

Mentions of Oxford and Oxbridge in Parliament

November 2014

Commons: Mentions in Second Reading of the NHS Bill
Lords: Mention, Committee Stage of the Deregulation Bill

Commons Second Reading - National Health Service (Amended Duties and Powers) Bill

Fri, 21 November 2014

Mentions

Sir Tony Baldry:

Yes, but the first point I want to make is this. We need to be careful about what we say about the NHS in the run-up to general elections. The first general election campaign that I was seriously involved in was back in 1966. In every one since then, there has been a period when the Labour party has run around saying things along the lines of “24 hours to save the NHS.” That is very destabilising, as was evidenced today in a letter to a national newspaper by Dr Michael Dixon, the chairman of the NHS Alliance, and a number of other GPs, in which they say:

“As NHS doctors, we are deeply concerned about the misguided and potentially disruptive National Health Service Bill being debated today.

The Bill’s proponents claim it will remove competition from the NHS and guard against ‘privatisation’ by repealing key clauses of the 2012 Health and Social Care Act.

We believe this would be a backwards step for patient care, reorganising the NHS in a top-down way at a time when it needs to be looking ahead to the huge challenges of the future. These were set out in the NHS England Five Year Forward View, and we urge all politicians to support it rather than using the NHS as a political football.

Suggesting that GP commissioners have a ‘privatisation agenda’ is an ill-informed attack on the clinical leadership which improves services and helps patients.”

I agree. It is disappointing if politicians use the NHS as a political football.

The NHS is an enduring part of the post-war consensus on the welfare state. That consensus was agreed on by everyone who had gone through the deprivations of the second world war, had lived through the blitz, and were determined that there would be a better Britain. The NHS was supported by everyone, including Archbishop Temple, a brilliant Archbishop of Canterbury, who was the person who first coined the phrase “the welfare state”.

I have always been interested in the NHS, not least because both my parents became part of the NHS on its very first day. When it came into being in 1948, my father was a recently qualified registrar and my mother was a theatre sister, having served as a theatre nurse during the Coventry blitz. My parents spent the whole of their working lives in the NHS: my father went on to become the research secretary of the British Tuberculosis Association and a chest and heart specialist, and my mother went on to become a sister tutor.

The other reason I have always been extremely interested in the success of the NHS is that, in the nearly third of a century I have been fortunate to be the Member of Parliament for north Oxfordshire, the most important issue in my constituency has probably been the position of Horton general hospital and the retention of its services.

I have left instructions in my will that my body should go to the anatomy department of the **university of Oxford**, partly because there is quite a lot of it for them to work on, but also because I feel that the liver of anybody who has been an MP for nearly a third of a century must be worthy of some anatomical research. I am also determined that when they open me up, they will discover engraved on my heart, "Keep the Horton general."

What we heard from the hon. Member for Eltham was a litany of gloom in the NHS, but Horton general hospital now has more consultants than at any time in its and the NHS's history. The **Oxford University** Hospitals NHS Trust employs 11,598 staff, including 1,800 doctors and 3,600 nurses. It is important to make clear that, since 2010, the number of patients seen by the trust, including at Horton, has increased significantly. There has been a 19% increase in elected in-patient admissions, a 9% increase in emergency in-patient admissions, a 24% increase in day-care admissions and a 12% increase in out-patient attendances. Those are significant increases in just over four years, so the NHS continues to treat more out-patients and in-patients.

Over the past two years, the **Oxford University** Hospitals NHS Trust has managed completely to eliminate its financial deficit and increase the amount paid to the Oxfordshire clinical commissioning group, such that the group finished the year with a surplus. Most importantly, over the past couple of years the trust has managed to create 400 new jobs, almost all of them new doctors and new nursing posts. Sir Jonathan Michael and his team deserve considerable congratulations on managing to balance the finances of the trust and securing a large number of new medical and nursing posts.

Lords Committee Stage - Deregulation Bill (Day Five)

Thu, 6 November 2014

Mention

Lord Wallace of Saltaire:

The thought had not crossed the minds of any of us on this side of the Room that we might possibly be waiting for the noble Baroness, Lady Thornton; we, too, are very glad to see her here.

I do not think we are very far apart on this matter. I think we are all strongly in favour of good-quality teaching. We all recognise that in many of these practical areas people with practical experience also have a lot to offer, but that, as part of their development and

encouraging them to become good teachers, it is quite useful these days to give them some teacher training—in spite of the fact that many of them may not want any.

May I declare a slightly embarrassed interest? I taught for 15 years in three successive universities without a single half-hour of training on how to be a teacher—which was the way one behaved in those days. What is more, I gained a prize at one stage for the quality of my teaching. I was rather relieved when, having spent 12 years in a think tank, I came back to universities and found that, although the **University of Oxford** did not think about training me to teach, the London School of Economics did. Since IT had become an important element in teaching, there were things that we really needed to know about how one handled a different student generation. No qualification was required, but there were some very good short courses on how to use teaching aids.

Thinking about my own university experience, I recall that the most popular course in my department at the London School of Economics was taught not by somebody who had come via the traditional route through universities or research and so on but by a former ambassador. He taught a course in economic diplomacy. The weight of his practical experience, as well his ability to organise an argument, made a huge difference for students, most of whom would not themselves become university teachers but many of whom were indeed hoping to become diplomats or businessmen and thus picked up that practical experience.