

PRIME MINISTER

The Prime Minister was asked —

Engagements

Daisy Cooper (St Albans) (LD): If he will list his official engagements for Wednesday 10 March.

The Prime Minister (Boris Johnson): The whole House can be proud of the UK's vaccination programme, with more than 22.5 million people now having received their first dose across the UK. We can also be proud of the support the UK has given to the international Covid response, including the £548 million we have donated to COVAX. I therefore wish to correct the suggestion from the European Council President that the UK has blocked vaccine exports. Let me be clear: we have not blocked the export of a single Covid-19 vaccine or vaccine components. This pandemic has put us all on the same side in the battle for global health. We oppose vaccine nationalism in all its forms. I trust that Members in all parts of the House will join me in rejecting this suggestion and in calling on all our partners to work together to tackle this pandemic.

This morning, I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall have further such meetings later today.

Daisy Cooper: The Government are throwing a staggering £37 billion at a test and trace system that we know has made barely any difference, yet they say they cannot afford to give more than a pitiful 1% pay rise to NHS workers. The Prime Minister has said that he owes his life to them. He stood on the steps of No. 10 and applauded them. So will the Prime Minister do more than pay lip service? Will he pay them the wage that they deserve?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Lady is indeed right that we owe a huge amount to our nurses — an incalculable debt — which is why I am proud that we have delivered a 12.8% increase in the starting salary of nurses and are asking the pay review body to look at increasing their pay, exceptionally of all the professions in the public sector. As for test and trace, it is thanks to NHS Test and Trace that we are able to send kids back to school and to begin cautiously and irreversibly to reopen our economy and restart our lives.

Mr Gagan Mohindra (Southwest Hertfordshire) (Con): I recently visited Long Marston, Bovingdon, Rickmansworth and Berkhamsted to see the damage that flooding caused to our communities at first hand. Will the Prime Minister assure this House that as the weather gets better we will not lose the momentum of finding long-term, sustainable solutions to prevent flooding in the future and to give residents the security they deserve all year round, irrespective of the weather outside?

The Prime Minister: I thank my hon. Friend for what he is doing to campaign for his local area on flood defences. I thank the Environment Agency for the tireless, imaginative and creative work it does to find solutions, and we are investing £5.2 billion to build 2,000 new flood defences over the next six years.

Keir Starmer (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab): Who does the Prime Minister think deserves a pay rise more: an NHS nurse or Dominic Cummings?

The Prime Minister: As I told the hon. Member for St Albans (Daisy Cooper) earlier on, we owe a massive debt as a society, and I do personally, to the nurses of our NHS. That is why we have asked the public sector pay review body, exceptionally, to look at their pay. I want to stress, however, that, as the House knows, starting salaries for nurses have gone up by 12.8% over the last three years, and it is thanks to the package that this Government have put in place that we now have 10,600 more nurses in our NHS than there were one year ago and 60,000 more in training.

Keir Starmer: The Prime Minister says nurses' pay has gone up; I know he is desperate to distance himself from the Conservatives' record over the last decade, but as he well knows, since 2010 nurses' pay has fallen in real terms by more than £800. And he did not answer my question — it was a very simple question. The Prime Minister has been talking about affordability; he could afford to give Dominic Cummings a 40% pay rise. He could afford that; now, he is asking NHS nurses to take a real-terms pay cut. How on earth does he justify that?

The Prime Minister: I repeat the point that I have made: I believe that we all owe a massive debt to our nurses and, indeed, all our healthcare workers and social care workers. One of the things that they tell me when I go to hospitals, as I know the right hon. and learned Gentleman does too, is that in addition to pay one of their top concerns is to have more colleagues on the wards to help them with the undoubted stress and strains of the pandemic. That is why we

have provided another £5,000 in bursaries for nurses and another £3,000 to help with the particular costs of training and with childcare. It is because of that package that this year we are seeing another 34% increase in applications for nurses. This Government of this party of the NHS are on target to deliver 50,000 more nurses in our NHS.

