

My contribution to the debate on the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (Exit Day) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2019

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): This is a travesty of proceedings. This is a major debate about the future of our country. This is a massive bill, committing us to making huge payments to the European Union, which we voted not to make anymore. It of course warrants a debate on the Floor of the House and a full vote of this House. I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Stone for the enormous work that he has put in. His case stands completely unanswered today by the hapless Minister asked to represent the Government on this occasion. My hon. Friend made it clear why he thinks the statutory instrument is defective, and why the proceedings pursued by the Government did not live up to the constitutional standards that we expect. There may well be a serious legal challenge in the courts following these proceedings.

I urge the Minister to go back to the Prime Minister and to think again. We did not vote in the referendum to delay our exit beyond two and a bit years, which was forced upon us by the rules and regulations of the treaty we were leaving. We did not vote to leave one treaty in order to sign up to two new and even worse treaties, the first of which has singularly failed to get through this House on three separate occasions and is universally condemned by most voters, remain and leave.

We need a Government that understand the mood of the British people. We need a Government that believe in democracy. We need a Government that understand that the British people voted with good purpose to leave. Almost three years on, they are appalled that we, their elected and collective representatives in this place, have collectively done everything in our power to delay, prevent and impede a proper leaving of the European Union.

The Committee should vote the statutory instrument down. It should unite in condemning the procedures being pursued. It should recognise that it has been packed to do the Government's work, which the public do not want it to do. I hope that the Committee does the decent thing and surprises us all. I fear it will not, but I trust that people outside this House will note that some of us came to make the case they wish us to make. Some of us stand up for democracy, and we are appalled by the proceedings.