



THIS WEEK IN PARLIAMENT 11 - 15 June 2018

Welcome to my *This Week in Parliament*, my weekly newsletter on events and developments in Parliament. **Your feedback is always welcome!**

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The European Union (Withdrawal) Bill returned to the Commons this week. Packed into two intense days of debate were perhaps the most important deliberations in Parliament since the Second World War and many unanswered questions remain unanswered. The only clarity to emerge from the debates was that the House is sharply divided on how to proceed and what the way forward looks like.

Debate will return to the Commons once the Lords have considered the Government's changes. However, it is now obvious to everyone involved that it was always too simplistic to think Brexit was ever going to be merely a matter of walking away. Our mutual inter-relationship with Europe is much deeper than people were advised of at the time of the Referendum.

The two days of debate are worth exploring and I would recommend you follow the hyperlinks below and read the arguments in detail. The most worrying aspect of the two days was the total lack of clarity in relation to the governments plans for and desire out come from Brexit.

Monday

The week began with Defence Questions. The Secretary of State answering a range of questions from equipment and personnel numbers to policy after leaving the EU.

I took the opportunity to ask what the Minister is doing to combat the increasing risk of cyberattacks.



Mrs Madeleine Moon (Bridgend) (Lab): The further east one goes, the greater the awareness of the cyber-threat in individual countries. Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and Sweden have all published advice on how to deal with that threat. What do this Government intend to do to build resilience among the British people and understanding of botnets, hacktivists and all the other ways in which Russia is attacking our political and social institutions?

The Minister for the Armed Forces (Mark Lancaster): I think that we are well on our way. The 2015 national security strategy reaffirmed cyber as a top tier 1 risk. That was precisely why we opened the NCSC, which helps to co-ordinate the work of government and the private sector. It is also why we now consider cyber to be essential in our armed forces' core skills.

The Government then answered an [Urgent Question](#) on Yemen.

G7

Following the G7 Summit over the weekend, the Government came to the Chamber to make a [Statement](#).

Given President Trump's attitude towards multilateral agreements, Members were worried about what this would mean for any future trade deals with the US.

[Hilary Benn \(Leeds Central\) \(Lab\)](#): With bitter divisions on trade and the imposition of tariffs by the US that are indeed undermining the international rules-based order of which the Prime Minister spoke, what impact does she think this will have on the timing and the content of any trade deal with the United States of America, bearing in mind that the backstop proposal she published last week for Northern Ireland will mean that we are going to be remaining in a customs union with the European Union until the end of 2021, and possibly for longer?

[The Prime Minister](#): In relation to the timing of trade deals with America, or indeed with any other country, the right hon. Gentleman knows full well that we are not able to put those in place until we have fully left the European Union. We will be able to talk about these issues—to sign and negotiate those treaties—in advance of that.

The right hon. Gentleman talks about the backstop. The point of the backstop is that it is there if, as at 1 January 2021, the future customs arrangement between the United Kingdom and the European Union is not in place. As I said last week, it has always been the case that we believe that the best way to address the issue of the border in Northern Ireland is through that overall relationship between the UK and the EU. We want to ensure that that is in place as soon as possible after the end of December 2020, and we preferably do not want to see the backstop having to be used at all.

A further [Statement](#) was then made by the Government on the progress of the Grenfell Tower inquiry.

The Second Reading of the Counter-terrorism and Border Security [Bill](#) was then heard in the House. The Day in the Chamber ending with an [Adjournment Debate](#) on Cornish National Identity.

Westminster Hall

Leaving the EU: Parliamentary Vote

Following a petition that reached over 100,000 signatures, Westminster Hall hosted a [debate](#) on the vote Parliament will have on the deal negotiated with the EU containing an option to remain in the EU.

