

Mentions of Oxford and Oxbridge in Parliament

Date: January 2016

Commons: Environmental Audit Committee on flooding
Commons: Question on Google and HMRC
Commons: Report Stage of Childcare Bill
Commons: Committee Stage of Charities Bill
Commons: Adjournment debate on student maintenance grants
Commons: SIs laid to amend statutes of Keble and Wadham
Lords: Second Reading Trade Union Bill
Lords: Science and Technology Committee
Lords: Economic Affairs Committee
Lords: Education (Student Support) (Amendment) Regulations: Debate on motion to regret

Commons

Research

Environmental Audit Committee - Flooding: Cooperation across Government evidence taken

Wednesday 27th January, Commons Select Committee

At 3.00pm

* Professor Dieter Helm, **University of Oxford**

Q44 Chair: Professor Helm, welcome to our first session on flood resilience. I think it is the first time you have come in front of this Committee in this Parliament. I am sure it will be the first of several occasions. Basically, we are looking at a cross-departmental response to flooding, at what I would say is a strategic level rather than looking at specific incidents. I will start by asking for your assessment of the effectiveness of Government approaches to flood resilience post the Pitt Review.

Professor Helm: Thank you very much for inviting me. I should stress at the outset that my remarks are personal. The Natural Capital Committee has a chairman—me—but no members yet and so, therefore, I could not reflect the views of the Natural Capital Committee in any event. I hope the Natural Capital Committee will be of enduring interest to your Committee, and I am sure we will look forward to explaining our views when we have a committee in order to express such views. I think Sir Humphrey might have put it like that.

MPs respond to Urgent Question on the settlement reached between HMRC and Google

Mon, 25 January 2016 | Statement Debate

Chris Philp (Croydon South) (Con):

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Is the Financial Secretary to the Treasury familiar with the report from the **Oxford University** Centre for Business Taxation that was published a short time ago? It itemised 42 anti-tax-avoidance measures that the coalition Government put in place, including the general anti-avoidance provisions, the banking code of conduct and the diverted profit tax, which will raise an additional £34 billion between 2011 and 2020.

Mr Gauke:

Yes, I am aware of that report and I am grateful to my hon. Friend for drawing the House's attention to it.

Commons Report Stage - Childcare Bill

Mon, 25 January 2016 | Report Stage Debate

Mr Gyimah: The hon. Lady is right to ask the questions. However, I shall resist the new clause, and the main reason is that a number of evaluations, which she has asked for, are under way. There are important programmes, as I shall explain, that focus on reducing the gap between disadvantaged children and other children.

.....The Department for Education has commissioned another longitudinal study, if the hon. Member for Darlington will listen: the study of early education and development, which follows 8,000 two-year-olds from across England to the end of key stage 1. It looks at how childcare and early education can help to give children the best start in life and at what is important for high-quality childcare provision. The study is being carried out by NatCen Social Research, working with Frontier Economics, the **University of Oxford** and 4Children, on behalf of the Department.

Education Access and Influence

Commons Committee Stage - Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Bill (5th sitting)

Thu, 7 January 2016 | Committee Stage Debate

Anna Turley:.....Seventy years ago, after the Education Act 1944, Conservative Education Minister Rab Butler reflected:

“The public schools are saved and must now be made to do their bit.”

I argue that that bit has not been sufficiently done. Sadly, despite the fantastic work taking place in many of our state schools and the strong investment and reform programme put in place under the previous Labour Government, which transformed state school achievement, the reality is that the gap is still too broad.

Independent schools remain one of the most significant bulwarks of social inequality in this country and continue to entrench privilege and hamper social mobility. Young people from independent

schools, who make up 7% of their age group, take up nearly 50% of the places at **Oxford and Cambridge**, with the subsequent statistical likelihood of earning more and being more likely to be in professional employment within six months. Within the professions, 71% of senior judges, 62% of our senior armed forces and 55% of civil service departmental heads attended independent schools, compared with just 7% of the population.

[....]

Anna Turley:...New clause 6 would require private schools to engage with their local communities and to share access to careers advice, work experience and further education admissions. We think it is a vital measure, because it seeks to get to the heart of some of the inequality that becomes entrenched for those in private schools by access to opportunity for outcomes in later life. As I set out in my earlier comments, the evidence on the difference in opportunity in higher education and careers for pupils from independent schools is stark and not diminishing. They take up nearly 50% of the places at **Oxford and Cambridge**, but I will not rehearse statistics that I have already run through.

