

So what is Parliament doing now?

Yesterday afternoon Parliament moved early to its Adjournment debate at 4.47 pm. The House had been given four Statutory Instruments to scrutinise and talk about on Brexit matters. Practically no Opposition backbench MPs turned up to do so. The SIs were hurried through without a vote. The Speaker had granted three Urgent Questions which used up much of the time that was spent. These were about the situation in Yemen, homeless people and the endlessly discussed Irish border.

Many Conservative MPs stayed at party conference correctly predicting the Opposition would not that day do anything interesting or challenging in the Commons. We were left wondering why Labour voted down a brief recess for the Conservative conference when Labour and Lib Dems had enjoyed the traditional recess for their conferences. They said they wanted to scrutinise Brexit, but not when it comes to detail about farming and trade.

Parliament needs to ask itself some simple questions about how it wishes to handle the next few weeks. Will it now do what it can to facilitate Brexit, to fulfil promises made by all Labour and Conservative MPs in 2017, or will it continue to do all in its power to stop it?

Will it continue to undermine the Prime Minister's efforts to negotiate a better Agreement with the EU, or will it at the last moment recognise that the loyal opposition should reinforce the government's requests for a better outcome to EU talks in our and their mutual interest?

Do MPs seriously think Parliament should try to enforce a requirement on the Prime Minister to act against his judgement to break his promises over Brexit?

Do a majority of MPs think whether we leave or remain in the EU this autumn should fall to be decided by 11 Supreme Court judges, after the massive public debate, referendum and General election we have held to settle this matter in the high court of public opinion?