[Anneliese Dodds \(Oxford East\) \(Lab/Co-op\)](#): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for the speech she is making and to the petitioners for raising this important subject. Does she agree that amendment 19, which is due to be voted on this week, would prevent the kind of Hobson's choice the petitioners are concerned about? Over 600 people in my constituency appear to be concerned about that, because they have signed this petition.

[Liz Twist \(Blaydon\) \(Lab\)](#): Yes, I agree with my hon. Friend, and I will touch on that point later in my speech.

If the agreement that the Government present to Parliament is not approved, the UK will leave the European Union on 29 March without a deal. That is a "take it or leave it" decision or, as the petitioners describe it, "Hobson's choice", with no option of saying, as the petitioners do, that



Parliament's vote on the Brexit deal must include an option to remain in the European Union. No matter what the outcome, there will be no chance for Members of Parliament to say, "It is better for us to stay in the EU than to accept the deal that the Government manage to negotiate, whatever that ends up being"—something the petitioners believe is essential.

The Labour party has said all along that Parliament should have a meaningful vote on the terms of any withdrawal agreement the Prime Minister reaches with the European Union. It cannot be acceptable, as the Government originally proposed, for the Prime Minister simply to force through a deal on an issue of this importance or, as the Government now propose, for Parliament to have only a binary, "take it or leave it" choice. That is why Labour has repeatedly tried to amend the withdrawal Bill—to ensure that Parliament has a truly meaningful vote, and we have seen much discussion about what a meaningful vote means.

Tuesday

Questions to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy

During a wide ranging [question](#) session, I was able to ask the Minister about what his Department are doing to aid British Steel Manufacturers.



[Mrs Madeleine Moon \(Bridgend\) \(Lab\)](#): What assessment he has made of the capability of British steel manufacturers to produce high-grade steel for new markets.

[The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy \(Richard Harrington\)](#): In December 2017 we published Government-commissioned independent research that identified high-value market opportunities for UK steel producers worth up to £3.8 billion a year by 2030

[Mrs Madeleine Moon \(Bridgend\) \(Lab\)](#): The national shipbuilding strategy sought to improve UK prosperity through shipbuilding. The MOD fleet solid support ships contract is worth more than £1 billion. What steps will the Government be taking to ensure that British steel manufacturers are ready to bid for that contract?

[The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy \(Richard Harrington\)](#): As the hon. Lady will know, because I met her the week before last, I am very conscious that Tata is in Port Talbot in her constituency. I promise that I will do everything in my power to ensure that Tata and other British steel companies, all of whom I meet regularly, are poised to act on these contracts.

The House then moved on to the First Reading of a [Bill](#) on the minimum pricing of Alcohol in England.

European Union (Withdrawal) Bill

The Withdrawal [Bill](#) was back in the Commons; Having made its way through the Lords, where the Government receiving 15 defeats. The Bill was back before the Chamber. The main points of debate centred around two amendments, one on the UK's membership of EEA and the other on whether Parliament would have a genuinely meaningful vote on the final deal.

As ever with Brexit passions were high on both sides, however the calls for calm, reasoned thinking were there and need to be heeded.

[Anna Soubry \(Broxtowe\) \(Con\)](#): I have never written a speech before and then had it typed out, Mr Speaker, and now

I do not know why I bothered: not only have you cut the time, but you can see how the debate has advanced. I am sorry but I am going to speak, as ever, frankly. This has got to stop; this is unseemly; this is the most important piece of legislation that this House has considered arguably since the second world war, and we sit here and watch a peculiar sort of horse-trading over the perfectly excellent amendment put forward by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr Grieve), who served in the Government for decades—[Interruption.] He served in the Government for a number of years, but he has served this party for decades and he has never rebelled once. I gently say to my hon. Friend the Member for Gainsborough (Sir Edward Leigh), who in just eight years rebelled 58 times, and to the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, who along with my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Mr Duncan Smith) rebelled in total 160 times, that we here understand the concept of being loyal to leadership and, indeed, being true and honourable to our principles—and I believe they are men of conscience and principle.

