



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 3, No. 3, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 18 May 2023

Note: (DT) signifies a decision taken at Decision Time.

The meeting opened at 11.40 am.

1. General Questions: Questions were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.

2. First Minister's Questions: Questions were answered by the First Minister (Humza Yousaf).

3. Supporting Foster Carers in the Workplace with Fostering Friendly Employers Scheme: The Parliament debated S6M-08721 in the name of Rona Mackay—That the Parliament recognises Foster Care Fortnight, taking place from 15 to 28 May 2023; notes the view that more flexible and supportive workplaces are needed, to assist foster carers in employment, and, in turn, encourage more working people to foster; understands that research carried out by the Fostering Network found that 41% of foster carers combine their role with other employment in Scotland, while 60% of foster carers said that a fostering-friendly HR policy would help them to work while fostering; believes that workplaces becoming Fostering Friendly Employers (FFE) helps to provide foster carers with additional support and raises awareness of the extra demands placed on them to nurture what it sees as some of the most vulnerable people in society; understands that there are presently 4,623 children in foster care in Scotland; is grateful for the 3,716 fostering families in this country and commends their hard work and the unconditional love that they give to the children in their care; understands that 500 more fostering families are needed; further understands that being part of the Fostering Network's FFE scheme ensures that foster carers have the opportunity for paid leave for training, respite, meetings and other requirements to fulfil what it sees as their vital role;

acknowledges that the theme during Foster Care Fortnight 2023 is Fostering Communities, and believes that being an FFE is a great example of how the wider fostering community can provide support, understanding and respect, which is entirely in line with The Promise.

4. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Education and Skills were answered by a Cabinet Secretary and Ministers.

5. Ministerial Statement: The Minister for Community Wealth and Public Finance (Tom Arthur) made a statement and answered questions on Delivery of the Agreed Recommendations of the Barclay Review of Non-domestic Rates.

6. Securing a Sustainable Food Supply for Scotland: The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands (Mairi Gougeon) moved S6M-09014— That the Parliament commends farmers and crofters, seafood and aquaculture industries, food manufacturers and producers for the role that they play at the heart of rural, coastal and island communities in contributing to Scotland's £15 billion food and drink industry; notes that the hard Brexit negotiated by the UK Government has created serious, long-term harms for the food and drink sector, creating labour shortages, new barriers to trade and failing to prioritise Scottish interests in third country trade deals; understands the growing impact that the climate emergency is having on food production in Scotland and globally, and applauds the progress that is already being made by the sector to adapt to, and mitigate, climate change; recognises the important work of the Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board, and the co-development of effective models to enable producers to produce while delivering for nature and the climate; welcomes the creation of a new, dedicated Food Security Unit as a result of the work of the Short-life Food Security and Supply Taskforce, established by the Scottish Government and industry to consider short- and long-term risks to food security; is concerned at current levels of food inflation; recognises that the UK Government holds the majority of powers and levers to support consumers and the food sector and urges it to act immediately to help them during the cost of living crisis, including with energy costs, and acknowledges that Scotland will need to further adapt how and what is grown and produced to address and mitigate climate change, as well as produce more food more sustainably, to meet Scotland's commitments to be a Good Food Nation now and in the future.

Rachael Hamilton moved amendment S6M-09014.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-09014 in the name of Mairi Gougeon (Securing a Sustainable Food Supply for Scotland), leave out from “for the role” to end and insert “, horticulturalists and the agritourism industry for the role that they play at the heart of rural, coastal and island communities in contributing to Scotland's £15 billion food and drink industry; notes the significant importance of the UK internal market in ensuring that Scottish farmers can maximise the benefits of their relationship with Scotland's closest trading partners in the rest of the UK, including access to a £30 billion agricultural market; understands the growing impact that the climate emergency is having on food production in Scotland and globally, and applauds the progress that is already being made by the sector to adapt to, and mitigate, climate change; recognises the value of the

recommendations from the farmer-led climate change groups, including the important work of the Suckler Beef Climate Group, as well as the work done by the Food and Agriculture Stakeholders Taskforce (FAST), and the Agricultural Industries Confederation, in developing well-evidenced strategies to enable food producers to reduce emissions and mitigate climate change without compromising production; understands that proposals have recently been launched by the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, which would support Scotland's rural communities to secure jobs, livelihoods, and a viable future for farmers, crofters and fishermen, placing food production at the heart of the new Agriculture Bill, whilst investing in producers to keep food prices affordable for consumers, allowing farmers to produce more top-quality food in Scotland, whilst bringing in more local jobs for processing and transport and bolstering support for technology, including genetic technology and innovation, to help improve the UK's world-leading standards on health, the environment and animal welfare; notes that Putin's invasion of Ukraine has resulted in global food inflation; recognises that the UK Government has recently announced steps to mitigate this, including a review of fairness in horticulture and egg supply chains, and welcomes the £2 million investment in boosting agricultural exports and £1 million for boosting seafood exports, in addition to the previously-announced £100 million Seafood Fund and £42.2 million for fisheries funding.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 28, Against 83, Abstentions 0).