Keir Starmer: The Prime Minister talks about recruitment; there are currently 40,000 nursing vacancies and 7,000 doctors' vacancies. How on earth does he think a pay cut is going to help to solve that? Frankly, I would take the Prime Minister a bit more seriously if he had not spent £2.6 million of taxpayers' money on a Downing Street TV studio, or £200,000 on new wallpaper for his flat. They say that charity starts at home, but I think the Prime Minister is taking it a bit too literally. Let me try something very simple: does the Prime Minister accept that NHS staff will be hundreds of pounds worse off a year because of last week's Budget?

The Prime Minister: No. Of course, we will look at what the independent pay review body has to say, exceptionally, about the nursing profession, whom we particularly value, but the right hon. and learned Gentleman should also know, and reflect to the House, that under this Government we not only began with a record increase in NHS funding of £33.9 billion, but because of the pandemic we have put another £63 billion into supporting our NHS, on top of the £140 billion of in-year spending. It is because of this Government that in one year alone there are another 49,000 people working in our NHS. That is something that is of massive benefit not just to patients but to hard-pressed nurses as well.

Keir Starmer: My mum was a nurse; my sister was a nurse; my wife works in the NHS — I know what it means to work for the NHS. When I clapped for carers, I meant it; the Prime Minister clapped for carers, then he shut the door in their face at the first opportunity. The more you look at the Prime Minister's decision, the worse it gets, because it is not just a pay cut; it is a broken promise, too. Time and time again he said that the NHS would not pay the price for this pandemic. Two years ago, he made a promise to the NHS in black and white: his document commits to a minimum pay rise of 2.1%. It has been budgeted for, and now it is being taken away. *[Interruption.]* The Prime Minister shakes his head. His MPs voted for it, so why, after everything the NHS has done for us, is he now breaking promise after promise?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. and learned Gentleman voted against the document in question, which just crowns the absurdity of his point. Under this

Government we have massively increased funding for our amazing NHS, with the result that, as I say, there are 6,500 more doctors this year than there were last year, 18,000 more healthcare workers and 10,600 more nurses. We are going to deliver our promises — I can tell the right hon. and learned Gentleman that — and we are going to go on and build 40 more hospitals and recruit 50,000 more nurses, and we are going to get on and deliver on our pledges to the British people. We are going to do that because of our sound management of the economy and the fastest vaccine roll-out programme of any comparable country which, frankly, if we had followed his precept and his ideas, we would certainly not have been able to achieve.

Keir Starmer: The Prime Minister says that he voted for it; he did. Now he has ripped it up — 2.1% ripped up. If he will not listen to me, he should listen to what his own Conservative MPs are saying about this. This is from his own side. This is what they say — behind you, Prime Minister. “It’s inept.” “It’s unacceptable.” “It’s pathetic.” These are Conservative MPs talking about the Prime Minister’s pay cut for nurses, and that was before his answers today. Perhaps the most telling of all the comments came from another MP, sitting behind him, who said: “The public just hear ‘1 per cent’ and think how mean we are.” Even his own MPs know that he has got this wrong. Why is he going ahead with it?

The Prime Minister: What the public know is that we have increased starting pay for nurses by 12.8% over the past three years. They know that, in the past year, this Government have put another £5,000 bursary into the pockets of nurses, because we support them, as well as the £3,000 extra for training. It is very important that the public sector pay review body should come back with its proposals, and we will, of course, study them. As I say, it is thanks to the investment made by this Government that there are 49,000 more people in the NHS this year than last year. That means that there are 10,600 more nurses helping to relieve the burden on our hard-pressed nurses. That is what this Government are investing in.

Keir Starmer: The Prime Minister says, “We support them. We’ll reward them.” He is cutting their pay. *[Interruption.]* “Not true”, he says. Prime Minister, a 1% rise versus a 1.7% inflation rise is a real-terms cut. If he does not understand that, we really are in trouble. Mr Speaker, the Government promised honesty, but the truth is that they can afford to give Dominic Cummings a 40% pay rise, and they cannot afford to reward the NHS properly. The mask really is slipping, and we can see what the Conservative party now stands for: cutting pay for

nurses; putting taxes up on families. He has had the opportunity to change course, but he has refused to do so. If he so determined to cut NHS pay, will he at least show some courage and put it to a vote in this Parliament?

