

Mentions of Oxford and Oxbridge in Parliament

Date: June 2014

- 1) Mention of Oxford in Commons Queen Speech Debate
- 2) Mention of Oxford WW1 study in Lords debate on WW1
- 3) Mention of Oxford in Lords Debate on charity sector
- 4) Mention of Oxford initiative to maintain a record of medical innovation in Lords' Second Reading of the Medical Innovation Bill

Debate - Adjournment and General

MPs debate the Queen's Speech 2014 (Day Three)

Mon, 9 June 2014

Mention

Lord Harris of Peckham (Con):

It is very important that we get every child in this country a good education because they get only one chance. I thank the late Baroness Thatcher and the noble Lord, Lord Baker, for giving us our first chance of a CTC, at Crystal Palace in 1992. I thank the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, under whose leadership we opened 10 academies. I am proud to say that nine of those are outstanding and one is good, in Peckham. I expect the school in Peckham, sometime this year, to get an outstanding rating. I also thank the Secretary of State, Michael Gove, for allowing us to have another 15 schools by September 2013 and 10 more this September.

I would like to mention all our schools. Some 44% of the children receive free school meals. Our school at Crystal Palace, which we opened in 1992, previously had a pass rate, with five As to Cs including English and maths, of only 9%. Over the past 14 years, our average has been 92%. On two occasions it was the most improved school in the country. From 1995 to 2000, it went from a 9% pass rate to a pass rate of 54%. It then went from 54% to 92%. When we took on the school, it had only 350 students; today it has 1,500. This year we have four students going to **Oxford and Cambridge**. It is the most popular school in the country with over 2,000 applicants for 180 places. This gave me the confidence to open more schools; so today we have 27 academies—16 secondary, 10 primary and one referral unit.

Lords debate the programme to commemorate the centenary of the First World War

Wed, 25 June 2014

Mention

Lord Jenkin of Roding (Con):

My Lords, the House has listened to a number of extremely moving speeches. Much has been made of the fact that World War I involved virtually every family in the land. I have been

encouraged to say a few words about the involvement of my own family. I do so in no sense of belief that it is in any way unique but simply because it might be illustrative, an example of what many millions of people went through at the same time. That includes not just the armed services but those who made their contribution in other services.

I begin with my paternal grandfather. He was the first professor of engineering at **Oxford University**. The department was set up in 1908 and in 1914 it was entirely dispersed so that staff could take part in the war and play their role. My grandfather was swiftly swept up by the then Ministry of Munitions and found himself helping to design improvements to the aircraft that were by then being used on the Western Front. The frail, wooden-framed, canvas-covered planes were almost the first example of air power being used in war. In fact, he invented a new, more robust covering. There is a story about that but not time for me to tell it. If anybody wants to know it, I will tell them later.

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Viscount Colville of Culross (CB):

The Government have talked of £100 million pounds being made available for the commemorations, most of which, rightly, is aimed at increased understanding, especially among the younger generation. However, there is nothing available for new discovery or research. The Arts & Humanities Research Council has given six grants to universities to help understanding of the war in local schools, which of course is quite right, but none of that money has gone towards new historical research. There is an extraordinary project being put together at the **University of Oxford** and other universities across the world to establish an ambitious four-year programme of research into the global implications of the war and the effect of religion. British research students and post-doctoral fellows will work with colleagues from France, Australia and Germany to carry out new historical, international research. There will be workshops and papers from across the world, in what could be a “cenotaph of war history”. The French, German and Australian Governments are putting money into this programme, but at the moment nothing has come from our Government. It is woefully underfunded on our front.

In all this talk of understanding, should we not do everything we can support a project like this, which will genuinely shine new light on to the First World War? As the Professor of War at Oxford, Sir Hew Strachan, one of the leading figures behind the project and the commemoration plans, said:

“We need to be surprised by what the centenary of the First World War throws up, not to dismiss the uncomfortable and unfamiliar. We must not be so caught by the rhetoric set by the war’s anniversary that we shut out the messages contained in the rhetoric of a hundred years ago, and so exclude what for us may be new insights and fresh findings. If we are open to the evidence in all its diversity and complexity we shall bring altered perspectives to the phenomenon that we call war, that are, sadly, likely to stand us in good stead as we travel through another century”.

