Socialist Party, who believe that discussions in our schools on enterprise culture should include discussion of the share of national wealth. Should that share be divided in such a way that a collection of private businesses own and thereby control the majority of our resources? Or should we be talking in our schools about the beneficial social effects of oil, gas, electricity, transport and finance being commonly owned, instead of being privately owned for the pursuit of private profit?

Fergus Ewing: Is Mr Sheridan really saying that we would have the benefits of oil without the entrepreneurialism that was shown by the people who built up the oil companies throughout the world from the late 19th century and throughout the 20th century? Is he really saying that without the so-called seven sisters oil companies and other oil companies—warts and all, as I said—we would have the benefits and the oil that we do? Does he really expect us to swallow that proposition?

Members: Yes.

Tommy Sheridan: I think that Fergus Ewing has already had his reply. The answer is yes, because the natural resources of our planet should be used properly and sustainably for the benefit of the people of our planet, not the pursuit of maximum profit for private individuals. That is the view that the Scottish Socialist Party wants to promote today. There is a fundamental disagreement between the ideology of the SNP and the other parties, and the ideology of the SSP.

Mr Monteith: Is the member aware that, when the Soviet Union had a command economy with no private ownership, it imported oil and that, since the delightful end of that command economy and the return of private ownership, Russia has become a net exporter of oil, which—this is

important to Mr Sheridan's point—brings benefits to its citizens?

Tommy Sheridan: There are none so blind as those who refuse to see. In Russia today, there are rising levels of poverty and inequality and a rise in prostitution and slavery. The command economy in the USSR had serious faults, the most serious of which was the lack of democracy in the command economy structure. That democracy is how the socialist model of the SSP differs from that of the USSR.

What is the exposure of Polish workers to the global economy? After years of exploitation, they now experience grinding poverty and low wages courtesy of global companies such as Volvo, which moved its truck-building operations from Irvine to Poland because it could get cheaper labour and longer hours in that country. Speaking of their social and economic conditions, a Polish worker said that the Poles thought they were going to get America, but ended up with Latin America

When Carolyn Leckie intervened after Susan Deacon spoke about the importance of ensuring that our schools build confidence in our children, she wanted to make the point that, on our way up to the chamber today, we were handed leaflets by nursery nurses who have responsibility for the early-years education of our children and who have been forced to take strike action. What is the lesson that we are teaching those children about our culture? Is it that, because the work force that is given the task of early-years education is predominantly female, we can get away with giving them poverty wages and substandard employment conditions?

Mr Ted Brocklebank (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Is Tommy Sheridan seriously suggesting that wealth would be created without men such as James "Paraffin" Young of West Lothian, who found a way to tap shale to produce the paraffin that powered the lighting for Scots in the 19th century, and Rockefeller in America, who developed the great oil companies? Is he suggesting that wealth creates itself and that such achievements would have been brought about without such entrepreneurs?

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman): Mr Sheridan, you are in your last minute.

Tommy Sheridan: That is unfortunate, Presiding Officer, as I think that I have taken quite a few interventions.

Mr Brocklebank misses the point, which is to do with the way in which that wealth is shared. We are talking about creating a culture in our schools that centres on human life skills, social solidarity and tolerance of one another, not on the ability to super-exploit another human being because it is

possible to make money out of them. We must explain in our schools that every man and woman on the planet is equal and that we must grow and learn to share the planet's resources and wealth. I agree that action must be taken to create wealth from those resources, but the important question is how that wealth is to be distributed. Should we teach in our schools that it is to be distributed in the obscene way that it is at the moment, which results in a situation in which 147 people have more wealth than the poorest 3 billion people, or should we talk about the need to redistribute wealth and resources in order to improve the quality of life of all our children, instead of only those who happen to live in the western hemisphere?

11:04

Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab): I welcome the opportunity to speak in support of the motion and I was pleased to hear the minister's announcement of additional funding of £2.073 million for North Lanarkshire Council. I am sure that that money will be put to good use in developing and supporting the already extremely successful enterprise programme and projects that have been engaging with young people, teachers and the business community in the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth area and throughout the rest of the North Lanarkshire area.

As a number of members have said, instilling self belief and confidence is a most important part of our education system. Without belief in our skills and knowledge, we will not have the confidence to succeed. By working with young people at an early stage, we have an opportunity to end the traditional Scottish fear of failure and start to build the economy of the future through the young people of today. David Mundell emphasised that this morning and I hope that the Tories will help to instil that self-belief in the young people who were held down during the Tories' years in government.

Primary, secondary and nursery schools in Cumbernauld and Kilsyth have been developing enterprise skills programmes for some time. It has been recognised that providing hands-on work experience and opportunities for pupils to participate in team work delivers not only enterprise skills, but the development of a more positive attitude towards school and learning. Teachers who are involved in the programmes tell me that they improve both attendance and the level of qualifications that young people attain, as well as bolstering their confidence and determination to succeed.

Enterprise in education is not new in the area that I represent. Visiting schools and attending the events that showcase the products and services that pupils have come up with, I can see the pride

that the young people take in the programmes that they are involved in and the way in which they are able to develop their skills.

Some members have mentioned the visit to Parliament of St Helen's Primary School during our first session. At the time, the then convener of the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee noted that the children, who were from primary 5 to primary 7, were probably the youngest people ever to have given evidence to a parliamentary committee. Everyone who heard them speak could see the enthusiasm that had been instilled in them by being involved in the projects. They took control from the beginning, with support from enthusiastic teachers. They set up the programmes that they were going to be involved in, decided what to produce and hired the staff through the school's pupils' council. The benefits that their involvement has brought them and their community can be seen by everyone. The pupils involved themselves with the business community and were able to engage in partnership working with them and secure sponsorship.

Earlier, Alex Neil talked about micro-credit. I admit that my colleagues and I wondered what that was. We came to the conclusion that it was to do with pupils finding small amounts of money to keep businesses going. I do not think that the Scottish Executive should provide that sort of money. Provided that support is provided for the core programme, it encourages the young people if they have to find partnerships in the business community. As well as learning through the curriculum, the young people in Cumbernauld and Kilsyth have been able to become involved in business and are going to lunch clubs and after-school clubs to work with businesses. The businesses are keen to feed back in to the process as they understand the positive outcomes that can be achieved by engaging with young people at an early stage.

As I said earlier, young people of nursery age have become involved in the production of goods for something that will hopefully become an annual fair to showcase their products.

People who left that primary school have continued what they were working on there when they have gone on to secondary school. Four of the young people have set up a business, the roots of which were developed from their experience in primary school. I am a great supporter of enterprise projects in schools. We should be ensuring that our children succeed, and "Determined to Succeed" will help them along the way.

I will finish by quoting one of the teachers who came along to the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee to give evidence. I think that every member at the meeting was impressed by

her enthusiasm. She started by saying:

"Enterprise is a wonderful enhancement to the curriculum."—[*Official Report, Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee*, 18 March 2003; c 3158.]

She went on to say:

"Enterprise is a wonderful way to enhance learning. Because they are enjoying themselves, the children do not realise that they are learning maths, language and all the other skills that we are giving them."

As was pointed out by the Tories this morning, some people suggest that that element is missing from learning. However, the teacher would

"recommend enterprise projects to every teacher".—[*Official Report, Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee*, 18 March 2003; c 3164.]

She said that they are hard work, but worth doing.

While Scotland is recognised as having helped to make major advances in the past, through anaesthetic, penicillin, television and the telephone, we now have the opportunity to advance our young people by instilling in them confidence and determination to succeed. If we take the steps that are proposed in the initiative, that can only benefit the whole community.

11:11

Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): This has been a very useful debate, not least because we have, for a change, heard a number of back benchers rather criticise, in an underlying way, the premise of this project, this initiative, this gesture, which has been launched by the Executive in the form of "Determined to Succeed".

In particular, I warmed to Susan Deacon's speech. I whole-heartedly agree that the initiative will count for nothing if pupils do not come out of school with self-confidence. It might show self-confidence to become a lawyer or a professional, but we will not get the entrepreneurs that we need to make a wealthier society if people do not have the self-confidence to take risks, to gamble and, importantly, to fail. I liked the comments made by Fiona Hyslop during an intervention and by Mike Watson during his speech regarding the importance of creativity. Creativity creates a spirit. It creates the imagination that drives people forward to come up with new ideas, to see opportunities and to find ways of delivering profitable businesses, which bring wealth to themselves and to others.

I appreciated the comments of Fergus Ewing and Alex Neil, who both explained how a great deal has already been done over the years. In particular, I would mention the work of ProShare and business dynamics courses, which have helped ensure that the voice of entrepreneurship

is heard in schools. Fergus Ewing mentioned an earlier scheme, which ran for some considerable time.

For all that, I come to the debate as a fully-signed-up capitalist pig, and I make no bones about it.

Tommy Sheridan: Hear, hear.

Mr Monteith: Indeed, I am recognised in the chamber for it. I have been involved in the running of four businesses. I have tasted success and I have tasted failure. I have taken on pupils on work experience. I have hired and fired people.

Shiona Baird: Will the member take an intervention?

Mr Monteith: I must carry on at this point.

In my estimation, “Determined to Succeed” is nothing more than a gesture, and it will not necessarily deliver the prosperity, wealth and entrepreneurial skills that we want from our children, and which will help us in the future.

Carolyn Leckie: Brian Monteith mentioned four businesses, and said that he had tasted success. I am sure that he has tasted profits from those businesses. Could he tell us what sort of wages he paid?

Mr Monteith: I remember that I hardly took any wages myself. When people start up a business, they pay their employees. If there is a week or a month when the money does not come in, or a year when a loss is made, then the entrepreneurs bear the losses themselves. That is the sort of entrepreneurialism that we need to recognise and understand.

Tommy Sheridan: Our hearts are bleeding.

Mr Monteith: I am not looking for bleeding hearts; I am looking for an understanding in the Parliament of what a profit is. What holds us back is the sort of mentality that is behind “Determined to Succeed”. It suggests that we need another initiative.

Mr Stone *rose*—

Mr Monteith: I must carry on.

It suggests that we need an initiative to bring us more managerial intervention, or an entitlement to enterprise. That comes from the same Executive that brought us an entitlement to golf lessons; it is the same Executive that cannot give us an entitlement to swimming lessons. The initiative is all about gesture politics.

As David Mundell explained, it is the culture that holds us back. The culture is wrong. It says that anybody who makes money must be like Ian Beale or Mike Baldwin. That is what is wrong throughout the United Kingdom, and it is

particularly wrong in the Scottish Parliament. The “Determined to Succeed” document does not even mention the word “competition”. How are we to tell pupils what it is like to run a business if the document does not even do that? Only once does it use the word “profit”.

Mr Stone *rose*—

Mr Monteith: I must carry on.

The only time the word “profit” is used is in the context of its’ being reinvested in the scheme concerned. This is not a Parliament of profit; it is a Parliament of loss. It never talks about how entrepreneurs will make a profit and how that will benefit people. We need to understand that profit is good. I love profit, and I think that we all need to admire profit. We need to recognise that profit is a good thing and that it comes out of competition.

Susan Deacon *rose*—

Mr Monteith: I will take an intervention from Susan Deacon so that I can catch my breath.

Susan Deacon: Since Brian Monteith has owned up to what many of us have known for a long time—that he is a “capitalist pig”—is he also owning up to the fact that what he, and perhaps others on his party’s benches, truly believe in is that free-market forces alone should determine the success of this country? If he is in the mood for what I said during my speech, will he agree that, during the Conservative years, while we saw confidence grown in some and wealth given to some, it was for the few and not for the many, and that that is what has changed?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You are in your last minute and must wind up now.

Mr Monteith: I appreciate that, Presiding Officer.

It is my proposition that the small amount of entrepreneurial growth and business creation that exist at present are the dying remnants of the Thatcherite economy that we had throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s. Were it not for that, business growth would be worse.

I agree that creativity and self-confidence are important, but I reject the nationalist model that, somehow, if we had an independent Scotland, things would change in that regard. Jim Mather was not able to say whether Scotland would adopt the Finnish model, the Irish model or the Cuban model, with its intervention. That is because the model that the nationalists would give us is the Airfix model. We open the box, put it together and there is no undercarriage, so it cannot land and will not work.

We need a change in our culture, which must start with the Parliament believing in profit. I aspire to the day when Scottish Water, for example, is

seen not as a not-for-profit company but as a not-for-loss company. That is how we should change and, if we did so, the Executive's project would at least have a chance.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Before calling Christine May to speak, I gently remind members that the debate is on creating an enterprise culture in schools.

11:18

Christine May (Central Fife) (Lab): I will try to stick to the subject, Presiding Officer. As others have done, I start by welcoming the initiative, and I am delighted to hear that there is genuine cross-party support for it, albeit rather grudging in some cases and a little woolly in others. Nonetheless, I think that everyone is agreed that it is necessary for us to instil a spirit of enterprise in our young people.

Doing so fulfils three criteria. First, it will support and take forward "A Smart, Successful Scotland". I remain an avowed advocate of that key, long-term strategy for the development of the Scottish economy. Secondly, and perhaps more important, it will improve the skills of individual young people. Lots of folk have mentioned building confidence and encouraging creativity, and the programme aims to do that and to help teachers identify the methods by which they can develop that. Thirdly, it will help young people see the importance of working together. Jim Mather, David Mundell and others spoke of the need for young people coming out of school and going into work to be able to turn up on time, speak properly and accept the discipline of a work environment, which is very important.

I will talk briefly about the up for enterprise programme, which Jim Wallace touched on. On 13 June, a large number of secondary school pupils in Aberdeen met people from NASA, and in my constituency Dr Bonnie Dunbar, a veteran of five NASA missions, spoke to 200 pupils. Our young people need such role models.

When I spoke to the enterprise in education staff who are developing the next wave of the programme in my area, I found that they were conscious of the need to encourage young people to aim to do those jobs in the local area that are suffering from a shortage of applicants. Those jobs are in travel and tourism, particularly in the north-east of Fife, the financial services industry, and the construction industry throughout Fife, but particularly in Central Fife. Last night we heard in the cross-party group in the Scottish Parliament for construction about the issues that are important to the construction industry. For too long we have failed to recognise as we should the importance of the construction industry to our

economy. All those areas offer a range of employment opportunities, for the professional to the basic, semi-skilled operative. They should, could and must be promoted as suitable opportunities for all our young people.

Allied to that is the need—and here I agree with Tommy Sheridan and the other socialists—to have properly structured pay scales and to identify and recognise the need for improvement in training and qualifications. I am pleased to note in the briefing that I had from the Association of Scottish Colleges that it is working with schools in identifying the transitional period—ages 14 to 16—when young people are deciding whether to pursue a vocational or other course. There is a need to recognise the qualifications gained in schools and in the programmes that are available to young people in colleges.

I return to the point that I made in an intervention earlier this morning on the importance of enterprise training for primary-school teachers, which "Determined to Succeed" recognises. I agree with Susan Deacon. What is being done in the nursery class sets the foundations, but the core skills need to be developed and encouraged at primary and secondary level, and for that we need teachers who know what to look for, who know how to deliver and who have skills developed through the release programmes in partnership with industry.

Unlike Brian Monteith, I am an unreconstructed socialist and I believe that Government has a role. However, we have to foster partnership and Brian Monteith is right that the Government should recognise the limits of its role, because we need the support of business. That is what the document encourages and that is what I want all of us to encourage. By the end of this session of Parliament I want to see us achieving the targets and being able to come back to Parliament and say what we have done as a result of the glossy document that has been produced.

11:24

Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): I will start by quoting an American actor. I was not sure whether that would be appropriate in a week when American actors and politics have combined, but I remembered that Lord James Douglas-Hamilton quoted Arnold Schwarzenegger's "I'll be back"—perhaps he has a hotline that we do not know about. The quotation that I want to use is from Lauren Bacall, who said:

"Imagination is the highest kite that one can fly."

I found the quotation in a document from Midlothian Council about its enterprise challenge final 2002-03. We are talking about creativity, confidence, ideas, and daring to be different.

When we fly a kite, sometimes it falls, but we learn from that and we go on to succeed. We have heard remarks about the problem of people's fear of failure, but we are also not very good at celebrating success. I ask the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning to concentrate on those issues.

In West Lothian, Bathgate Academy and Balbardie Primary School have won Skene awards, which Fergus Ewing mentioned, not once but several times. I noticed that the minister mentioned six councils that will get funding. I hope that the councils in the Lothians are among those that have yet to have their funding announced. We should hear how much of what is a not inconsiderable sum will be spent in that area.

Tommy Sheridan wants to wait for a world socialist revolution. In the here and now, we have to ensure that people have jobs when companies such as Motorola and NEC leave. The jobs for the many are created by the enterprise of the few. We must not mock enterprise in the Parliament, because that would do the people of Scotland a disservice.

John Swinburne (Central Scotland) (SSCUP): Will the member give way?

Fiona Hyslop: No, I am sorry.

I move on to the school curriculum and what it means as far as creating confidence, self-assuredness, ideas, creativity and imagination are concerned. I welcome the move by the Minister for Education and Young People to abolish national testing, for which the SNP has called for some time. That will provide space and time in the curriculum for teachers to do what needs to be done now, including the literacy and numeracy that Murdo Fraser talked about. We should not consider the review of the three to 18 curriculum in a narrow sense and say that literacy and numeracy will be learned in only English and maths; literacy and numeracy can be learned throughout the curriculum.

Mr Monteith: Will the member give way?

Fiona Hyslop: No. I am conscious of the time; the Presiding Officer has warned me.

One of the curriculum challenges that we face is to ensure that enterprise is not just about business studies, but about creativity, ideas and daring to be different. When we review the three to 18 curriculum and when we consider removing some of the bureaucracy and time constraints that teachers face, it is essential that we ensure that music and drama are valued as the engines for creativity.

We have to recognise that we cannot expect children to arrive at school confident. We have to ensure that we value children and those who care

for children in the early nursery years, which are the foundation for the future.

I turn to the social responsibility agenda. The problem in this debate is that we are covering too much. We have strayed all over the place and covered a variety of ideological arguments about capitalism and socialism. Enterprise in schools is the focus for the debate, but we must also consider citizenship in schools and social responsibility. Most of the businesses that are run in schools are co-operatives. The foundations of responsibility are there. The children might go on to be the profiteers that Brian Monteith wants to celebrate, or they might end up running co-ops.

Let us give young people the opportunity to experience enterprise regularly throughout their lives. Before I became an MSP I worked on understanding industry. I was involved in proposals on bringing education, industry and business together. We are a small country and we can create a dynamic. We can do what Fergus Ewing suggested and try to create that spirit and dynamism on a yearly basis. We cannot end our fear of failure if we are told that we cannot run our own country and that we cannot do things for ourselves. Self-confidence comes from leadership and I would like the minister to show some to the people of Scotland.

11:29

Mr Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): The Green party amendment attempts to define better what we mean when we talk about enterprise in education. The dictionary definition says that an enterprise is a business firm, but it also says that an enterprise is a venture, a bold undertaking, and a readiness to engage in a bold undertaking. That is the definition that we should take into schools when we talk about enterprise; and yes, Christine May, it is the definition that we should take into primary schools too. We should be preparing our young people for a lifetime of bold undertakings and ventures. Jamie Stone's comments gave us a sense of how wide enterprise can be. It is not simply about business.

We have to prepare young people for ventures. Key to that will be confidence. Jim Wallace started this debate by talking about the fear of failure. It is important that we address that issue. Susan Deacon spoke extremely well on it and was backed up by Brian Monteith and Mike Watson. When we consider confidence, we should not consider only enterprise but other areas of the curriculum in which we can stimulate confidence in young people. I include the arts in that.

Some of the ventures that our young people will strive towards and hope to make a success of in future will of course be business enterprises.

Young people will need the confidence and skill to go into self-employment. They will also need to know how to take ideas and make them into new products and services that will meet the goals of a sustainable society. However, there are other, equally important, ventures that are crucial to the well-being of our communities.

Scotland is the birthplace of the co-operative movement and of social enterprise. There are enterprises and ventures whose objectives are not entirely about wealth creation but are also about a fair distribution of wealth and about sustainability. The Executive is now edging towards allowing communities to take more control of their own resources. The Green party welcomes that; we welcome community control of resources. Over the summer, the First Minister pointed the land reform agenda firmly towards towns as well as villages. Community control of assets would be fantastic. This century, Scotland could see a flourishing of community control. However, that will not happen unless we can tool up the next generation to manage the assets in their communities effectively if communities choose for that to happen. When we bring enterprise into education, we must allow social enterprises and the voluntary sector into our schools—not only businesses—so that young people will, in future, be able to manage assets at community level.

Although I shouted at him at the time, Alex Neil's comments on micro-credit were very helpful. We should allow ideas on micro-credit initiatives in the outside world to come into schools. Young people should learn about credit unions, local exchange trading schemes and other similar initiatives. The problem with "Determined to Succeed" is that there is little linkage between enterprise—in its particularly narrow definition—and other issues in the Executive's partnership agreement such as citizenship, the environment and the community. That linkage must be a lot stronger to enable sustainability. There is a danger that those who shout the loudest, and those with the biggest resources—such as the multinational companies—will have disproportionate access to our schools. We need a level playing field to ensure that the enterprise experiences that are offered to young people are offered by businesses, the voluntary sector, social enterprises and—as Tommy Sheridan said in an earlier intervention—trade unions. People have to understand how to organise in the workplace.

We need better screening of the private sector materials that are coming into schools and we need to think carefully about private sector funding in our schools. We need Executive funding for educational materials, not private sector funding. Leaving aside Alex Neil and Fergus Ewing, I wonder how many members would be happy for

Brian Souter to provide educational materials for schools.

I urge members to support the Green party's amendment. If Fergus Ewing and others read it, they would find little that they would have a problem with. We are trying to broaden the definition of enterprise. All members in the chamber could support that and I urge them to support our amendment.

11:35

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): Jamie Stone was right when he said that all the amendments show an underlying support for the thrust of the Executive's motion. Fiona Hyslop recognised that when she complained about people going off on tangents. I was surprised when she then went off on a tangent of her own—independence—which is irrelevant to the central point.

Enterprise in education is vital for Scotland, as has been acknowledged across the chamber. The need to encourage entrepreneurship among our young people has been a consistent message from Liberal Democrats for a long time. Jim Wallace has a long-standing personal commitment to that encouragement; he has advocated it for many years. Today's announcement of the funding programme—£8 million, including £3 million for Glasgow—to support the building of entrepreneurship in our schools is hugely welcome, especially as part of the broader strategy in "Determined to Succeed", which almost everyone in the chamber has welcomed. There may have been nuances in the views of what the debate should have included and what it should not have included, but no one would dispute that the debate has wider aspects. Many members have spoken about those aspects today. The strategy will fulfil the commitment in the partnership agreement to raise to 100 per cent the number of schools that are involved in enterprise in education. That is an important central initiative.

I accept that the business sector requires skills in literacy and numeracy. I also accept the importance of older secondary pupils having the option of accessing vocational courses in further education colleges. Other contributions can be made through citizenship education. However, as Jim Wallace said, it is not a matter of choosing between those options; they are all important. We have to move forward vigorously on all fronts, as the Scottish Executive is doing. The partnership agreement contains solid commitments on all those fronts. That was insisted on by Liberal Democrats. That 14 to 16-year-olds should be able to attend college was a strong and specific campaign theme for the Liberal Democrats at the recent elections. We have to build on the progress that the Executive has already made.

Many good points have been made. Alex Neil totally ignored the SNP amendment and suggested a role for micro-credit. He was right to do so. David Mundell rightly stressed the importance of the cultural environment and the centrality of role models. He talked about the importance of soaps on television. Mark Ruskell spoke about the need to allow social enterprise activities into schools. Jamie Stone made an important point about the business exchange, which has been a controversial issue in the Parliament. It is right that we should support the business exchange to show the Parliament's commitment to the enterprise agenda.

