

My Interventions in the Energy Bill

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John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):

On that very point—security—what provision is being made for days when there is no wind, given that we will see the closure of most of our nuclear power stations this decade and will have little else to rely on, other than fossil fuel? How are we going to get through?

Andrew Bowie, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Nuclear and Networks:

My right hon. Friend knows that I am a great champion of supporting our oil and gas industry, which continues to supply a large amount of our energy baseload and will do for a significant amount of time to come. As he also knows, we are investing a lot of time and money into ensuring that we deliver the next generation of nuclear power plants, including small modular reactors, so that we have the energy baseload that this country needs so that, as he rightly suggests, when the wind does not blow and the sun does not shine, people can still be assured that the lights will come on. The Conservative principles that I have spoken about are at the very heart of the Bill, which I am pleased to bring before the House today.

It is true that some time has passed since the Bill was introduced in July last year. The Opposition spokesperson, the hon. Member for Southampton, Test (Dr Whitehead), was but a boy when this Bill was introduced last year. A huge amount of constructive dialogue and dedicated Toggle showing location ofColumn 275work has taken place during that time. I thank all the Secretaries of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Ministers and the Prime Ministers who have been involved since the Bill was introduced.

Since the Bill came to this House from the other place, I have met and engaged with colleagues from all sides of House. We debated the Bill in a lively Second Reading and spent 72 long hours in Committee, so I start by thanking everyone across the House, especially the shadow ministerial team, the former Scottish National party energy spokesman, the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Alan Brown), and all on the Government side, for their constructive engagement in ensuring that we got the Bill to these final stages in a state that, I hope, will be broadly welcomed by most, if not all, Members.