

Scottish Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: Demography of Scotland and the implications of devolution, HC 82

Wednesday 19 October 2016

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 19 October 2016.

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Members present: Pete Wishart (Chair); Deidre Brock; Mr Christopher Chope; Margaret Ferrier; Chris Law; Ian Murray; John Stevenson.

Questions 313-363

Witnesses

I: Rt Hon. David Mundell MP, Secretary of State for Scotland, and Robert Goodwill MP, Minister of State for Immigration.



Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Rt Hon. David Mundell MP, Secretary of State for Scotland, and Robert Goodwill MP, Minister of State for Immigration.

Q313 **Chair:** We are grateful to both of you turning up. For the record, if you could introduce yourselves and make any opening statements in reply to the terms of reference that we have for this inquiry. We will start with you, Mr Goodwill.

Mr Goodwill: I am Robert Goodwill, the Minister of State at the Home Office and Minister for Immigration. I will pass over to my colleague here to make an opening statement.

David Mundell: Thank you, Mr Wishart. I will make a very short opening statement. I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before the Committee again today, along with Mr Goodwill. Obviously it is for the Committee to determine how they place their questions, but in general terms he will speak on the migration issues and I will address the other issues that you seek to raise, including Brexit no doubt.

I can confirm that the Government today published their response to your post-study work scheme report. I apologise for the delay of that response, but as I hope you will appreciate, the EU referendum, a change of Government and change of ministerial responsibilities all contributed to that. I should also say the Government have announced a consultation on non-EU work and study visas to ensure that the UK continues to attract the brightest and best.

In relation to this evidence session, can I begin by saying that I fully accept Scotland needs inward migration to continue to prosper? I recognise the great contribution that generations of migrants from other parts of the UK and outwith the UK have made to the socioeconomic wellbeing of Scotland. The Scottish Government do, of course, already have a variety of policy levers at their disposal to encourage more individuals and families to move to Scotland for work and ultimately to settle, such as economic development and support for enterprise, education and workforce training, health and social care, digital connectivity and transport. In addition the Scottish Parliament has recently taken on new tax-raising powers that have the potential to be used to shape the working-age population in Scotland in line with local needs.

There is a legitimate question—why, with the high levels of migration we have at the moment in the UK, Scotland is unable to attract what the Scottish Government feel are the sufficient numbers of people required to come to Scotland. I do not dispute it is a challenge. The Immigration Minister and I are here today to show the UK Government's willingness to work with the Scottish Government to harness the resources and talent available to encourage and support people to remain, visit or settle in Scotland and contribute to the future vitality of our nation.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Based on what was discussed at last month's evidence session, however, it would appear that so far the Scottish Government's thinking has not advanced far beyond resurrecting a post-study work system for Scotland. The UK Government have set out reasons for scepticism in that regard in the response published today. If the Scottish Government are giving other thought to how they can make best use of the powers and resources available to achieve their stated population growth targets, we would be very interested in seeing their analysis so that we can consider how else the UK Government can contribute and support their work.

Q314 **Chair:** We are very grateful, Secretary of State. We did indeed get your response to the post-study work scheme. Unfortunately the Committee has not had an opportunity to examine that yet. If we get that chance next week we will get back to you again. Thank you very much for that and thank you for your introduction.

Can I start with a very simple and basic question? Do both of you accept that Scotland has different immigration, population and demographic concerns to the rest of the United Kingdom?

David Mundell: I think there are specific issues in Scotland that apply to other parts of the United Kingdom. As a totality, we have a set of needs across the whole of the United Kingdom. There are areas in England and Wales, for example, that have very similar issues to the issues that this Committee has been investigating in relation to Scotland.

Q315 **Chair:** Do you accept that as a nation, just looking across the range of our immigration requirements and demographic challenges and a sluggish population growth, it is different from the United Kingdom in terms of what we need to do and how we approach this?

David Mundell: If you are asking me if I think that Scotland needs a different immigration system to the rest of the UK—

Chair: That is not what I am asking.

David Mundell—then, as you would anticipate my answer to that question, no. I think that within Scotland—and I am sure that this is what your work will importantly touch on—there are important differences. There are areas of growth in population in Scotland. Those of us who are Scottish MPs can see that reflected today, as the Boundary Commission have had to take into account significant population movement within Scotland or areas of Scotland where there is growth in the population and areas of Scotland where population is declining. I think overall the issues that Scotland face are reflected elsewhere within the United Kingdom, but clearly there are specifics within Scotland, such as population density. The population density within Scotland is significantly less than other parts of the United Kingdom and that is self-evident.

Q316 **Chair:** I recognise that there are distinct difficulties and challenges for Scotland compared to the rest of the United Kingdom. I think I was hearing that from you. I do not know if the Immigration Minister has a view about this. You are in this job and you represent the whole of the United Kingdom. Have you recognised or detected that there does seem



HOUSE OF COMMONS

to be a different set of agendas for Scotland when it comes to immigration, population and demography than the rest of the UK?

Mr Goodwill: If you look at the demographics of Scotland compared to England, you will see projections of slower population growth in Scotland compared to the UK. That point has been made by many north of the border. But if you look regionally at England, there are parts of England that bear much more relation to Scotland.

Q317 **Chair:** Could I stop both of you with this just now? I am not particularly interested in regionally. This is the Scottish Affairs Committee. What we are here to try to establish and determine is an inquiry about Scotland's immigration, population and demographic growth. I know it is important to compare and contrast Scotland to the rest of the United Kingdom, but you are the Minister responsible for immigration throughout the whole of the United Kingdom. What we are looking for you to identify and acknowledge is that there is a different range of issues in Scotland than the rest of the UK. You can say that is the case or not, but we were wondering if you do acknowledge that, first of all.

Mr Goodwill: At the risk of being shot down in flames again, England is made up of a number of parts. You have London and the south-east, where there is tremendous pressure in terms of the economy, people have been drawn in from all parts of the UK and Europe, but you have other parts of the UK where many of the issues affecting Scotland are very much the same. In the north-east, where I come from, there are areas that have exactly the same type of problem that they have in Scotland. Of course we must not be distracted from the point that immigration is something that tends to be demand-led. It is led by good universities attracting students, by jobs being created, both in the high-skill sector, where we can bring people in from outside the EU, and in the low-skill sector, in agriculture, fishing and the hospitality industry, where people have come from the rest of the EU. But I would agree with my right hon. Friend here that having a separate immigration policy for Scotland is not something that we feel would be appropriate.