Let us look around us at what is happening. There are good men and women of great ability, and indeed courage, who are, unfortunately, no longer in our Cabinet, such as my right hon. Friends the Members for Ashford (Damian Green), for Putney (Justine Greening) and for Hastings and Rye (Amber Rudd)—all great people who have been lost from our deeply divided Cabinet. Never before have we had a Cabinet that is so divided, and with some of its most senior people, who hold the greatest offices of state, at every twist and turn, when our Prime Minister moves towards securing a Brexit that will serve everybody in our country—the softest, most sensible of Brexits—both publicly and privately undermining her and scuppering her attempts. It simply has to stop, and the moment for it to stop is now.



I know absolutely that the Solicitor General is a man of great honour, whose word will always be true, but I say with the greatest respect to him that he is not the most senior person around today and it is not his decision. He knows that I say that as somebody with great respect and love for him. So where is the Secretary of State? All he has to do is accept the amendment of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Beaconsfield. If he does not, he will force Members who for decades have never before rebelled to traipse through a Lobby or sit and abstain, just as they did in the Lords—and who I will support in each and every one of those important amendments on the EEA and the customs union and amendment 19.

Those Lords were Members of this place once; they include a former Chief Whip, a former Deputy Prime Minister, more Secretaries of State than we could shake a stick at, a former Leader of the House, and two former party chairmen. For decades they were always loyal to every leader. Meanwhile, there lurk some, I am afraid, who for decades have plotted and connived. They have got rid of leaders and anybody and anything that stood in their way, and they will continue so to do. Even if they are supported by Russian bots and their dirty money, they will do what they have had a lifetime's ambition to do, which is to take us over the cliff into the hard Brexit that my constituents did not vote for. I will continue to represent my constituents. We reckon that overall 52% voted to leave, but the 48% who voted to remain have been put to one side in this process and ignored. That has to stop. We have to come back together and we have to do the right thing.

I know and understand how difficult it is for many of my colleagues to go through the Lobby and vote against their party, but I say this: I am getting a little tired of the right hon. and hon. Members on the Back Benches, in govern-

ment and even in the Cabinet who come up to me and others in quiet and dark corridors; of the British businesses that demand private meetings in which they lay bare their despair but refuse to go public; of the commentators who say to me, “You’re doing a great job. Keep on going”, in the face of death threats which have meant that one of our number has had to attend a public engagement with six armed undercover police officers—that is the country that we have created and it has got to stop; and to the journalists who fight nobly for every cause but on this, this most important of issues, are mute. It has got to stop. Everybody now has to stand up and be true to what they believe in.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I hope you will give me time to find and read out some great words:

“The House is made up of 651 robust individuals whose position gives them a powerful say in what the Executive can and cannot do. The powers of the House are sovereign and they have the ability to upset the best-laid plans of Ministers and of Government, which no Minister ever forgets, and nor should any Back Bencher”.

Those words were true then, and they are true now. They were spoken by the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union. Accept the amendment!

When the votes were tallied, the Government avoided any humiliating defeats, but it’s attempts at compromise between the factions of the Conservative Party may come back to haunt them as the Bill is sent back to the Lords.

The day in the Chamber ended with an [Adjournment Debate](#) on Sexual Exploitation: Newcastle.

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

As a part of the Committee’s investigation into fake news, Arron Banks and Andy Wigmore, two of the lead figures from the Leave.EU Organisation came before the Committee to give [evidence](#). This [session](#) was achieved after a very public refusal from the pair and the recent revelations of their apparent connections with Russian Officials. The Contempt with which they treated the Committee was startling, top off by leaving early as they claimed they did not want to be late for lunch.

Ian C. Lucas (Wrexham) (Lab): What do you think first attracted the Russian Embassy to Arron Banks, the biggest political donor in political history. Do you think it was anything to do with the fact that you were involved in the referendum campaign?