The Prime Minister: The last time that we put this to a vote, the right hon. and learned Gentleman voted against it, as I said before. We are increasing pay for nurses. We are massively increasing our investment in the NHS. We are steering a steady course, whereas he weaves and wobbles from one week to the next. One week he is attacking us and saying that we should be doing more testing, and the next week he is denouncing us for spending money on testing. One week he calls for a faster roll-out of PPE, and the next week he is saying that we spent too much. He has to make up his mind. One week, he calls for a faster vaccination roll-out when he actually voted — although he claims to have forgotten it — to stay in the European Medicines Agency. Perhaps he would like to confirm that he voted to stay in the European Medicines Agency, which would have made that vaccine roll-out impossible. We vaccinate and get on with delivering for the people of this country. We vaccinate, he vacillates, and that is the difference.

Scott Benton (Blackpool South) (Con): The incredible success of our vaccination programme, for which the Prime Minister and this Government deserve immense credit, now means that tourism businesses in Blackpool can look forward to a successful summer season when the economy reopens. When the time is right, will the Prime Minister support a campaign encouraging people to holiday here in the UK this summer, and will he join me in Blackpool to launch that campaign and to showcase everything that we have to offer?

The Prime Minister: I will look very carefully at my diary to see whether I can actually get up to Blackpool. I have many happy memories of joyful evenings spectating at the illuminations of Blackpool. I know that Blackpool will play an important part in the tourism recovery that we hope to see this summer if we continue on our road map.

Kirsten Oswald (East Renfrewshire) (SNP): Yesterday, the Prime Minister published his plans for an Erasmus replacement, without any consultation or discussion with the devolved Governments. The replacement scheme offers lower living support, no travel support and no tuition fee support. Why are this Tory Government taking opportunities away from our young people?

The Prime Minister: That was a delightfully concise question, but the hon. Member is wrong about the difference between Erasmus and the Turing project. Unlike the Erasmus scheme, which overwhelmingly went to kids from better-off homes, the Turing project is designed to help kids across the country, of all income groups, get to fantastic universities around the world.

Kirsten Oswald: That is just not the case. We know that we cannot trust a word that the Prime Minister says on this. He told us that there was no threat to the Erasmus scheme, but he clearly will not match EU levels of support. And it is not just us saying it; his own Scottish colleague, the hon. Member for West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine (Andrew Bowie), told the BBC last week that young people will not benefit from Brexit. The Government have saddled a generation with tuition fee debt, and are now closing the door on Erasmus. It is no wonder that students are choosing the SNP and independence for a prosperous future. Prime Minister, will you think again, do the right thing, engage with our EU friends and re-join Erasmus?

Mr Speaker: May I just remind Members not to use “you”?

The Prime Minister: I think students should choose the Turing project because it is fantastic and reaches out across the whole country. I believe, by the way, that they should reject the SNP — a Scottish nationalist party, Mr Speaker — because it is failing the people of Scotland, failing to deliver on education, failing on crime and failing on the economy. I hope very much that the people of Scotland will go for common sense. Instead of endlessly going on about constitutional issues and endlessly campaigning for a referendum, which is the last thing the people of this country need right now, I think people want a Government who focus on the issues that matter to them, including a fantastic international education scheme like Turing.

Jeremy Wright (Kenilworth and Southam) (Con): My right hon. Friend will recognise that while Covid restrictions have been in place, children have not only had to learn online rather than in the classroom, but have also missed out on cultural, artistic and sporting activities with their peers. At the same time, cultural, artistic and sporting organisations have remained restricted in what they can do, and, despite the considerable help offered to them, are still in need of Government support. Will he consider how we might put those two things together and provide for enrichment activities that are available to all young people over the coming months, funded by the Government and provided not

by hard-pressed teachers, but by our outstanding culture and sport sectors while they are unable to reopen to the wider public?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. and learned Friend has been a great champion of the arts and culture sectors, and he is completely right about the role that they can play for young people in the recovery. That is why we hope that the massive £2 billion recovery fund that we have given to thousands of theatres, orchestras, choirs, music venues and others will be used for the benefit and the cultural enrichment of young people up and down the country.