Rhoda Grant moved amendment S6M-09014.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-09014 in the name of Mairi Gougeon (Securing a Sustainable Food Supply for Scotland), insert at end “; believes that it is unacceptable in the 21st century, in a resource rich nation, that so many people are living in food poverty and relying on food banks; notes that many of those who are living in food poverty are those who work in the food industry; urges more action on addressing low pay, zero-hours contracts and insecure work for those producing Scottish food; recognises the powers that the Scottish Government has that could be used to mitigate the cost of living crisis; believes that food production and a sustainable environment can work hand in hand for the benefit of both, and do not need to be at the expense of one or the other, and further believes that the right to food should be enshrined in Scots law, and that the Scottish Food Commission should be empowered to realise that policy urgently.”

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 83, Against 28, Abstentions 0).

Beatrice Wishart moved amendment S6M-09014.3—

As an amendment to motion S6M-09014 in the name of Mairi Gougeon (Securing a Sustainable Food Supply for Scotland), insert at end “; recognises the high-quality and nutritious food that the fishery and aquaculture industries provide, the importance of producing fish and shellfish sustainably, and the

interdependence of rural businesses; notes with concern that these sectors, major contributors to Scotland's food industry and the livelihoods of coastal and island communities, are at risk of disruption from Brexit, unreliable ferry services and the Scottish Government's approach to Highly Protected Marine Area proposals, and calls on the Scottish Government to guarantee that any work that directly affects coastal and island communities should always be undertaken in partnership with them to ensure that livelihoods are protected.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 49, Against 62, Abstentions 0).

The motion, as amended, was then agreed to ((DT) by division: For 83, Against 28, Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament commends farmers and crofters, seafood and aquaculture industries, food manufacturers and producers for the role that they play at the heart of rural, coastal and island communities in contributing to Scotland's £15 billion food and drink industry; notes that the hard Brexit negotiated by the UK Government has created serious, long-term harms for the food and drink sector, creating labour shortages, new barriers to trade and failing to prioritise Scottish interests in third country trade deals; understands the growing impact that the climate emergency is having on food production in Scotland and globally, and applauds the progress that is already being made by the sector to adapt to, and mitigate, climate change; recognises the important work of the Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board, and the co-development of effective models to enable producers to produce while delivering for nature and the climate; welcomes the creation of a new, dedicated Food Security Unit as a result of the work of the Short-life Food Security and Supply Taskforce, established by the Scottish Government and industry to consider short- and long-term risks to food security; is concerned at current levels of food inflation; recognises that the UK Government holds the majority of powers and levers to support consumers and the food sector and urges it to act immediately to help them during the cost of living crisis, including with energy costs; acknowledges that Scotland will need to further adapt how and what is grown and produced to address and mitigate climate change, as well as produce more food more sustainably, to meet Scotland's commitments to be a Good Food Nation now and in the future; believes that it is unacceptable in the 21st century, in a resource rich nation, that so many people are living in food poverty and relying on food banks; notes that many of those who are living in food poverty are those who work in the food industry; urges more action on addressing low pay, zero-hours contracts and insecure work for those producing Scottish food; recognises the powers that the Scottish Government has that could be used to mitigate the cost of living crisis; believes that food production and a sustainable environment can work hand in hand for the benefit of both, and do not need to be at the expense of one or the other, and further believes that the right to food should be enshrined in Scots law, and that the Scottish Food Commission should be empowered to realise that policy urgently.

7. Decision Time: The Parliament took a decision on item 6 as noted above.

The meeting closed at 5.11 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
18 May 2023

Appendix

(Note: this Appendix does not form part of the Minutes)

Subordinate Legislation

Laid Only Instruments

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 18 May 2023 and is not subject to any parliamentary procedure—

Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021 (Commencement No. 3) Regulations 2023 (SSI 2023/148 (C.16))

laid under section 30(2) of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

Other Documents

The following document was laid before the Parliament on 18 May 2023 and is not subject to parliamentary procedure—

A Report to Scottish Ministers: Contingency Planning Arrangements for Industrial Action in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SG/2023/86)

laid under Section 43D(4) of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005

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