Arron Banks: No. Have we started on Russia now? Are we finished the—

Damian Collins (Chair) (Folkestone and Hythe) (Con): I think we have to get into a routine where the questions are asked and the witnesses answer it, rather than just providing a commentary on the questions.

Ian C. Lucas (Wrexham) (Lab): I did ask a question and he has not answered it.

Andy Wigmore: Why do we think the Kremlin were interested in us?

Ian C. Lucas (Wrexham) (Lab): I asked why the Russian Embassy was interested in you.

Andy Wigmore: I will tell you why they were, because I asked to meet them. We met them at a UKIP conference. I was a diplomat and we thought it would be quite a nice thing to go and chat to them. Why? Because his wife is also Russian. She has never ever engaged much with the Russian diaspora, and we thought it would be nice to have a chat with him. I had met him and his people in the diplomatic community many times. You do. That is what you do, so it was not unusual when you meet somebody and say, “We would like to come and have a chat with the ambassador. It would be nice to see him.” There was no other reason. In fact we instigated, not the other way round.

Wednesday

Prime Ministers Questions

The Secretary of State for Wales was at the Dispatch Box to open proceedings, quick fire [questions](#) then followed before the Prime Minister came to the House.

Brexit was once again on the agenda, the Leader of the Opposition pushing the Prime Minister on when the Government's White Paper would be published.

Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab): I am not really sure whether it is a backstop or a backslide that the Prime Minister is talking about here.

Last week, I asked the Prime Minister about this, and I am sorry to bring this subject up again because it is probably quite painful for her, but when is the Government's Brexit White Paper going to be published? She did say it would be published before the June EU Council summit. Is that still the case?

The Prime Minister (Mrs Theresa May): No, I did not actually say that. I said the White Paper would be published, and we will be publishing it. We will be bringing Ministers together. [Hon. Members: "When?"] Just calm down. We will be bringing Ministers together after the June Council, and the White Paper will be published thereafter.

PMQ's ended with the SNP showing their dissatisfaction with the handling of the devolution element of the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill by requesting that a vote be held for Parliament to sit in Private. This was refused by the speaker until after the end of the Question session. The SNP, still unsatisfied, refused to sit and left the Chamber en masse, their Leader in the Commons, Ian Blackford, being ban by the Speaker for the rest of the day.

This was followed by the bringing of a Bill on Packaging (Extended Producer Responsibility).

European Union (Withdrawal Bill)

The second day of debate after the Bill returned to the Commons. Several more amendments were packed together to be debated and voted on. The main focus fell on the amendments aimed at keep the EEA option on the table.

I used the debate raised the concern which car manufacturers have with the lack of clarity and the reluctance to invest which results.



Mrs Madeleine Moon (Bridgend) (Lab): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the Dutch Government and the European Commission have begun to advise businesses not to take car parts produced in the UK for export because of concerns about rules of origin. Will today's proposals address that?

Keir Starmer (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab): I had heard that. It is not an isolated example; there are others. This is deeply troubling, which is why the amendments before the House today are so important.

The case for the EEA amendment was laid out several times, but a frank and honest debate also tried to address the underlying issues.

As ever Hilary Benn provided a voice of thought and reason.

Hilary Benn (Leeds Central) (Lab): It is a great pleasure to follow the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke). I shall also follow him in not taking interventions, because many Members wish to speak. I wish to talk about the EEA amendment tabled by our Front Benchers and the EEA amendment that came from the House of Lords, and to explain why I shall be voting for both.

Time is running out, not just in the debate this afternoon but for the country. For far too long over the past two years, we have wasted time with a lot of dreaming—dreaming about the easiest trade deal in history, dreaming about us holding all the cards and dreaming that we will get the exact same benefits. The moment when that finally came to an end was when the Prime Minister spoke at the Mansion House and admitted that it was not really going to be like that. This is the moment when we need to tell each other the truth: there are choices that we face; there are trade-offs that we have to accept; and there are decisions that need to be made, which is the point just made by the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe.