Q318 **Chair:** The Scottish Government have a population target to match the EU15 in population growth from 2007 to 2017. We questioned the Scottish Government Minister about how this may be achieved. Do you believe that is the right priority for Scotland, to meet the average growth across Europe? Is that something that the Scottish Government should set themselves as a target?

David Mundell: I accept the Scottish Government have every right to set that target. I want to see an end to population decline in parts of Scotland, but I do not believe that setting a target will simply achieve the outcome, particularly if that target cannot achieve a distribution within Scotland. I will give you, if I may, an example from within Scotland, Mr Wishart. I represent part of Dumfries and Galloway. There are very significant population changes with Dumfries and Galloway. The west of Dumfries and Galloway is projected to significantly decline in population, while the east has grown to an extent. I don't think a target in itself will



HOUSE OF COMMONS

necessarily achieve that, because one of the key reasons that the council and Scottish Enterprise and others identify as being the difficulty for the west of the region is connectivity. It is the connectivity, the poor road infrastructure to the west, the poor access to broadband and other things that makes people feel that area is isolated, remote and less attractive to go to. While a target has a place, unless there is a whole myriad of other actions taken, I do not think that it will achieve its objective fully.

Q319 Chair: We are grateful for that. We want to touch on some of the rurality issues; we will come with questions on that.

This is more of an observation and I would like your response to this. I spoke on home affairs issues for my party for years and years and years. One of the things that always struck me is when we had to give the announcement for population figures. In this place, if we hear of a substantially increased population, it couldn't make the Minister who is delivering that message more miserable. Yet when we hear of population growth in Scotland we always celebrate that fact, because for a while Scotland's population was set to fall below the iconic 5 million mark. That has now been rescued with steady work. But do you notice a difference in approach to this issue between Scotland and the UK, particularly in reference to these announcements about population growth relatively in Scotland and the rest of the UK?

David Mundell: If you are asking perhaps a wider question—are attitudes in Scotland on issues of immigration different to the rest of the UK?—then I don't believe that they materially are. I think the First Minister herself has, on previous occasions, acknowledged the polling that has taken place. I think the most recent by the BBC indicated that attitudes to immigration in Scotland and the rest of the UK were not significantly different.

Q320 Chair: Do you, Mr Goodwill, recognise this difference in terms of response to an increase in population figures from Scotland? You have probably seen some of the remarks from Scotland already when we have heard about growth in the population. It is welcomed, something that is seen as good news. I am sure when you are announcing the immigration figures in the next few months you will be miserable again, because it will have gone up and you will have people on your Back Benches who will be insisting that you do something about it. Do you recognise the difference in the way that this information is appreciated?

Mr Goodwill: That is a very valid point. When you look at the way that communities may react to the pressure of migration, often the problem is the pressure it puts on public services—so you will have schools, the health service, housing in particular under pressure.

In Scotland, your population rise has not been as dramatic as in other parts of the UK, certainly not if you look at some of the rural communities in East Anglia and Lincolnshire, where agricultural migrant workers are coming in very large numbers and putting tremendous pressure on public services; similarly in some of our city centres. In Scotland, you do not have that to the same extent. Indeed, if it is anything like my



HOUSE OF COMMONS

constituency, we are looking at possibly having to close certain schools because people are not living in the area and bringing up families. The situation in Scotland is different because of that, but it is no different to, for example, the North Yorkshire moors or some areas where the steel industry is in decline or where traditional shipbuilding is no longer there.

There are other parts of the UK where we would not feel the same problem, but of course those tend to be the parts of the UK where jobs are not being created. As I mentioned earlier, migration tends to be demand-led, demand through state of art, world class educational institutions such as the universities you have in Scotland, but also demand for work. An economy that is growing and creating jobs is an economy that will bring people in to work, both at the unskilled level from the EU and at the more skilled graduate level from outside the EU. We have systems in place to manage non-EU migration. EU migration, because of our treaty obligations, is not something that we can control at the moment.

Q321 Ian Murray: We spoke to the Scottish Government Minister in this Committee on this subject and he talked a lot about the demographic liability, the ability to pay for future public services, income tax, all of those kinds of issues, and said that inward migration was critical to the Scottish economy and the growth of Scotland. But what he did not say and what I think he dodged was whether or not the Scottish Government had done any modelling of how much immigration would be required, where it would be required and in what sectors it would be required and the quantum in different parts of the country. Have the UK Government done any modelling of that kind, of where migration would have to go, what it would need to be used for and whether it could be modelled around the demographic liability in Scotland?

Mr Goodwill: It is difficult to make predictions on demand for jobs, because it is difficult to make predictions about the future growth of the UK economy or indeed the Scottish economy. One of the challenges that we face is ensuring that the British people and the Scottish people have the skills to take those jobs. I recently had correspondence from your colleague from the Western Isles about bringing people into work in the fishing industry. I wrote back to him and pointed out that we have a very good fishing school in Whitby, in my constituency, and the more people who go through the fishing school, the more indigenous people we will have who can join the fishing industry. The same would apply to a number of other high-tech industries and other industries, where we have not done enough. We have had 3 million apprenticeships and we are doing more. In my own constituency we have just opened a new university technical college with state of the art engineering skills being taught, so we need to do more of what we have been doing.

But I think that to say the answer to skills shortages and demand for labour is, "Let's just bring some more immigrants in" is missing the point. The point is that we should make sure that our people have the opportunity to develop their skills and to take the jobs that become available. As I mentioned, in Scotland we have very cheap housing, so it



HOUSE OF COMMONS

is a very attractive place to go and live compared to some other parts of the country, where the barriers to movement are very great. A lot of the jobs are in the south-east, but you try selling a house in Scotland or a house in Yorkshire and moving down to the south-east and you will find you cannot buy an equivalent property there. Scotland does have a lot going for it.

The Secretary of State mentioned the need to have broadband. As we get more high-speed broadband rolled out, there will be more reasons why a high-tech industry can be located in Scotland. I don't believe that we should be too pessimistic about the opportunities that there are in Scotland. If those jobs are created through the opportunities being laid down, then we will see people moving to Scotland to take up those jobs.

Q322 Chair: Do you accept, though, that if Scotland's population growth is less than that of the United Kingdom, there will be economic and demographic issues for Scotland? Is that something that you recognise? We are looking at this as an inquiry because it was like a challenge we had with our report into the fiscal framework where it was said that Scotland, in order to keep up per capita, had to grow our population. I think the very strong suggestion was that if we did not keep up with our population growth vis-à-vis the rest of the United Kingdom, there would be consequences and issues for Scotland economically. Is that something that you accept or is that something that we can manage in some other way?