MPs debate student maintenance grants

Tue, 19 January 2016 | Debate - Adjournment and General

Mr Gordon Marsden (Blackpool South) (Lab):
I beg to move,

That this House calls upon the Government to abandon its policy on replacing maintenance grants with loans for lower income students.....

.....Graham Stuart (Beverley and Holderness) (Con):

The debate was five years ago.

Emma Reynolds:

There he goes again. This is a serious debate about the impact of the proposals on our poorest constituents. That debate should be taken seriously by the Minister and by Conservative Members. This is not just about participation; this is about fair access and about which university someone chooses to go to, if they have that first choice. Some of my constituents in Wolverhampton might not choose to apply to **Oxford, Cambridge** or even perhaps the University of Sussex, because it is too far away and will be too expensive. This is about the choices that the poorest children must now make, given the level of indebtedness that they will face voted on by only a handful of MPs.

Other

Statute, dated 29 June 2015, made by the Governing Body of Keble College in the University of Oxford, amending the existing Statutes of the College laid before Parliament

Mon, 11 January 2016 | Statutory Instrument Laid

Statute, dated 29 June 2015, made by the Governing Body of Keble College in the **University of Oxford**, amending the existing Statutes of the College has been laid before Parliament

This statutory instrument is subject to negative resolution and will be published at a later date.

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Statute, dated 29 June 2015, made by the Governing Body of Keble College in the **University of Oxford**, amending the existing Statutes of the College (by Act), with an Explanatory Memorandum (by Command) (Secretary Sajid Javid).

Statute, dated 13 October 2015, made by the Governing Body of Wadham College in the University of Oxford, amending the existing Statutes of the College laid before Parliament

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Lords

Research

Lords Second Reading - Trade Union Bill

Mon, 11 January 2016 | Second Reading Debate

Lord Mendelsohn (Lab):....So where is the evidence that there is a particular problem, and why are the Government taking a risk in acting so disproportionately? I have searched for any study or evidence that the Government could even point to, to suggest a strong public interest case. I have looked at the writings and research of economists, but they, too, cannot see the logic. In fact, a recent **University of Oxford** paper entitled The Benefits of Enforced Experimentation, studying the impact of the RMT Tube strike on the travelling habits of 18,000 commuters, concluded that a 48-hour stoppage was economically efficient—encouraging consumer behaviour to examine alternatives in markets where there is not perfect information, far better than the benefits of technology—and actually helped commuters in the long run, including and especially working mothers. I am not arguing in favour of conduct based on this analysis; I am just pointing out the absolute dearth of any evidence to support not just the Government’s stated figures but their measures and means to achieve their objectives.

[....]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe:....I was glad that the noble Baroness, Lady Gould, touched on the place of women. However, I disagree with her suggestion, and that of the noble Lord, Lord Sawyer, that women are disproportionately adversely affected by this Bill. Indeed, I would argue that they can often be more affected by strikes and will therefore potentially benefit most from this Bill. For example, working mothers may have to give up a day’s work or try to find alternative care for their children. This makes their busy lives even harder. The British Chambers of Commerce has estimated that the 2008 teachers’ strike alone cost businesses some £68 million in lost working hours.

Those figures are regrettable and dispiriting, especially because, as my noble friend Lord Leigh said, the vast majority of days lost to strikes are in the public sector. Any responsible Government would try to do something to lessen the incidence of such events. However, I am not convinced of the case he made for extending the 40% balloting requirement to additional sectors.

I am also grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Mendelsohn, for bringing the **Oxford University** research to the House’s attention. People affected by Tube strikes might not just face delays in travelling or need

to find new routes; they may be forced to miss out on a day of work or miss important appointments. Our proposals consider this wider context.

Science and Technology (Lords) - Royal Society, Academy of Medical Sciences, Royal Academy of Engineering - The relationship between EU membership and the effectiveness of science, research and innovation in the UK

Tue, 12 January 2016 | DeHavilland Report - Parliamentary Committee

The Chairman: On behalf of the Committee, I welcome our three representatives from the learned societies to our session. We are most grateful to you. We are being recorded and broadcast, so you may wish to note that. Could you therefore introduce yourselves for the record, and, if you would like to give a brief opening statement, feel free to do so at the same time. Perhaps we could start with Professor Halliday.