If I may use an analogy, it seems to me that we have decided as a country to disembark from a liner in the middle of the ocean, and we have two basic choices: we can jump into the sea, which is what a hard no-deal Brexit would

mean, or we can climb down into a lifeboat and decide where we are going. What are those in the Cabinet doing at the moment? They have spent two years arguing, first about how to create a deep and special lifeboat. They are trying to come up with a lifeboat that will not breach their red lines, and they have broken up into working groups, probably discussing the size, colour and shape of the lifeboat. The only thing that has not happened yet is a Minister getting up at the Dispatch Box and announcing that no lifeboat is better than a bad lifeboat. I tell you, Mr Speaker, it is not funny. The truth is that it is extremely serious indeed.



What does all of this mean? It means that we have not yet agreed as a country what we want for the future of the relationship. Not only is the promised White Paper now not going to appear until next month, but we learned this week that there will be a two-day away day in Chequers where the Cabinet tries to thrash things out. That means there will be one European Council left on 18 October—one—at which to sort out all the things we have been debating yesterday and today and to agree the political declaration, which is all about the future of our country. As a result, we have barely begun to discuss what might be in that political declaration at a time when, as the Prime Minister said in her G7 statement on Monday, the international rules-based order is under a threat that it has not been under at any time since it was created at the end of the second world war.

We are in a perilous place. Business is losing patience; we know that. The EU is frankly bewildered about what is going on in this country. The British people, to judge by the polls, think the whole thing is going very badly. The right hon. Member for Broxtowe (Anna Soubry) made the point really well—it is true—that in this place and outside, people have whispered conversations in which we say, “What on earth is going on?”

The consequences of getting this wrong for the country will be deeply damaging for our future and for the jobs, livelihoods and public services that depend upon our economic strength. That is what we are debating. There is so much at stake that it is frankly difficult to overstate it. Let me say it plainly: we have had enough of management in the party interest. What we desperately need now is leadership in the national interest.

That brings me to the EEA amendment and the question of our future relationship with our biggest, nearest and most important trading partner: the 27 countries of the EU. The truth is that on both sides of the House we are all debating, and sometimes disagreeing on, what kind of framework would be best. The Government now accept that we will be staying in a customs union and, in all likelihood, aligning with the rules of the single market for quite some time to come, because nothing has yet been agreed that can possibly replace the benefits we derive from both.

The same outcome will inevitably result from the proposed Northern Ireland backstop, although it is currently silent on the question of regulations and the internal market, which is why I described it last week as half a backstop. That omission will have to be remedied between now and the end of this month, because half a backstop will not do the business when it comes to getting the European Council to agree with it. And by the way, it is ludicrous to debate whether the backstop is time-limited, because the truth is terribly simple: the backstop will remain in place as long as necessary, until something else comes along that can replace it and achieve the same objective, which is main-

taining an open border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. I am afraid that was about politics, not about policy.

That is also true of the debate about maximum facilitation and the customs partnership, although both ideas strike many people as costly, bureaucratic, burdensome and reliant on technology that is not yet in operation. However, being a generous soul, let me say that even if the Cabinet, on its away day, manages to reach agreement on one or the other, and even if the EU negotiators said, "Okay, let's give it a go"—I do not think there is any prospect of that whatsoever—we all know that neither of them could be put in place by December 2020. It is too late: too much time has been wasted. That is why the transition period, or a transition period, is going to have to be extended by one means or another, whether that is with the backstop or an agreement on a way forward. That is where we are heading by default, so the question is: what form should the next transition, from January 2021 onwards, take? This is where the EEA comes in, because that would be one way of doing it.