I would like to make two other points. One concerns the broad range of the issues. Yesterday, as convener of the Education Committee, I hosted a meeting of a group of organisations that were campaigning for the inclusion of sustainability right across the school curriculum. That will be a key theme. The partnership agreement contains a commitment to that, and we have to put flesh on the bones to make things happen.

My second point is to do with informal education, which has not been touched on in this debate. We cannot lose sight of the importance of the scouts, the Boys Brigade, the guides, the youth clubs and the various informal educational organisations that are very important in building leadership skills. In a different, more natural and more voluntary way, they do that at least as well as it is done in schools. Support from the Parliament and the Executive for some of those organisations is not great and more support would make an important contribution towards the objective of enterprise in education.

I want to touch on Tommy Sheridan's point on the announcement by Hoover in Cambuslang of the proposed end of manufacturing there, with the direct loss of 250 jobs. Clearly, there are many issues involved in that. I hope that the Scottish ministers will do everything possible to try to avoid such an end result and to deal with the consequences if that is what happens. However, part of the background to the issue—this also applies to Motorola, which Fiona Hyslop mentioned—is the need to have available alternative employment options that are built by enterprise. The citizens of Scotland need the ability to go forward in that realm.

These are important issues. Let us now go forward and make it happen. We have agreement across the chamber, so let us not muddy that message by sniping about the important enterprise initiatives that the Executive is taking forward. I support the motion.

11:40

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con): I very much welcome Robert Brown's comments about the importance of youth organisations.

This has been a good wide-ranging debate. I was particularly interested in the disagreement between Fergus Ewing, Fiona Hyslop and Tommy Sheridan. Tommy Sheridan brings to mind the statement of King Alfonso of Castile, who said, "Had I been present at the creation, I would have had some useful hints to make to the creator of the universe as to its better organisation." Sadly, we need to deal with the world as it is. We need the enterprise first, before its benefits can be spread throughout the community. After all, those of us who are familiar with the Old Testament will remember that, after Adam and Eve bit the apple, they needed an entrepreneur to make all those clothes.

We believe that enterprise is important and essential. It follows that we must develop the skills of those who work with their hands as well as of those who work with their minds. The Conservatives made a manifesto commitment not only to maintain current Government investment in skills and learning but, in particular through the modern apprenticeship, to give schoolchildren a choice of continuing with traditional education at school or, from the age of 14, pursuing technical education at a further education college.

We believe that programmes involving schools with work placements and colleges should be enhanced. We want to ensure that all secondary 3 and secondary 4 pupils who wish to do so should have access to further education. Indeed, we warmly welcome Glasgow's vocational programme as an admirable example of how courses can lead to jobs and a growing enterprise economy and culture.

I want to mention to the minister the concerns and worries of the small business sector. It feels that there is an insufficiency of soft and basic skills and of the ability to turn up on time.

I must also raise with the minister the fact that, under Tony Blair's Government, schools south of the border have more diversity in their curriculum. That is because the UK Government has supported specialist technology schools and specialist business and enterprise schools, which have been a success. Exam results show that specialist schools constitute at least 76 of the 100 highest-performing comprehensive schools in England. Indeed, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has stated that he has plans for several hundred more specialist schools.

The Prime Minister himself said:

“Why shouldn't there be a range of schools for parents to choose from? From specialist schools to the new city academies, from faith schools to sixth forms and sixth form colleges offering excellent routes into skilled employment”

and university.

“Why shouldn't good schools expand or take over failing schools or form federations?”

I endorse those wise words, which are good Conservative policy. If that policy was good enough for Tony Blair's Government, surely it is not too much to hope that the Executive might be coaxed in the same direction.

I welcome the Executive's commitment to creating an enterprise culture. To be successful, we need to concentrate on standards of literacy and numeracy and on basic skills. We support a more vibrant curriculum that encompasses FE courses on a much wider footing than at present. We wish to extend the opportunities that exist at the moment. I look forward to the minister's reply.

11:44

Brian Adam (Aberdeen North) (SNP): I have certainly enjoyed listening to this morning's debate. I was glad that Mr Wallace opened the debate by referring to Oldmachar Academy, which happens to be in my constituency and to be where all five of my children had the benefit of a very good education. I am familiar with the youth enterprise scheme that has been run in that school for many years. Indeed, one of my sons had the joys of tussling with the successes and failures associated with such enterprises, when perhaps not everybody was pulling their weight.

If Alex Neil's suggestion on micro-credit was about the provision of share capital, I can tell him how the scheme worked at Oldmachar, where pupils were offered the opportunity to provide share capital. However, that may well reflect the nature of Oldmachar's catchment area and would not necessarily be the case for every school. Alex Neil's suggestion for micro-credit is well worth consideration.

This week, I visited a primary school in Aberdeen where the head teacher has started an enterprise in education programme. She has done that off her own bat and without any support from either the business community or the education department or, indeed, from any of the wonderful new initiatives that are about to come forward—although I note that they will not start in Aberdeen as yet. That head teacher hopes to roll out the programme over the years. I hope that we will see much more of that sort of thing.

Recognition has rightly been given to some of Scotland's entrepreneurs and to the positive contribution that they have made in the development of the programme. Among those who

have been specifically mentioned today are Tom Hunter, who has given significant financial support to the programme, and Charles Skene, who has a long-standing association that has rightly been recognised.

Eleanor Scott: Does the member agree that there must be some sort of ethical vetting of the people who are involved in the scheme from the business side? Alternatively, does he agree with his colleague Fergus Ewing, who seems to be quite happy to allow anybody, including international arms manufacturers, to become role models for our pupils?

Brian Adam: That is a scurrilous comment and I ask Eleanor Scott to withdraw it. At no point did Fergus Ewing refer to international arms dealers—

Eleanor Scott: He did not seem to agree that there should be any vetting or that planet trashers should be excluded.

Brian Adam: I will move on.

At the moment, about 30 per cent of our youngsters leave school with no qualifications. Until recently, our education has been driven by a desire to produce people with academic qualifications. As a consequence, we have a society that is good at invention but not at all good at innovation, which is why our economy has such a poor growth rate. I would like encouragement to be given to the 30 per cent who have perhaps no great interest in being academics but who may well have within them the desire to grow, develop and contribute as individuals. It may well be that some of our entrepreneurs will come from that 30 per cent.

Mr Stone: As a fellow director of the Scottish Parliament and Business Exchange, does the member agree that the Parliament and other arms of government, including the greater enterprise network—the local enterprise companies and so on—also have a role to play? I made that point in my speech.

Brian Adam: As a fellow director of the business exchange, I am more than happy to endorse that. We should show leadership.

It is wholly inappropriate that those who contribute positively with their leadership are attacked on the basis that they contribute for selfish motives. That is disgraceful. There are certainly dangers that people might do things for selfish motives, but why should selfish motives be ascribed when much of what is happening is being done in a selfless way? Indeed, that is where the distinction arises.

John Scott (Ayr) (Con): Does Brian Adam agree that for many people who have created businesses—among whom I would include some members in the chamber, such as Jim Mather and

possibly, in a modest way, myself—the greatest satisfaction is seeing the dignity and the joy that is brought to the people who have benefited from the jobs that have been created? The remarks from the lady over there were simply outrageous.

Brian Adam: I am happy to endorse what Mr Scott has said. The suggestion that the proposals are about our school system training robots and indoctrinating people into the culture of free enterprise is wholly inappropriate.

However, I have considerable concerns about the dependency culture that we have. Susan Deacon's remarks were right on the button. We need to increase self-esteem and confidence. We want self-reliant people and a self-reliant country. Indeed, as we encourage people to be independent as individuals, we may well get to the point where we achieve that as a nation. In fact, the only issue on which I disagree with the Executive is that although it recognises that confident nations and states have a number of attributes, it does not go all the way. In order to have a confident nation, we need to have a strong sense of identity. That is growing and the Parliament contributes to that.

We need to have an enterprise culture. That will take time to grow. When I intervened on the minister, I voiced my concern that we are not growing the enterprise culture fast enough, and that the detail does not exist. We should have a genuine meritocracy and burgeoning autonomy, but we need the power to compete, because otherwise our young people will disappear to stronger economies where decisions are being made by the people themselves.

11:51

The Minister for Education and Young People (Peter Peacock): I am pleased to be able to close this debate on behalf of the Executive. For the most part, it has been extremely constructive, with a significant degree of consensus on the main thrust of what the Executive is seeking to do. That is welcome confirmation of what the Executive wants to do, and gives us confidence in driving forward the agenda.

It is fitting that the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning and the Minister for Education and Young People have been involved in the debate, because that signals the close co-operation that exists between our departments and the need to align the schools agenda with the enterprise agenda to a significant extent, so that we create jobs and opportunities for our people.

One of our national ailments, to which a number of members referred, is the low business birth rate. A big part of enterprise in education must be to support the attributes in our young people that

will drive the creation of successful businesses and jobs in the future, and produce the prosperity that flows from having those jobs.

Mr Stone: The minister will be aware that there is a particularly low business birth rate in parts of the Highlands. Given all that the minister and I try to do to promote enterprise in the Highlands, does he agree that it would be appropriate for the Executive to consider adding the Highland Council to the authorities that will receive money to promote enterprise among our young people?

Peter Peacock: I assure Jamie Stone that that will be the case. All local authorities will be invited to join the programme to ensure that they are contributing across the whole of Scotland.

The skills and attributes that our young people will gain through enterprise in education will, of course, equip them to function highly effectively in a range of settings and enable them to be ambitious and enterprising in public work, just as much as in business; in the voluntary sector; and in the environmental sector, whether in a business sense or through voluntary organisations involved in, for example, recycling, energy saving and reducing the use of water. All those attributes that young people should gain through enterprise programmes will contribute to a range of settings in Scotland. We must develop young people's attitudes, build their confidence—which I will return to in a moment—and encourage them in their willingness to take risks, as Jim Wallace said.

I will address the large number of issues that members raised in the debate. Susan Deacon caught the spirit of what members wanted to say about the need to instil in all our people in Scotland a degree of confidence that, sadly, has been lacking for too many generations, and a self-belief that they have not been able to express in the past. That point was also made by Richard Baker, Brian Monteith, Fiona Hyslop, Mark Ruskell and many others.

Susan Deacon also made a point about the importance of starting the process of gaining confidence from the earliest years. As she rightly pointed out, that will be helped significantly by the investment in nursery education, by moving the new techniques of teaching young people into primary education and by deploying new techniques and enterprise in education in the secondary sector as a vehicle, as Cathie Craigie described, for other forms of learning. It is not just about enterprise in itself; it is about finding new ways of working, engaging young people in working together and expressing themselves in new ways, and giving them the self-belief and confidence to move forward.

Susan Deacon, Mike Watson and others mentioned the role of music, art, drama and sport,

as well as enterprise education. Through those dimensions of school life, people often gain the respect that they require from their peers when they cannot gain it in an academic sense; they express themselves in new ways; they are creative; and they move forward in new directions in their lives. Part of the curriculum review that I announced last week seeks to free up space in the system to give us more choice and more flexibility, and to give young people more ability to express themselves and be creative. Mike Watson picked up on creativity in his speech. Having creative young people who have the confidence and self-belief to move forward is hugely important to the future success of Scotland.

Mr Monteith: On the subject of the curriculum, in opening the debate the Deputy First Minister talked about how we must overcome the fear of failure. How does the Minister for Education and Young People propose to do that if he allows there to be a curriculum in which no one can fail, and a system in which no school can seem to be failing, because no information is available on performance?

Peter Peacock: That is another fundamental misdiagnosis, along with one that Brian Monteith made in his speech. He fails to understand the agenda that we are pursuing. We are not frightened of information. We want to liberate people by the power of more information. The point is to make it relevant and to give people real choice and real insights into how their schools are performing.

Susan Deacon also made the point about the importance of connecting the school to the community. Of course, enterprise projects of the sort that we have described, through enterprise in education, are one means of doing that. It is not just about placement in the workplace and in communities; it is about young people running projects in the community for the benefit of others, such as environmental projects, and projects in relation to the elderly, young people and care. The report "Determined to Succeed", which underpins our approach, helps to put attitudes to those matters at the top of the agenda.

Alex Neil referred to micro-credit, as did Cathie Craigie, but the sense in which Alex Neil referred to micro-credit and its potential importance in this field was not the sense in which Cathie Craigie described it. It is not about keeping a business going but about the start-up capital to allow a small enterprise to grow. I agree with Alex Neil that that is an important point. In fact, one dimension of the plans that local authorities are bringing forward addresses that particular point, so that is already happening in our schools.

Alex Neil: I thank the minister for his comments on micro-credit. Where is the money that has been

earmarked being spent? We know where it is being spent geographically, but what is it being spent on?

Peter Peacock: Each local authority is producing a wide range of different approaches to widen the scope of opportunity and the range of placements, to give more support, and to ensure that there is a more systematic approach to embedding these matters in the curriculum. I would be happy to give Alex Neil a note on that, because the issues are quite complex and wide-ranging.

David Mundell talked about the problem, as he saw it, of too many young Scots in the past going into the professions when they were successful in school. There is nothing wrong with going into the professions—we need good doctors, teachers, lawyers and so on—but I take the spirit of what he said, which is about widening choice and aspiration and ensuring that young people do not see the professions as their only opportunity. Going into business is not only legitimate but something that increasingly we want people to do.

Fergus Ewing was uncharacteristically positive in his speech. I take this extraordinarily rare opportunity to agree with everything that he said. He is right to say that the agenda builds on existing experience and the lifelong experience of the sort that he has had in running his own business. It is not about starting afresh. I am happy to say that we want to gear up work placements significantly in the way that he described.

Murdo Fraser, with his reluctant support, made an interesting point about the ability of Scots to pull other people down. It is part of the Scottish psyche not to allow people to get above themselves and be successful. If this enterprise initiative is about anything, it is about giving people the confidence and self-belief to move forward, and about people having ambition and being proud of it and the contribution that they can make.

Sadly, Murdo Fraser spoiled his remarks with his amendment, which refers to "economic decline" in Scotland. Of course, the Tories are the best-qualified party in the chamber to talk about economic decline. It was under their rule that we suffered 3 million people unemployed in the UK, consistently high inflation, and interest rates of 15 per cent, which led to a lack of investment in business and public service infrastructure, and the kind of boom and bust economy that the Scottish people rejected. His amendment also refers to the unacceptable standards in reading and writing, when of course we are raising attainment in reading and writing and numeracy from the standards that the Conservatives left when they left office. We are doing that successfully because

we are not complacent about these matters. We recognise that more has to be done, which is why we are investing in early intervention, in classroom assistants, in reducing class sizes and so on.

Jim Mather was also rather muted in his welcome for the strategy, although I was pleased at the extent to which he did welcome it. However, he spoiled things again by peering into the half-empty glass that the Scottish National Party always sees in Scotland and, sadly, being unable to distinguish between the constitutional constipation that Wendy Alexander referred to last week and the needs of our young people. We want our young people to be ambitious and to have confidence, and not to be told that they cannot succeed unless we have constitutional upheaval.

I could go on at considerable length but I can see that the Presiding Officer wishes me to draw to a close. I commend the motion to Parliament.

First Minister's Question Time

12:01

Cabinet (Meetings)

1. Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP):

To ask the First Minister what issues will be discussed at the next meeting of the Scottish Executive's Cabinet. (S2F-263)

The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell): The next meeting of the Scottish Cabinet will discuss our progress with implementing the partnership agreement and the legislative programme.

Mr Swinney: I wonder whether the Cabinet will discuss the statement issued on 17 September 2003 by the Scottish Liberal Democrats, which says that

"The Government ... is crippling ... Scottish manufacturing firms",

that the Government is

"unable to ... tackle the difficulties facing"

manufacturing, and that Scottish manufacturing is in "crisis".

Is that the view of the whole Executive, or just the party of which the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning happens to be the leader?

The First Minister: This Government is not crippling Scottish manufacturing, but some sectors of the Scottish manufacturing industry are facing very difficult international conditions. We saw that yesterday, when the workers at the Hoover factory received 90-day notices on their jobs, which will cause difficulties for their families and communities. Although we feel strongly about the condition and the situation in which those workers find themselves, we should note that in the same week there has been other news in other parts of Scotland about new manufacturing jobs. There are clearly difficult international conditions for Scottish manufacturing; however, in some sectors and in some parts of Scotland people are rising to that challenge and are delivering new jobs to Scotland and real growth in their sectors.

Mr Swinney: I am no further forward in understanding what the Executive's view is. On 17 September, the Liberal Democrats said:

"The Government ... is crippling ... Scottish manufacturing firms",

that the Government is

"unable to ... tackle the difficulties facing"

manufacturing, and that Scottish manufacturing is in "crisis".

Manufacturing exports have fallen by one fifth over the past year, 50,000 jobs have been lost in manufacturing in the past five years, and yesterday 260 workers at Hoover started their search for work. Does the First Minister now accept the view of his junior coalition partners that the policies that he supports are “unable to ... tackle” the crisis that faces manufacturing in Scotland?

The First Minister: We had this discussion to some extent last week, and I am happy to have the debate again. The issue here is not in the analysis of the problem that faces the Scottish economy, but in the solutions that our respective parties propose. That is the difference between us. That difference lies in our Government’s commitment—now widely recognised, including by Mr Swinney’s party, or at least by its spokesperson prior to the elections in May—that a policy that delivers a smart, successful Scotland that competes on the international stage is the right policy for Scotland. Much more important, however, is our recognition that that needs to be backed up by investment in transport, in skills, in broadband—again this week we have announced new developments in broadband for the Scottish islands—and in a range of other areas. That investment by this Government, here in Scotland, backs up successful companies that have the ability and the potential to grow their jobs in their local communities. That is the right way for us to go, and it is entirely different from the policy that Mr Swinney wants us to pursue, which would see those same Scottish companies broken off from their main markets, isolated on the north-western corner of Europe and unable to compete in the modern world.

Mr Swinney: It might have escaped the First Minister’s notice that thousands of jobs have been lost in Scotland in the manufacturing sector. He talked about the long term; last year, the Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning issued a press release boasting that the long-term future of the Hoover plant was secure. She said:

“The Hoover plant at Cambuslang has shown how Scottish manufacturers can beat the competition when they invest in skills and innovation.”

That is the strategy, but it has just failed because it is not enough. We have the highest business rates in Europe, manufacturing is in crisis and exports have collapsed. How many more jobs must be lost before the First Minister joins the growing consensus that the Parliament must have the powers to safeguard the Scottish economy?

The First Minister: There was a consistent debate in the Parliament over a fair length of time between those of us who believe that we need to see the Scottish glass as being half full and those

who see it as being half empty. It seems increasingly to be the case that Mr Swinney thinks that the glass is completely empty. That is not an accurate picture of Scotland today.

Mr Swinney will receive no credit from the workers at Hoover, their families or the community in which they work for using them as political footballs to justify his policies, which would damage their situation even more. The workers at Hoover have worked long and hard to preserve the plant and the decision that was announced yesterday is regrettable. The workers have competed against that decision and tried their very best to ensure that it did not come about.

The difference between Mr Swinney and me is not in the analysis that Scottish manufacturing currently faces a difficult set of international conditions. Even in those conditions, the oil and gas industry in Scotland is still competing on the international stage, our financial services are still among the best in the world and our renewable energy industry can be the best in the world if we invest in it. In a range of other areas, the Scottish economy remains strong and is strengthening. The difference between Mr Swinney and me is that, in his world and in his economy, Scotland would have less public spending to invest because we would break off from the rest of the United Kingdom. We would apparently cut taxes and increase public spending at the same time as we had economic chaos as a result of independence. Mr Swinney’s outcome is wrong. Our policy is right and is starting to deliver.

Janis Hughes (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab): Will the First Minister join me in expressing sincere regret at Hoover Candy Ltd’s decision to cease manufacturing in Scotland, which will result in the expected loss of 250 jobs at its plant in Cambuslang in my constituency? Does he share my deep concern that it is intended that some of the jobs that will be lost will go to Wales? Will he assure me that he will offer the workers at Hoover’s Cambuslang plant his full support in urging the company to overturn the deeply unfortunate decision and will he provide what assistance he can to facilitate such an overturn?

The First Minister: There is no disagreement between us that Hoover’s announcement yesterday is extremely regrettable and has deep implications for the families that are involved. Our job is, of course, first of all to support them and to make the case for Scotland. However, it is also our job to ensure that, should the company implement that decision, we are as successful at the Hoover plant as we were at the Motorola plant in West Lothian and in a number of other areas in supporting workers who were in the same situation to achieve alternative employment or train for new work.

That is fundamental to turning round the situation in the Scottish economy. In Scotland, we currently have more people in work than ever and we have the lowest unemployment in my adult lifetime. In the circumstances of Hoover's announcement, we can use the employment situation to rebuild people's careers, give them new hope and new opportunities and support companies that can prosper and are prospering. That is the challenge for us. It is not to run down those companies and the Scottish economy, but to give them support. That includes those whose jobs are under immediate threat.

Prime Minister (Meetings)

2. David McLetchie (Edinburgh Pentlands)
(Con): To ask the First Minister when he will next meet the Prime Minister and what issues he intends to discuss. (S2F-264)

The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell): I expect to meet the Prime Minister on a number of occasions before Christmas and I expect to discuss a number of issues with him.

David McLetchie: That was a characteristically enlightening answer from the First Minister. I will take on some of the earlier discussion about the economy in the light of the job losses at Hoover that we have already discussed and the fall in manufacturing export sales.

The First Minister is always telling us that he wants to help grow our economy—it is, of course, one of the Executive's many first priorities—but I am sure that he is aware of the study that was published this week by the Executive's own economists which showed that Scottish businesses face higher business property taxes than do their counterparts in England and Wales. Indeed, the Hoover plant in Wales to which Janis Hughes referred pays a business rate that is more than 4p in the pound lower than the equivalent plant in Scotland. In light of that evidence from his economists, will the First Minister acknowledge that his policies on business rates have damaged Scotland's competitive position? Will he cut our business rate poundage as a matter of urgency?

The First Minister: I am pleased that Mr McLetchie chose to get an enlightened answer today, rather than to listen to an enlightened speech down in Blackpool—it is good to have him here.

The study that was published on Tuesday makes it clear that Scottish businesses are not at a competitive disadvantage in comparison with their counterparts in other European countries. It shows conclusively that, in spite of the scaremongering that goes on, business taxation in Scotland is not higher than the European average

but is, in fact, more competitive than in most comparable locations in Europe.

It is vital to put that on the record, because every time that fact is distorted, it might affect businesses' decisions about whether to locate in Scotland. First, I make a plea that people do not distort the position, but state it accurately. Secondly, I point out that businesses take account of a wide range of factors and keep the whole picture in mind when they make their decisions. They make their decisions not just on the basis of local property taxes, which do not even exist in some other European countries, but on the basis of all the different factors that would lead them to locate in a country. That means that we must invest in transport, skills and the things that make our economy grow. If we were to cut that investment, as Mr McLetchie urges me to do week after week, we would be making a mistake—we would be going for a short-term political hit, rather than for the long-term good of Scotland. We are not prepared to put cuts before investment.

David McLetchie: I am afraid that the First Minister is confusing the position. It might well be the case that Scottish businesses, as part of the United Kingdom as a whole, are not uncompetitive vis-à-vis other businesses in the wider world or in Europe, but that is a matter for the UK Government. With regard to matters that are the Scottish Executive's responsibility—business rates and water charges—there is no doubt that Scottish businesses are at a serious competitive disadvantage in relation to businesses in the rest of the UK as a whole. That is what this week's report discloses.

The First Minister's problem is that he and Mr Kerr are so concerned about getting a few hundred million pounds extra into their pot from our businesses that they cannot see the wider United Kingdom picture. I urge the First Minister to put aside those parochial concerns, to look at the bigger picture, to cut the burdens on our businesses, to put our businesses on the same plane as those in the rest of the UK and to let them play their part in growing our economy as a whole.