Mr Goodwill: There is a degree of flexibility in the system to react to a skills shortage in the Scottish labour market in terms of migration needs. For the tier 2 non-EU skilled work route, we have a Scotland-only shortage occupation list designed to reflect any skilled labour market needs that are particular to Scotland. The Migration Advisory Committee has consulted extensively with employers and other organisations in Scotland when recommending changes to the Scotland-only shortage occupation list. But for the most part, the list reflects the UK-wide shortage occupation list, suggesting that Scotland's skills needs are largely aligned with the rest of the UK.

Obviously for non-skilled work we have relied on EU migration. That is something where, as we move forward through the Brexit negotiations, we need to get the best deal for Britain in ensuring we have some flexibility in our immigration system to allow that to happen but at the same time deliver on the referendum result, which did indicate very strongly that we need to have controls on immigration. We have heard from the Secretary of State that the opinions on that in Scotland are very similar to those in other parts of the United Kingdom.

David Mundell: To follow up, Chairman, from your question and Mr Murray's question, I think we all have to face up to the fact that there are parts of Scotland where, if people are not encouraged to go there, there will not be any people to carry out a series of basic tasks that are required for the public sector or the economy. I do not think that we should underestimate what the challenge of that is. There have been



HOUSE OF COMMONS

numerous schemes that have been developed over the years—the famous golden hellos that I recall particularly for professional people. The trouble with golden hellos was people quite liked the hello and as soon as the conditions ran out they said goodbye and went off somewhere else where something could be replicated.

That is why I welcome this inquiry and, representing an area like I do, it is such a fundamental challenge as to how we get people into these areas who want to live there and want to play a part economically and socially. But there are big challenges because there are attitudinal changes. We do live in a much more metropolitan society, for example, where particularly younger people are looking for a more metropolitan environment than perhaps living in a remote rural community.

Q323 Deidre Brock: In regard to those remote rural communities then, Secretary of State, I think you were talking in your opening statement about Scotland being unable to attract inward migration. Can I draw your attention to the issue of the Zielsdorf family in Laggan, a Canadian family of about seven, several of their children born in Scotland? They invested in a local community store and bothy under the entrepreneur visa. Those premises had been empty for 18 months. They are, as a result of not being able to have two full-time employees yet, now under threat of deportation. I think when you are talking about remote rural areas, pretty much the entire community of Laggan has apparently written in support of this family, wanting them to stay. You will know yourself, representing fragile community areas, how important the community store is. I am just wondering—

Mr Chope: Isn't this issue sub judice?

Deidre Brock: Not as far as I know. It has been in the press. Can I use that as an example of a situation where the policies of the Westminster Government have not been particularly helpful in attracting people?

Mr Goodwill: If I could talk generally about the rules regarding people coming and setting up businesses, we have been aware of some loopholes in the past where, for example, you can set yourself up as a self-employed *Big Issue* salesman or saleswoman and then get access to working tax credits because you have a business. It is a two-edged sword. One of my constituents, who is approaching retirement, came in to see me the other day. He has a painting and decorating business and is working two days a week. The authorities are asking him whether he has a genuine business, because he is only earning maybe £8,000 or £10,000. They are saying, "You shouldn't qualify for these benefits. Is it a real business?"

We bring in rules for non-EU people coming to work here, which have a minimum employment threshold. In this case, unfortunately the business was not employing that number of people. Obviously we keep these rules under review, but the demand for low-wage, low-skilled jobs has tended to come from the EU. For people coming from outside the EU, I think we should be careful that people from Australia, New Zealand and Canada should be viewed in exactly the same way as people from Nigeria, India



HOUSE OF COMMONS

and Pakistan. There is no difference in the way that those people's cases should be dealt with. Those people need to come in at the higher skill level in employment. Also, if they are running a business, they do need to meet those requirements. I am sorry in this case that the family did not meet that employment requirement.

Chair: Just to clarify on that point, it was a case where there was a Home Office decision, not a court decision, on this family, so it is perfectly in order for that to be raised.

Q324 **Deidre Brock:** Thank you. Following the comments about a recognition of Scotland's population issues, what plans do the Westminster Government have to encourage people to migrate to Scotland? Perhaps a question for the Secretary of State.

David Mundell: First, I should have welcomed Ms Brock to the Committee because, although I have been here many times, I have not had the pleasure of being questioned by your good self.

Deidre Brock: Thank you. I am a newbie.

David Mundell: What we want to do and what we are committed to do is to work with the Scottish Government in relation to their objectives, as that is the case, of growing the population. I felt, for example, and I have said before at this Committee, that tax powers to the Scotland Parliament was a way in which a significant change can be made to make Scotland more attractive for people to go to, combined with the range of other levers that the Scotland Parliament and Scotland Government have. Other than the work study visa proportion that we referred to earlier, I am not aware of the Scottish Government having come forward with a range of specific proposals on which they were looking for us to contribute and support. They may do so, and obviously we would look at trying to work with them, as long as they were not proposals that undermined the UK immigration system.

Q325 **Deidre Brock:** One of the previous witnesses on this suggested that a continuous population growth was not necessarily the best way to manage demographic change. They feel it is not sustainable in the long term. Do you think having a constantly growing population is, first, achievable and, secondly, desirable?

David Mundell: I think it is a challenge. Mr Goodwill set out some of the challenges that come with a growing population in areas with restricted resources or geographies. Certainly from my perspective—and I am just putting my constituency MP hat on—my objective is to try to achieve a balanced population, because the area has had a growing population, but it has tended to be people of an older age, while younger people have left. One of the problems for the south of Scotland, for example, is we have the lowest number of people aged between 16 and 24, so you could take a view that the population could grow—and I may be wrong in this, but I think the highest growth part of our population is people over 90—without that contributing economically and without raising other challenges. I think simple targets are too rough a cut. I do not think per



HOUSE OF COMMONS

se in Scotland there would be anything wrong with a growing population, but I do not think that in itself it would necessarily tackle some of the issues that we have touched on.

Q326 Mr Chope: Can I begin by picking up the Secretary of State's statement at the beginning, that he wants the brightest and the best to be attracted to Scotland universities? I wondered to what extent he believes that that policy objective will be affected by whether or not Scotland opts into the Teaching Excellence Framework, as set out in the Higher Education and Research Bill.

David Mundell: Obviously I accept that because higher education is devolved then these are matters for the Scotland Government. I want to see the Scottish Government work as closely as they possibly can with the UK Government, but I would not seek to tell them what to do. What has happened is that there has been very good ministerial engagement between the Scottish and UK Governments on these issues, but there is a distinctive higher education system in Scotland. Ultimately these are matters for the universities within Scotland and the Scotland Government to determine.