Debate - Adjournment and General

Lords debate the roles played by the voluntary and charitable sectors

Thu, 26 June 2014

Mention

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (LD): Yes, we are all committed to the continuation of the welfare state, but we recognise that it has limits, that it is bad for us to be too dependent on the state, and that the voluntary sector alongside it has a great deal to contribute—including, of course, to the National Health Service. Just think about how much money is raised for medical research and other dimensions from the voluntary sector, and the excellent initiatives such as those that the Government have been supporting—the growth of dementia volunteers and King’s College Hospital volunteers to relieve the pressures on local hospitals. That is all part of what we must do to ensure that the welfare state continues to maintain its functions.

I follow the debates of such bodies as Policy Network and Policy Exchange, and I recognise that they are all discussing these questions. We cannot depend entirely on the state. Twenty years ago, when I was working for the **University of Oxford**, I was helping to raise funds for a range of international initiatives. Someone from a Dutch university said to me, “It’s actually very difficult to raise money for universities from the private sector in the Netherlands, because when you approach a possible donor he thinks, ‘If this were a good idea, the state would already have paid for it,’ so the fact that you are asking for a private donation makes people think that it’s not a very good idea.” But when we went to the Swiss, they understood. With a more limited attitude towards their state, they understood that it was a good idea to have both voluntary funding and state funding for higher education. One of the reasons why British universities are better than those in a number of other European countries is that they have both state and private funding.

Lords Second Reading - Medical Innovation Bill

Fri, 27 June 2014

Mentions

Lord Saatchi (Con):

The noble and learned Lord the former Lord Chief Justice, who I am pleased to see in his place and who will speak later, agrees. He said:

“At the moment, the doctor’s hands are tied—by concerns about professional reputation and potential negligence claims. That needs to change”.

Some have still objected that if more innovation is needed, the right place for it to be is in clinical trials. Sir Austin Bradford Hill, the forefather of the RCT—the randomised control trial—writes:

“Any belief that the control trial is the only way”—

to study therapeutic efficacy—

“would mean not only the pendulum had swung too far but that it had come right off its hook”.

This is why the Regius Professor of Medicine at **Oxford**, Professor Sir John Bell, said:

“There will be no cure for cancer until real doctors with real patients in real hospitals can attempt an innovation”.

The Secretary of State for Health said:

“We must create a climate where clinical pioneers have the freedom to make breakthroughs in treatment”.

The Prime Minister said that his vision of the NHS is:

“Every clinician a researcher, every willing patient a research patient”.

Can we safely put aside the objection that this Bill is unnecessary? The objection, however, that we must consider most seriously is that in its attempt to open the door to more innovation the Bill opens the door to quacks, crooks, cowboys and charlatans. No one wants that and so I greatly welcome the Secretary of State’s invitation to Sir Bruce Keogh to consider the oversight mechanism in the Bill. I am greatly encouraged by his thoughts. My noble friend will say more about that later, I am sure.

As well as that, there has been another important new result from the consultation which I should like to announce to your Lordships. **Oxford University** has come forward to say that it will maintain a public register of innovations that take place under the Bill. This Oxford initiative achieves two aims simultaneously: to advance scientific progress through the dissemination of knowledge to the global medical community; and full public disclosure and transparency to deter recklessness. Sunlight is the best disinfectant.

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Lord Ribeiro (Con):

The Royal College of Surgeons and the Government established a minimal access training unit to teach the new procedure and, in 1996, introduced a safety and efficacy register for new interventional procedures, called SERNIP. The register accumulated a list of new procedures and allocated each to a category, signifying its perceived degree of safety and efficacy, but it had no legal power and so its effects were limited. It was taken up by NICE in 2002 and remains within its remit. If the Bill is adopted, it would be essential to have a national register with legal powers to log and follow up with patients. I am delighted to hear that **Oxford University** has agreed to undertake this.

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Lord Giddens (Lab):

If the Bill’s objective is to be a kind of mutual learning process, which is how I see it—I was encouraged by what the noble Lord who referred to himself as a rat said in his contribution—we have to decide what would be the nature of the evidence base that is accumulated and who would police it. Open-source access will help but is clearly not enough in itself. I was reassured to hear that there is an **Oxford** initiative, referred to by the noble Lord, Lord Saatchi, which might be a beginning. This would need to be done in a systematic, co-ordinated way or it simply would not belong within the province of science.