The First Minister: I urge Mr McLetchie to tell the truth and to state the facts as they are. Overall tax revenues in Scotland, relative to total income, are similar to those for the UK and are substantially below European Union averages. It is not right to tell businesses that they should not come to Scotland because we tax them too much and it is certainly not right to blame the level of local taxation on the past few years' Government. Between 1993 and 1997, local taxation in Scotland increased by 27 per cent; since 1997, it has gone up by only 11.1 per cent, which is an increase of

less than half the increase during the last six years of the Tory Government.

This year, local taxation rises have again been pegged at a level that is substantially lower than the levels in England and Wales. That is good news. This year, 70 per cent of Scottish businesses are paying less in business rates than they paid last year because we froze the business rate and introduced a small-business relief scheme that is benefiting them directly.

My plea to the Opposition parties is that they tell the truth about the Scottish economy and about taxation. Scotland is a good place to invest, to do business and to create jobs. The more often we all say that, the more those things will happen.

Common Agricultural Policy (Reform)

3. Karen Gillon (Clydesdale) (Lab): To ask the First Minister what the policy objectives of the Scottish Executive are in relation to the launch of its consultation on the implementation of common agricultural policy reform. (S2F-269)

The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell): Our objectives for CAP reform are clear: farmers should produce for the market, rather than for subsidy and more Government support should be used to protect our rural environment while securing a thriving agriculture industry at the heart of a strong rural economy.

Karen Gillon: Does the First Minister agree that the CAP reform gives us a huge opportunity to rebuild some of our hard-pressed rural communities? Will he give a clear commitment that the Executive will provide strong leadership, explore fully the radical opportunities that are available to us and ensure that any decision is made in the best interests of the Scottish people and is not subject to veto by any vested interests?

The First Minister: On Monday, the consultation on implementing the CAP reforms was launched. I remind Parliament that we were fully engaged in the CAP reforms. They will be better for Scotland than the original proposals would have been and can be used to preserve, support and develop not only our agriculture industry, but our wider rural economy. Those reforms are ready for implementation and we will consult on that. In doing that, we must achieve the right balance between supporting farming that is designed to produce food that is right for the market, that consumers want and that is at the right price, and ensuring that the wider rural economy and the rural environment are preserved and enhanced.

The consultation started on Monday with an event that involved in the discussion all interests—those with direct farming interests and those with wider environmental and rural interests. That is

how we will conduct the consultation. By the end of the consultation, I am sure that we will have heard a wide range of views. We will then present our decisions to the Parliament.

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con): I am sure that the First Minister agrees that a tremendous opportunity is available for rural Scotland. The consultation is critical to the future of many rural businesses. Does he agree that this is not the time or the place for those who want support to rural Scotland to be significantly redistributed and concentrated on some regions to attempt to influence the process? Does he agree that if we allow those people to have their head, the result could be that the rural east of Scotland becomes an environmental desert?

The First Minister: I certainly hope that north-east Scotland never becomes an environmental desert. Such descriptions are not helpful. North-east Scotland has strong agricultural and rural economies, but it requires similar support to other parts of Scotland. We need to have a proper debate about that, so that everybody can influence the consultation's outcome and the final decisions. That is why it is important that agricultural interests, other rural interests and environmental interests can participate in the consultation. We must take a balanced judgment at the end of the consultation and do the right things for Scotland.

At the margins of the CAP reform, we have the flexibility for which we argued. We can use that in Scotland's interest. If we can do that after all the wider rural interests have been engaged in the debate, we will make better decisions and deliver what I hope will be a better environment and economy for rural Scotland.

Land Ownership

4. Stewart Stevenson (Banff and Buchan) (SNP): To ask the First Minister what plans the Scottish Executive has to establish a publicly accessible and complete register showing land ownership in Scotland. (S2F-268)

The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell): Scotland has had a publicly accessible register of land ownership since 1617, which is being replaced by a fully computerised and plan-based land register of Scotland. Land registration is organised by reference to the old counties of Scotland and the new land register has been operational in all those counties since April this year. Registration first takes place when ownership is transferred.

Stewart Stevenson: Is it smart that our current land register conceals beneficial ownership of a huge part of our land? Is it successful to allow that concealment to be used to avoid effective tax collection? Should Scotland's people be able to

find accountable owners when they need to? Smart, successful Scotland requires transparent land ownership.

The First Minister: Stewart Stevenson raises two issues. One is about having a complete land register, towards which we are working. The register is added to when land is sold or transferred. In time, that will be a good asset for Scotland.

The second issue is beneficial ownership of land, which the land reform policy group has raised. In the previous parliamentary session, the Executive researched the subject and found that a strong case could not be made for implementing the changes that Mr Stevenson advocates. However, we will keep the matter open for consideration; I am sure that the matter will be discussed in Parliament over a long period.

Rhona Brankin (Midlothian) (Lab): Does the First Minister agree that, although compiling lists and directories of land ownership may be interesting, what really matters to people in Scotland is access to the countryside, regardless of who owns the land?

The First Minister: How the land is operated is just as important as how it is owned. It is also important that everyone in Scotland can enjoy the new rights of access that the Parliament has created and of which we should be proud. One obligation that the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 created was on local authorities and others to create and maintain a system of paths throughout Scotland. We want to make speedy progress on that in order to ensure that everybody, regardless of their income, background or community, has access to the countryside and the open spaces of Scotland so that they can take exercise and enjoy their country.

Colin Fox (Lothians) (SSP): The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations argues that the fact that vast areas of Scotland are owned by a few wealthy individuals, many of whom live abroad as tax exiles and refuse to free up land for housing, is a substantial and serious obstacle to providing social housing in rural areas. Does the First Minister agree with the federation and, if so, what does he intend to do about the situation?

The First Minister: One of the most significant things that Parliament has achieved is a shift in the balance of power, particularly in rural communities, by giving people new rights of ownership of the land on which they live. That measure has had opponents, but I am proud of it. Those rights, which have been overdue for many decades, now exist in Scotland.

I am not in favour of the compulsory transfer of land ownership; the right time to transfer ownership is when the land has been put up for

sale. However, where ownership of estates has not been transferred and is in private hands, an important part of our strategy must be to achieve access to those estates to build homes for local communities. The new money that Margaret Curran announced this week in Stornoway for rural housing developments will be part of the package that will be considered for that strategy. The money will not be used only for new housing association and local authority developments, but for new developments on private and Forestry Commission Scotland land.

Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): In addition to compulsory registration of land when ownership changes, will the First Minister consider looking back? I understand that the present register is seriously defective because existing owners have not registered. Could the law be extended to make such people register their land?

The First Minister: I have no doubt that there will come a point in the process at which that measure will be required for the last few pieces of land that will not have been registered. The process of moving from the old register to the new one in Scotland has been successful. The move has been done stage by stage, county by county and property by property during the past two decades. We must now look to escalate the process and ensure that property is registered whenever it changes hands. We must also consider a medium-term voluntary agreement by which people can register land, whether or not it has changed hands. Subsequently, at the end of the process, we must consider dealing through a compulsory scheme with the few remaining individuals who have not co-operated.

Brian Adam (Aberdeen North) (SNP): Does the First Minister agree that the option to purchase land ought to be registered, so that the potential beneficial ownership of land, particularly land that might be available for development, is clear and transparent?

The First Minister: We should try to ensure that things are as clear and transparent as possible, but we also need to act in a way that is seen to be reasonable by the public and which is reasonable in relation to the rights that people have over land that they own. That is why we have taken the absolutely right and radical—but not crazy or extreme—step of ensuring that when people sell their property, in certain circumstances they must give the community the first option to buy it.

I disagree fundamentally with the Scottish nationalist party and others, who insist that there should be a compulsory purchase scheme, under which the original landowners would have no rights whatever. That policy is fundamentally wrong, whereas our policy achieves the right balance between community engagement and the rights of those who own the land in the first place.

Ferry Services (Tendering)

5. George Lyon (Argyll and Bute) (LD): To ask the First Minister whether the Scottish Executive will review its plans to tender Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services in light of the European Court of Justice's decision on government subsidies for essential services. (S2F-276)

The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell): We are considering the implications of the Altmark judgment on European Union rules regarding maritime state aids, including Caledonian MacBrayne's ferry services.

George Lyon: I am sure that the First Minister, being a native of Arran, will be aware of the need for clarity on the subject: it is of great importance to the communities that I represent that we understand whether the tender process has to take place. I urge the First Minister to do everything in his power to get clarity on the subject and to get to the bottom of whether we need to progress along that route.

The First Minister: There are two decisions to be made. First, we must get good legal advice and make a sound judgment on the implications of the ruling for the current tendering process. That is what we seek to achieve. When we have received the advice and made a judgment we will be able to confirm it to Parliament.

Subsequently, we will have to make the right decision about the tendering process. Although at this stage clarity on the implications of the judgment for the tendering process is important, it is also important that those who are involved in the preparation of tenders and are preparing for that process do not take their foot off the pedal based on the assumption that life is somehow going to change over the next few months. They must continue with their preparations until such time as we have managed to clarify the matter.

Jim Mather (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): Will the Scottish Executive review its plans for the tendering and supply of other services for the Highlands and Islands, such as air services and broadband, in the light of the European Court of Justice decision—the Altmark judgment?

The First Minister: Clearly, we are examining all the implications for the different state aids that might be affected by the judgment. We will make a statement in the usual way when we have got information on that.

Healthy Living Campaign

6. Chris Ballance (South of Scotland) (Green): To ask the First Minister whether its national healthy living campaign will lead to healthy eating habits. (S2F-284)

Members: No.

The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell): I certainly hope so. The campaign is not helped by members in this chamber running it down and shouting "No" when a sensible question is asked about an important campaign.

The healthy eating campaign is one part of our overall effort to improve public health in Scotland. It is designed to influence demand for healthy food and to work with all those who influence the supply of that food to ensure that Scotland's eating habits can and do change fundamentally.

Chris Ballance: The First Minister will be aware that today sees the official opening of the new Royal infirmary of Edinburgh, where the food that is supplied will be frozen, pre-processed, pre-packaged and delivered by truck from Wales. Is the First Minister proud of that? What will he do to promote a joined-up approach so that schools and hospitals are supplied with fresh produce from local farmers and producers? Is he aware of the Soil Association's food for life pilot? Are there plans to extent that to schools in Scotland?

The First Minister: I was delighted this week to read that the Soil Association had praised our Government in Scotland for its initiatives on healthy eating in schools and that it was advocating that our colleagues south of the border follow our example. I am always pleased to be in accordance with the Soil Association when it gives us some praise.

I believe that it is very important that we use the levers that we have in the public sector in Scotland to influence eating habits and to ensure that decent food is available. I have expressed my regret previously about the fact that the food contract for the ERI had no Scottish tenderers, and that the tender eventually went to a company in Wales. I do not think that we should be particularly nationalistic about that, but I think that it is a regret that no Scottish companies felt able to tender at the early stages. I certainly hope that they will tender when the contract comes up again.

We should not forget—I notice that a lot of comments have been made in the past week about the advertising campaign—that the public advertising campaign is a very small part of the overall healthy eating campaign that we have under way. The new standards in hospitals and schools and the work with the private sector and food producers are all part of that effort. Those measures are already making a significant difference.

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): We started late, so I will allow a final question.

Susan Deacon (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab): The First Minister acknowledged in his answer the importance of the healthy eating campaign as part of a much wider

effort. Will he say more about any discussions that are taking place with food producers to address, as other countries have done, the levels of saturated fat, sugar and salt that work through the food chain and into our diets via food that is produced not just in Scotland but throughout the United Kingdom?

The First Minister: I repeat to some extent what I have already said. The advertising campaign that is part of the healthy eating campaign, but which is also part of a wider health improvement campaign, plays only a small part. Crucially, it is designed to influence demand for healthy foods in Scotland because we are competing with massive international businesses that would like people to eat other kinds of food. That is why an advertising campaign is important, but is only one part of the jigsaw.

The Executive's healthy eating unit is currently working with the food producers; we are working with the agricultural industry and we are working with the private firms that have been part of the problem in the past. To my knowledge, Scotland is the only country in the world where Coca-Cola has agreed to take its branding off the vending machines that it supplies to places where young people are in order to ensure that it does not abuse and exploit young people in a commercial situation. It is a positive development that we are working not only with the agricultural industry, but with major multinational companies.

Our healthy eating campaign is making a difference and all parties in the chamber should get behind it.

12:31

Meeting suspended until 14:30.

14:30

On resuming—

Question Time

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Devolved School Management

1. Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con): To ask the Scottish Executive whether devolved school management will be extended. (S2O-565)

The Minister for Education and Young People (Peter Peacock): Yes.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Does the minister recollect that the partnership agreement includes a commitment to issue guidance on how to raise from 80 per cent to 90 per cent the proportion of the school budget that is under the control of head teachers? When will that commitment be honoured and when will progress be made towards achieving the target?

Peter Peacock: I am delighted to hear that Lord James Douglas-Hamilton is such an avid student of the partnership agreement, which I commend to anyone who has not studied it as closely as he has. The member is right to say that there is a commitment to increase from 80 per cent to 90 per cent the proportion of the school budget that is subject to devolved school management. We plan to issue guidance on that in spring 2004. We are collecting information from local authorities on how they are best using devolved school management, so that we can incorporate into the guidance all the latest thinking about how to move the issue forward.

Road Improvements (A9)

2. Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive what proposals it has for improving the A9 at Berriedale. (S2O-580)

The Deputy Minister for Finance and Public Services (Tavish Scott): We will shortly go out to tender on a £500,000 structural maintenance scheme over 2.9km at Berriedale, which is programmed for completion by spring 2004.

Mr Stone: Members who travel the A9 to Caithness will be aware that, at Berriedale, there are some particularly difficult hairpin bends, where articulated lorries often jam the route.

May I press the minister further on this matter? I am grateful that money will be spent at the Ord of Caithness, but substantial investment is required at Berriedale, which remains a noose around a

vital link not only to Caithness but to islands beyond, including the minister's constituency. I ask that his officials examine the problem, with a view to implementing a more radical solution.

Tavish Scott: I will be happy to take the points that Mr Stone has made back to Mr Stephen's officials and to ensure that they are fully briefed on this issue. We recognise the member's concerns. From my experience of driving on the road, I know the serious problems that exist. However, Mr Stone was right to mention the £10 million that the Executive is spending on the major upgrade between Helmsdale and the Ord of Caithness. We hope to build on that work.

Fife NHS Board (Meetings)

3. Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive when it will next meet Fife NHS Board and what issues will be discussed. (S2O-577)

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Malcolm Chisholm): Officials of the Scottish Executive Health Department meet Fife NHS Board regularly and discuss a wide range of issues.

Tricia Marwick: Will the minister comment on the report on Fife NHS Board by the external auditors Henderson Logie, the findings of which have been published in *The Courier*? The report suggests that Fife NHS Board is not achieving effective financial control and that to ensure confidence and belief in the leadership of the NHS in Fife, there needs to be clarity and communication of the corporate vision and actions that are necessary to achieve recurring financial balance. Will the minister confirm that he has confidence in the ability of the present leadership of Fife NHS Board to deliver the health service that the people of Fife need?

Malcolm Chisholm: I am glad that Tricia Marwick has raised this issue. Fife NHS Board asked for the report to which she refers because it realised that there were issues that it had to address. It is now acting on the report.

I regret that parts of the document have, in the past, been misreported—I am not saying that that has happened today—and reported out of context. Any questions that the report raised about leadership in Fife related to financial leadership at an operational level. It is a matter of deep regret that those comments have been transferred to the board's chair, who was not criticised in the report. I am glad that the Conservative member Brian Monteith said, in a recent press release, that the chair's ability was not in question. I am also glad that she received a good performance appraisal from the chief executive of NHS Scotland. I hope that people will focus on the real health issues in

Fife rather than on personality issues, which are not relevant.

Christine May (Central Fife) (Lab): Does the minister agree that it might be best for the nationalist list MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife to attend meetings with Fife NHS Board, instead of wasting the chamber's time by asking such questions?

Malcolm Chisholm: It is obvious that Christine May knows more about that situation than I do, and I am sure that members heard what she said.

Fife NHS Board, others in Fife and I are focused on the real issues of concern to patients in Fife. For example, the board has made progress on waiting times. There have been some difficulties in one or two areas, but I commend the progress that the health board has made in reducing waiting times. The board has also been active on the patient focus agenda and is proceeding with the health reorganisation plans.

Stewart Stevenson (Banff and Buchan) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Rule 7.3 of the standing orders of the Parliament states:

"Members shall at all times conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner".

From his time in another place, does the Presiding Officer recall that one of the rules of that place that covers discourteous behaviour is the mayor of Sligo rule, which prohibits a member, in asking a question of a minister, from referring to another member of the house? On that basis, does the Presiding Officer agree that Ms May has shown discourtesy to my colleague?

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): The point is that we do not have a mayor of Sligo, nor a mayor of Sligo rule.

Iain Smith (North East Fife) (LD): Does the minister agree that Fife NHS Board and its chair should be judged on whether they are delivering improvements to the health service in Fife for the people of Fife, including the "Right for Fife" business plan, the new hospital and health centre for St Andrews, improvements to Adamson hospital in Cupar and the establishment of a strategy for mental health services, including Stratheden hospital?

Malcolm Chisholm: Iain Smith makes a similar point to those that were made by me and by Christine May. People in Fife are interested in all the issues to which Iain Smith referred and progress is being made on several fronts. That is what patients are interested in and I am sure that that is what is of interest to the majority of MSPs.

Civil Service Jobs (Dispersal)

4. Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive what action it is taking to disperse civil service jobs around Scotland. (S2O-615)

The Deputy Minister for Finance and Public Services (Tavish Scott): The Executive is committed to the dispersal of public sector jobs, and wants all areas of Scotland to benefit from the policy, including areas of most need. Devolution should apply not only to Scotland, but within Scotland. Since 1999, the devolved Government has relocated, or announced plans to relocate, more than 1,200 posts around Scotland. A further 2,000 posts are being considered under reviews that have been announced to date. The Executive will announce further relocation opportunities later in the year.

Robert Brown: Is the Executive's policy on the matter binding on quangos? For example, is the minister aware of Scottish Water's bizarre recent decision to close its recently modernised laboratory in Glasgow and to centralise its operations in Edinburgh? Is he aware of the actions of the Scottish Agricultural College? Is it not time that quangos that belong to the Scottish Executive were required to follow Scottish Executive policy?

Tavish Scott: It depends upon the definition of quangos. I am sure that Mr Brown means non-departmental public bodies, which have to have regard to the Scottish Executive's relocation policy. We expect them to pay close attention to it and follow its terms.

I am not aware of the particular circumstances of the Scottish Water laboratory to which Mr Brown refers. Members should, however, reflect on the extremely tough cost-reduction targets that that organisation has to meet. I presume that those have implications for the issues that Mr Brown raised.

Roseanna Cunningham (Perth) (SNP): Will the minister detail the socioeconomic criteria that are used in the Executive's job dispersal programme? Will he explain why my constituency, which has lower-than-average wage rates, did not make the list for VisitScotland? Will he indicate whether the overall strategy will contain provisions for smaller work units being dispersed to smaller towns?

Tavish Scott: The initiative on small units within the Executive will deal with the point that Roseanna Cunningham makes. The Executive intends that the small-units initiative, announced by the First Minister late in 2002, will ensure that such units are relocated to areas around the periphery of Scotland, if I may use that terminology.

As for the member's wider point, socioeconomic factors account for some 50 per cent of the analysis in relation to a decision on a particular relocation. That will continue to be the case; indeed, we will put more stress on that approach.

Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab): The minister will be aware that my area has lost out more than once on bids for relocation, including its bid for the recent relocation of VisitScotland jobs. Will he assure me that areas that have lost out will receive appropriate feedback and guidance and that due consideration will be given to the factor of unemployment, which is very high in my constituency?

Tavish Scott: Irene Oldfather makes an extremely good point about feedback. We think that that area needs to be strengthened to ensure that we are very clear and transparent about why a particular area has benefited from the relocation policy and why other areas have not been successful in particular cases. In that context, it is important that local authorities, local enterprise companies and other partners who work together in pursuit of relocation options are clear about why they have or have not achieved something.

Civil Registration (Archives)

5. Brian Adam (Aberdeen North) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it has advised the Registrar General for Scotland to allow local authorities to retain paper copies of the birth, marriage and death registers in local archives and to make available the appropriate funding for this purpose. (S2O-594)

The Deputy Minister for Justice (Hugh Henry): The Registrar General has made it clear to local authorities that they will be allowed to retain paper records locally after electronic images of the registers become available. An authority that wished to hold those records in local archives would meet the cost of such storage, as for other records held in such a way. The Registrar General will continue to meet the cost of storage of the principal paper copy of the registers and the cost of providing the electronic version.

Brian Adam: I welcome the minister's response. However, the Registrar General's guidance has not yet been conveyed to local family history societies, which have expressed considerable concern about the matter. In addition, will the minister assure us that he will meet the societies to find out whether other records that are valuable in Scotland might be useful and to help and encourage the societies to develop family history as a tourism niche market?

Hugh Henry: I am surprised that people in Brian Adam's area are not aware that the Registrar General has made that information clear. They

might well wish to take up that issue with the local authority. If Brian Adam thinks that his local authority is still in the dark about the matter, he should by all means let me know about it and I will take up the issue with the Registrar General. That said, I have no reason to believe that that information did not go out.

As for meeting local family history societies, I am sure that if they wish to make a case to the local authorities and then both parties decide to raise the matter with the Registrar General, he will arrange whatever meeting is required to examine the most sensible way of providing a service throughout Scotland.

Tourism

6. Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con): To ask the Scottish Executive what the outcome was of the recent meeting of the steering group on tourism with regard to promoting tourism. (S2O-590)

The Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport (Mr Frank McAveety): The group of ministers on tourism held its sixth and latest meeting on 1 October. We focused on how the £90 million of public sector tourism expenditure is spent and how effectively the various agencies that support tourism in Scotland integrate their activities and their investment. The group hopes to report its findings to the Cabinet soon.

Mr McGrigor: What is the Executive's decision on the future of the area tourist boards? Moreover, what is it doing to promote the training of tourism skills to Scottish youth to ensure that young people properly represent and benefit the tourism industry and take pride in their jobs?

Mr McAveety: The deliberations on the future of ATBs form part of the broader debate that is taking place in the ministerial group. I hope that we will report on that matter when we report to the Cabinet.

As for skills issues within the tourism industry, I meet VisitScotland and various other agencies regularly to ensure that we address such matters. Earlier this week, I met representatives of the Federation of Small Businesses to discuss the issue. Moreover, I met my colleague Allan Wilson this morning to discuss how we can utilise skills development, particularly in relation to the development of the Cairngorms national park. I am sure that that will be of interest to Mr McGrigor's constituents.

Shona Robison (Dundee East) (SNP): Does the minister share my concern about the exclusion of four Scottish cities, including Dundee, from VisitBritain's new short-break campaign? Will he join me in expressing concern about VisitScotland's statement that the promotion of

Dundee as part of that campaign would have been a waste of money? Moreover, does the minister agree that we need to promote Dundee in the European market to ensure that the city is put on the map as a destination for Europeans who come to Scotland?

Mr McAveety: To clarify, it was questioned whether the inclusion of Dundee would give an effective return for the investment involved, which is a remarkably different turn of phrase from that which was used by the member. The SNP's tourism spokesperson complained this week that Aberdeen, too, had not been successful, but that city did not apply to be successful in the first place.

Other cities from throughout the United Kingdom that were not included have larger populations than the two or three in Scotland that were not fully included. Our two largest cities were included in the scheme because of the proportion of Scotland's population that they have and because those cities have direct routes to Europe, the promotion of which was the main purpose of the scheme. If the member took the time to examine the scheme, I am sure that she would see that other aspects of it involve the promotion of other cities in Scotland to ensure that we access that important market.

Animal By-Products (Scotland) Regulations 2003

7. David Mundell (South of Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Executive what assessment it has made of the impact on rural businesses of regulations that ban the sale of animal by-products. (S2O-589)

The Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Ross Finnie): The Animal By-Products (Scotland) Regulations 2003, which implement European Commission regulation 1774/2002, came into effect on 1 October. A regulatory impact assessment accompanied the regulations through the consultation stage and the parliamentary scrutiny process. The main objective of the legislation is to ensure that animal by-products that are not intended for human consumption are controlled through to final use or disposal to ensure that they do not pose a threat to public or animal health or to the environment.