Q327 Mr Chope: Does the Secretary of State understand that there is concern in Scotland that if Scotland does not opt in and adopt this Teaching Excellence Framework—if it is adopted as an international standard and it is on the basis of that standard that higher education students are attracted to the United Kingdom—then it may inadvertently disadvantage Scottish institutions of higher education?

David Mundell: I do understand that there are concerns. Those people putting the concerns forward will hopefully have the opportunity to influence the outcome of that decision-making. There are significant issues that this Committee has touched on previously in relation to higher education in Scotland: how funding impacts on the people who come into Scotland or the need for universities to bring people into Scotland to meet their funding requirements. I want Scottish universities, which are acknowledged as being among some of the best in the world, to remain there, because they are a tremendous economic advantage to Scotland and indeed the whole of the United Kingdom.

Q328 Mr Chope: Turning to the issue of population growth, is there a United Kingdom Government policy on population growth?

David Mundell: As per the Scotland Government, there is not a specific target for the UK population growth. There are a number of policies being pursued that take into account issues like an ageing population and the demography challenges that that presents.

Q329 Mr Chope: You talk about an ageing population, but surely what is more important than that is the quality of the people who are aged. I represent a constituency with a very high proportion of elderly people but fortunately a lot of them are in very robust health, even into their 90s. Isn't the issue about dependency and age related to the quality of life and the quality of health of those older people rather than in itself to their



HOUSE OF COMMONS

age?

David Mundell: I absolutely agree. That is the case in Scotland, where we have some of the worst health and life expectancy outcomes in parts of the city of Glasgow that are next to the area, Eastern Dunbartonshire, that has the highest life expectancy and health outcomes. There are huge variations within Scotland. I think that is one of the things, as we were talking about in relation to population, that there are huge variations in health and life expectancy within Scotland as well.

Q330 **Mr Chope:** National Records Scotland has told us that male life expectancy in Scotland is going to increase between 2025 and 2075 by seven years, which is six months more than for the equivalent people in Wales and indeed in the rest of the United Kingdom. What is the reason for that? Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

David Mundell: I absolutely think it is a good thing. One position I do not subscribe to is somehow the fact that there had been this poorer life expectancy in Scotland should be promoted as a positive, which means that people should get pensions earlier or it should be a positive for the funding mechanism, as some in the past have suggested. I think that that is a very positive statistic and one that we should all welcome. What we should also want to see, though, is an improvement in health and life expectancy equalities across Scotland. I am sure some in the Scotland Government would acknowledge that there must be disappointment that the current Government, having been in office since 2007, essentially have not been able to make a significant difference to date on some of these health equalities and have significantly missed many of their own health targets.

Q331 **Mr Chope:** Indeed, despite the fact that they receive so much more money per capita than their counterparts in, for example, my constituency.

David Mundell: That, as always, Mr Chope, is your interpretation of the situation. As you know, the Government support the Barnett formula, accompanied by the new fiscal framework, and are committed to continuing to proceed on that basis.

Q332 **Chair:** Just before I lose this point, again I am asking for an acknowledgement that there is an understanding that we have a more significant issue with what is called the dependency ratio, where there are more people in Scotland dependent upon a shrinking working-age group than the rest of the United Kingdom. I do not think I have the exact figures here, but certainly the evidence that we have heard is that this dependency ratio seems to be more significant than the rest of the United Kingdom.

Mr Goodwill: I suppose there are two issues there. The first one in terms of tax revenues is that, as part of the United Kingdom, Scotland is stronger than the United Kingdom, because even if the working-age population in Scotland does not grow as fast as the rest of the country, we are able to ensure that does not negatively affect Scotland. The same



HOUSE OF COMMONS

would apply to oil revenues from the North Sea, which can fluctuate dramatically; as part of the United Kingdom, that helps.

The other issue in a population with fewer of working age and more older people, of course, is the whole care sector and the demand for people to work in that. That has, to a great extent, been filled by people from parts of the European Union working very hard in a very dedicated and committed way. I am sure every care home I go to has a number of people who come and work very well in that sector. As we negotiate the Brexit deal, I think we need to make sure that we can ensure that, where we do need people to come in to take up that sort of role, the system will allow that to happen in a controlled way.

Also, to build on the point I made earlier, there will be people currently in the UK with no skills who need to get those qualifications to work in this sector, because there is a declining number of roles and jobs where you can go without any skills at all. Even just working in a warehouse you need certificates to drive your forklift; working in factories there is health and safety. There are not the jobs out there that there were, where you can just walk into them without any qualification. The care sector has become much more professionalised and people do have those qualifications. I think the challenge throughout the country, but particularly in Scotland, is to encourage the younger people to take up those careers where there is demand, which has been increased by the ageing population, and ensure that we can fill that particular role.

Q333 Margaret Ferrier: To clarify, I think you mentioned North Sea oil again. Obviously it has fluctuated since it was discovered back in the 1970s. Maybe if the UK Government had invested some of that money and put it away in a fund like Norway has done and now has billions of pounds in a fund for its citizens, then we might not be looking at fluctuations and worrying too much about that.

Mr Goodwill: Yes, I have heard that argument before.

Margaret Ferrier: It is true.

Q334 Ian Murray: On the post-study work visa, obviously we have not quite looked at the response yet, but a trial has started at Oxford, Cambridge, UCL, Imperial and Bath to bring it back. Could I ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will become the champion of Scotland in the Cabinet for encouraging the Cabinet to extend those trials to Scotland's ancient universities?

David Mundell: If you explain the background, I will then respond to the specific query.

Mr Goodwill: The details of this pilot is for international students looking to study on a master's course in the UK for 13 months or less at one of the institutions that you mentioned, Mr Murray. Students participating in the pilot have an extended period of up to six months in the UK at the end of their course. During this period, they can look to switch into a work route, a tier 2 route, to take up a graduate role. Students



HOUSE OF COMMONS

participating in the pilot also have their documentation evidence, their maintenance requirements and previous academic qualifications checked and so on.

The basis on which these institutions were chosen was those with a consistently low level of visa refusals, and these four were top of the league. A pilot would indicate that, if it is successful, we could seek to extend it. There are a number of excellent universities in Scotland that I am sure would be at the front of the queue should we wish to extend that, if it is successful.

We will need to wait and see just how successful it has been, but I think what is important is that we continue to build on our very best universities through the UK, including a number in Scotland. There are some that say we should go to the post-study visa route for low-skilled, where previously 60% of those who went to university went into low-skilled jobs and many of them in Scottish universities would gravitate to the south of the country. I do not believe that the way to market our universities globally is to use them as a way of getting into the UK to take a low-skilled job. We should attract the brightest and best to the best of our institutions.

