

Edinburgh MPs speaking about Brexit

Yesterday, 14 January 2019, the Prime Minister made a statement on the EU in the Commons ahead of the vote today on accepting the Government's withdrawal deal with the EU or otherwise. This vote was delayed from early December.

Most political commentators envisage a defeat for the government and speeches of three minutes or so are continuing in the House as we publish this article. Some have said this is the most important vote in the Commons since the Second World War.

[Click to read the full text of the Prime Minister's Statement](#)

At the end of the statement the Prime Minister said : "With just 74 days until 29 March, the consequences of voting against this deal tomorrow are becoming ever clearer. With no deal, we would have no implementation period, no security partnership, no guarantees for UK citizens overseas and no certainty for businesses and workers such as those I met in Stoke this morning. We would also see changes to everyday life in Northern Ireland that would put the future of our Union at risk. And if, rather than leaving with no deal, this House blocked Brexit, that would be a subversion of our democracy, saying to the people whom we were elected to serve that we were unwilling to do what they had instructed.

"I say to Members from all parts of this House that, whatever you may have previously concluded, over these next 24 hours give this deal a second look. No, it is not perfect and, yes, it is a compromise, but when the history books are written,

people will look at the decision of this House tomorrow and ask: did we deliver on the country's vote to leave the European Union; did we safeguard our economy, our security and our Union; or did we let the British people down? I say that we should deliver for the British people and get on with building a brighter future for our country by backing this deal tomorrow. I commend this statement to the House."

The Leader of the Opposition Jeremy Corbyn called upon the Prime Minister and others to see that the only way forward is to call a General Election.

Deidre Brock SNP MP asked of the Prime Minister : "A survey by Harvard researchers of 120 small and medium-sized enterprises and stakeholders concluded that for most companies

"the May deal is inferior to remaining in the EU or...a much closer relationship with the EU that includes continued participation in the [Single Market](#)".

"We still respect experts in Scotland. When will the [Prime Minister](#) follow their advice, fulfil the people of Scotland's vote in the EU referendum, and protect our place in the single market and the customs union?"

The Prime Minister replied : "What we have negotiated with the European Union—what is set out in the political declaration—is the most ambitious trade relationship with any third country that the EU has ever negotiated. It is one with a good customs arrangement and good access to market. The protection of jobs was one of the things that I wanted to ensure we achieved in the deal that we negotiated, and it does just that."

Joanna Cherry QC MP accused the Prime Minister of returning to the house with no material changes in the deal.

Tommy Sheppard MP for Edinburgh East said : "I am against Brexit, my party is against Brexit and Scotland voted against Brexit, so I think people know where I stand. I am not into

[“Project Fear”](#); I had enough of “Project Fear” in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum. I do not suggest that the world will end if Brexit goes ahead on 29 March. In fact, I do not even think that it will be that big a historical event, apart from the significance of the date, in terms of what materially happens.

“I think that the most horrible thing about this process is that we will enter a process of slow, insidious grinding down of living standards, and with that will come a grinding down of the hope and optimism of the country and a fuelling of many of the sentiments that led to the vote in 2016. My concern is that we are about to commit a degree of national self-harm that we could avoid; it is entirely self-inflicted.

“Having said that, all that we can summate from the petitions that we are considering today is that opinion is divided. The big question now: what are we going to do to take this process forward, knowing that the country is divided, knowing that Parliament is divided and knowing that it is very, very difficult to try to chart a course through?

“I turn to the question of whether there should be another referendum on the question. I do not think that we should put the same question again, but I do think that there are circumstances in which it is legitimate to go back to the people and consult them further. We cannot do so every day, but in a democracy people have the right to change their minds. Particularly when one decision has created a process and led to things that were not anticipated, people have the right to be consulted again.”

Ian Murray MP for Edinburgh South asked : “In the [Prime Minister’s Lancaster House](#) speech, she said that a future agreement with the EU would be concluded by the time the article 50 process had finished. That was to be used for businesses to implement the deal during the transition period. That is now not the case, is it?”

The Prime Minister replied : “We have the framework for that future relationship in the political declaration, we have the commitment that we can start work on that quickly, and we have the implementation period for businesses.”