David Mundell: Does the minister accept that small rural butchers will bear a disproportionate cost as a result of the requirements of the regulations and that the increased costs may threaten the future viability and availability of butchers in rural communities? Will the minister investigate whether, subject to the state-aid rules, it is possible to introduce a national disposal scheme to help small butchers, similar to the scheme for fallen stock which is to be introduced for farmers?

Ross Finnie: One must be careful when talking about the extent to which the regulations have imposed new requirements. I accept that there are new requirements in relation to disposal, but confusion exists in the butchery trade and others about the distinction between products that are for human use and products that can be used for pets and other purposes. There appears to be confusion about whether additional action is required, other than simply complying with the regulations. Some butchers have doubts about the matter, which I hope will be resolved. Butchers are beginning to believe that they cannot supply products that, in fact, they can supply. We hope, by explanation, to assure those people that that is not the case and therefore to reduce the burden to which Mr Mundell alluded.

Richard Lochhead (North East Scotland) (SNP): Most people welcome the simplification of the common agricultural policy, which will lead to simpler regulations for farming and other businesses in rural Scotland. However, it was reported in the press this week that the minister thinks that the reform of the common agricultural policy may lead to job losses in the civil service. Will the minister guarantee that any loss of civil service jobs will not occur in rural communities, which will need on-going support during the intense period of transition in the years ahead?

Ross Finnie: I am not aware that the Animal By-Products (Scotland) Regulations 2003, to which the original question referred, will give rise to job losses in the civil service. Mr Lochhead alone in the chamber could possibly have arrived at that interesting conclusion. However, I can tell Mr Lochhead that the completely different regulations that govern the CAP reform might give rise to streamlining in my department. As usual with the Executive, value for money will be a key objective and we will use the savings to good purpose.

George Lyon (Argyll and Bute) (LD): I return to the original question to seek further clarification. The new regulations mean that small butchers can no longer dispose of bones and by-products to landfill. Will the minister consider whether bones might be uplifted under the fallen stock scheme, which, I believe, is due to come into operation in January? Given that in the Highlands and Islands there is a derogation that allows people to bury fallen stock, surely, in those derogated areas, people should be able to continue to send bones to landfill.

Ross Finnie: Yes. I am happy to take on board the issue of what to do in the derogated areas, where there would be an illogicality in the application of these two quite separate regulations. I am happy to look into that.

Prejudice

8. Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive how it is tackling prejudice in Scotland. (S2O-613)

The Minister for Communities (Ms Margaret Curran): The Executive is fulfilling its commitment to tackle prejudice and discrimination through a combination of legislation, policies and campaigning, backed up with research and training. We are also working closely with groups and organisations that represent their interests that share our commitment.

Donald Gorrie: Will the minister consider working with those organisations to produce guidelines, useful material and suggestions to help groups of all ages, through informal education or social activity, to address issues arising from prejudice? For example, the Executive could suggest that pensioners groups and youth clubs get together for a talk by somebody from an ethnic minority or somebody with a disability, or that young people from the two sides of the sectarian divide play in the same football team.

Ms Curran: In principle, I am sympathetic to that approach. The Executive attempts to stimulate that kind of approach across the raft of activities that it undertakes, in partnership with organisations. At the core of what Donald Gorrie says is the fact that prejudice often stems from a lack of understanding, knowledge and experience of another group. We want to break down those barriers through a variety of mechanisms, and we would be happy to pursue those issues.

John Swinburne (Central Scotland) (SSCUP): That is interesting. In Lanarkshire, on 22 October, we will go through an exercise involving the police, the Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party and a group of schoolchildren. We will be implementing exactly what Donald Gorrie was suggesting. It is on drugs—

The Presiding Officer: You must ask a question, Mr Swinburne. What is your question?

John Swinburne: I was just saying that—

The Presiding Officer: Well, it is question time, Mr Swinburne.

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I ask the minister to address prejudice in planning issues. Does she think that equal weight should be given to individuals' views regardless of how long they have lived in an area?

Ms Curran: As the member will know, we are giving great consideration to the planning system and people's involvement in it—obviously, with a degree of scrutiny of the balance. It is important that different views are represented, but we still need to reach the required outcomes in the

planning system. Mary Mulligan spent some time explaining that at last week's question time. We want to have a well-balanced planning system in which people are involved.

Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003

9. Mark Ballard (Lothians) (Green): To ask the Scottish Executive how much funding is being made available to local authorities to ensure that they are able to develop the core path network, as set out in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. (S2O-610)

The Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Allan Wilson): The local authority settlement includes £6.5 million for 2003-04, £7.4 million for 2004-05 and £8.1 million for 2005-06 to enable local authorities to prepare for and to implement the new access legislation, including planning a system of core paths.

Mark Ballard: The consultants' report indicated that, if communities are to get what they expect out of the land reform legislation, a figure nearer £340 million over 10 years will be required. How does the Executive intend to close that gap to ensure that—as Jack McConnell said this morning—speedy progress is made in that area?

Allan Wilson: Mark Ballard has certainly identified a fairly significant funding gap. I think that he perhaps misunderstood my original response. The sums of money that I explained are available are for planning a system of core paths. When we come to establish the core path network, we will have to consider the financial requirement for that.

The core path network will not be the only means by which we will provide wider access to the countryside. Many other funders are involved in providing that, including Scottish Natural Heritage. The core path network is an important means of providing access for people of differing abilities, but it is only one means by which we will provide wider access.

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab): Will the minister indicate when Parliament might be able to see the final version of the access code that is so vital to the operation of the important Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003? Does he agree that it is important that the access code reflects the Parliament's intentions and that we get to debate the access code before it is finally agreed in its correct form? Does he further agree that it is important that issues that have yet to be resolved, such as passage around farmyards, are finally and properly resolved?

Allan Wilson: I agree with those points. It is important that the access code is subject to the fullest consultation. It is only recently that SNH has completed its consultation. The matter will then

come to ministers for approval and from there to Parliament for its approval. I expect that some of the issues about disputes over access rights to which the member refers will be covered in the local authority access forums that will be set up and will be designed to facilitate dispute resolution.

Stewart Stevenson (Banff and Buchan) (SNP): I welcome the £22 million over three years that the minister has indicated will be available. I take it that the money applies to the consultation and the publishing of maps and so forth. Will the minister tell us how many miles of core paths the money will provide and what proportion will be existing rights of way? What further funding will be available thereafter to develop new paths?

Members: Ask the mayor of Sligo.

Allan Wilson: No, but I will get on the case right away. We will get out the maps and the cartographers to check just how many more core paths will be introduced.

I repeat the serious point that the core path network is but one means of ensuring wider and more responsible access to our countryside. We expect that in due course the entire countryside—excluding Sligo—will be opened up to wider access. I know that Stewart Stevenson will support those aims.

Student Funding

10. Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive whether there would be any changes in the repayment of student loans and the graduate endowment if proposals by Her Majesty's Government on the reform of student loans and tuition fees are implemented. (S2O-568)

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Mr Jim Wallace): Her Majesty's Government proposes to increase the income threshold at which student loans are repaid and to allow universities to vary the tuition fees that they charge.

Although student support is devolved in Scotland, repayments of student loans are collected through the UK-wide tax system. Therefore, it makes sense to continue with the UK-wide income threshold and we have made a commitment in the partnership agreement to support the proposal to raise the threshold. Student loan repayments made by Scotland-domiciled borrowers, including graduates who have chosen to meet their graduate endowment liability by adding it to their student loan account, will be made at the new threshold when it is introduced.

Any proposed changes to tuition fees that are implemented by Her Majesty's Government will

affect Scotland-domiciled students who study at English institutions that charge higher fees. We are currently considering the effect of that change as part of the third phase of the higher education review.

Dr Murray: The minister is aware of the concerns of the universities of Glasgow and Paisley about the funding of their places at the Crichton campus in Dumfries. Will he assure Parliament that any financial consequences of the reduction in graduates' annual payments—which would be welcome—will not affect the funding of or the number of places at Scottish universities?

Mr Wallace: As Parliament might know, the reason for establishing the third phase of the higher education review is to enable us to gain a thorough understanding of the competitiveness of Scottish higher education in the United Kingdom. We will not have a knee-jerk reaction to what might or might not happen with regard to all that has been said about the possibility of top-up fees south of the border; rather we will work through the issues about the recruitment and retention of staff, which affect student choice; capital funding, including teaching infrastructure; and the possible sources and uses of income.

I welcome the developments at the Crichton campus in recent years. It is a worthwhile addition to the delivery of higher education in the south-west of Scotland.

Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): Does the minister agree that tuition fees and top-up fees—if they are introduced—in England will have a direct effect in Scotland? On the point about competitiveness, will he consider as a matter of urgency the proportion of the budget that is spent on higher education, bearing in mind the fact that it will have an increase in the next few years of only two thirds of the increase in the Scottish block? If we are to be competitive, we must ensure that we have funding in higher education.

Mr Wallace: As I indicated to Elaine Murray, the point of establishing the third phase of the higher education review is to examine the implications for the Scottish higher education sector if changes take place south of the border. The review will give us a better idea of the likely implications, so any policy decisions that we make will be made on the informed basis of evidence. I welcome the fact that the Enterprise and Culture Committee, chaired by Alasdair Morgan, is engaged in similar work.

On the funding of higher education, it is important to put on record the fact that, in every year since the Parliament was established, we have increased the funding for higher education above the rate of inflation. During the period of the spending review, there will be a 15 per cent cash increase in higher education funding and a 6.9 per

cent increase in real terms from more than £700 million to more than £800 million. That shows the Administration's commitment to higher education in Scotland.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Given the adverse impact on Scottish universities of top-up fees in England, will the minister tell us what representations he and his colleagues in the Executive have made to Her Majesty's Government in relation to the white paper? Has he stressed to the UK Government the damage that will be done to Scottish universities if top-up fees are introduced in England?

Mr Wallace: I can assure Murdo Fraser that those matters have been discussed not only at official level but also between me and Charles Clarke, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. However, as Mr Fraser well knows, the contents of such conversations are inevitably kept confidential.

Broadband

12. Richard Lochhead (North East Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what progress is being made in extending the availability of broadband throughout the country. (S2O-563)

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Mr Jim Wallace): Sixty-three per cent of the Scottish population now has access to affordable broadband services, compared with 43 per cent at the time of the launch of our broadband strategy in August 2001. With current and planned interventions, we expect to exceed our target of 70 per cent by March 2004, and we are currently examining opportunities for extending coverage beyond that.

Richard Lochhead: Does the minister accept that we have to extend broadband throughout the country, particularly to places such as Aberdeenshire, where fewer than 10 per cent of British Telecommunications exchanges are currently connected to broadband? Will he explain to Parliament how Northern Ireland is able to tender for 100 per cent roll-out in the province while we are apparently unable to do so in Scotland? Will he also confirm whether he has inquired as to how much it would cost to achieve, say, 95 per cent or 100 per cent roll-out in Scotland? If he has, what figure was he given?

Mr Wallace: I can assure Richard Lochhead and the entire Parliament that those matters are indeed under active consideration, as we wish to extend broadband. The implication underlying his question is that broadband is a valuable part of improving our infrastructure for economic and social development in all parts of Scotland. Like

our counterparts in Northern Ireland, the Scottish Executive is pursuing a strategy that aims to achieve pervasive, affordable broadband coverage. We are currently implementing the demand-side measures, and have the benefit of increasing take-up as well as stimulating additional coverage. However, we must acknowledge that any supply-side interventions must be consistent with state-aid regulations.

I accept that, in some parts of Aberdeenshire, there are topographical, or topological—I mean geographical—[*Laughter.*] There are geographical reasons why there have been difficulties with specific exchanges, and that has increased the cost. However, where demand is insufficient to support the commercial deployment of ADSL, the Executive and the enterprise networks are certainly willing to help local communities to identify and procure alternative broadband solutions, such as the wireless network.

Water Industry (Charges)

13. George Lyon (Argyll and Bute) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive what consultations will be carried out with businesses by Scottish Water and the water industry commissioner before water charges are set for the next financial year. (S2O-586)

The Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Ross Finnie): Scottish Water has already undertaken consultation with a selection of key businesses and with business representatives, and both Scottish Water and the water industry commissioner are in regular contact with individual businesses and their respective organisations.

George Lyon: The minister will be aware that Scottish Water has submitted its proposals for next year's water charges to the water industry commissioner. At a recent public meeting in Campbeltown, the water industry commissioner indicated that he thought that it would be a waste of time to consult the small business sector ahead of his decision on next year's water rates. Will the minister use his influence with the water industry commissioner to ensure that he consults and listens to the small business sector before agreeing to next year's water charges?

Ross Finnie: I was not present at the meeting, but I would be surprised if that were an accurate reflection. After all, the role of the water industry commissioner was expressly constituted to reflect consumer interests. Therefore, that response seems surprising and I certainly want to look into it.

Colin Fox (Lothians) (SSP): Will the minister commission an independent inquiry into water charges and ask it to consider the situation in Ireland? As he knows, domestic water users in

Ireland are not charged and the costs are borne by big business and by general taxation. I am sure that the minister is aware that that system's attraction is that it would relieve the burden that currently falls disproportionately on the poorest people in Scotland.

Ross Finnie: No, I do not think that there is a case for an inquiry into any aspect of the water industry. Members are aware that the water industry commissioner produced a large and detailed report in 1998, which revealed for the first time the difficult situation that the three water companies that existed at the time were in: there was massive underinvestment, great inefficiency and a charging policy that simply was not capable of being sustained. Indeed, North of Scotland Water could not have been sustained at all. Given the size of its consumer base, it would have been almost impossible to have kept the company in being.

The Scottish Executive has taken a pragmatic step in the past four years by establishing Scottish Water in a way that allows the company to set objectives. Scottish Water has not got there yet, and there is no question of complacency on the part of the Executive. We have set Scottish Water the target of supplying water and sewerage services of the highest possible quality and at the lowest possible price. That is the right objective and I stand by the decision to establish Scottish Water on that basis.

Submarine Decommissioning

14. Bruce Crawford (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what representations it has made to Her Majesty's Government about the decommissioning and storage of nuclear submarines in Scotland. (S2O-588)

The Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Ross Finnie): The Executive has made no such representations to the Ministry of Defence.

Bruce Crawford: Members will be somewhat surprised to hear that no representations on the matter have been made by the Executive to Her Majesty's Government. Will the minister tell us whether, at the end of the day, he will support the decommissioning and storage of redundant nuclear submarines in Scotland? Yes or no?

Ross Finnie: Bruce Crawford's questions always involve a "Yes or no" interlude. I know that he was unsuccessful last week when he asked a question in identical terms. I thought that Allan Wilson dealt with him admirably and I recommend that diligent readers of the *Official Report* reread his answer.

Mr Crawford must understand that the Scottish Executive and others have a role to play in the matter. [*Interruption.*] I do not know why anyone should be surprised that we have done nothing yet because the Ministry of Defence has, quite properly, only just begun its consultation process on a matter for which it has the proper powers. There are three bites at the cherry and Mr Crawford can have at least one of those by participating in the consultation process.

As far as the Executive is concerned, at the end of that process and depending entirely on what the Ministry of Defence then proposes—we do not know what it will propose, as the matter is only now going out to consultation—we have powers under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993 and under planning legislation to take full account of all the proposals' implications and ramifications for Scotland. That seems to me to be a sensible way in which to proceed. It is also the procedure that is provided for in statute.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): I wish to question the minister on planning powers. I understand that the Executive and the UK Government have reached agreement on the removal of Crown immunity from the planning system. Will the minister confirm the timetable for that change and say whether the proposal for the decommissioning of nuclear submarines will be considered as a normal planning application?

Ross Finnie: I regret to say that I am unable to advise the member on the matter. The precise timing is a matter for the Procedure Committee of the House of Commons. The member is absolutely right to say that there is total unanimity between this Executive and the Westminster Executive that immunity should be lifted. I very much hope that it will be, but I point out to the member that, even if it is not, there are administrative planning procedures for development by Government departments and the Crown and those procedures mirror the requirements for environmental impact assessments of such applications. It is not as though we will be left in a complete void. However, it would be helpful if the motion were proceeded with.

The Presiding Officer: The point of order took a minute, so I will allow an additional question.

Education (Pupil Placement Requests)

15. Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it has any plans to review legislation on pupil placement requests. (S2O-569)

The Minister for Education and Young People (Peter Peacock): We have no immediate plans to suggest changes to the legislation. However, we

are monitoring the system to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of changing circumstances.

Fiona Hyslop: Is the minister aware that in certain areas with growing populations, such as West Lothian, there can be pressures on local schools, which children in the catchment area cannot access? Will he give due consideration to any request to revise pupil placement legislation to allow schools to bank places for more than one year to allow children to go to their local school?

Peter Peacock: As Fiona Hyslop will know, I am aware of the situation in West Lothian, which Mary Mulligan raised with me recently. I have a recent letter from her about the particular circumstances at Linlithgow High School. West Lothian Council has also written to me. My officials are due to meet West Lothian Council officials to discuss the issues that have arisen.

I am sympathetic to the points that Mary Mulligan and Fiona Hyslop have made. I will examine closely whether and how it might be possible for us to assist in the situation. However, assistance would have to be subject to any legislative considerations.

Commonwealth (Education)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman): The next item of business is a debate on motion S2M-468, in the name of Peter Peacock, on Scotland's past, present and future contribution to education in the Commonwealth.

15:13

The Minister for Education and Young People (Peter Peacock): I welcome the opportunity to open this debate on Scotland's past, present and future ties with education throughout the Commonwealth. By the time the Parliament meets again after the recess, one of the biggest international events in Scotland since devolution will have begun here in Edinburgh. I am referring to the 15th conference of Commonwealth education ministers in late October. Scotland will play host to education ministers from 52 countries around the world. The conference will develop and agree an action plan for educational development in the Commonwealth.

At the same time in Edinburgh, some 250 young people from around the Commonwealth will take part in a youth summit, which will feed their perspectives into the ministers' discussions. A parallel symposium in Edinburgh of around 300 experts and academics will address the same themes as the ministers conference. Finally, a showcase of best practice will highlight innovative developments in education in Scotland, the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the Commonwealth. Throughout the whole range of events, the focus will be on practical action: on what can be done and by whom to make a real difference to the life chances of children and young people across the world.

Before proceeding further, Presiding Officer, may I welcome to the public gallery a group of six teachers from the Limpopo province in South Africa, who are visiting Scotland as part of the Scotland-South Africa education interchange. They are working in schools in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Renfrewshire and Falkirk, bringing their experience to Scotland and taking their experience of Scotland back to South Africa. [*Applause.*]

It is right and fitting that Scotland, on behalf of the United Kingdom, should host the Commonwealth conference. The history of Scotland is written into the history of the Commonwealth. Over the years, countless Scots have contributed to the development of the countries of the Commonwealth, whether as engineers, doctors, educators or missionaries, or whether they were seeking their fortunes or escaping from hardship.

Mr Keith Raffan (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD): Does the minister agree that it is disappointing and regrettable that the Scottish Parliament is barely involved in what will be the most significant conference to be held in this country since the Parliament opened? Originally, it was planned that the Parliament would be more involved and would entertain the delegates. Will the minister revisit the matter and make efforts to ensure that we meet some of those education ministers, rather than merely debate the matter beforehand?

Peter Peacock: I will reflect on that suggestion and examine the detailed plans to see what is possible in that regard. It is an important occasion and I would like more members to be involved if that is possible.

Mrs Margaret Ewing (Moray) (SNP): Has there been discussion with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office about the possibility of the direct involvement of the Scottish Parliament in the conference, or are we just allowing it to be precious about its role, rather than projecting this Parliament?

Peter Peacock: It would be fair to say that the principal relationships are with the Commonwealth Secretariat, not the UK Government, which is acting as the host in Scotland in that context. However, I will consider the matter in the spirit in which it has been raised.

As I was saying, over the years, countless Scots have contributed to the development of the countries of the Commonwealth. The Scotland that they travelled from was one that already had well-developed education, some dating from the putting into practice of the vision of the Calvinist manifesto, "The First Book of Discipline" of 1560, which saw education, and especially literacy, as vital to effective religious education. A series of acts of Parliament in the 17th century had led to the establishment of a near universal system of primary education in Scotland—initially for boys, but eventually extended to girls too. The Scottish enlightenment spawned further important thinking and values.

Those who travelled from Scotland, for whatever reason, carried with them a powerful set of values and ideas that were rooted in a commitment to universal education and improvement.

That period in our history has left a lasting influence on the countries to which those Scots travelled. In President Mbeki's speech in this chamber two years ago, he referred to the Lovedale Institute, for many years a beacon of educational development in South Africa. The institute is also the reason why the first name of President Mbeki's father was Govan, as it was founded by the Rev William Govan. Similar stories

can be heard across the countries of the Commonwealth.

Of course, in celebrating Scotland's contribution to the Commonwealth, we should not pretend that it was universally positive. Modern ideas of equality, and of respect for other cultures, were far from prevalent and individuals' motives were not always perfect. Nonetheless, there is much to celebrate in the positive contribution that Scots have made, because of which many parts of the Commonwealth still look to Scotland for leadership in education. We still have the opportunity—here, now, today—to make a difference to people's lives throughout the Commonwealth and more widely.

When he addressed us in 2001, President Mbeki gave us a very challenging message about the things that we could continue to do. He reminded us that Scotland, along with other more developed countries, had a basic human duty to work with countries facing serious challenges relating to health, education and poverty and to help improve the future of their peoples.

There are plenty of good examples of Scotland working with the Commonwealth and more widely to promote education. I have already mentioned the education interchange between Scotland and South Africa: just as we have six South African teachers with us today, so six Scottish teachers will travel to South Africa in the new year. One of the South African teachers with us is currently at Shawlands Academy in Glasgow, a school from which a number of teachers have already visited South Africa. Those links grew directly from the live webcam links on the day of President Mbeki's visit.

For the past couple of years, Kelvin School for blind children in Glasgow has enjoyed links with a school in Nigeria that teaches deaf-blind children. Through that exchange, Kelvin School has sent Braille material and equipment to Nigeria and, earlier this year, two Nigerian teachers visited Glasgow. That is just one small-scale but important initiative that is helping others in the Commonwealth and, at the same time, helping our children to develop a positive outlook.

Scottish schools and colleges are involved in some 400 links and exchanges around the world. Through the British Council and the League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers, the Executive supports that kind of exchange to the tune of around £0.5 million a year. Last week, I agreed to provide additional funding over three years to send up to 45 teachers from Scotland on placements of five weeks to projects in South Africa, Ghana and Uganda.

Not only have we had a role in the Commonwealth, we have a role now and I believe that we will have a role in future. The best way in

which we can remain relevant and build on our past and present roles is to ensure that we have world-class thinking and practices in Scottish education today, which we do. There are many examples of developments in Scotland being used as a model elsewhere in the world, and not just in the Commonwealth. One of the foremost among those is the model of self-evaluation of schools, which was developed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in "How good is our school?" That approach has generated great interest in many parts of the world: in the Netherlands, in Germany, with the United Nations in refugee areas in the middle east and even as far afield as the Seychelles. Systems across the world now bear many hallmarks of the Scottish approach. Versions of "How good is our school?" have been spotted, I am reliably informed, in Swedish, Spanish and Finnish.

"How good is our school?" links with our school improvement framework, which is based on the national priorities for education. That is a new system, through which the Parliament has agreed national priorities, with local flexibility in implementation and accountability.

Dr Sylvia Jackson (Stirling) (Lab): Will the minister acknowledge, in addition to the valuable work of HMIE and that involved in "How good is our school?", the work of the former Scottish Examination Board—now the Scottish Qualifications Authority—which still undertakes a lot of consultancy work abroad?