Colum Eastwood (Foyle) (SDLP): The Prime Minister's fantasy bridge to Northern Ireland could cost £33 billion — this, while our road and rail networks have been absolutely decimated from decades of underinvestment. The Conservative party got a grand total of 2,399 votes at the last Assembly election. What mandate does he think he has to override the democratically elected people of Northern Ireland to impose a bridge that goes through miles of unexploded munitions and radioactive waste?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Member had read the article I wrote this morning in *The Daily Telegraph*, he would have seen that the things that we have set out in the Hendy review will be of massive benefit to Northern Ireland. That includes upgrading the A75, which is the single biggest thing that people in Northern Ireland wanted, by the way, and which the Scottish nationalists — the Scottish National party — have totally failed to do. The review also includes better connections east-west within Northern Ireland, which we should be doing, and better connections north-south within the island of Ireland. It is a fantastic Union connectivity review. The hon. Member should appreciate it; it is the way forward. I am amazed, frankly, by his negativity.

Paul Holmes (Eastleigh) (Con): Despite the claims of Eastleigh Liberal Democrats, my constituents will be delighted to know that the concrete section of the M27 will start to be resurfaced this summer. Does the Prime Minister agree that this shows that it is Conservative Governments who invest in infrastructure and that if elected in May Conservative candidates like Jerry Hall will deliver for the people of Eastleigh, Hedge End and West End?

The Prime Minister: That is absolutely true. It is Conservative Governments who invest in Eastleigh; it is Conservative Governments putting £640 billion into an infrastructure revolution. I congratulate Jerry Hall on what he is doing to

resurface the road and to make it quieter, and I hope that he will be duly elected in May.

David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP): In extending the £20 uplift to universal credit, which we welcomed at the beginning of the pandemic, the Prime Minister was clearly conceding that social security support in the UK is inadequate, so while I welcome the fact that it has been extended for six months, I would like to see it being made permanent. But can he tell the House why, if it was so inadequate, it was not extended to those on legacy benefits, such as disabled people?

The Prime Minister: Throughout the pandemic we have done whatever we can to look after people throughout the country, whether those on benefits or those who have lost their jobs, sadly, because of the pandemic. I am very proud of what universal credit has been able to achieve, and I think that the hon. Gentleman should perhaps take it up with his friends in the Labour party who actually want to abolish universal credit.

Lia Nici (Great Grimsby) (Con): Last week Grimsby celebrated the Chancellor's announcements of the towns fund and the Humber freeport, and it is clear to the people of Grimsby that this Government are determined not to neglect the town like Labour predecessors. Our next challenge is to raise skills and educational achievements in the town. Will the Prime Minister outline how people can take advantage of the new lifetime skills guarantee that he is launching next month?

The Prime Minister: The fantastic thing about the lifetime skills guarantee is that in very, very tough circumstances, with many people having, I am afraid inevitably, to seek new jobs and to find ways of retraining, as will happen in a changing economy, it offers everybody — adults over 23 — the opportunity of £3,000 for an A-level-equivalent qualification. I think it will be absolutely instrumental in helping young people of beyond school age to retrain and get the jobs they need. The lifetime skills guarantee: it is the first time it has been done.

Claire Hanna (Belfast South) (SDLP): It takes 16,000 dedicated nurses to staff Northern Ireland's health service, costing around £380 million per year. That is less than 2% of UK sales for just one internet giant, Amazon, whose revenues doubled during lockdown. What possible reason can the Prime Minister and his Chancellor, who both talked about the need to pay for this pandemic, have to

not apply a modest windfall tax on those businesses who have benefited so much from the pandemic, in order to properly pay those staff who worked so hard to bring us through the pandemic?

The Prime Minister: Actually, I think that the hon. Lady is making an important point about the discrepancy in the tax paid by some online businesses and some concrete businesses. That is an issue that the Chancellor is trying to address in an equitable way, working with colleagues in the G7 and around the world.

Mrs Sheryll Murray (South East Cornwall) (Con): We have seen the disgraceful way the EU has responded to UK fish exports. Part of the answer is for UK consumers to buy British fish. As chairman of the all-party parliamentary group on fisheries, could I invite the Prime Minister to join a fantastic British chef to show us how easy it is to prepare and cook a dish using British-caught fish?

The Prime Minister: I am very happy to take up my hon. Friend's suggestion. I am not the greatest chef myself, but I have made, and can make, from memory, a fish pie with haddock and prawns, which I undertake to do.

Mr Speaker: British haddock.