This pilot is a way of building on that. We have seen very good figures. We saw a 5% increase in Russell Group universities that were able to recruit students. Indeed, visa applications from international students to study at Scottish universities have increased by 10% since 2010. The most recent figures for the year ending June 2016 show a continued year-on-year increase.

Ian Murray: All the more reason to hang on to them.

David Mundell: I obviously have been in correspondence with Scottish universities on this issue. I was satisfied that the four universities that were selected were chosen for the pilot on an objective criteria. What I think is an important thing for universities in Scotland is that the pilot is seen in the short term to be successful and then can be rolled out to universities in Scotland and indeed qualify—

Q335 **Ian Murray:** So you will be a champion in the Cabinet?

David Mundell: Indeed I will, provided, it being a pilot, that the pilot is successful and does not demonstrate that there are significant other issues. I fully appreciate why individual universities would want to be one of the pilot universities, but I am satisfied that they were chosen on objective criteria.

Q336 **Margaret Ferrier:** Going back to the point about how you chose the four universities or the three universities and the college, when we took evidence from the Minister in Scotland he said, "It would have been nice to have been asked about it and it would have been helpful, and also the inclusion of some of the Scotland universities would have been good." It appears that there was no communication about the choice and who was going to choose. It looks like Scotland and other devolved nations have



HOUSE OF COMMONS

not been taken into account when this decision was made. Can you explain why you did not approach a Scottish university? As Mr Murray says, if the trials prove to be successful, then as the Secretary of State for Scotland, we would be hoping that you would be championing a trial in Scotland to be taken forward once the trial has proven successful.

Mr Goodwill: The institutions were chosen purely on the data. We decided we would choose four universities, and the four universities were the ones with a consistently low level of visa refusals. They just happened to be all in England. If one of the universities with a low level had been in Scotland, then it would have been in Scotland. There was no decision made by anyone to concentrate on English universities. It was purely based on the data. I think it would have been unfair to have done it in any other way. But there are a number of universities in Scotland that also have low visa refusal levels and, therefore, if we extended it, there would be no reason to expect that that would not include a number of blue-chip, world-class Scotland universities.

Q337 **Margaret Ferrier:** I think you can see where we are coming from with the point that if we are supposed to be four nations within the United Kingdom, then it would have been quite nice to have a university in Scotland, maybe one in Wales, one in England and one in Northern Ireland. It makes sense to me.

David Mundell: I understand that that is a way of doing it. I am satisfied that it was done on the basis of objective criteria and it was not done on a geographic basis. Clearly if it had been done on a geographic basis, perhaps presentationally that would have been helpful, although knowing the robust views of different universities in Scotland, if Glasgow had been chosen, Mr Murray would have been asking us how Glasgow had been determined, and likewise Mr Law perhaps in relation to the universities in Dundee. It was done on objective criteria. I accept there was not a Scottish university within those four, but if the pilot is successful, then it will happen in Scotland and I will champion it happening in Scotland. I give that absolute undertaking.

Q338 **Chair:** I think that does satisfy the Committee. We have not had an opportunity to study fully the response to our inquiry into post-study work schemes. There may be an opportunity to discuss that further with you, Secretary of State, because I think it was characterised as something the Scottish Government wanted with these post-study work schemes. It is not, it is practically every single sector within academic institutions and it is cross-party. That has overwhelming support right across the political establishment in Scotland when it comes to these things, so we are counting on you, Secretary of State, to progress it in Cabinet.

David Mundell: Just for clarity, of course there is a wide cross-section of people who raise these issues but they do not all have the same solution in mind. I think we need to understand that as well, because I have engaged very extensively since I met with the Committee previously on this issue with universities. Scotland looked at a whole range of specifics



HOUSE OF COMMONS

that they brought forward, other interested parties. I remain very live to the issue.

Chair: We will come back to this again with you. Thank you for that response. Ian Murray, we have lost your thread with each of these questions.

Q339 Ian Murray: This is probably the crux of this matter, because you have talked about your own semi-rural constituency and the Chair has a semi-rural constituency. My constituency is incredibly urban and one of the key points about Edinburgh as a city, and indeed my own constituency, is that people do want to migrate there—population is increasing—but there is a real problem with social policy in responding to that. There is an incredible lack of supply of housing, of primary 1 places, of GP appointment places and GP places and there is a great strain on transport infrastructure, which is all the responsibility of the Scotland Government.

How important is it for the UK and Scottish Governments to work together on these issues? Are there better mechanisms for both Governments to use to make sure that if you are going to deal with some of these demographic issues through migration and some economic levers that are the reserved issues of the UK Government, you can work better with the Scotland Government to address some of those social policy issues?

David Mundell: I think we can work better together. There is considerable scope to do that. We have demonstrated that at some practical levels and hopefully in a way some of which will benefit your constituency and Ms Brock's constituency with the Edinburgh and Fife and Lothian City Deal, which is a really exciting proposal. I am very favourable to the Dundee City Deal, for the record, as that comes forward—just so that I do not demonstrate any bias. What we have shown is that we can get on and work together and look at things for the benefit of the economy and the people of Scotland.

But let us not deny that other issues get in the way. I am not going to take this Committee into the route of discussing the Independence Bill to be lodged this week, but my focus would be on Scotland, its economy and its people, rather than these constitutional issues. I make an open offer to continue to work with the Scottish Government, and virtually in all the day-to-day dealings we have with the Scottish Government those discussions are productive in relation to both Governments.

Q340 Ian Murray: The final question goes to welfare. You mentioned pensions earlier on and said you would not countenance Scotland having a slightly different pension system in order to negate the fact that Scottish pensioners pay in the maximum that they pay in, but they get less out than Christopher Chope's pensioners because they die earlier. Yes, it is not something we should celebrate, but my question then comes: is there scope in the Scotland Act 2016 in terms of the welfare powers for the Scottish Government to pay pensions earlier or to pensioners at a younger age if they chose to do so, or is there a way that the UK Government will perhaps look at the demographic differences across the



HOUSE OF COMMONS

UK and whether or not the pension system is fit for purpose?

David Mundell: First, Mr Chope's solution on the age differential is the one that I am attracted to: by making the circumstances such that people in Scotland do not have a lower life expectancy. The structure of the Scotland Act would mean that pensions, as administered by the DWP, remain reserved and could not themselves be paid earlier or differently by the Scottish Government. But I think that with an innovative use of the powers that are being transferred in relation to top-ups and the power to create new benefits, then there would be an ability, if there was a desire, to pay benefits to certain targeted people within the community, who clearly could be pensioners.