Peter Peacock: The member anticipates something that I am about to address, so I hope I will not disappoint her in what I am about to say. As I indicated, the new national priority system is implemented locally, with flexibility and accountability at a local level. Our pioneering system is one in which many countries, in Europe and beyond, are showing real interest.

Another good tale to tell the world is that of our assessment of achievement programme, which we plan to gear up and move forward as the Scottish survey of achievement. This is a rigorous and scientifically constructed way of monitoring achievement at levels between five and 14 years, which will give us a clear insight into how our school system is performing. It will allow us to leave behind the recent misuse of five-to-14 testing for national statistical purposes. The survey of achievement is a system of sampling that is keeping us at the leading edge of world practice in monitoring performance in schools.

Scotland is also at the forefront of development in distance learning. For example, Heriot-Watt University's SCHOLAR programme is a truly national programme of e-learning, bringing together a learning community that includes

schools and further and higher education. It is a world leader.

The Scottish cultural resources access network—SCRAN—provides an unprecedented level of access to Scotland's heritage collections, using information technology media to make them available to schools, libraries, museums and the general public. It is another world leader.

Representatives of the SQA, the successor to the Scottish Examination Board, were telling me earlier this week about the great interest being shown in China in our national higher qualifications, which are seen by the Chinese as leading the world. Scotland is continuing to play its part in educational development on the world stage by being innovative.

Through our continuing involvement with the Commonwealth, the children of Scotland are helped to develop an open outlook on the world. Yesterday, I attended the launch of a new video produced to mark the conference to be held in Edinburgh. Presented by a young Scot, it tells the story of the African Children's Choir. It brings home to us the difficulties faced by many children in Africa in accessing basic education, but also the optimism of children there, where education is seen as the most precious gift that a child can receive.

We need to remember—perhaps a good deal more often than we do—that while we quite rightly debate highly sophisticated refinements to our already universal and sophisticated education system, many in the Commonwealth are still combating fundamental challenges, including class sizes of over 100; one book between whole classes in many places; a supply of clean water; basic health, as a pre-requisite to good education; good education, as a foundation for improving health; a lack of basic facilities and equipment; and the need to cope with the impact of HIV/AIDS. That scale of challenge is almost unimaginable to us. In Botswana, for example, as many as 4 per cent of all children have at some point lost a teacher to AIDS. In 2001, more than 600 teachers died of AIDS in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa alone. Those are staggering statistics, which I hope give some context to our challenges and priorities—and to our education debates.

Scotland's history has left it in a unique position. It is prominent in a Commonwealth of nations; it is at once respected and held in fond affection; it is able to support others and to help make a difference; but it is also able to recognise that it can constantly learn from others. The best way we can continue to make a big impact from this small nation is by keeping ourselves at the leading edge of world developments in education, and we are doing so in many areas of endeavour.

In the continuing journey of the Commonwealth's educational development, we all have some way to go, and this month's conference in our capital city is just the latest step on that road.

I move,

That the Parliament welcomes the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers to Edinburgh later this month; recognises the contribution Scots have made, and continue to make, to education in the Commonwealth and more widely, and encourages the Scottish Executive to continue to work internationally to support educational development.

15:25

Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): I welcome the debate and particularly the spirit of it. Sometimes people ask why we debate issues such as the Commonwealth and conferences, but the Parliament has an important role in marking the 15th conference of the Commonwealth education ministers. Perhaps it would have been better to hold the debate as a members' business debate, because I am sure that the subject will have universal support. Perhaps we should focus on day-to-day domestic issues such as the economy and jobs.

That said, Parliament should recognise the importance of the conference. I am delighted that Edinburgh will host the conference and I am sure that the education ministers and the delegates of the parallel symposium and the education youth summit of the Commonwealth will have a warm welcome from the people of Edinburgh.

One of the most interesting aspects of the conference is its theme—closing the gap—which is appropriate for us, given what we are facing in education and given the legislation that the Executive will introduce in the next few months. The conference will cover access, inclusion and the achievement of individuals' potential. We are in tune with that and recent debates have addressed those issues.

The conference presents an opportunity for Scotland to share with the rest of the world some of our best practice. We should take pride in the promotion of the Scottish credit and qualifications framework. I recognise that the publication "How good is our school?" is being used elsewhere in the world.

We have to address the inequalities that remain in the world, which the Minister for Education and Young People mentioned. Barriers to education are not necessarily to do with education; the minister mentioned health issues, such as AIDS, and poverty. If we want to liberate many more children so that they can have the opportunities that we have had to benefit from education,

perhaps we should contribute to world solutions to conflict and poverty. If there is an opportunity for education, we should drive it forward regardless of whether those matters are reserved.

I ask Peter Peacock to explain in his summing up what his role will be at the conference. I hope that Charles Clarke, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, will not represent us, but that the minister will represent the Parliament. Margaret Ewing and Keith Raffan were concerned that the Parliament seems to be standing on the sidelines of the conference, rather than being involved. Only this week—barely three weeks before the conference—did I receive a notice, as a member of the Education Committee, asking whether I would be interested in taking part in the conference. That notice was a bit belated. I am not saying that it was necessarily the minister's fault, but perhaps he could look into that, or perhaps his officials could advise him before he sums up.

I was interested to learn recently about the initiative from Queen Margaret University College in Edinburgh whereby it is taking its expertise to India to improve the knowledge and skills of Indian nurses. Professor Alan Gilloran, dean of the faculty of health and social sciences, reflected that the initiative is to address issues around the decision making and empowerment of nurses, which requires high-quality education. Indian nurses have substantial practical experience and they are extremely good at community health care. The memorandum of understanding, which is the first of its kind in India, aims to help British nurses learn the skills of community health care in India while the Indian nurses will be given confidence through education that will empower them to be independent, critical thinkers. That kind of collaboration at university level is a tribute to the continuing relationship between Scotland and the Commonwealth countries and I am pleased that we can support it.

Of course, we have a long history of such relationships. The founders of McGill University in Canada were from Scotland and Mary Slessor did missionary work throughout the world, from Africa to India. We have been on the wrong side of too many arguments about Britain's imperial past, as the minister acknowledged. We regret some aspects of our imperial past, but we have to acknowledge it.

If we consider the Commonwealth now, we see a great deal of energy being put into Commonwealth links—links between equals rather than links that reflect the imperial past. We learn from the Commonwealth: many students have come to our universities and many lecturers have contributed to the intellectual wealth of this country. We should pay tribute to them and acknowledge their contribution.

The theme of the conference is

“Closing the Gap: Access, Inclusion, Achievement”.

The Scottish Parliament is contemplating additional support for learning in a forthcoming bill, which I am sure will be discussed at the conference. Will the minister reflect on recent inclusion issues that have arisen? I am thinking particularly of the education of asylum seekers. He may want to reflect on the way in which education ministers elsewhere treat the children of asylum seekers in their education services. He may be able to learn from them to ensure that we educate the children of asylum seekers properly.

We have some way to go on disability. We can learn from good practice round the globe. I hope that the work of this chamber over the coming year will be informed by the international meeting of minds and ideas that will take place at the end of October. I regret that the contribution of this Parliament has been almost at the last minute. However, we should now grasp the opportunity for the Parliament to contribute to the conference.

Education is a gateway to the future. Countries round the world can help each other to push the gate wide so that as many children as possible can benefit from the education that they so deserve.

15:31

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con): We are glad that Edinburgh is hosting the meeting of Commonwealth education ministers in a few weeks' time. It is an important event and we are committed to Scotland making a strong contribution to education in Commonwealth countries. I declare an interest. In a voluntary capacity, I am chairman of the Edinburgh support group of the charity Hope and Homes for Children, which assists in providing homes for orphans who have been abandoned, neglected or forgotten as a result of their parents being killed in conflict or losing their lives through famine, drought or AIDS. The charity has made a contribution in the Commonwealth—in South Africa—and the Deputy Minister for Education and Young People very kindly supported the issuing of the Scottish school pack last week. I also thank the First Minister for his letter of 2 October in which he wrote:

“I am delighted to hear that Hope and Homes for Children have produced a second Scottish school pack, this time specifically aimed at the Scottish Curriculum. I am sure that it will be a much valued source in schools and help to spread awareness of the work of Hope and Homes.”

If any members wish to have copies for their schools in Scotland, I am certain that that can be speedily arranged.

In the past, a considerable number of students from the Commonwealth have studied at Scottish

universities. A number have become leaders in their own countries. It is no coincidence that when President Mbeki of South Africa came to this Parliament, he said:

"John Philip, a Scottish missionary, came to South Africa in 1819, and made a profound contribution with regard to exposing thousands of Black people to education, to various skills and to the promotion of a society of equal rights for all, irrespective of colour."

Scotland has made a terrific contribution in the Commonwealth in driving back the frontiers of poverty, ignorance and disease. Much of that has been achieved through education. In 2001, Don McKinnon, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, said:

"Young people want to be taken seriously, they want to make a difference, and they want a better life for themselves, their families and their countries."

He continued:

"With our support and willingness to empower them, they can be a powerful partner in tackling many of the problems we face today."

Our teachers, volunteers and doctors have played a key role in the Commonwealth ever since the days of David Livingstone. However, that must not obscure the reality that there is a great deal to be done, both in the Commonwealth and at home. The themes of the conference on Commonwealth education concentrate on access, inclusion and achievement. That is right. However, there are two areas of difficulty that the conference should address. First, there are substantial teacher shortages in the Commonwealth. That is a particularly sensitive issue. Britain issued some 6,000 permits to teachers from outside the European Union in 2001. A great many of those teachers came from Commonwealth countries such as India, Jamaica and the smaller Caribbean nations.

Instead of British teachers going to the Commonwealth nations, newly qualified teachers from Commonwealth nations are coming to Britain. The head teacher of Wolmer's Boys' School in Kingston, Jamaica, claimed that recruitment drives were

"doing serious damage to our education system".

I put the question to the Minister for Education and Young People whether we can be absolutely sure that we are producing enough teachers in all subjects—including shortage subjects—such that our education system makes a net contribution to Commonwealth countries and does not act as a magnet to deprive them of their best teachers through a brain drain. I seem to remember Harold Wilson campaigning strongly on the need to prevent the brain drain from Britain to North America resulting from the pursuit of new technology. We took that matter seriously;

Commonwealth nations are entitled to take the matter seriously now that it applies to them.

We do not wish to prevent freedom of movement, but it is right that the wealthier industrialised, developed nations should make a substantial net contribution in education. I will be glad if the minister and his officials will look into the matter objectively with a view to making a positive contribution when the matter is discussed at the conference.

Secondly, we should be prepared to learn from Commonwealth countries as much as they learn from us. For example, in 1988 New Zealand restructured its public education system almost overnight. The then Labour Government shifted authority from the central department of education to individual schools. Even Tories are prepared to learn from Labour, as well as the other way around. We would call that an extension of devolved school management, on which the minister spoke so eloquently a few minutes ago. We believe that that should be implemented here, too.

New Zealand also experimented with education vouchers. In 1996, a pilot programme was launched that gave 160 low-income students the opportunity to study at the independent school of their parents' choice. The Government paid the full cost of their fees. Those reforms have been supported and 97 per cent claim to be satisfied under the scheme. We think that there may be scope for pilot schemes in Scotland.

Incidentally, I am pleased that the SQA is now making such a strong contribution in many Commonwealth countries, including in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean and in Botswana and Lesotho.

Although we hotly debate education issues, it is incumbent on us to remember that there are literally millions of children in Commonwealth countries who neither attend school nor have any meaningful education. We should therefore engage in constructive debate with education ministers from Commonwealth countries and welcome them most warmly to Edinburgh.

15:38

Mr Keith Raffan (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):

I welcome this debate. The only thing with which I disagreed in Ms Hyslop's speech was her opening sentence, in which she said that the debate ought to have been relegated to members' business. To use the word "relegated" is perhaps unfair, but I am glad that the debate is taking place during Executive time, because the issue is very important.

I congratulate the minister on the breadth of his speech—he has obviously been studying some history—and I am grateful for his positive contribution and the response that he made to my intervention. I do not want to go on about that, but it is important that the Parliament is more involved in the conference. It was originally planned that the Parliament should be more involved, but our involvement has now been reduced to a handful of observers from the Education Committee. That is regrettable. We should have a greater interface with the conference and with the conference ministers, as was originally planned. I think that I speak for the other three members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association executive in the Parliament in expressing the wish that the minister do his utmost to see whether we can be fitted in somewhere in what I know is a very tight and heavy schedule.

The motion recognises the contribution that Scots have made to education in the Commonwealth. Perhaps the most dramatic statistic that I came across is that no less than six African presidents received a Scottish education: Nelson Mandela of South Africa; Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya; Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana; Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia; Hastings Banda of Malawi; and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. Indeed, the last two studied here in Edinburgh. Of course, we might wish to lay claim to certain of those more than we would to others, but the impact of Scottish education can be seen in that simple statistic.

Nelson Mandela—who, like the first four, was educated in Scottish missionary schools—put it in a nutshell when he said:

“The missionaries built and ran schools when the Government was unwilling or unable to do so.”

Michael Fry is an eloquent Tory but an objective historian—even though he is a Tory he has described them as slow-witted, which shows how objective he is. In his extraordinarily comprehensive history of the Scottish contribution to the outside world, “The Scottish Empire”, he said that the presidents

“had all learned they were the equals of the European. In later careers, they proved to him”—

that is the European—

“that Africa was not for him to dispose of as he wished ... Once their generation came along, imperial government was doomed and the continent destined to return one day to the rule of its own people.”

That is a fair assessment.

As the minister said, it was not just education that was exported; values and ideals were exported along with that education to other Commonwealth countries. That was not a negligible contribution from a small country on the north-west periphery of Europe. I pay tribute to the

Conservative Government—the Conservatives were enlightened once—back in the 1960s under Harold Macmillan and Iain Macleod, which undertook the great decolonisation of Africa as the previous Labour Government had, quite rightly, given freedom to India.

What has happened in sub-Saharan Africa has been replicated elsewhere. Fiona Hyslop mentioned McGill University in Canada. Indeed, in the first empire we had quite a lot to do with the creation of Princeton. The Americans do not forget that, although sometimes we do. We made a major contribution in India with Madras Christian College, which produced numerous Oxbridge professors and one President of India. We also made such contributions to education in Hong Kong and China.

What of the present and the future? I wholeheartedly support—as have the other speakers in this debate—the themes of the forthcoming conference, which are access to education, inclusiveness and the opportunity for children and teenagers to realise their full potential. However, as others have said, there are barriers in the way of achieving those goals—poverty, lack of parental support, lack of teacher training, the sheer lack of teachers, as James Douglas-Hamilton said, low standards of teaching, and the poor quality of buildings and classrooms.

I was somewhat disappointed when I looked at the conference website to see no mention of disease, but that was more than made up for by the minister who, quite rightly, mentioned the absolutely devastating impact of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa in particular. We are not talking about the lack of parental support there, we are talking about the lack of parents. Due to the horrific HIV/AIDS pandemic there are more than 30 million orphans in sub-Saharan Africa. Tragically, in South Africa 50 per cent of all new HIV infections are among children and teenagers.

In the other countries of Africa the pandemic is hitting hardest those who are not only the most economically active members of the population, but those who are also most likely to have young children. The statistics are quite horrific. In Kenya, 15 per cent of the adult population is living with HIV/AIDS, in South Africa it is more than 20 per cent, in Zambia 21 per cent, in Zimbabwe 34 per cent and, worst of all, in Botswana the figure is 39 per cent. At the moment, 30 million adults are living with AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. As Fiona Hyslop rightly said, it is important for us to look not just at education, but at what is preventing us from improving education. Clearly, we must help to tackle this devastating health crisis in Africa, and in India where, sadly, the number of HIV infections is increasing at a rapid rate.

It has already been recognised that the United Nations millennium target of free primary education for all children in Africa by 2015 will not be realised, except in seven countries. At Christmas I was in Kenya as an election observer, and one of the main platforms of the National Rainbow Coalition and President Mwai Kibaki was free primary education for all. I will never forget the day before the schools went back in January, seeing shops in downtown Nairobi crowded with parents buying textbooks—what they could afford—notebooks, pencils and rulers for their children. In clothes shops they were even buying uniforms for their children. Such is the huge thirst for education in Africa.

The conference will agree an action plan for educational development in the Commonwealth. I hope that we can contribute in particular to the goal of free primary education for all through teacher training and exchange—as the minister mentioned—through the League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers. I welcome what has been done, but I hope that more can be done, through distance learning, through the British Council, churches and voluntary organisations, and through the contribution to the global fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, not just in financial terms, but with doctors and nurses too. Scotland has made a major contribution in the past. In helping to improve education in the Commonwealth, we must continue to contribute even more energetically than we have up till now.

15:45

Marlyn Glen (North East Scotland) (Lab): I am happy to have the opportunity to take part in the debate that has been called on the occasion of the 15th conference of Commonwealth education ministers. Invitations have gone out to MSPs—mine arrived today—to take part in the open debate that is part of the conference. I hope that the Parliament can facilitate at least a few of us taking part in that debate.

As we have heard, the themes of the conference are inclusion, achievement and closing the gap. Those themes are, as has been said, close to our goals for education in Scotland—and indeed to the whole Scottish Executive programme. However, the kind of education that children are given depends on where they are born. Although some children are lucky in that education is seen as their birthright, others are left behind. The conference gives space for Scotland to show its best practice, and also for us to learn of others' best practice. It will take many years to close the gap in educational opportunity throughout the Commonwealth, but the conference is a chance to exchange ideas and to discuss how real progress can be made and sustained.

I ask the Ministers for Education and Young People to put at the top of their agenda the gap in provision of education for boys and for girls. I serve on the Equal Opportunities Committee where, as members know, there is on-going work to close the opportunity gap in Scotland. However, the first opportunity, without which there can be little progress, is the opportunity to have an education. A postcard campaign to the First Minister has been organised by the Global Campaign for Education, which includes development organisations and all the education and teaching unions in Scotland. One of the pleas on the postcard is that the Executive prioritise education for girls. The postcard says:

“Education—especially girls' education—leads to fewer infant and maternal deaths, healthier families and faster-growing economies.”

Educate the girls, and so much follows on. Positive action on a huge scale is required. Positive action is generally rejected by some members, but I recommend that they consider closely the following extreme example of how positive action can—and I hope will—make a difference to reduce the gap. The situation of one girl, Rebecca Lokalii, is illustrated in the campaign. Rebecca says:

“Girls have too much work to do as well as learning.”

One of Rebecca's daily chores is to walk 4 km to collect water during her lunch hour. Like so many girls and women throughout the world, her responsibilities hinder her progress. I have seen it happen in Dundee and it can be seen throughout Scotland. Sadly, it often happens with terrible consequences in countries throughout the Commonwealth.

To take advantage of any education on offer, Rebecca, like so many girls, needs extra support. The Global Campaign for Education is calling on world leaders to keep their promises to fund education for all. The demand is for proper funding, with no charges or hidden costs for pupils and, because of the proven link between girls' education and general progress, for greater effort to make it easier for girls such as Rebecca to go to school.

The facts speak for themselves. Worldwide, 860 million adults cannot read or write and two thirds of them are women. In Zambia, rural women with no education are twice as likely to live in extreme poverty as are those who have benefited from between eight and 12 years of education. There is also the stark statistic that the risk of a child's dying prematurely is reduced by around 8 per cent for each year that its mother spent in primary school. That is how important education is, especially for girls.

All children deserve a good education and the consequences of failing to provide it should not be contemplated in the 21st century. I look forward to reading the report of the Edinburgh conference; I trust that it will include realistic targets for closing the unacceptable gap, and that it will show that there is the political will to do it.

15:49

Michael Matheson (Central Scotland) (SNP): I welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate and hope sincerely that the conference that will take place in the next three weeks proves to be successful. I am sure that the delegates will receive a warm welcome from the people of Scotland—at least in spirit if not in weather. I add my voice to the concerns that some members have expressed about the Parliament's lack of a role in the event. I hope that the minister will endeavour to ensure that that is changed.

Our traditional view of the Commonwealth is of a stuffy old organisation that is a hangover from the days of the empire. I confess that I have never been a fan of the empire. However, one thing that distinguishes the Commonwealth today is the benefit that comes from relationships between member nations. Every nation in the Commonwealth is there on an equal footing. The relationships between nation states that have been built up over the years have allowed them to benefit from one another's skills and abilities.

Over the years, Scotland has played a distinctive role in the Commonwealth. As members have said, the lead was taken largely by famous missionaries such as Robert Moffat, John Philip, David Livingstone and John Mackenzie. One of our most radical missionaries was John Philip, who was mentioned by Thabo Mbeki in the chamber and by Lord James Douglas-Hamilton this afternoon. Philip not only made a significant contribution to the development of education in the Cape of Good Hope area of South Africa but was one of the leading lights in campaigning for what was called the Cape ordinance 50, which meant that no legislation could be passed in the Cape if it discriminated against someone on the basis of their colour. Philip was obviously very forward thinking on that issue. Sadly, ordinance 50 was repealed following the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, but Philip sought to prevent discrimination against individuals on the basis of colour and to ensure that education was available to all.

As a number of members have indicated, the challenge that faces the Commonwealth and many of its member nations is that of providing access to education. I know from experience the benefits that access to education can give to individuals. This year I visited South Africa for the third time in

six years—I was visiting friends who were students with me at Queen Margaret College. They were black students during the apartheid era and were sponsored by the British Council to come to Scotland to study. Sadly, during that time they were not allowed to study in South Africa. From my visits over the past six years, the benefits that they have gained from the educational opportunity that they received are clear. That example illustrates the potential benefits of education for individuals.

Over the years, many universities and higher education institutions in Scotland have developed strong links with other Commonwealth nations. More than 12 years ago, as a student at Queen Margaret College, I undertook my final clinical placement in a hospital in India. I am glad that the college is continuing to develop its links with hospitals in the Indian health service. Many of our higher education institutions have built up relationships with other universities and colleges in Commonwealth nations that involve exchanges of both students and staff.

Links between younger pupils at primary school level are a key element of the relationships that must be developed within the Commonwealth. In June 2000 Osun Arts Foundation ran a project that was intended to develop understanding of African culture and music in primary schools in Scotland. The project was sponsored in part by the Scottish Arts Council, Falkirk Council and the Highland Council. A school in my locale, Ladeside Primary School, was active in that programme and hosted an African culture and music event. The project helped to nurture and develop understanding of other Commonwealth nations.

In the future, our relationship with other Commonwealth nations will continue to develop and will naturally change. The challenge for the Parliament is to recognise the role that it can play in that process. It is significant that one of the first heads of state to address the Parliament was the President of Malawi. A couple of years ago we were also visited by Thabo Mbeki. The visits by those individuals provided clear evidence of the affinity that they feel for Scotland. The Parliament, its committees and the Executive should look to strengthen their links with other Commonwealth nations. We should examine what we can do to build up a partnership with them—through the health service, education and other services. It is important that we recognise that both we in Scotland and other Commonwealth nations have much to learn from each other. If we are able to achieve that, Scotland will have an active role to play in the Commonwealth—I hope that we will be able to take that role in the coming years.

15:55

Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands)

(Con): The 54 member countries of the Commonwealth contain 1.6 billion people. That is more than one quarter of the world's population. More than 50 per cent of that population is under the age of 25.

More than 100 million children around the world have never seen the inside of a classroom and double that number are forced to drop out before they complete primary education. Seventy per cent of those children come from Commonwealth countries.

I am glad that someone of the stature of Eddie George is chairman of the Commonwealth education fund, and I am fully behind its aims. It is so important that Commonwealth children should possess the right to an education and that they learn that along with those rights come a responsibility to use that education for the betterment of themselves and their communities. Let us hope that Scottish teachers will play as important a role as they have done in the past.

Scottish education was famous all over the world because it offered people from every background a solid grounding in useful subjects by which they could make their own way in the world. It emancipated people and gave high standards that people respected and followed. It was the basis of civilised society for a great many people.