Kate Osamor (Edmonton) (Lab/Co-op): People like my constituent, Tessa Stevens, have had to keep their salons shut despite shrinking Government support, unchanged overheads and decreased profits. I am urgently seeking the Prime Minister's support to protect the immediate and long-term recovery of beauty businesses and the jobs they support. Will the Prime Minister explain why his Government refuse to listen to the beauty industry, which is calling for VAT to be temporarily reduced to 5% for hair and beauty businesses, similar to what has happened to businesses in other sectors such as hospitality, tourism and culture?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Lady is absolutely right in what she says about the importance of beauty businesses. They do an amazing job, and we want them to bounce back very strongly from the pandemic. I want high-street beauty salons to be opening up in the way that they were in the past, rather than people going round and giving services and cutting hair at home. It is very important that we revive high-street salons, and that is why we are continuing with the cautious, but irreversible road map out of this, which will enable a full recovery for the entire sector. In the meantime, as she knows, the Chancellor has extended furlough and all the other provisions that are necessary.

Chris Loder (West Dorset) (Con): May I warmly welcome the Union connectivity review that has been announced this morning? It is brilliant news to connect the whole of the UK, but in West Dorset, we have single-track railway lines. We have a three-hourly rail frequency, yet we have the highest level of roadside pollution anywhere in the UK. Will my right hon. Friend kindly support a levelling up rail proposal that will not only look to support West Dorset, but also some of the most deprived areas in the south-west?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend knows whereof he speaks. He is probably one of the greatest experts on railways in this House, and we are certainly determined to follow his lead and to upgrade services in the west country and in Dorset. He knows what is happening at Dawlish and elsewhere. Network Rail has identified proposals, including the improvement of the performance of the west of England line, which is currently being assessed. He is knocking at an open door.

Dan Carden (Liverpool, Walton) (Lab): Back in 2012, commissioning for alcohol and drug addiction treatment was taken out of the NHS and handed to local authorities, and those services are now overwhelmed after a decade of cuts and fragmentation. Last year, the UK recorded the highest number of alcohol-specific deaths since records began. Addiction is an illness that can be treated, so will the Prime Minister urgently investigate the rise in deaths and bring addiction treatment back into the NHS within mental health services and give it the funding it requires?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman is entirely right to draw attention to the importance of addiction treatment and its relationship to mental health, and that is why the Government are investing record sums in mental health — £13.3 billion — and treatment for alcoholism is of course part of that.

Theo Clarke (Stafford) (Con): I have seen first-hand, visiting both St George's Hospital and County Hospital in Stafford, the great work being done to support people, including veterans, with their mental health. Does my right hon. Friend agree that, sadly, the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to have had a negative impact on people's mental health, and will he commit to working with me and the Stafford mental health network to improve and increase mental health provision in Stafford?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I am certainly very happy to discuss that with my hon. Friend, or to make sure she gets access to the relevant ministerial authority. What we are doing, in addition to the £13.3 billion I spoke of, is supporting mental health charities throughout the pandemic, and in particular focusing on the mental health needs of children and young people. That is why I appointed Dr Alex George to be our youth mental health ambassador.

Karin Smyth (Bristol South) (Lab): This Government are failing young people. Before the pandemic, apprenticeship starts were down by 28% for under-19s and £330 million of unspent levy went back to the Treasury, falling short by 81% in creating the promised 100,000 new apprenticeships. This month, I will be holding my fifth apprenticeships and jobs fair in Bristol South. Will the Prime Minister join me in urging all young people to support that fair, and will he apologise to them for failing them so far?

The Prime Minister: I think that jobs fairs are an important thing, and I know that colleagues across the House do them, but I also think that the Government can be proud of our record in getting record numbers of young people into employment. We now face a very severe problem caused by the pandemic, which we are addressing not just with the lifetime skills guarantee that I mentioned earlier with but the kickstart funds and the restart funds, with £2 billion going into kickstart alone, to help young people into the jobs that they need.

Damien Moore (Southport) (Con): After putting in a fantastic bid, Southport last week got a £37.5million town deal. That will be transformational and represents the levelling-up agenda of the Prime Minister and this Conservative Government. When his diary allows, will he come to Southport to see these projects as they unfold and the impact they will have on the lives of my constituents?

The Prime Minister: Yes, indeed. I am told that the boulevard of light on Lord Street rivals the Champs-Élysées itself, and I will certainly keep my hon. Friend's invitation in mind.