Q341 **John Stevenson:** Your opening remarks about parts of England having similar problems to Scotland are interesting. I reckon Cumbria would be a prime example of that, hence my interest not only about Scotland in this inquiry but also the impact it has in Cumbria, because I think they are very similar issues. The Scotland Government want to increase their population. There are two aspects to this. I am going to ask the Immigration Minister: do you think that immigration from overseas matters as much as getting Scots to either stay in Scotland or come back to Scotland or, indeed, other people from other parts of the UK to move to Scotland?

Mr Goodwill: At the risk of being repetitive, it has to be demand-led. People move to Scotland because they can secure a good job. People move to Scotland as immigrants because they have a world-class university where they want to study. One of the problems in parts of the world, and I think Cumbria and parts of the north-east, is we are not seeing the jobs being created. They are being created elsewhere. I think it is fundamental that it is the economic policies, the City Deals and the other ways that economic activity can be stimulated by Government. Having a competitive tax regime and having a highly skilled domestic workforce can all fit into that.

Yes, immigration can play a part, but we need to make sure that we are not taking the least line of resistance, in that companies are employing migrant workers because it is easier—they are skilled already in some cases—rather than training up our own indigenous workforce who have tremendous potential in many ways. Of course, if local companies and local public services do not step up to the mark for that training and that offer, then you will find your own young people moving to other parts of the country and that vacuum having to be filled by migration. To some extent that is the situation we have in Scotland.

Q342 **John Stevenson:** Secretary of State, do you think the UK Government are doing enough with regards to migration to encourage them to move to Scotland rather than just come to the United Kingdom? Should they encourage them specifically to go to Scotland, given the fact the Scottish Government actively want to increase the population?

David Mundell: It is an important question, and one I am sure your report will touch on. In very simplistic terms, only 3% to 4% of people



HOUSE OF COMMONS

coming to the United Kingdom, in terms of net migration, are coming to Scotland. We need to understand why that is the case. We have a significant number of people coming to the United Kingdom; why are they not coming to Scotland? I think Mr Goodwill might have touched on part of that in what they perceive the employment prospects to be, but I certainly think that we could all do a better job of selling Scotland as somewhere that is attractive to come to live, to work, to bring up your family and to contribute to. I think we can all do that.

Q343 **John Stevenson:** You accept that the UK Government could do more?

David Mundell: I accept that in conjunction with but I do not think—

Q344 **John Stevenson:** We will come to the Scottish Government. Taking on board what the Minister has said about creating the environment for business that creates the jobs and attracts people in, do you think the Scottish Government, given the powers that they have, are doing enough themselves?

David Mundell: As you have heard me say throughout the passage of the Scottish Government, decisions for Scotland are matters that are devolved for the Scottish Parliament. I am disappointed certainly, as a Scottish representative, that the Scottish Government have chosen to go down the route of higher tax. I think that is a serious mistake in selling Scotland. What we do not want is to get an impression that if you go to live and work in Scotland you will be paying higher tax than if you are in another part of the United Kingdom. I think that is a huge mistake, but I accept they are entitled to make that decision with the powers that have been conveyed. From my perspective—and others on the Committee do not necessarily agree—I would want Scotland to be positioned as a low-tax environment that is attractive to come and work there and conduct your business there.

Q345 **John Stevenson:** I take your point, which I am clearly sympathetic to. But notwithstanding that, do you think the Scottish Government are doing enough themselves in trying to attract people to come to Scotland, whether it be migrants or people from the rest of the United Kingdom?

David Mundell: What I think, and I think Mr Murray touched on it, is that whatever campaigning you might do, you have to be able to back that up with the substantive arrangements on the ground for connectivity and the health and education offering that people might receive. People want to be sure that these things are there and available to them. I do think more could be done, and I acknowledge that more could be done by the UK Government as well. Everybody at this Committee probably will have met many people here in London who do not have a very comprehensive understanding of Scotland. I think clearly there is more that could be done to improve that.

Q346 **Chair:** I know that you have ruled out an immigration policy for Scotland and devolving it. You have said that, and you have been very clear in some of the responses you have given, even though you were not specifically asked that. Do you see the success of subnational



HOUSE OF COMMONS

immigration policies in countries like Australia and Canada, where there has been an identified issue when it comes to population demographics and they have been able to make a success of it because they have managed to secure some levers to control immigration into these territories?

Mr Goodwill: If we are talking about a points-based immigration system, which is what was trotted out as the panacea during the referendum—

Chair: I am not talking about that. I am talking about how nations like Canada and Australia have subnational immigration systems that have devolved to particular states, and they manage that as part of the general immigration system that these countries have. You said that you are ruling out devolving immigration, but when you have looked at these examples, have you seen any merit in them at all? Would that be something that could be applied to Scotland to help us deal with some of our immigration issues?

Mr Goodwill: Nobody is suggesting that we should have a policy of uncontrolled migration.

Q347 **Chair:** Again, nobody is saying that. I am asking you how you have observed these subnational immigration policies in action and whether they would be of any benefit and assistance in addressing Scotland's requirements.

Mr Goodwill: Controlled migration does have a part to play in the way an economy can develop. It is important, as we approach the Brexit negotiations, that we see how that control would be implemented in a way that both protects the interests of EU citizens who are here and the interests of British citizens elsewhere in Europe, but also enables us to prevent some of the overloading that many people feel their local communities have been subject to in schooling, health and all the other public services. Nobody is suggesting that we should not have a situation where we want to attract the brightest and best to the UK, that they will make a contribution to our economy.

Similarly, we do not want to return to the days of, for example, the view that if you come to the UK to study at a college or university, you are basically here for life. That is not something that is good for the UK economy in terms of the fact that people are coming in to do low-skilled jobs. It is not good for the economies where people have come from to study at the UK if we operate a brain-drain situation—the developing world send their brightest and best and then they stay here. I do not think that is doing any favours to those countries from where they come. I think as we approach the Brexit negotiations we will need to bear these issues in mind to ensure that we come up with a deal that is one that satisfies the population that voted in the referendum—that we deliver what they asked us to—but at the same time does not mean that we cannot control migration to carry out some of the tasks that we need.

Chair: I am conscious of the time, and I know we have some questions on Brexit that I believe Chris Law is going to ask.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Q348 Chris Law: I am going to touch on the impact of the EU but, first of all, I am assuming both of you are still recovering from the disappointment of your active campaigns to remain in the EU. Seeing that Scotland voted overwhelmingly to remain, have you made a full recovery?