Let me turn to the amendment moved by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Keir Starmer) and Lords amendment 51 on the EEA. Both are about a future framework and the internal market, and the difference here—apart from the free movement issue, which I will say a word about in a moment—is really quite small, and I very much welcome what was said by my right hon. and learned Friend, who leads for the Opposition, about having an open mind. I will of course vote for his amendment, because who could argue with the notion of full access to the single market? If it is not successful, I will vote for the EEA amendment, because we need to keep our options open. To return to my analogy, it has the one great advantage that it at least looks like a lifeboat, and I have to say that the closer we get to October, the less inviting the cold sea appears to those thinking of jumping off the side of the ship.



I am the first to acknowledge that the EEA option is not perfect. I do not want us to be like Norway, and I am not arguing that we should have a deal like Norway's. Apart from anything else, we want to remain in a customs union. As Michel Barnier repeated yesterday, it would be an option to have the EEA plus a customs union. Let us acknowledge that.

We should seek some changes to the way in which free movement currently operates. Some of those could be made within the current rules of the European Union, which we will be leaving. Others would involve discussion of the emergency brake, which is why my right hon. Friend the Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper) and I have tabled amendment (b), which refers to "safeguard measures". The Exiting the European Union Committee, which I have the honour to chair, drew attention, in its report on the future UK-EU relationship, to the possibility of additional flexibility on free movement. We need to make sure that our agricultural and fish exports can continue to move freely...

Who knows whether the EEA option may turn out to be a temporary state, but as a potential starting point, with a customs union, it would provide a means of solving the Northern Ireland problem, keep goods flowing freely, ensure common standards, maintain the flow of data, protect employment and environmental rights and enable us to continue to co-operate in really important areas such as aviation, consumer safety, medicines and space research. Crucially, it would also gain us a place in the room when some future decisions are being taken. In the EEA, not all EU

agreement that we may seek to reach.

EEA/EFTA is also something the Brexit Committee said could be an alternative, and I just want to read what we said in our fourth report:

“Should the negotiations on a deep and special partnership not prove successful, EFTA/EEA membership remains an alternative and would have the advantage of continuity of access for UK services. The EEA option is available off-the-shelf and could be negotiated relatively quickly.”

For me, the other attraction of the Lords amendment is that it uses the word “enables”, not the word “requires”, referring to an agreement

“which enables the United Kingdom to continue to participate in the European Economic Area after exit day.”

In other words, it gives us a choice. Now, that may not be the definitive answer, although I note that several right hon. and hon. Members on the Conservative Benches have tabled a similar amendment to the Trade Bill, which we will come to later in the summer. However, at the moment, when we are not entirely sure what options we have available to us, it would be very unwise to discard this amendment.

I finish by making two points. First, to those who say that this would mean Britain staying in the European Union, I repeat what I said yesterday: we are leaving the European Union, as the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe acknowledged, at the end of March next year—that is what the referendum decided. Secondly, however, is anyone seriously arguing that Iceland, which is an EEA member, is a member of the European Union? It is not. So the argument holds no strength at all.

To finish, I somehow suspect that the EEA amendment may not survive the vote later today, but their lordships may come back with something in its place, and I hope that next time there is a proposal before us all of us who know just how much is at stake—now, here—will have the chance to rally round.

The day in the Chamber ended with an [Adjournment Debate](#) on Fois Gras Imports.

Thursday

The day began with [Questions](#) to the Secretary of State for Leaving the European Union. A very apt Department given the proceedings earlier in the week.

Galileo Programme

One of a number of unforeseen difficulties in the Brexit negotiations to emerge recently has been the question of Britain’s access to the Galileo Programme. This joint EU programme is an essential element to European Security and the UK would be seriously remiss not to retain its access. A concern I put to the Minister during this [Urgent Question](#).



[Mrs Madeleine Moon \(Bridgend\) \(Lab\)](#): This decision has immense implications for the security of our region, and it is frightening to think that our missile defence capability and our ISTAR capability could be damaged in this way. I commend the Minister for the tone in which he has responded to the debate this morning. It is imperative that that reasonable tone continues, as well as a recognition that Britain remains as committed as ever to NATO and the defence of Europe. This issue also has implications on further discussions that we will need on Permanent Structured Cooperation—PESCO—and the European Defence Fund. How does the Minister see our ability to let the Commission, and others across Europe, understand the grave implications for regional safety and security that this small-minded decision has led to?