McGill University was the first university in Canada; it was founded by James McGill, a fur trader from Glasgow. Even today, many Canadians of Scottish descent are prominent in the modern academic world, such as the economist J K Galbraith and the writer Alistair MacLeod. Australia's first college of higher education was founded in Sydney in 1830 by a Scot, John Dunmore Lang. The most prominent Scot in Australian education in the 20th century was the philosopher John Davidson, who ensured that Australia's higher education system was based on the Scottish model rather than the English one.

In India, the earliest permanent institutions offering western education were founded by two Scots: Alexander Duff in Calcutta and John Wilson in Bombay. In Hong Kong, the education system that is now superior to Scotland's was set up by Frederick Stewart, a crofter's son who ended up as governor of Hong Kong. Scottish influence is legendary.

In South Africa, the first college in Cape Town was also founded by Scots, and the anthropologist W H Macmillan, the son of Scottish missionaries, tried to fend off racial discrimination in the 1930s. Much of black Africa was schooled by Scottish missionaries. People such as Nkrumah, Jomo

Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, Hastings Banda and Nelson Mandela were schooled by Scottish missionaries.

In his autobiography, "Long Walk to Freedom", Mandela comments:

"The missionaries built and ran schools when the government was unwilling or unable to do so. The learning environment in the missionary school, while often morally rigid, was far more open than the racist principles underlying the government schools."

It was a Scotsman, the eighth Duke of Argyll, whose influence produced the act that made education compulsory in the United Kingdom in 1872.

Scotland's contribution to education in the Commonwealth in the past has been enormous and the Scottish education model was considered to have no equal, in the same way that Scottish medicine was held in great esteem. Alas, that is hardly the position today.

During the past five years, the Scottish Executive's approach to education, consisting of a centrally planned one-size-fits-all model, has trapped many young people in schools in which there are falling standards and which are plagued by indiscipline. Rather than being emancipated, enlightened or given hope, those children are being let down by this country's politicians who have delusions of adequacy. That is regrettable and I call on the Executive to provide more choice in education and put that right.

As I said, I am glad that Eddie George is in charge of the Commonwealth education fund because he is a proven economist. However, he has a tough fight on his hands. The fund target of £30 million, to which the British Government has committed £10 million, represents only 40p per child in the Commonwealth who is not currently receiving primary education.

My friend Lord James Douglas-Hamilton has pointed out the big problem of teacher shortages in the Commonwealth, which has been sparked by teacher shortages in the UK. Recruitment agencies from Britain and North America are currently recruiting teachers from countries such as Jamaica, India and the West Indies. How can the aims of the Commonwealth conference on education be met when the UK Government's failure to deal with teacher shortages in the UK is causing a teacher drain in other Commonwealth countries? We must put our own educational house in order before anyone will envy the Scottish educational model as they did in the past.

What about the future? The New Zealand model, which James Douglas-Hamilton mentioned in his speech, seems to work very well. After all, 82 per cent of parents there are happy with it. The policy, which shifted authority from the central

Department of Education to individual schools, replaced the Department of Education and its 4,000 employees with the Ministry of Education and a staff of only 400. District school boards were replaced by local school boards, which have created working partnerships between teachers and communities. I hope that other Commonwealth countries will consider that model when they come to set up their schools. Decision making should be as close to the school as possible and the curriculum should have the flexibility to suit the needs of different communities and areas.

In this ever-changing world, the Commonwealth is still a pillar of strength and must continue into the future. We in Scotland and the UK must ensure that we play our part in achieving good education for all Commonwealth citizens. Surely it would be appropriate for this Parliament to play some welcoming role in the coming conference. Will the minister take account of the thinking of all parties on this issue?

16:01

Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab): I, too, am happy to join members in welcoming this special conference to Edinburgh. I am sure that, like many visitors, our Commonwealth visitors will fall in love with this wonderful city of ours and with the Scottish people. After all, Scotland has been part of the history of many of our visitors.

I want to take a slightly different approach to the debate. I recognise that the conference's themes are very specific. However, I support other members' view that there should be interaction between Scottish parliamentarians and parliamentarians from other parts of the Commonwealth, because it is clear that the parliamentarians at the conference will educate each other. The whole thrust of the CPA's work has been learning and sharing of experience. That has gone on over many years; it was one of the primary aims when the association was founded in 1911. Indeed, the UK played its part in that foundation. For that very reason, it is particularly important that Scottish parliamentarians have the chance to interact with other parliamentarians when the conference takes place.

In his press release, the First Minister reminded us of how the whole world felt the impact of the events of September two years ago. That is why we have to learn best practice from each other as parliamentarians at this conference as well as at many other CPA events.

While looking on the internet in preparation for this debate, I discovered that the CPA website now provides e-learning for every parliamentarian, with modules that supply information about what

happens in other legislatures. I am sure that we all need that. In fact, the papers that I am holding up represent a whole e-learning module from the site. Members and everyone across the Commonwealth will find such information particularly interesting, although it might pose particular problems for people in parts of the Commonwealth that do not benefit from the same wonderful access to the internet as we do in this Parliament. We can access anything that we want to and people can access us if they want. I commend these e-learning modules to members and hope that, even if they do not need to use them, they will still have a look at them.

I was very pleased to be part of a group of members including Keith Raffan, Fiona Hyslop and Margaret Ewing that attended one of the two British islands and Mediterranean region conferences that have been held in the UK. I am sure that those members would agree that we learned a tremendous amount about the issues that challenge other Parliaments and about the protocols and procedures that they have adopted and how some of them could be brought back to our Parliament. We have also learned about procedures that might be exported from our Parliament.

The bottom line of what I am saying to the ministers is that we applaud their work, which is first class, and that it is important for the Parliament to be involved. Sylvia Jackson is not here, but she and other members are involved heavily with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I wish those members well in their endeavours and I encourage other members to become much more fully involved in the work of the association, which exists for particular reasons.

I finish with a plea to the ministers. I am sure that during the conference there will be many events to showcase the talents of young people from throughout Scotland. I remind ministers that the Lochgelly High School pipe band, who are world champions, could be showcased at such an event. I am sure that the band would be delighted to be involved.

16:06

Mrs Margaret Ewing (Moray) (SNP): I enjoyed attending the conferences to which Helen Eadie referred. We learned a great deal at them—they were not simply junkets, which many people seem to think about such conferences.

Helen Eadie mentioned the Lochgelly pipe band. When I was a Commonwealth observer in Lesotho during the previous elections there, I was once awakened at 2 o'clock in the morning by the sound of bagpipes. Members of the secretariat from

London were working through the night on finalising the report and they blamed me because they were convinced that I had something to do with it. In fact, the person behind the sound was Allan Macartney, who was formerly the vice-president of the Scottish National Party and who spent a lot of time working in Malawi and other countries in Africa. He had been an observer previously in Lesotho and had taught people there how to play the bagpipes, so at every big function, the bagpipes materialised. Mind you, at 2 o'clock in the morning, I thought that I was having a nightmare.

The debate is about education and, being a teacher, I start with the question of what we mean by the Commonwealth. I remember that, when I started school, there were many red blotches on the map of the world. We were told that the powers were coming to Britain because the sun rose first in China and then moved its way through Greece and Rome and, finally, Britain would be in charge of the world. Let us consider the word "commonwealth". "Common" means without special qualities, rank or position or equally, and for the whole of a community. "Wealth" is defined as an abundance of valuable possessions or money, or as the state of being rich. However, the word "wealth" is derived from the Old English word "weal", which means a sense of being well or well-being. The phrase "the common weal of the people", which we often use in Scotland, is what we mean when we talk about the Commonwealth as we know it.

I do not want to dwell too much on the past. Other members have spoken eloquently about the history and record of people who have contributed to education throughout the Commonwealth. We are moving away from the imperialist tradition, to which Michael Matheson referred, and gaining a sense of equality with all of our neighbours in the Commonwealth. That idea is very different from that with which our early missionaries and others set out.

The debate is about our contribution to education—there are many contributions that we can still make. I caught the tail end of a television programme the other night which involved an exchange between an Australian teacher and a Scottish teacher. The only moan from the Australian teacher was about the weather—she could not wait to get back to the sunshine. That minor complaint was the only one about her experiences in Scotland; members might often share it.

It is important that we recognise the exchange of information. The people from Limpopo province who were in the public gallery earlier have now departed, presumably for yet another meeting. We must not ignore some Commonwealth countries.

We can talk a great deal about Australia, Canada and New Zealand, where most of us have cousins, second cousins, nieces or nephews. However, there are whole areas of the Commonwealth that fundamentally need the attention of us all.

Some 10 years ago, I went to a conference in Zimbabwe, under the auspices of the British Council, to talk about equality of opportunity for women in Zimbabwe. I know that Zimbabwe is suspended from the Commonwealth just now. Lynda Chalker—a Conservative for whom I have the highest regard—and I talked to women there who were becoming teachers and lawyers and who were taking up professional courses. They told us that back home, many miles away, their sisters were walking for hours to collect water from the only available well and take it back to their villages. The women to whom we talked asked what equality of opportunity there was for their sisters. Irrespective of our political loyalties, all of us as elected members have a responsibility to ensure that we do not neglect those people.

I am going to say something controversial—the minister will be glad to hear that it is nothing to do with him, as I have made my grin to him already—as I want to talk about basic needs. I will quote Bjørn Lomborg, whom many people—including the Greens, who are not here—regard as the devil. In his book, he says that

"the Kyoto Protocol will likely cost at least \$150 billion a year, and possibly much more. UNICEF estimates that just \$70-80 billion a year could give all Third World inhabitants access to the basics like health, education, water and sanitation."

We can talk all we like about our contribution to Commonwealth education, but we must back that up by addressing the basic issues. During the forthcoming conference in Edinburgh, we must not use just honeyed words. The legacy that our generation of politicians has inherited is such that we owe a debt of conscience to the people of Africa, in particular, but also to people in other parts of the Commonwealth, to ensure that we take best practice to them.

I see that my time is up. I close by remembering that beautiful song called "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother", which was a hit for the Hollies in the 1960s. I believe that we must see this not as a burden, but as a challenge, and that we must help our brothers and sisters everywhere in the Commonwealth.

16:13

Bill Butler (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab): I am pleased to take part in this brief but important debate that presages the 15th conference of Commonwealth education ministers, which is to be held in Edinburgh at the end of the month. The previous CCEM was held in Nova Scotia in 2001.

At that conference, Jack McConnell—the then Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs—put forward the idea that Scotland would make an ideal venue for the 15th CCEM, and I am delighted that our First Minister's suggestion was taken up.

The conference will be probably the largest education conference in the world this year, and I am glad to say that the union of which I am a member—the Educational Institute of Scotland—is to play a prominent part in the parallel symposium associated with the event. The conference's theme, as has been stated, is closing the gap in access, inclusion and achievement. The conference director, Elizabeth Williamson, is on record as saying that it will be no talking shop. I am sure that members are glad to hear that. Ms Williamson's view is that the conference must consider closing the gap

“not just between Commonwealth countries, but within countries”.

She takes the realistic position that no instant solutions are possible, but that

“sitting back and doing nothing is not an option either.”

There is, of course, much to do. Margaret Ewing and Marlyn Glen spoke eloquently about the real challenges. Worldwide, 115 million children are being denied an education: most of them are girls and most of them live in Commonwealth countries. That is a damning indictment of much of our imperial past and what flowed from it when the sun set on the days of empire. I am heartened that the conference that is to be held in Edinburgh will seek to put together a positive programme of action to begin to redress a most basic injustice.

I mention one of the many initiatives with which Scotland is involved to right that wrong. Others have mentioned the six teachers from South Africa who were in the public gallery a few moments ago. They are in Scotland as part of the new Scotland-South Africa education interchange. I believe that that new initiative, although not formally part of the 15th CCEM, is a practical example of the modern Commonwealth at its best. I do not refer to the imperialist concept of the Commonwealth, but to a society of equals.

The initiative brings mutual benefits to pupils and to the wider education system. Four local authorities are participating in the first year of a three-year pilot. As the minister said, the South African teachers are working in Edinburgh, Falkirk, Renfrewshire and Glasgow until 9 November. I am also glad to say that six teachers from those Scottish local authorities will go to the Limpopo province in February next year for 10 weeks.

As an MSP from Glasgow, the city that first honoured Nelson Mandela, I am delighted to see Scottish local authority workers taking part in an

exchange that seeks to undo the horrific legacy of the former racist apartheid regime. The teachers from Scotland will be based in Greater Sekhukhune—a former homeland that is building an education system virtually from scratch. In South Africa, classes of 100 are not out of the ordinary and pupils can walk up to 10 miles to school. I am told—I am sure that the chamber will be glad to hear this—that people's completely understandable resistance to education because of their experience of the former apartheid regime's imposition of its racist caricature of education has melted away. In its place is a thirst for knowledge; suspicion has been set aside and there is a desire for learning in the new democratic South Africa.

The new South Africa has prioritised primary education, particularly in the early years, mathematics, science and school management. Teachers from both countries will not be based in any one school, but will sensibly act as a resource for schools and subject departments in the local authority that they will work in.

That example is typical of the many initiatives that are under way, but so many more are still needed to bridge the gap in educational opportunity, which is the central focus of the 15th CCEM. Members will wish to celebrate that example of co-operation, which is a significant symbol of the solidarity between the people of Scotland and the people of South Africa. However, it is also illustrative of the Herculean task of achieving equality of opportunity and outcome. A colossal collective effort will be required to achieve the six CCEM area action priorities of universal primary education, improving quality in education, abolishing gender disparities, using distance learning to greater effect, supporting education in difficult circumstances, and mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on education systems. I hope that the conference will play its part in focusing Government attention on the challenge.

Poverty leads to poverty of provision and poverty of ambition. Education can help to release the wealth of potential, untapped talent and latent ability in those 115 million human beings to whom I referred earlier who do not have the chance to be educated. I wish the conference and its aims well because there is so much to do.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Murray Tosh):

We move now to closing speeches. At this stage, we are 10 minutes ahead of the clock. I call Kenneth Macintosh to close for the Labour party.

16:20

Mr Kenneth Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): I thank my colleagues and MSPs from all parties for their contributions to today's debate—with the

possible exception of Jamie McGrigor, although that may be a bit small minded of me.

I would like to raise a couple of points of my own and, in doing so, I want to talk not so much about Scotland's contribution to the Commonwealth as about the Commonwealth's contribution to education in Scotland. My first point concerns a specific matter that I want to bring to the attention of the Deputy Minister for Education and Young People. Exchange programmes for pupils and teachers within the Commonwealth are a constructive example of what can be achieved and how we can share knowledge and experiences and learn from one another. That is something that Mr Peacock referred to in his opening speech.

A constituent of mine was lucky enough recently to go on just such a teacher exchange with a school in Australia. It was clearly a rewarding experience and potentially very beneficial, as the school that she attended and taught in, which was in Victoria, excelled in vocational and entrepreneurial education. From what my constituent told me, there is much that we could learn from how the Australian school had broken down the artificial barrier that sometimes exists between vocational and academic education and developed ways of supporting pupils and offering real choices. Given this morning's debate and our desire to promote entrepreneurial education, that is obviously a topical lesson.

Unlike her Australian counterpart, however, the Scottish teacher was offered little in the way of structured opportunity to share what she had learned when she came back from the exchange. There was a minimal debriefing and, although she wrote up a report, there was little or no feedback on that report, which she has reason to believe may be languishing on a shelf now. That may or may not be typical of the welcome home offered to exchange teachers, but it is disappointing, and I urge the minister to consider what mechanisms could be put in place to allow the wider community, or even just the teacher's school, to benefit from what can obviously be a very positive individual learning experience.

Turning to the forthcoming Commonwealth conference, I offer a particularly warm welcome, as Fiona Hyslop did earlier, to the parallel youth summit. Not only do I hope that we will gain from listening to the perspective of our young people, but the occasion itself is a fantastic educational opportunity for all concerned. From my own constituency, Amy Little from Mearns Castle High School and Kenneth Waterstone from Eastwood High School are two senior pupils who have been selected to represent their schools, East Renfrewshire and our country at the conference, and to host two of the visiting delegates. Amy and her family will offer their hospitality to a pupil from

Samoa, and I know from talking to her last week how much she is looking forward to that. I have no doubt that both Kenneth and Amy will be excellent ambassadors for our education system, and I also look forward to hearing their views following the conference.

As many speakers have mentioned, the theme of the youth conference—access, inclusion and achievement—echoes that of the conference as a whole. We all know how important those issues are in Scotland. We are all aware of the need to widen access, particularly in further and higher education, by pursuing policies that will include looked-after young people, pupils with special educational needs or additional support needs, and those from the travelling communities, to raise achievement across the board. Those important themes are high on our agenda, but the same three issues take on a different meaning when looked at from a Commonwealth perspective.

When we talk about access, we know that, of the 115 million across the globe who cannot access education, up to 75 million are primary-age children who do not attend school. When we talk about inclusion, we know that two thirds of those missing out on a basic education are girls. That point was made forcefully by Marlyn Glen and Bill Butler. When we talk about achievement, we know that more than 800 million adults worldwide remain illiterate. The scale of the problems facing countries in the Commonwealth is simply staggering. Although they are tied up with issues of armed conflict, poverty, health, debt repayment and fair international trade, the crucial and central role of education cannot be overstated.

Elaine Smith (Coatbridge and Chryston (Lab)): Does Kenneth Macintosh agree that educational development can also be affected by the impact on many children around the world of the widespread proliferation and misuse of arms that results in armed violence? Will he join me in welcoming today's launch of the control arms campaign, backed by Amnesty International, Oxfam and the International Action Network on Small Arms, and in urging the Scottish Executive to support the campaign where it can?

Mr Macintosh: I welcome Elaine Smith's intervention and certainly support her on that matter. In fact, I will mention it before I close, if I have your indulgence, Presiding Officer.

It is important that an awareness of the matters that the conference will raise is encouraged in our schools. A greater understanding of the difficulties that young people in the Commonwealth face should be regularly taught in our classrooms. The Executive has done much over the past four years to promote sustainable development and development education, and I urge ministers to take advantage of such a notable event in

Scotland to send out a clear, strong message to schools on the importance of including sustainable development in the curriculum.

The Commonwealth may have learned from Scotland, but we have also learned from the Commonwealth and continue to do so. Just as I want schools to offer young people a window on the world, I welcome the opportunity for the Parliament to look outward and share ideas that are of international concern and not just of parochial interest. Several members raised that point this afternoon.

Elaine Smith mentioned that the subject arose at today's lunchtime meeting of the cross-party international development group of the Scottish Parliament. In that meeting, we explored the Scottish Parliament's role in trying to control the global trade in small arms. The Parliament has been established for more than four years, but we still need to do much to develop a framework that not only is sensitive to Westminster's responsibilities and avoids provoking unnecessary constitutional wrangling, but allows us to express our opinions maturely and to look elsewhere for enlightenment and inspiration. Today's debate has allowed us to do that and I commend the Executive's motion.

16:26

Mr Ted Brocklebank (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I begin with a quotation:

*"dic, age, frigoris quare novus incipit annus,
qui melius per ver incipiendus erat?"*

I am sure that few members in the chamber will have failed to recognise the opening lines of Ovid's "Ode to Spring" and even fewer will not be able to translate it as, "Isn't it a pity that new year does not begin in spring instead of in the deep mid-winter?"

My purpose in quoting Ovid today is twofold. In a debate that is mainly about allowing the Executive to pat itself on the back for persuading the Commonwealth education ministers to hold their conference in Scotland, it does not seem too self-indulgent for me to give myself a pat on the back for remembering my schoolboy Latin all these years later. Much more important, it seems to me that the ability to absorb and retain knowledge is the hallmark of the education that dedicated Scots have been taking to Commonwealth countries for more than two centuries.

Dr Andrew Bell, the great education reformer who devised the Madras or monitorial system of education in India in the late 18th century, taught not only the three Rs of "reading, riting and 'rithmetic"—he was not too good at spelling—but the rudiments of Latin, including the learning of poetry by rote to his British and Indian pupils.

Clearly, some aspects of Bell's teaching methods have not changed a lot since they were first taught in India two centuries ago or the time I attended the high school that he founded in his native St Andrews.

Of course, much has changed in the way in which we teach our youngsters in schools today. We are told that learning by rote is out of date and that it works against real understanding. Members will be glad to hear that I do not advocate its return. Latin opened up huge vistas for my generation but I accept that, for many, learning dead languages is outdated and meaningless. However, it disappoints me that the modernisers, in throwing out much of what was considered old fashioned in Scottish elementary education, failed to hold on to the bedrock of the system—the ability of pupils to read, write and count. As it appears that we cannot get the basics right in our own country, it seems ironic that we have the temerity to offer advice on education to emergent Commonwealth countries.

The theme of the forthcoming conference is closing the gap and, as we have heard, the conference will focus specifically on access, inclusion and attainment. The truth is that, while we debate those goals for emergent Commonwealth countries, we are failing to achieve them here in Scotland.

On access, the Executive remains committed to the existing centrally planned model for our schools that is sadly failing so many of our young people. In recent years, that approach has seen increasing violence in the classroom, wasted millions on bureaucracy and no apparent improvement in attainment.

On inclusion, if we wanted to design a school system with the express aim of perpetuating social divisions, it is hard to envisage how we could improve on existing arrangements.

On attainment, more than 50 per cent of pupils between five and 14 in Scottish schools are failing to reach targets. The Executive, to cover its failings in raising attainment levels, apparently plans to abolish national testing. I have visited several primary and secondary schools in Mid Scotland and Fife in recent weeks. A number of those schools do superb work, but that often appears to be despite the system in which they work rather than because of it.

Bill Butler: Is Mr Brocklebank saying that the Conservative party's position is that it no longer supports the comprehensive state education system and wants to go back to selection and the disasters that befell people of my father's and grandfather's generations, when there was a junior and senior secondary divide? Can he elucidate?

Mr Brocklebank: I am sad that Mr Butler appears to believe that the education system in those days failed people. I am not saying what Mr Butler suggested. I believe that, after the passage of the years, we should be grown-up enough to realise that much of what we threw away in years past was of considerable value and should not have been thrown away.

I welcome the Commonwealth conference and I welcome much of what has been said in the debate about the plight of underdeveloped countries. Margaret Ewing's speech was particularly thoughtful and articulate in that respect and I agree with much of what she said about the plight of people in the developing countries. It is a sobering thought that we are seeking to ensure that, by 2015, every Commonwealth child completes a primary education. Why should the Commonwealth countries that will attend the conference necessarily believe us when it seems that we cannot deliver that aim for our own primary schoolchildren?

Of course I applaud and support investing money in the Commonwealth education fund in order to raise standards. However, after doing that we go on to rob Commonwealth countries of their most vital weapon in the battle against illiteracy. Statistics show that in 2001 we poached no fewer than 6,000 teachers, mostly from the Commonwealth, in order to fill teaching posts as a result of shortages in the UK. I was happy to hear from Peter Peacock that 45 Scottish teachers will be able to build their management skills by working on education projects in Africa. I applaud and welcome that initiative. However, what if we were to help Commonwealth teachers to hone their skills in exactly the same way in our country, without expecting them to stay on and prop up what appears to be a creaking system?

We must continue to support the millions of Commonwealth citizens who have no access to education. We must also be prepared to learn from Commonwealth countries such as New Zealand, which has pioneered levels of accessibility to and attainment in education that we in Scotland still only dream about.

Dr Jackson *rose*—

Mr Brocklebank: I am nearly finished.

Andrew Bell's system for educating the poverty-stricken and illiterate 250 years ago was simple. He introduced to India a scheme whereby children who grasped what he was teaching could pass on that knowledge to their younger brothers and sisters. Andrew Bell called that his monitorial system. He brought his methods back to the UK and his system swept through the country, allowing hundreds of thousands of underprivileged youngsters their first taste of education.

It is a sad indictment of Bell's native Scotland that, 250 years later, we still appear to be grappling with the human fallout of an education system that is not geared to teaching our youngsters adequately and which, as we heard during this morning's debate, often fails to produce the culture of enterprise that our country so desperately needs.