Alison McGovern (Wirral South) (Lab): In this House, we all know the importance of the people who have looked after our vulnerable loved ones over the past year when we have been unable to do so, so will the Prime Minister explain to me why in this country we have 375,000 care workers on zero-hours contracts?

The Prime Minister: I am proud of what the Government have done to increase the wages of care workers across the country, with record increases in the living wage. This country is unlike most other countries in the world in the speed with which we have vaccinated care home workers and their elderly charges.

James Grundy (Leigh) (Con): I thank the Prime Minister for his commitment to levelling up the north, the benefits of which we are already beginning to see, with a £15million allocation from the Government's transforming cities fund enabling the plans to reopen Golborne station in my constituency to progress. Will the Prime Minister not only welcome that progress but back my campaign to reopen Kenyon Junction railway station, which will help unlock the potential of Leigh, provide my constituents with a vital rail connection between Liverpool and Manchester, and ensure that Leigh is no longer one of the largest towns in the UK without a railway station?

The Prime Minister: I am very happy to support my hon. Friend's initiative, and I understand that Golborne, which he represents, was the sight of the world's first railway junction.

Alyn Smith (Stirling) (SNP): Anthony Jones, a ferociously bright student at Stirling University, was looking to do a master's degree in Amsterdam. Pre- Brexit, the course fees were £2,168. Post Brexit, the fees are £14,600. The Turing scheme will not touch the sides of what is necessary. Would the Prime Minister like to apologise to Anthony and countless hundreds of thousands of students like him for limiting their life horizons against their will?

The Prime Minister: No, because I think that the Turing scheme is fairer and will enable students on lower incomes to have access to great courses around the world. I believe it is a highly beneficial reform of the way we do this, and it is truly global in its ambitions.

Jack Brereton (Stoke-on-Trent South) (Con): With a new station at Meir, investment in Longton station and restoration of the Stoke to Leek line, does my right hon. Friend agree that investment from this Government has the potential to reverse the Beeching cuts, restore our local railways in Stoke-on-Trent and cement our position as one of the best-connected places in the whole UK?

The Prime Minister: Yes. I thank my hon. Friend; I know that he supported the bid for the reinstatement of the Stoke to Leek line. That is currently being

assessed by the Department for Transport as one of the Beeching reversals, which are so popular around the country and so right, and he can expect an outcome in the summer.

Dan Jarvis (Barnsley Central) (Lab): If the Prime Minister is serious about levelling up the country, does he honestly think that favouring the Chancellor's Richmondshire constituency over Barnsley for financial support is the best way to do it?

The Prime Minister: We are devoted to levelling up across the entire country, and that goes for Barnsley as well as everywhere else.

Chris Grayling (Epsom and Ewell) (Con): I know that the Prime Minister shares my commitment to conservation around the world, and I am sure he agrees that we have to reverse the tide of deforestation. Will he ask Ministers in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to look seriously at my proposals for a kitemark scheme for food products in the UK, so that consumers can see clearly whether the products they buy come from sustainable sources or from producers who are doing further damage to our environment?

The Prime Minister: I am very happy to look at my right hon. Friend's interesting suggestion for a kitemark scheme. In the meantime, this Government are leading the world in tackling deforestation, with a £3 billion investment being led across Whitehall.

Jonathan Ashworth (Leicester South) (Lab/Co-op): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Is the point of order relevant to Prime Minister's questions?

Jonathan Ashworth: It is indeed, Mr Speaker. The Prime Minister has twice, from that Dispatch Box, said that the Labour Opposition voted against the NHS Funding Bill and the 2.1% increase for NHS staff. This is not the case. Indeed, in the debate, as *Hansard* will show, I was explicit that we would not divide the House. Can you, Mr Speaker, use your good offices to get the Prime Minister to return to the House to correct the record? And do you agree that if the Prime Minister wants to cut nurses' pay, he should have the courage of his convictions and bring a vote back to the House?

Mr Speaker: May I just say that that is not a point of order? It is certainly a point of clarification, and that part has been achieved. But I am certainly not going to be drawn into a debate, as the shadow Secretary of State well knows. I will now suspend the House for three minutes to enable the necessary arrangements for the next business to be made.

12.35 pm Sitting suspended.