David Mundell: I think perhaps the important thing to understand in relation to the outcome of the vote from my perspective is that my position remains exactly the same as it was in the 2014 referendum. If there had been a yes vote in that referendum, I would have respected that result and worked to achieve it. The result was not as I wanted it to be, but I just want to be very clear that I cast my vote to remain on the basis I wanted the United Kingdom to remain in the EU. I did not cast it on the basis that if I did not get my way, then Scotland would be dragged out of the United Kingdom. People who characterise themselves as speaking on behalf of remain voters need to understand that remain voters did not vote on the basis that they were seeking to leave the UK if they did not get what they want.

Q349 Chris Law: One of the reasons I ask was there was a little bit of a sweetener offered in June by Michael Gove, who pledged new immigration powers to Scotland. In fact, he said it would be for Scotland to decide. The First Minister replied by saying on Twitter that it was a fib and a lie. What is true?

David Mundell: I would not wish to suggest that the First Minister was anything else but truthful with the people of Scotland, as you would imagine.

Q350 Chris Law: So the Brexit campaign was a liar then with regards to an immigration policy for Scotland?

David Mundell: I think in relation to that we should follow the advice of your colleague Alex Neil MSP, who said very clearly that the arguments pre the referendum are over, the argument now is about getting Scotland and the UK the best possible deal for our departure from the EU. Quite clearly, as you appreciate, the campaigns were separate from the Government, as indeed I think was the case in the independence referendum. Therefore, individuals who made claims on both sides did not speak on behalf of the Government. They put forward their proposal.

Q351 Chris Law: I have to make it clear it was a Cabinet Minister—it was Michael Gove, part of your Government—who made that statement. I want to know if you are standing by that statement or not.

David Mundell: If I stand by—?

Chris Law: If your Government now stand by the statement that there will be new powers for Scotland over immigration.

David Mundell: Michael Gove did not make that statement on behalf of either the previous or current Government.

John Stevenson: I thought this session was about demographics in Scotland.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Chris Law: It is. It is leading into my next question.

John Stevenson: This seems to be a whole heap of questions about Brexit. We have a separate inquiry about that.

Chair: I am sure Mr Law is getting to his question.

John Stevenson: It is a bit of a liberty, and maybe the Chairman should rein it in a little bit.

Chair: Let's just see where this goes, and we will then decide. Chris.

Q352 **Chris Law:** What I really want to know is what work has been done as a result of the impact of leaving the EU and migration to Scotland in the last few months?

David Mundell: What has happened, in terms of Brexit, is that I, along with my colleague Lord Andrew Dunlop, have held over 60 individual meetings and discussions with bodies, organisations, companies, and young people—a whole cross-section of Scottish society—to hear from them directly what their issues and concerns are about the impact that Brexit will have on Scotland, and indeed the opportunities that it can create for Scotland. Migration is one of the issues they have raised in those discussions.

Q353 **Chris Law:** What I am getting back to is the point about immigration policy. Is it an open door, as we sit here this afternoon looking at the impact of EU on migration in Scotland and population growth in Scotland?

David Mundell: It is not an open door in relation to the fact that it is not the UK Government's policy to devolve immigration policy to the Scottish Parliament. It was not an issue that was agreed as part of the Smith commission. Perhaps my memory does not serve me fully. It may well be an issue that was put down as an amendment during the progress of the Scotland Act, but it was certainly not part of the agreed Smith commission package and it does not currently remain the Government's policy to devolve immigration to Scotland.

Q354 **Chair:** I know you have to go; if you would just give us another few minutes of your time, if that is that okay. I want to follow up on that point, because there was the impression given during the referendum conversation debates that somehow if Scotland voted to leave there would be a greater exercise of control and authority over immigration policy. I remember taking evidence from some of the leave campaigns in this Committee—and I am sure colleagues around this Committee will remember that—but there does not seem to be anything forthcoming since. In fact, when it comes to post-study work schemes and a subnational immigration policy there does not seem to be any sort of move towards that or any acceptance that this would be necessary. You can see why people thought that if we were leaving the European Union, there would be more opportunities to develop a specific Scottish immigration policy.

David Mundell: I think the statistics are that 500,000 SNP/yes voters voted to leave the EU, but I would not seek to tell you why they sought



HOUSE OF COMMONS

to do that. I think it will no doubt become clear over the months and years ahead, as it has in relation to the independence referendum, why people made the choices that they did. I could not accept a simplistic analysis that, because Michael Gove said something and the First Minister said something contradictory, people were then moved in huge numbers to take a particular course of action.

Chair: But when immigration did emerge as a feature in the independent referendum that was certainly the impression that was given among some of those within the leave campaign. I think that is why we had that form of questioning.

Q355 **Mr Chope:** Chair, I am delighted that our two witnesses today are not in the “remoaners” camp, although it is clear that some members of this Committee still are. Can I ask the Secretary of State to comment on a bizarre situation? The Scottish Government say they want to take control over immigration. One of the ways in which they might have been able to achieve that would have been to support the points-based system, similar to that which they have in Australia where you can have regional differences. Yet my understanding, Secretary of State—and I am sure I will be corrected if I am wrong—is that the Scottish Government have never made representations in support of a points-based system, despite the fact that on their own evidence, and from their own rhetoric, that would suit their political purposes better.

David Mundell: Probably in this environment it is not appropriate to comment on contradictions set out by the Scottish Government. I will give you another example, since I have the opportunity. You will be aware that the Scottish Government are very concerned—and I do not dismiss that concern—about remaining in the European single market but seem much less concerned about remaining in the United Kingdom single market, which is worth four times as much to the Scottish economy and employs a million people in Scotland. There are a number of contradictory positions around at this time.

Q356 **Chair:** Just before you go, Secretary of State, this may be for the Minister but we would like your response to this too. We took evidence from the Brain family when we visited Isle of Skye, and I think we are all relieved that this case has been resolved. It has taken a long time, it was pretty convoluted, and it looked, on many occasions, that this could go disastrously wrong. Are you both proud of the way that you dealt with this case? How did we get to the situation where it seemed to be a community was at total loggerheads with the Government about trying to keep a couple of valuable people who they felt could contribute to the community and faced a situation where they were quite close to deportation? How do things like this happen?