***The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Guto Bebb):** I thank the hon. Lady for her kind words, and I commend her for her fantastic work on behalf of our armed forces and for her contribution to defence issues in this House. She rightly touches on the impact of this decision on the security of the whole of Europe, including the United Kingdom, and I hope that in bilateral discussions with colleagues in other countries, she will highlight the dangerous nature of this decision. She asked about the European Defence Fund. Bilateral discussions with my counterparts have indicated that they would like us still to be involved with that, and we have been clear that that is our intention. Does this decision throw doubt on that? I think the answer is yes. Will we carry on negotiating and discussing in a constructive manner because we believe strongly in the common defence of Europe? The answer to that is also yes and I hope the hon. Lady will continue to support us in our endeavours.*

A further [Urgent Question](#) on the job losses at Rolls Royce followed.

Business of the House

During [Business Questions](#) this week I raised the issue of the lease at MoD St Athan. It is up for renewal and concerns for job losses in the area are accompanying the indecision around the lease.

***Mrs Madeleine Moon (Bridgend) (Lab):** My constituents who work at MOD St Athan RAF School of Technical Training are concerned that little action is being taken to renew the lease. Their concerns are not only about job losses, but about defence security should the lease revert to the ownership of the Welsh Assembly Government, who obviously cannot provide the same level of security. May we have a statement from the MOD, please, about what steps the Defence Infrastructure Organisation or the defence school of technical training is taking in relation to the lease?*

***The Leader of the House of Commons (Andrea Leadsom):** I am grateful to the hon. Lady for her question; it is obviously very specific to her constituency. The Under-Secretary of State for Wales, my hon. Friend the Member for Pudsey (Stuart Andrew), who is with me on the Front Bench, is happy to take that up in the Wales Office to help her. With the disquiet from the SNP at PMQ's on Wednesday highlighting the disaffection in some parts of the House regarding the progress of the European Union Withdrawal Bill, the Government made a [Statement](#) on the Sewell Convention regarding devolved matters.*

After a Select Committee [Statement](#) on preparations for the World Cup, an application for an [Emergency Debate](#) on the Sewell Convention was made.

BackBench this week saw a pertinent [debate](#) commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the Windrush Generation.

The day in Chamber ended with an [Adjournment Debate](#) on Sound Reading System and Literacy.

Friday

Another sitting Friday saw several important Private Members Bills to be debated.

Mental Health Units (Use Of Force) Bill

An important piece of [legislation](#), which has received Government support. Now at Committee stage, the debate was open and frank with several amendments being voted on.

***Norman Lamb (North Norfolk) (LD):** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way. In my experience both from my time as a Minister and from talking to many people in mental health, restraint covers an enormous range of circumstances, from the very light-touch to very considerable force, including pinning people to the floor with face-down restraint, which was the action that led to the tragic death of Olaseni Lewis. It is not right to say that it cannot involve considerable force; it often does.*

***Philip Davies (Shipley) (Con):** The right hon. Gentleman certainly knows more about this subject than I do, and probably more than anybody in this House, and I commend him for that. Absolutely—I am certainly not saying that the use of restraint never involves the use of excessive force; it absolutely does. My point is that it often does not. To throw all these things in together by using the word “force” is not only not within the terminology generally used in mental health trusts, but slightly misleading given what the norm in this area is.*

Upskirting

Due to this being a sitting Friday the text of the final debate has not been uploaded to Hansard yet. However, despite Government support for the Bill to make upskirting illegal, a Conservative MP, Sir Christopher Chope, stood and talked out the Bill to jeers from all sides of the House including the Minister for Women.