Professor Alex Halliday: I am Alex Halliday, a professor at [Oxford University](#) and vice-president of the Royal Society. I would like to say a few things. I left this country in the mid-1980s to go to work in America because even though, as I saw it, I was very successful here, the amount of funding was not adequate for doing what I needed to do science-wise. I went to America and built a big research programme and was there for about 12 years. I then moved to Switzerland and was there for about six years, so I have experience of the Swiss system. I have also had experience of trying to organise European Union networks through Switzerland. In 2004, I moved to Oxford and became a professor there. After three years, I became head of science and engineering at [Oxford University](#), which are non-medical sciences, and so I have a perspective on the critical dependence we have nowadays on European Union funding in non-medical science and engineering. I stepped down from that role about a year ago and became vice-president of the Royal Society, which is why I am here today.

[....]

Professor Alex Halliday:

There is no question but that individuals such as Paul Nurse and Venki Ramakrishnan have come out and been quite vocal about their views, just as the universities have spoken up on this very clearly. As an academy, it is our job to try to present the evidence to help inform debate. That is the primary role. Some of the evidence could take a bit of unpicking, and that is where individuals may be able to play a bigger role than hitherto. For example, we show in the Royal Society report that the overall contribution of the European Union is about 3% of R&D in the UK. If you look at [Oxford University](#), which is one of the leading universities in the UK, if you take the science and engineering bit, the non-medical sciences, the research funding that we get from the European Union is equivalent to about half of what we get from the whole of Research Councils UK, which is several research councils combined. It is about twice what we get from the European Union, so it is a massive chunk of money that we are getting. One of the reasons why we are so competitive in the European Union in this context is because we have leading academics and institutions in the UK that can go in and get that funding and be very competitive in the broader playing field of Europe.

Economic Affairs Committee - Migration Watch UK, Cambridge University, Oxford University, Newcastle University - Economics of the United Kingdom housing market

Tue, 19 January 2016 | DeHavilland Report - Parliamentary Committee

During a meeting of the Economic Affairs Committee on the economics of the United Kingdom housing market, peers heard from:

- Lord Green of Deddington, Chairman, Migration Watch UK
- Professor Robert Rowthorn, Fellow, Cambridge University
- Professor John Muellbauer, [Oxford University](#)

- Professor Tony Champion, Professor of Economic Geography, Newcastle University

Education Access and Influence

Lords debate the Education (Student Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2015

Mon, 25 January 2016 | Debate - Adjournment and General

Motion to regret: *That this House regrets that the Education (Student Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2015, which change the existing student support arrangements so that new students starting full-time courses after 1 September 2016 will no longer qualify for a means-tested maintenance grant, will result in a significant decrease in participation in higher education by those in low-income groups, older students, female students, and students from ethnic minorities (SI 2015/1951).*

Baroness Deech (CB):

My Lords, most speakers tonight will focus on cost and the increased debt that will accrue to students if these grants are converted to loans. I want to explore an effect that, in my view, is far more serious and damaging to the Government's aspirations for higher education. The effect of ending grants designed for food and rent costs, is that more students will have to stay at home for their studies. I will explain briefly that this will eventuate in a decrease in social and academic mobility and a ghettoisation of universities.

It is already the case that teenagers from better-off families are more likely to attend top universities than those from low-income backgrounds, even though more students from less well-off backgrounds are attending university. Some 5% of poor students went to Russell Group universities according to the latest statistics, compared with 12% from more affluent homes. It is very likely that this is simply because the teenager from a comfortable home can afford to go to any university of his or her choice throughout the country, knowing that they are able to pay the rent and all the added costs of living away from home, while the less well-off student is increasingly forced to attend whatever university is close to home. Average rents for students living away from home are around £400 a month and over £500 in London. Therefore, of course the less well-off London student will live at home, even though academically and socially his or her choice might be **Oxford or Cambridge**.

Much though those top universities have done to make themselves affordable by way of bursaries, the prospect of adding to one's debt will be off-putting for the student from a modest background. Government Ministers of all parties are frequently heard to complain that disproportionately few poor and ethnic minority students attend **Oxford and Cambridge**. These proposals will make that situation far worse, and undermine all the imaginative and extensive efforts made by top universities to reach out to underprivileged students all over the country.

Other