Mr Goodwill: Historically we had a post-study work visa system where 60% of people went into low-skilled jobs. As I mentioned already, some from outside the EU saw getting into the UK to do a college course somewhere as a way of basically setting yourself for life in a job, albeit in many cases a low-paid job. Bearing in mind that the low-skilled jobs have



HOUSE OF COMMONS

been agriculture, hospitality, the care sector and all these other sectors that have been filled by those coming from the EU, I think it was only reasonable that we should have controls in place to make sure that those who come to the UK and then graduate do go on to a graduate-type job.

That was the problem with the Brain family. Mrs Brain, and Mr Brain indeed, were unable to secure a job that met the requirements for the high-skilled graduate job. I was very pleased that we managed to extend the deadline three times. I know there was one job in the offing that then did not happen because a better qualified Scottish person came along. I am sure in some ways I was very pleased that we had people capable of doing that; in another way I was disappointed that that pushed it on. But I know Mrs Brain now has employment that meets all the requirements.

Q357 Chair: Yes. I think we are all grateful that is the case. But I think all of us around this table have examples—particularly those of us who have maybe done this for quite a number of years, like me and the Secretary of State have—of people who get themselves caught up in this. I lost a vet in my constituency who had to leave Perthshire in order to go back to Canada even though we have a shortage of vets within the Tayside health region. Are we going to see this as a continued feature of communities requiring these people and wanting them to stay here and an immigration system that seems absolutely determined to remove them even though they are valuable to our economy and our community?

Mr Goodwill: The figures do not indicate that is the case. Six-thousand international students switched from the tier 4 study visa to a tier 2 work visa in the UK in 2015, and this has increased year on year. Unlike the former post-study work route, these students are moving into skilled employment with employers known to the Home Office. I think this is successful, because if we are going to attract the brightest and best to the UK to study, we need to ensure that they are then going into the high-skilled jobs for which they have trained. As I say, the Brain saga had a happy ending, and I was pleased that that happened and they are now making their life in a remote community that does need families and skills, and other institutions rely on people having families there. But I think it is absolutely right that we should ensure that people who come here to study and then graduate should then be looking for a graduate-level job. I believe that the rules in place that we administer ensure that does happen. We have seen increases year on year.

Q358 Ian Murray: This was the heart of the problem, Chair. I am delighted the Brain family are staying, because all the indications were that they should have been given the opportunity to stay. I hope the Minister and the Secretary of State will reflect on the fact that the immigration system is seen as being incredibly unfair. I have had families who have had to leave the country. If you are going to provide flexibility for one family because they are on the front of newspapers, I hope the Immigration Minister will reflect on the fact that he has opened up the door now for some of my constituents—one in particular who is now living back in Canada because she missed her renewal by six days—and you will



HOUSE OF COMMONS

provide similar flexibility in other situations, otherwise you have created a rod for your back with this particular case. I hope that the immigration system will reflect on the fact that it sometimes needs to be slightly more flexible and there needs to be a little bit of discretion for people who make genuine mistakes or have to give that flexibility in order for them to be able to satisfy the criteria.

Mr Goodwill: As the Immigration Minister I make decisions of that type almost on a daily basis. Generally speaking, if a Member of Parliament gets involved, we will ensure that those situations are dealt with speedily and effectively. We have teams around the country that deal with MPs' inquiries, which work very well. I think it is important that we continue with that, and indeed—

Q359 **Ian Murray:** I am sorry to interrupt, but I think you are completely wrong. I do not think the immigration system should respond to MPs getting involved. I think the immigration system should respond to personal circumstances. If what you are saying is, "The immigration system can be flexible as long as people come to see me and then I hammer on your door", I am not sure that is the way system should operate.

Mr Goodwill: For example, if somebody has a visa that is going to run out and, for reasons of getting a ticket on an aircraft, they are a few days late and they contact the Home Office and explain why that is, then they may well not generate a negative immigration history. But it is important that people do comply with the terms of their visas. Gone are the days when people came here as tourists and 10 years later they were still here. It is very important that if people are coming to work, they apply for the right sort of visa and their employer can demonstrate that that is a job where there is a definite requirement and it is where we do have shortages in the United Kingdom

If they are coming to get married or join family, then they need to get the right sort of visa. Most of the problems that we seem to get are people who either have the wrong sort of visa, sometimes try to mislead the visa and immigration service about the sort of visa they want, and that is when you get the problems at the gate at the airport when they are going through passport control and that is picked up. The system is there for people to operate within, and for the vast majority of cases it works correctly. When people do seek to mislead us about their intentions of coming, they should not be surprised if they find that we smell a rat.

Chair: I know the Secretary of State has to get away, and I am looking around colleagues to see if there are any further questions.

Q360 **Mr Chope:** I thought, Chairman, we were going to ask the Secretary of State whether he could help us with a particular problem we have at the moment. We are carrying out an inquiry into exiting the EU and the implications for Scotland. We are having difficulty in getting the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU to agree to come along and give evidence to us. I am sure the Secretary of State for Scotland would agree that the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union is supremely well



HOUSE OF COMMONS

qualified to give evidence to this inquiry. I am asking him whether he would ensure that his colleague comes, at obviously a mutually convenient occasion, and that he does not hide behind the idea that this is something that can be dealt with solely by the Secretary of State for Scotland, able though he obviously is.

David Mundell: Thank you, Mr Chope. I think we do understand that the Secretary of State has enormous pressures on his time at the moment, and is seeking to be scrutinised as much as he can while at the same time doing the job that he is seeking to do. He has committed, for example, to go to the Scottish Parliament and appear before—

Q361 **Chair:** No, apparently that is in doubt too.

David Mundell: In doubt?

Chair: Yes. We have just heard. Our inquiry is to see if we can secure him to give evidence to this Committee, and we have heard that that might not be the case now. I think I support Mr Chope: we are hoping that you as the Secretary of State for Scotland could do all you can to persuade him.

David Mundell: I am surprised to learn it is in doubt, but I will take that away, as I will take Mr Chope's inquiry, and I will revert to you.

Chair: This Committee would be very grateful for that.

David Mundell: I myself am appearing before the Scottish Parliament European Committee on 27 October.

Q362 **Chair:** I am sure all our parliamentary committees are delighted to have the opportunity to question you.

Mr Goodwill: Could I just add on immigration and Brexit, the Home Office is taking the lead in that, working very closely with the new Brexit Department.

Q363 **Chair:** I am sorry we detained you, Secretary of State, because I know you have other responsibilities, but can I thank both of you for helping us with this inquiry? This is the last session of the inquiry. If there is anything further you feel you could usefully add or contribute, we would be very grateful. Thank you for attending today.

David Mundell: I will just reiterate, I think this is a very important inquiry. As ever, once you have produced your report we will be very happy to engage with you in that regard.

Chair: Excellent. Thank you both.