I look forward to the conference, which I hope to attend. However, I feel less sure about what the Commonwealth countries will learn from our educational examples. I hope that we have something to teach them.

16:34

Brian Adam (Aberdeen North) (SNP): The debate has been interesting. I would have liked to have said that we had heard from all the parties and that we had an international perspective on education. However, those parties that espouse the brotherhood of man and international relations are noticeable by their absence from the chamber.

I am pleased that the Executive parties chose to debate a subject that might be regarded as being connected to the reserved matter of international affairs, and I am delighted that they were able to do so in a consensual manner. They have not attacked us, which is unusual.

The debate could easily have descended into a round of "Here's tae us! Wha's like us?" Although it threatened to do so once or twice, I am glad that it did not. A wide range of issues has been highlighted. It ill behoves us, when having such a debate, to focus on our differences on such issues as the diversity of education in Scotland—or the lack of it—and the other problems that Scotland faces, given that those problems pale into insignificance when compared to the problems faced by other Commonwealth countries.

I am happy to endorse what the Executive has done in relation to the South African education interchange. That is a small programme, but is no less worth while for that. I was delighted to hear what was said about the involvement of Queen Margaret University College in the training of Indian nurses and am happy that the SQA framework is seen internationally as being something to aspire to. I am glad that the value of the integrated approach that is taken in our education system is recognised and can be translated in other countries.

There has been some mention of our imperial past today. Last weekend, I heard a radio programme on the subject of Nyasaland, which was part of the Rhodesian Federation and is now the independent country of Malawi. As other members have noted, many African leaders received a Scottish education and Hastings Banda

of Malawi was no different. The radio programme gave voice to a considerable resentment of the colonial approach of the British empire but there was also a considerable appreciation of the education that was given and the fact that it was given in a non-discriminatory way. The educationists had the attitude that everyone should be helped, rather than the attitude that is evident even in our society today, that knowledge is power and is not to be shared by the powerful but used to exploit others. That is not the approach that we should take; we should try to share knowledge so that we can all benefit from it. That is the approach that was taken by many of the Scottish missionaries who went to Malawi to set up mission schools in areas in which there was no educational provision by either the imperial or the post-imperial power. Of course, I should mention that, in those schools, the children were not instructed only in the three Rs—regardless of whether we can spell or not—but in other areas that might be regarded as inappropriate today.

That tradition of offering help continues today. However, sometimes that help is not offered in an altogether altruistic manner. We still welcome many students from the Commonwealth to this country, but, as part of the debate that we are having around the future of higher education in Scotland, it has been pointed out that Scotland receives £195 million a year from them. It is good that we have such diversity in our universities, but I hope that the focus is not just on what we can get from Commonwealth students in terms of finance, but on what we can give them and on what we can learn from them. It is important for our young people to mix with people from all over the world, so that their experience can be enriched.

I am looking for guidance as to how much longer I might have, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We are still ahead of the clock, so I can give you a couple of minutes to wind up. I will let you know if there is a problem.

Brian Adam: Thank you.

Let me highlight what has happened in Aberdeen, where I live. The Robert Gordon University has been very successful in developing courses that are relevant to the needs of many Commonwealth students from the far east. It has been so successful in attracting those students that it feels it necessary to hold graduation ceremonies in the far east—ceremonies are held not only in the Music Hall in Aberdeen but in Singapore, Hong Kong and elsewhere. That is taking Scottish education right out to the world. It allows the families of the students who have come to Scotland and who have benefited from their education to see how important Scottish universities regard that education—they are

prepared to ensure that the families can share in the special event that is graduation by taking the ceremony elsewhere. That is an example of the positive links that we should be continuing to develop for the future.

Members have been right to point out the difficulties that countries, particularly in Africa, that are under the burden of heavy international debt experience in delivering any education, let alone any other public service; to describe such countries as “more unfortunate” would be to use the wrong term. We need to recognise those difficulties. As parliamentarians and as Scots, it is our duty to encourage our Government to continue to raise the level of support that it is prepared to give in the form of international aid and development and to ensure that giving aid is not tied to arms contracts, kickbacks or any other arrangement that does not allow the necessary choices to be made in the countries that are receiving the aid.

We need to facilitate conditions in which clean water, appropriate health care and basic education can be provided. They cannot be provided unless the finance is in place. As long as those countries continue to service unreasonable levels of international debt, they will never be able to achieve the modest goals that have been set, for example for every child to receive primary education at some point, and perhaps in this decade.

The debate has been very worth while, and I wish the Commonwealth education ministers every success in their conference.

16:43

The Deputy Minister for Education and Young People (Euan Robson): Today’s debate has been an important occasion and there have been some excellent speeches, highlighting Scotland’s contribution to education across the Commonwealth and anticipating the 15th conference of Commonwealth education ministers. It is worth reflecting for a moment that the Commonwealth has 54 member nations and that its 1.8 billion people make up one third of the world’s population and live on one third of the world’s land mass. The scale of Scotland’s achievements has to be seen in that context. The debate has highlighted much of the excellent work that is being done in the Commonwealth and further afield, in which Scotland is taking part.

Dr Jackson: In the light of what the minister is saying and will probably go on to say, and considering what has been said about the exemplary work of HMIE and the Scottish Examination Board, as well as the unprecedented investment that was put into education under the

McCrone settlement, does he agree that Ted Brocklebank's comments about the demise of the education system in Scotland were somewhat exaggerated, particularly in relation to primary education?

Euan Robson: I could not have put those remarks better. It is a shame that Mr Brocklebank chose today to unwrap his parcel of assorted prejudices.

Some aspects of our involvement in education in the Commonwealth and in the conference have only been touched on. As Peter Peacock said at the start of the debate, as well as the ministers conference and the parallel symposium, the conference will play host to 250 or so representatives of the young people of the Commonwealth at the first ever education youth summit of the Commonwealth, which will be held in Murrayfield stadium.

At the same time, a showcase of best practice in education will be held in the Edinburgh International Conference Centre. I will investigate the opportunities for greater parliamentary involvement, as requested by Keith Raffan, Fiona Hyslop, Michael Matheson, Jamie McGrigor, Margaret Ewing, Helen Eadie and a number of others—the list of names demonstrates the strength of feeling throughout the Parliament. The Education Department has not been involved primarily in the organisation of the event, but I will take the comments on board, as that is clearly the wish of members.

The showcase of best practice will display good practice in the UK and throughout the Commonwealth and to date almost 80 exhibits have been planned. They come from schools, universities, local authorities and other organisations and include real and virtual demonstrations of some of the best and most innovative current developments in education. They will concentrate on the involvement of young people in new educational processes and will feature examples of best practice relating to the conference themes. The event will also include creative and performing arts events for young people and demonstrations of the use of new technology for international links. Examples of that include a school project with a real-time link to Ghana and a project based in Govan that is designed to encourage disaffected young people back into further education.

I turn to a constituency example of the involvement of young borderers in the Commonwealth. Africom is based in high schools in the Borders. Each participating school runs an autonomous project. For example, in Hawick High School young people raise funds for a rural hospital in Kenya. Kelso High School is involved in sending refurbished computer equipment to

Tanzania and a container of over 200 computers is en route. I pay tribute to Techknowledge and to the late Andy Mark of Kelso, who did so much to develop that excellent initiative. Each year an Africa day is held in one of the schools—this year it will be in Earlston High School—to promote mutual cultural understanding and enrichment. It is hoped that it will enable student exchange visits to take place in future.

I turn to examples that members gave. I had heard about Queen Margaret University College's initiative on nursing in India. I was privileged to have Lord James Douglas-Hamilton invite me to the launch of the schools pack for the Hope and Homes for Children charity. I pay tribute to the work of that charity and to Lord James for the efforts that he has made on the charity's behalf in Edinburgh and throughout Scotland. One of the memories that I have of that day is hearing about the young girl aged 15 in Rwanda whose ambition was to own a pair of shoes. That puts into perspective some of the debates that we have.

Keith Raffan mentioned the devastating health crisis in Africa and the thirst for education in Kenya. Establishing free primary education for all is one of the objectives of the conference. Bill Butler mentioned work in South Africa where there can be 100 children to a class and children walk 10 miles to school.

Ken Macintosh mentioned a particular teacher exchange. If he passes me the details, I will be happy to take up the questions of the debriefing received by his constituent and the report that seems not to have been followed up on.

An important part of the 15th conference is the youth summit. That innovation is a forum for young people from all Commonwealth countries to debate the education issues that matter to them and to contribute their conclusions and recommendations to the Edinburgh communiqué, which will close the conference.

A total of 52 member countries, eight overseas territories and three Crown dependencies are each sending two delegates to Edinburgh. They are being sponsored by UK bodies, made up from local authorities and educational establishments—universities and colleges. Each host body has agreed to meet all travel and accommodation costs for the youth summit delegates. That means that those young people from all over the world—some from very resource-poor countries, who could never have afforded to come to such an event—can participate at no cost to themselves. By enabling delegates to share ideas, experiences and talents, the youth summit will encourage them to identify their vision of education and inspire them to celebrate cultural diversity and Commonwealth values.

This first ever education youth summit will debate issues within the overarching conference theme of

“Closing the Gap: Access, Inclusion, Achievement”.

It will consider how that theme can be fed into action plans for the future of education in the delegates’ own countries.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton raised the important issue of teacher supply, which will be discussed at the conference. I cannot say that there will be a ready solution to what is undoubtedly a problem—although a problem that is not especially prevalent in Scotland, being more of a UK phenomenon. I assure Lord James that we are investing in initial teacher education here in Scotland. We are conscious of the problem that he spoke about. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): Order. There is far too much chatting in the chamber.

Euan Robson: At the conference, there will be several opportunities for contact between youth delegates and education ministers—at the opening ceremony and the opening session, and at a joint lunch on Wednesday 29 October at Murrayfield. The conclusions and recommendations arising from the youth summit discussions will be presented to the Commonwealth education ministers in a plenary session in the late afternoon of Wednesday 29 October.

Fiona Hyslop: I am very interested in what the minister says about the youth summit. However, if he has time, it would be helpful if he could explain what exactly he and Peter Peacock, as ministers representing the Parliament and the Executive, will be doing at the conference.

Euan Robson: I was about to come on to that very point. Ministers, whose conference does not end until the afternoon following the plenary session that I mentioned, will have time to incorporate the input from the young people in drawing up the Edinburgh communiqué. To answer Ms Hyslop’s question directly, the First Minister, Peter Peacock and I will be chairing particular sessions of the conference. We will engage with the delegates at the youth summit and with ministers from across the Commonwealth.

The opportunities for the young delegates will continue over the following week when they set off to visit their host organisations across the UK and take part in a week-long programme involving family home stays, visits to educational establishments and social and cultural activities with young Britons. The sponsorship arrangement ensures that the follow-on visits to the host

organisations, like attendance at the conference, will be free to the youth delegates and their countries. The visits will add value by providing a more in-depth experience of Scotland and the rest of the UK. I am sure that the reception that our young guests from around the Commonwealth will be offered in Scotland, and the experiences that they will have, will make a lasting impression. Members will, I am sure, want to wish the delegates a successful and rewarding time.

On a similar theme, Presiding Officer, I take this opportunity to inform you that Scotland has recently been awarded the opportunity to host the world congress of youth in 2005. That international event—which follows the first millennium youth congress in Hawaii in 1999 and, more recently, the second congress in Morocco—is being organised by Peace Child International in partnership with the Scottish Executive and Scottish voluntary organisations. At the world congress in Scotland, I am sure that the youth delegates will have a number of challenging debates and discussions. It is essential for young people to confront intractable problems—as they did in Morocco—to ask hard questions and to try to find new ways to answer age-old questions.

In hosting the world congress of youth in 2005 and the 15th congress of Commonwealth education ministers later this month, we demonstrate that Scotland’s historic interest in continuously improving education and in providing the best possible opportunities for young people remains as strong today as it has always been. The congress and conference clearly show that Scotland can and does play a major role in those fields and on the world stage.

Criminal Justice Bill

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): The next item of business is consideration of motion S2M-407, in the name of Hugh Henry, on the Criminal Justice Bill, which is a piece of UK legislation. Members who wish to speak against the motion should press their request-to-speak button now. I see that two members wish to speak against it.

16:55

The Deputy Minister for Justice (Hugh Henry): The Westminster Criminal Justice Bill, which was initially considered in the Scottish Parliament on 5 December last year, will reform the criminal justice system in England and Wales. Since last year, there have been further developments, which the Executive believes should be considered by the Parliament.

When I appeared at the Justice 2 Committee on 30 September, the committee expressed concern that there was a possibility that, under the bill, prisoners from England and Wales could transfer to Scotland in the hope of serving a shorter period in prison before being considered for parole. I have since written to the committee convener and I hope that my letter has addressed those concerns.

I hope that the Parliament will agree with me that the few provisions in the bill that apply to Scotland are sensible and worthy of inclusion as part of an overall package of measures. In the main, the provisions can be characterised as being designed to allow current reciprocal cross-border arrangements to be maintained and updated to take account of the reforms that are included in the bill.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees that, in addition to the provisions referred to in motion S1M-3671, those further matters which have been brought forward in the Criminal Justice Bill and that relate to devolved matters should be considered by the UK Parliament.

16:56

Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow) (SNP): The minister is aware of the SNP's concerns about Sewel motions. When this Parliament permits Westminster to legislate on a matter that is within our competence, we have a duty to pay close attention.

As the minister said, this Sewel motion is supplemental to one that was agreed to in December last year. Mostly, the bill will involve no substantive changes to Scots law, but there are two exceptions to that. The first is the change to

which the minister referred and which was raised by our colleague Annabel Goldie at the Justice 2 Committee. I have seen the minister's letter, which I think clarifies that matter.

The second exception is the matter that I raised with the minister at the Justice 2 Committee. One of the provisions that has been newly added to the Criminal Justice Bill will create in Scots law a new offence of breaching an order of the English Court of Appeal imposing reporting restrictions in cases of serious offences for which a retrial is ordered. Although that offence will be similar in nature to existing offences in Scotland, it will nevertheless be a new offence that will be triable in Scottish courts and will result in a substantial fine for any individual who is convicted of the offence.

Accordingly, it is my view that, when we are permitting Westminster to legislate on such matters, we should all be made aware of what we are doing. As I said, I previously raised the matter with the minister in the Justice 2 Committee, but it is right that the matter is brought before the Parliament as a whole. I look forward to hearing the minister's further comments.

16:58

Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con): I am indebted to the Deputy Minister for Justice for his response. It is important to place within the public domain the fact that the minister has assured me that, when prisoners from England who are serving a minimum term on an unrestricted basis are transferred to Scotland,

"There would be no reduction in the time to be served in such a case by virtue of being transferred to Scotland".

Given that assurance, I am prepared to withdraw my concern about the motion.

The Presiding Officer: Does Nicola Sturgeon maintain her concern about the motion?

Nicola Sturgeon *indicated agreement.*

16:58

Hugh Henry: We do not accept that the changes that have been made to the bill are substantial. There are already a range of circumstances in which it would be an offence to report on trials in England and Wales. There are also occasions when the reverse is true, when it would be an offence to report on Scottish cases from elsewhere.

In the first version of the bill, which the Parliament approved on 5 December, the reporting restrictions would have applied automatically, so that any breach would have been an offence in Scotland in the same way as I have described. It is now proposed that the restrictions

will apply where the English Court of Appeal makes an order in that respect. Under provisions to be included in the bill, it will be an offence to publish a report in Scotland contrary to any such order that is made. The proposal is not substantially different from that which was approved by the Parliament on 5 December.

The Presiding Officer: The question on the motion will be put at decision time.

Business Motion

16:59

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): The next item of business is consideration of the business motion S2M-458, in the name of Patricia Ferguson, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a timetable for legislation.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) that the Justice 1 Committee reports to the Justice 2 Committee by 31 October 2003 on the Lands Tribunal for Scotland (Relevant Certificate) (Fees) Rules 2003 (SSI 2003/451), the Lands Tribunal for Scotland Rules 2003 (SSI 2003/452), and the Title Conditions (Scotland) Act 2003 (Conservation Bodies) Order 2003 (SSI 2003/453); and

(b) that Stage 1 of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Bill be completed by 8 January 2004.—[*Patricia Ferguson.*]

Motion agreed to.

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):

There are six questions to be put as a result of today's business.

Before we commence consideration of questions relating to the debate on creating an enterprise culture in Scotland's schools, I point out that if the amendment in the name of Murdo Fraser is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Shiona Baird falls.

The first question is, that amendment S2M-467.1, in the name of Jim Mather, which seeks to amend motion S2M-467, in the name of Jim Wallace, on creating an enterprise culture in Scotland's schools, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinburne, John (Central Scotland) (SSCUP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)

AGAINST

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Baker, Mr Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 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)
 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)

Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (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)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 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)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 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)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 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, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 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 22, Against 80, Abstentions 1.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S2M-467.3, in the name of Murdo Fraser, which seeks to amend motion S2M-467, in the name of Jim Wallace, on creating an enterprise culture in Scotland's schools, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
Swinburne, John (Central Scotland) (SSCUP)
Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)

AGAINST

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
Baker, Mr Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)
Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
Glen, Marilyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (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)
Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
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)
McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
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)
Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)
Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)
Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
Lochhead, Richard (North East Scotland) (SNP)
MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP)
Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)
Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
Turner, Dr Jean (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Ind)
Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 14, Against 61, Abstentions 27.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: In that case, the third question is, that amendment S2M-467.4, in the name of Shiona Baird, which seeks to amend motion S2M-467, in the name of Jim Wallace, on creating an enterprise culture in Scotland's schools, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)
Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)
Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)
Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)

Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)

AGAINST

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Mr 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)
 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)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marilyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (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)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 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)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 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)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)

Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Swinburne, John (Central Scotland) (SSCUP)
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

ABSTENTIONS

Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Turner, Dr Jean (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Ind)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 6, Against 75, Abstentions 21.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The fourth question is, that motion S2M-467, in the name of Jim Wallace, on creating an enterprise culture in Scotland's schools, be agreed to. Are we agreed? That is agreed to. *[Interruption.]* I am sorry, was there a no?

Members: Yes.

The Presiding Officer: There was a no. I am sorry. I have to take a vote on the motion. If people say no, they should do so loudly. There will be a division.

FOR

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Mr Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)

Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marilyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (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)
 Lochhead, Richard (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 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) (SNP)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 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 (Linthgow) (Lab)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinburne, John (Central Scotland) (SSCUP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Turner, Dr Jean (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Ind)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)

ABSTENTIONS

Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 84, Against 13, Abstentions 6.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament welcomes the 'can do, will do' attitude the Scottish Executive's strategy for enterprise in education aims to engender among young people; notes that it is a priority of the Partnership Agreement to deliver the strategy in partnership with local authorities and businesses, and looks forward to the *Determined to Succeed* strategy giving young people the skills they need to take an entrepreneurial spirit from the classroom into a confident and prosperous Scotland.

The Presiding Officer: The fifth question is, that motion S2M-468, in the name of Peter Peacock, on Scotland's contribution to education in the Commonwealth, past, present and future, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament welcomes the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers to Edinburgh later this month; recognises the contribution Scots have made, and continue to make, to education in the Commonwealth and more widely, and encourages the Scottish Executive to continue to work internationally to support educational development.

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S2M-407, in the name of Hugh Henry, on the Criminal Justice Bill, which is UK legislation, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Mr 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)
 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)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (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)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 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)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 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)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Turner, Dr Jean (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Ind)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)

ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 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)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 75, Against 1, Abstentions 27.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament agrees that, in addition to the provisions referred to in motion S1M-3671, those further matters which have been brought forward in the Criminal Justice Bill and that relate to devolved matters should be considered by the UK Parliament.

Macmillan-CABx Cancer Patient Services

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman): The final item of business today is a members' business debate on motion S2M-166, in the name of Karen Whitefield, on Macmillan-citizens advice bureaux cancer patient services. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament congratulates Macmillan Cancer Relief and the citizens advice bureaux of Lanarkshire on the innovative service that they have developed for cancer patients, providing debt assistance, employment, housing and other benefits to cancer patients and their carers; recognises that this is an excellent example of effective partnership working between voluntary organisations; commends Macmillan Cancer Relief and Airdrie Citizens Advice Bureau on the success of the pilot project in Airdrie; wishes them well as the project is rolled out across Lanarkshire, and recognises the benefits that such a service could provide across Scotland.

17:08

Karen Whitefield (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab): I welcome this opportunity to highlight the excellent work that is being carried out by Macmillan Cancer Relief and citizens advice bureaux in partnership. I am proud that the service was first piloted in Airdrie in my constituency and am pleased that it has been expanded to cover all Lanarkshire. I firmly believe that it should be expanded throughout Scotland.

Following an informal conversation with Ian Gibson, who is the Scottish director of Macmillan Cancer Relief, I was made aware of the difficulties that cancer sufferers and their carers face in obtaining advice on a range of issues. I suggested that he should contact the manager of Airdrie CAB, Eileen McKenna. Together, they developed a pilot project that has now been expanded throughout Lanarkshire. It is not often that such problems can be solved so quickly and effectively merely by putting two people in touch with each other, although perhaps those people have not viewed the process as being so easy.

Many—if not all—members in the chamber this evening will have been touched by the effects of cancer. In Lanarkshire, where the project is running, around 10,000 people suffer from cancer. Each year, a further 3,000 are diagnosed with the disease. Whether through personal experience or through supporting a friend or relative, we all know that coping with cancer is a dreadful and wearing experience. Financial pressures, which can result from the fact that cancer sufferers or their carers have to leave work, come at a time when families are least able to cope. For many people, this will

be their first encounter with the benefits system, which is complex and difficult to understand at the best of times. They may also find that for the first time in their lives they are unable to pay their bills or repay their loans.

That is where Macmillan Cancer Relief and CABx can play a vital role. Project workers will visit cancer sufferers and their carers and provide a benefits check to ensure that they receive everything to which they are entitled. The workers will also provide support and advice on rearranging debt and on employment and housing issues.

I regard the Macmillan Cancer Relief-CABx partnership as an excellent example of how the voluntary sector can respond quickly to needs at a local level. Both agencies have unsurpassed expertise in their fields and the services that they provide are complementary. Also important is the fact that both agencies are well known to and respected by members of the public.

It is important to stress that the cancer patient service is not for cancer sufferers only; it is also for their carers. Carers can face considerable pressures—emotional, physical and financial—and they often need as much support as cancer sufferers do. They may face personal dilemmas such as wanting to leave work to care for a loved one but feeling that they are financially unable to do so. For the first time, they may be left with the responsibility for household finances, at a time when the household income has dropped. It is vital that carers understand and can access the range of support services and benefits that are available to them.

There is some evidence that increased stress can have a detrimental impact on the immune system. Reducing the stress that is caused by financial difficulties ensures that the sufferer is given every chance of remaining as healthy as possible and is in the best position to fight their cancer.

The project also provides bereavement visits to carers and families. For example, one woman who had lost her husband wanted to reduce her working hours so that she could spend some much-needed additional time with her children. She had worked out that that would cost her about £80 a week—a sum that she could not afford to lose. However, an interview with a project worker established that, as a result of various benefit entitlements, the woman would be only £20 worse off—a price that she believed was worth paying, as it allowed her to stay at home with her children a little longer. That simple but effective piece of assistance clearly demonstrates the benefit that the cancer patient service can provide to sufferers, carers and their families.

I am convinced that the partnership between Macmillan Cancer Relief and CABx is working in Lanarkshire. I am equally convinced that it should be available to people throughout Scotland. In a press release on Tuesday, the Minister for Health and Community Care, Malcolm Chisholm, stated:

"There are undoubtedly initiatives across Scotland that can be adopted and adapted for local use. There is no point in starting from scratch if patients can benefit from experiences elsewhere and from changes that have already proven their value. We want to see best practice".

I am pleased that the minister is here tonight to allow me to remind him of the comments that he made on Tuesday. I hope that he will agree that the Macmillan Cancer Relief-CABx project is very valuable and could be expanded across Scotland. I call on all major players involved, including the Scottish Executive, local health boards, local government, Macmillan Cancer Relief and citizens advice bureaux to do everything in their power to ensure that all the people of Scotland can benefit from this excellent initiative.

