

No surprises in Queens speech

There were no surprises in the Queen's speech. I spoke in the debate and will post the transcript soon.

The Speech did not expressly pledge to legislate to sort out the EU's damaging and unreasonable interpretation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. Stories in the press suggest the government may however be about to act on this. The EU shows no wish to back off to save the Belfast Agreement and rescue an Assembly government. It is vital the government acts now, as the Lords will try to delay and block such a law. The government needs to leave time to use the Parliament Act if the Lords decide again to oppose the democratic will of the U.K. and side with the EU.

The Queen's speech debate

Today the government has a chance to set out its aims for the next couple of years freed of the special measures for covid which preoccupied people and Parliament from March 2020. I want them to set out not just a plan for 2022-4 but also a wider vision for an independent, innovative, flexible, democratic, freedom loving UK engaged with the wider world but governed by ourselves.

Prime Ministers need to recognise the factions and groups within the Conservative party and craft a programme which carries most of the MPs with them for most of the time. Fortunately there is today considerable agreement between One Nation, the European Research group, the Free enterprise groups and the social Conservatives about the main needs. We are all agreed we need a strong programme geared to economic growth, more jobs and better pay. We all want lower taxes, and wish to see opportunity to own, to get a good education and training and the chance of a good job to be spread as widely as possible.

The Bank of England has just laid bare the way current economic policy may worsen conditions for many with no growth ahead, higher unemployment and difficulty in affording the private and public investment needed to transform more lives. The Bank does at least think inflation will soon be on the wane after a bad summer this year. They may this time be right. That gives the government a bit more scope to do what needs doing.

I want the government to adopt a 2% growth target, and to take joint responsibility with the Bank for the 2% inflation target. The Bank has failed to keep inflation anywhere near that level this year. Government needs to do much more to clear the way for the UK to invest more in the private sector, to produce more goods at home and grow more food at home. It needs to

redouble its recent efforts to produce more domestic oil and gas.

The methods to bring about this growth require lower tax rates, less prescriptive regulation whilst preserving high standards of employment, safety and animal welfare laws, sensible use of government ordering and more encouragement of self employment and entrepreneurship. The Treasury needs to be transformed from its negative approach. It should stop using IR 35 to prevent people working for themselves. It should cut Corporation tax to the 15% world minimum. It should cut the National Insurance tax on jobs. It should sponsor new rules to allow landowners and local communities to participate in profits from ventures needing planning permission.

There does not have to be a recession in the next two years to get on top of inflation. The best way to get the deficit down is to go for growth. Growth will come if more people think it worthwhile to work for themselves or to expand small businesses. The demand is there, as we import too much. It needs positive reform to allow more people to go on the journey to home ownership, to self employment and to participating in a growing business.

Change the Protocol

I did not vote for the final Agreement with the EU for three reasons. The first was all my experience of the EU taught me if you do sign an Agreement with them they ceaselessly try to enforce it selectively and in a biased way against you. It behaves badly to all its neighbours and tries to boss them as if they were member colonies of the project. Secondly I thought the NI Protocol a mistake. Thirdly I wanted to end all EU say over our fish. On fish and the Protocol the government tried to assure MPs these were provisional or transitory arrangements which would be changed. The Protocol contains a clause to allow alteration and the fishing agreement was transitional.

As I expected the EU has sought to use the Protocol as a battering ram against our U.K. Union or as a device to keep the whole U.K. prisoner of the single market and its rules. The EU always sides with the nationalists in Northern Ireland and with the Republic of Ireland as an EU member state in a way which continuously undermines the Good Friday Agreement. That peace settlement in NI requires the consent of both the nationalist and the Unionist communities in NI to any political development or decision. The EU claims to want to uphold that Agreement yet does everything in its power and some things beyond its legal authority to alienate the Unionist community and split it from the U.K.

Unionists now refuse to form and work in a devolved government at Stormont all the time the EU interprets the Protocol in a one sided way to throttle GB/NI trade. The EU's bigoted inflexibility, refusing to agree that GB/NI trade should not face any internal barriers crossing the Irish Sea has

damaged business in NI and made Unionists feel cut off from the rest of the U.K.

The Secretary of State for NI and the PM must now legislate in the U.K. to make clear that GB/NI trade will be governed as England/Wales or London/Liverpool trade is governed, in accordance with those statements in the Protocol to respect our internal market. The U.K. legislation should include making it an offence to seek to pass on any goods traded under the GB/NI provisions to the EU to uphold their main requirement in the Protocol. This will be enforced by the U.K. as we currently enforce anti smuggling measures.

Public views of net zero

If someone believes the most pressing issue facing the planet is excess carbon dioxide, and if they believe each one of us and every country has to do more to prevent "climate disaster" you would expect them to vote Green, the one party who put this issue above others. They demand much more is done immediately to bring about these changes and criticise the other parties programmes which allow continuing use of fossil fuels without the restrictions and tight shut down timetables the Greens would like.

In the 2019 General election in the U.K. just 2.7% of voters voted Green. In last week's local elections the Greens were in seventh place in numbers of Councillors elected.

You would also expect those who want rapid action for fear of disaster to rip out their gas boilers and scrap or sell their petrol or diesel cars. Again, it is a tiny minority that has taken both these steps.

When I ask constituents for their views the overwhelming majority accept that CO₂ is a greenhouse gas. They are not sufficiently persuaded of the urgency to make a sacrifice to get rid of the car or find the big sum to replace the boiler. Some argue that all the time India and China carry on expanding their coal based systems world CO₂ will rise whatever we do. A minority do not believe man made CO₂ will do the damage envisaged, or it may be offset by less sun intensity or water vapour and cloud changes or other variables. Many await better technology answers and cheaper and better products to help them eliminate their own CO₂. Today many see the price and availability of gas and oil as more pressing issues that concern them.

The Treasury should give back some of its windfall profits from energy taxes.

The biggest winner from sky high oil and gas prices is the government. Half the pump price you pay is duty and VAT. The VAT has surged as oil prices rose. If your petrol came from North Sea Oil the government has also taken another slug of tax from the oil producer, charged as a windfall profits tax at double the standard corporation tax.

Those who shout for a windfall profits tax on oil companies to give back to consumers should demand such a hand back from the government instead as they are ripping you off for driving and home heating with their taxes. BP made an overall loss of a colossal \$20 bn in the first quarter. Yes the company made more on selling petrol but it had to write off its huge investment in Russia. In 2020 thanks to lockdown the group also lost \$20bn for the year as a whole. Labour did not suggest then giving them a subsidy or tax rebate to help them out.

I have tried before to get the oil companies to put the government take on the pump and show it is many times the oil companies profit. They did not want to do so. That is a pity as it leaves some motorists thinking the bulk of the high price is extra profit when the bulk of the high price is a government tax rip off. No government is about to stop these taxes on petrol so they could at least give some of their windfall back to consumers as tax cuts on other taxes.

If the U.K. gets a reputation for still higher and erratic taxes it will put off investment and make it more difficult to increase domestic supply. Surely the best answer to our struggles is more home output?