Finally, I take this opportunity to congratulate the staff and volunteers who have helped to make the cancer service such a success—I am particularly pleased that Eileen McKenna is in the gallery tonight. Their commitment and dedication ensures that cancer sufferers and their carers receive support and advice at exactly the time when they most need it. They are providing a community-enhancing service that is second to none. I urge other members to speak in support of the service tonight.

17:15

Shona Robison (Dundee East) (SNP): I congratulate Karen Whitefield on securing the debate. I join her in paying tribute to Macmillan Cancer Relief and Citizens Advice Scotland, not only in Lanarkshire, but throughout Scotland, where staff and volunteers work hard to provide good services.

The project that has taken off in Lanarkshire is a coming-together of skills to ensure that patients get the best service. It seems obvious that such a coming-together and provision of good services would be good for patients. It is great to see the service developing in Lanarkshire, but I would like it to extend throughout Scotland. I am sure that it would benefit patients throughout Scotland just as it does patients in Lanarkshire.

The case studies provided by Citizens Advice Scotland show that the time when people have the medical worries that cancer brings is often also the time when they have financial worries. We cannot alleviate the physical problems resulting from cancer and the difficult treatments that are required, but we can alleviate the psychological worries and financial concerns that a family faces

because of a diagnosis of cancer. That is what, I hope, this project achieves and I would like that to happen in the rest of Scotland.

I note that Citizens Advice Scotland talks about its services in other health settings. Working with Macmillan Cancer Relief is just one example of the increasing role that Citizens Advice Scotland has in the health setting. I would like that role to be extended. We talk about joined-up working but, to make it real, we need such innovative ideas. In this case, the initiative was taken by Citizens Advice Scotland to ensure that patients get advice and information when and where they require it. Patients need that advice and information as soon as they have been diagnosed, not weeks or months later. It is important that Citizens Advice Scotland is prominent in the health setting, whether in primary care or in the hospital. Where patients are is where they should be able to find appropriate financial advice and assistance. We are talking about advice and information not just on financial matters, but on employment, housing and the other areas in which Citizens Advice Scotland has practical expertise.

Such initiatives are a growing area of work. As Karen Whitefield said, there is a huge requirement for support. There is the rub. In order for Citizens Advice Scotland to expand its services so that everyone in Scotland can access free, independent advice at times of ill health, it will require resources. That is not just up to the Scottish Executive; it is up to Citizens Advice Scotland, the health boards and local councils. However, the Executive has a key role in pulling everything together. I am sure that, if it says that it is willing to put in the resources to ensure that the model is introduced throughout Scotland, others will follow suit, fall in behind and put their money where their mouth is. I hope that the minister will give us a commitment on the matter tonight.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: To ensure that all members who requested to speak have a chance to do so, I ask that speeches be kept to four minutes.

17:20

Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): I am sure that there will be no dissent over such a brilliant idea, which reflects great credit on the CABx in Lanarkshire—I think that there are nine of them—the Macmillan nurses and Karen Whitefield, who has promoted the service and secured this debate.

We can copy the model on which the service is based in many other spheres of our lives. In that model, people who can do one thing co-operate with another bunch of people who can do something different. For example, Macmillan

nurses are brilliant at dealing with cancer but know nothing about the benefits system. As a result, instead of wasting their time struggling with forms that they do not really understand, they get the CAB to do that work. The CAB people, who have an amazing range of knowledge about money and all sorts of problems but know nothing about clinical health issues, can deal with the benefits side of the matter and leave the nurses to deal with the clinical aspects. Although the idea is simply common sense, it is the sort of thing that we do not do.

Lots of people spend time filling in forms that they do not understand. The benefits system is a particular nightmare in that respect. My cleverer colleagues might understand it, but I always rely on my excellent assistant in such cases. Once I get the required details from the person with the problem, she sorts out how I should go about sorting the problem out. However, the CAB people really understand the benefits system and can help the patient. As a result, the service is a marvellous use of people's time. It is obviously beneficial to patients, who can get all their benefits worries sorted out, and it is very good for carers, who often do not know about the help that they can get. The various case studies in the paper that the CABx have produced demonstrate the service's huge financial and emotional benefit to individuals.

As other members have said, we should spread this brilliant idea across Scotland, because everyone should benefit from it. Indeed, a Macmillan nurse in Lanarkshire and the manager of a CAB in the area urged me to say precisely that. I hope that that can be done, because once things are all sorted out the service will not cost very much and will save lots of money. I urge the minister to do what he can to promote it so that we can all do what we can to get it up and running in our local areas.

17:23

Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab): Like other members, I congratulate Karen Whitefield on lodging the motion and securing this evening's debate. A survey that Macmillan Cancer Relief commissioned in 1999 showed that cancer patients, particularly in the Lanarkshire area, were worried about their financial future. They were worried that they would have to give up work, that they would not be able to provide for their family and that they did not know their way around the maze of the benefits system or where to start filling in the forms.

Patients and carers asked—and indeed are still asking—Macmillan nurses for help and advice on such matters. As highly trained professionals delivering palliative care to patients in their homes

and in the community, the nurses realised that they could not offer advice about benefits, as they knew nothing about the issue. However, they also realised that such worries were affecting their patients' lives. Those people have enough on their minds without having to worry about money and the benefits system.

The success of the partnership between Macmillan Cancer Relief and the CABx in Lanarkshire is benefiting patients and their families. I thank the staff and volunteers from both organisations. I would also like to mention on the record Karen Whitefield's contribution to the partnership. We all know how she has promoted her constituency of Airdrie and Shotts, not forgetting—

Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP): The surrounding villages.

Cathie Craigie: That is what I was going to say.

In 1999, Karen Whitefield, as the youngest female MSP—I could say a swear-word now; I am sure that the other women present feel the same way—was asked by Macmillan Cancer Relief to be the first signatory to its voice for life campaign. She always had close links with her local CAB but, when she signed up to the campaign, her interest in Macmillan Cancer Relief increased. When she heard what the survey uncovered, she was quick to put the two organisations together.

As has been said, because of the success of the pilot scheme in Airdrie, the service is being rolled out and is delivering throughout Lanarkshire. The people involved with the CAB movement and with Macmillan Cancer Relief want to deliver the service throughout Scotland, but there is a lack of resources to do so. There is certainly not a lack of commitment from the staff and volunteers. I hope that the benefits that the people of Lanarkshire enjoy can be enjoyed throughout Scotland. I ask the minister to consider carefully the project in Lanarkshire and to put in motion the process that will allow the project to be rolled out Scotland-wide.

17:27

Mr David Davidson (North East Scotland) (Con): I add my congratulations to Karen Whitefield. The project in Airdrie is a good example of best practice and partnership. I have a small local connection because I once had an office in Airdrie, although I did not operate in the surrounding villages.

The debate is important because it focuses on the fact that when people are ill, the illness is often not the only problem. As co-convenor of the cross-party group in the Scottish Parliament on cancer, I have an interest in cancer, but the same point

applies to all people who are ill, not just to those who have cancer. Through no fault of their own, problems can arise. The project is an example of best practice that could be rolled out throughout Scotland—I know that the minister is listening intently.

The partnership involves different organisations in the voluntary sector. Macmillan Cancer Relief and the CABx do excellent work, but they have limitations that arise from capacity and funding problems. We must consider how we can free up the Macmillan workers to deal with the care aspects and help CABx to deliver their advisory and advocacy role in Scotland. Members have received excellent briefings from the two organisations. The Macmillan Cancer Relief briefing mentions awareness of benefits, “access to information” and “receiving practical assistance”. That encapsulates what the project is about.

I would like to widen out the issue and ask about the role of the health boards if we rolled out the project. I seem to remember that, in the dim and distant past, hospitals had people called almoners who advised patients on what help they could receive from the council with rent and other such matters. The health service seems to be slipping away from that role, which does not relate to the service’s expertise.

How can we introduce the kind of support that we have heard about tonight to other parts of the system? That would involve not only the Scottish Executive, but also the Department for Work and Pensions and the Benefits Agency. Even though the benefits system is a reserved matter, all members receive queries and requests for assistance on the issue. I use the CABx a lot in that field because they have a particular strength in it. How can the two Westminster agencies, which use taxpayers’ money from throughout the United Kingdom, deliver and support the people who can provide such a service? Should we perhaps look for the CABx to be able to receive lottery money or money on contract from those two agencies? That is a matter for Westminster to talk about.

The scheme could be rolled out across the whole UK, not just for cancer sufferers, but in other parts of health care. If that happened, what role would we have here, other than to offer our congratulations on an excellent project and to ask for more? How can we support such initiatives practically, and how can we get the Scottish Executive on board to play the role that it can play? How can we get the UK Government on board? It is unfair that the voluntary sector has to pick up the tab for the delivery of services that, in theory, are the responsibility of the various

ministries that handle benefits and support—whether housing benefit or whatever.

I congratulate Karen Whitefield and the two organisations on the work that they have done. However, the issue should perhaps be pushed a little further than saying that we will leave it to cancer services and roll out services across Scotland where the CABx can afford to do so. We must lift the horizon and consider the model carefully, in the Health Committee and other committees of the Parliament as well as in the Executive, and consider how we can involve Westminster. The project is a shining example of what can be done through good partnerships in Scotland.

17:31

Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP): It has become a matter of form to congratulate members on their motions, but I genuinely congratulate Karen Whitefield on the pivotal role that she has played in bringing together these two groups of people. It is a simple idea, but the simple ideas are always the ones that some of us walk past. The word “partnership” is so overused and overexposed that we think, “Oh, it is just another partnership.” However, this one really works and it is extraordinary what has come out of it.

I looked up some statistics on cancer and discovered that four in 10 of us will develop cancer at some point. Looking around the chamber, I find it extraordinary to think that of the 10 members who are here, four of us might develop cancer. Then there are the other debilitating illnesses that have been mentioned, which the service deals with. This year, some 25,000 people in Scotland will develop cancer. The disease changes a person’s life; their priorities change, they are thrown into turmoil by thinking about their mortality and they are not in a position to consider the practicalities of life.

We all know how vital Macmillan Cancer Relief is in giving advice on treatments to control pain and conducting home visits. Macmillan also has a wing of Borders general hospital that is very user-friendly and pleasant. There are quiet rooms, treatment rooms and rooms for information. Most important of all, Macmillan takes away the fear and stigma of cancer—the C-word that people do not like to mention.

I used to work for the CABx, at times, when I was a lawyer. It was user-friendly, it was in the high street and it was free. However, nearly all the questions that I got were about benefits and housing problems, about which—after seven years’ training and 12 years’ practice as a lawyer—I knew nothing. Lawyers know hardly

anything about benefits and we speak a funny language that nobody understands when we give answers. In the CABx, people get straightforward explanations. They are given forms and are helped with them.

To bring those two organisations together to deal with people who have a crisis in their lives, so that the burden can be taken off them, is worth while and to be commended throughout Scotland. Nevertheless, I endorse the comments that have been made about funding. CABx are not keeping their offices open all days of the week now, because of a lack of funding, although they do such a worthwhile, on-the-ground job. That must be addressed.

I am grateful for the briefing papers that I received from Macmillan Cancer Relief and the CABx. The Macmillan paper says:

“Our experience of supporting people affected by cancer has given us clear evidence that the financial needs of some patients and carers are poorly met”

and that

“welfare benefits is a problem, with many people unaware that they may be entitled to support, or others who simply ‘fail’ the test of completing lengthy and complex forms.”

Let us hear what the CABx say about the partnership operation. They say that in Lanarkshire alone,

“over 300 individuals have used the service”.

Advice has been sought on 1,500 issues and £177,000 of benefits has now reached people who did not know they were entitled to them. That is what has been done just on that issue; I am sure that the partnership service is doing other things on housing and other issues.

I thoroughly commend the service. The first thing that I will do tomorrow is to ensure that it gets rolled out across parts of the south of Scotland, including the Borders and East Lothian. I see nothing but good in it. It is of such use to people and their families to know that they have medical support from Macmillan and support on all other issues from the expertise of the CABx.

17:35

Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab): I congratulate Karen Whitefield on lodging the motion for debate this evening. I also congratulate Macmillan Cancer Relief and the CABx on their excellent piece of work.

People talk about partnerships, but we could learn much from some of the partnerships in which voluntary organisations are involved up and down the country. The voluntary sector has the capacity to consider an issue and to work in partnership with others, not only in the voluntary sector, but in

the health service and local authorities, to bridge a gap or to deal with an issue in a way that others have not been able to do. We underestimate the voluntary sector's ability to act quickly, to get rid of barriers, to sit down and consider an issue, to decide who the partners should be and then to work on it.

What happens in a family when a loved one is faced with cancer? There are all sorts of questions, and once people have got over the turmoil and the fear, they are left with basic questions. What does the illness mean, for the loved one and for the family? How do people offer support? How will the illness develop? How can people care? Who can help? How are we going to manage financially? Karen Whitefield highlighted what happens if someone has to give up work to care for another. How will they cope with the benefits?

People need clear information when they need it and they should not have to seek out that information. Families often struggle without that vital support, and that is why the Airdrie project sounds fantastic and why it is a good example of the kind of partnership that the voluntary sector is able to deliver.

Six years ago yesterday, I lost my mum. It is hard to stand here and talk about it. She had cancer and she was a determined old buddie—in fact, she was not that old. She was a nurse and there was no way that she was going to die in a hospital because that is not the place to die, she said. She was going to die at home. She lived on her own and I worked full time. My brother and I were the only ones who were there to care for her. We got past working out how we were going to support my mum and she decided that there was to be no daft therapy and all the rest of it; she knew that she was terminally ill and she wanted to be at home to make the best of the life that she had with her grandchildren around her.

How could I cope? I did not know where to go for the kind of support that we needed. Although I worked in the voluntary sector, I had never faced that kind of support need before. After speaking to organisations such as Crossroads, Marie Curie Cancer Care and the health service, I found that they were able to help me to identify the support that I would need initially to be able to go to work for some of the time and to be at home for my mum as well. Crossroads identified the care that would be needed to help support my mother. Local social services helped by looking at the adaptations that were available in the short term to help us to support her and to keep her at home.

What about the practical bit? People feel, “I am never going to be able to cope with this,” so it is important to have people in the voluntary sector to offer help and support and to say, “Yes you can

cope.” It was not easy, but we coped because people helped us. At a time when people need support, it is important that there is not only practical support and clear advice on what the illness means to the family and the loved one, but practical advice on where to get help with benefits, adaptations and all the things that are needed to help children and families to deal with the crisis at hand. Partnership between the voluntary organisations is vital. We need to be creative in our support of the voluntary sector, but we cannot expect it to do what it does on a shoestring; that is not possible. The sector needs resources and I urge the minister to consider that.

17:39

Mrs Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con): I welcome the debate and I join Karen Whitefield in commending the Lanarkshire initiative that provides services to cancer patients. I go further and suggest, like David Davidson, that not only would people in every health board area of Scotland benefit from a rolling-out of the service, but all patients—not only those who suffer from cancer—would benefit significantly from such a service.

The Aberdeen citizens advice bureau has been running a successful advice clinic at Aberdeen royal infirmary for more than two years. The facility is available two days a week and follow-up home visits are carried out if possible. That has benefited many patients who are referred to the clinic by nurses, occupational therapists, consultants and other people who are concerned with the patients' care. Using the CABx to give advice on social welfare issues frees up the time of health care professionals to treat patients instead of filling in forms. Nurses and other hospital staff are very often not up to speed with benefit entitlements or with the complicated form-filling that is entailed. The CABx service relieves staff and their patients from a significant amount of stress, giving them more time to deal with health concerns. As has been said by several members, patients gain from having their non-medical problems dealt with; it relieves them of worry and aids their medical progress. Carers also benefit from the help that they get to deal with the practical concerns that they have to handle on behalf of patients.

Unfortunately, the health board in Aberdeen has withdrawn the £5,000 that it gave initially towards the £10,000 annual running cost of the service. The CAB there depends on charity on a year-by-year basis, without a partnership such as the Lanarkshire one that we are praising tonight. That means that the future of the clinic is not secure, and I would like to see that situation improved. On behalf of the Aberdeen CAB, I intend to raise the

issue with Grampian NHS Board representatives at my next meeting with them in November, to see whether more secure funding arrangements can be arrived at. The model that we have heard being described tonight will be worth putting forward.

I am pleased to take part in today's debate, and I congratulate Macmillan Cancer Relief and the CABx in Lanarkshire on their partnership initiative. I shall certainly bring the Lanarkshire experience to the attention of those who matter in Aberdeen.

17:41

John Swinburne (Central Scotland) (SSCUP): I thank Karen Whitefield for introducing a motion in this most compassionate field. Like many other members, I received all the briefing papers for this debate. When our youngest child went to school, my wife went to Hairmyres hospital to train as a nurse. She had general nursing experience and, in the last few years of her working life, she became a dedicated Marie Curie nurse and worked closely with Macmillan Cancer Relief. I took the briefing papers home and asked her to read them. She sat quietly and read through all the cases and said, “My God, what a step forward. Thank the people who are doing this.”

My wife's personal experience was that the Macmillan nurses had not only to cope with the medication, the syringe drivers and all the unfortunate things that are used to relieve the pain; they also had to try to cope with the paperwork that was involved in getting people the benefits that they were entitled to. She said that many of them were not up to speed in that area, although they were perfect in the medical area, and she had the feeling that many people were neglected financially through not being able to get the proper assistance.

The straightforward Lanarkshire scheme, involving people who are competent in the benefits field as well as people who are competent in the medical field, is a simple but unique example of co-operation between Macmillan and the CABx. It is not the case that the scheme should be implemented throughout the nation; it must be implemented throughout the nation. Although I am quite sure that by now his heart is in it, I implore Malcolm Chisholm to do everything that he can to have such schemes implemented throughout the nation for the good of anyone who is unfortunate enough to suffer in that manner. I thank Karen Whitefield again.

17:43

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Malcolm Chisholm): I congratulate Karen Whitefield on securing the debate and, like Cathie Craigie, I pay tribute to the part that she played in

bringing about the important collaboration between Macmillan Cancer Relief and the CABx, which started in Airdrie and has expanded to the whole of Lanarkshire. I also thank and congratulate all the staff and volunteers who have been involved.

I know that we are all pleased that cancer mortality rates in Scotland are beginning to fall, as has been highlighted this week, but the corollary of that, particularly with an increasingly elderly population, is that more people are living with cancer. It is therefore more important than ever that we take a broad, holistic view of cancer care. That is what led me to announce in the cancer debate on 4 September a broadening of the important cancer scenarios work on mortality rates to encompass morbidity and the implications of living with cancer.

The provision of a service to people who are affected by cancer, by offering debt assistance and employment, housing and other benefit advice, is a valuable contribution to the overall support of people with cancer. The service benefits patients most of all, but it also benefits carers and indeed health professionals, as Donald Gorrie, David Davidson and John Swinburne pointed out. I am therefore happy to welcome and congratulate the new partnership between Macmillan Cancer Relief and the Lanarkshire CABx. I am aware that they plan to roll out the partnership into other areas and I wish them well in that.

The partnership with Macmillan Cancer Relief is only one example of the increasing role of the CAB service—as Shona Robison reminded us—in delivering advice in health settings. The CAB service currently delivers advice in over 200 locations across Scotland, which include more than 20 health care settings, ranging from general practitioner surgeries to clinics and from hospital sessions to home visits. For example, in the north-west Edinburgh local health care co-operative, CAB sessions in the GP surgery provide dedicated social and financial advice to patients and their carers.

I recognise and applaud the efforts of voluntary groups, which work tirelessly to provide support for people who are affected by cancer and, indeed, by any illness. That is why we are giving specific support to Voluntary Health Scotland to work with NHS boards to ensure their increasing involvement with the voluntary sector. Partnership and collaboration—with NHS Scotland, with the voluntary sector and with patients and their carers—are central to everything that we do and to the on-going successful implementation of “Cancer in Scotland: Action for Change”.

In early September, I was invited to launch the Scottish cancer coalition: a partnership of cancer charities in Scotland, which have collaborated to

form a new group. The coalition includes Macmillan Cancer Relief and I pay particular tribute to the enormously important work that that organisation carries out in a range of areas, such as carer schemes and the invaluable Macmillan nurses. I was pleased to have a useful meeting recently with the director in Scotland, Ian Gibson. We discussed cancer scenarios, patient involvement and a range of other issues. He also had a meeting recently with community care officials to discuss how Macmillan can play into the joint future agenda. We are providing him with the addresses of the joint future managers of local partnerships so that direct contact can be made with local decision makers. I hope that that will lead to further collaborations.

More generally, we applaud the voluntary sector collaboration that has resulted in the Scottish cancer coalition. The Scottish Executive looks forward to working with the coalition in the future, particularly but by no means exclusively in the key area of patient involvement.

Another good example of partnership and collaboration in practice is the new opportunities fund project in the Forth valley that is managed by Falkirk Council housing and social work service. That project, too, focuses on the provision of money advice to people with cancer and their families by providing advice on financial issues such as benefit entitlement and debt advice and by signposting other useful services that are provided by health and social work departments.

Social work involvement in managed clinical networks should be part and parcel of the provision of multidisciplinary services. Cancer is an excellent example of that. Networks aim to integrate health and social care; that is important if we are to be able to meet the holistic needs of people who are suffering from illness and its effects, whether cancer or any other debilitating disease.

The Scottish Executive's carers strategy recognises and values the huge contribution that carers make to the health and social care of thousands of people throughout Scotland. The Executive is committed to ensuring that carers are better supported than they have ever been before. The resources that are given to local authorities to support carers have risen from £5 million a year in 1999-2000 to £21 million this year.

We recognise the very special difficulties that people with serious illnesses such as cancer face and the strains that those illnesses cause for those people and their carers. We support the innovative work by Macmillan Cancer Relief and the citizens advice bureaux to address problems that cancer patients and their carers face and we applaud their contribution to helping many people to cope better with their illnesses and their lives.

Patients' difficulties in getting the information that they need, in the format that is best suited to them and at the time when they need it, is an issue that arises time and again. There are many options for resolving that problem, such as using textbooks, booklets, brochures and videos. Earlier this year I launched a Cancer in Scotland publication called, "A Guide to Securing Access to Information", which highlights the frequently asked questions from people who are affected by cancer as they progress through the patient pathway. The document also highlights areas where there are information needs, including clinical, practical, emotional and financial needs. The document sets the wider strategic picture that surrounds patient information and asks NHS boards and regional cancer advisory groups to focus on whether local patient information strategies meet the specific needs of people affected by cancer.

Meeting closed at 17:52.

Christine Grahame: I hope that at some point the minister will address the matter of the funding of CABx, which are under pressure. I believe that there is consensus among members on that point. I do not necessarily expect an answer now, but I hope that the issue will be addressed. If the collaborative idea that we are discussing is an excellent one, we must find the money to fund it.

Malcolm Chisholm: I recognise that a series of funding issues arose in the debate, with reference to CABx, support of the voluntary sector, local authorities and health. I will not make any funding announcements in this debate, but I recognise that funding is crucial for that collaborative work. Christine Grahame will know of the significant investment that we are putting into the cancer strategy. However, the important aspect is to build genuine partnerships and collaboration, because at the moment the bulk of the cancer money goes into other areas.

It is important that those with cancer have access to accurate and timeous information and to the support services that they need to help them continue with their lives in as normal a manner as possible. Our work on providing information links up with the specific initiative that we are discussing.

I thank Karen Whitefield for reminding me of my comments on Tuesday. As I said, there are undoubtedly initiatives throughout Scotland that can be adopted and adapted for local use. The collaboration between Macmillan and Lanarkshire CABx is undoubtedly in that category.

I pay tribute to everyone involved in cancer services in Scotland, but particularly to those who work in the Macmillan and Lanarkshire CABx initiative, which demonstrates that by working collaboratively and in partnership we can secure real and lasting improvements in services for people with cancer.

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