Mock greenery

There is a rogue element and an extreme element amongst the carbon campaigners. The rogue element trades in pardons and offers false reassurances that their goods and services are green. The extreme advocates demand lifestyle sacrifices well beyond what most people are prepared to consider, whilst often themselves disobeying their own strictures in order to attend another global conference or a City demo. They expect others to give up the foreign holiday in the sun and to abandon the family car, whilst they jet or drive to their important climate change events.

It is emerging that some people who claim to offer renewable energy in practice supply electricity from the general grid supply like everyone else, which still has a majority of power generated from non renewable sources. The attempts to hypothecate some renewable supply may entitle the renewable generator to earn a little more by offering a made from renewables certificate, but in most cases there is no dedicated cable to take that particular electricity to the end user.

The whole carbon trading scheme is designed to let companies that need to burn gas or oil to buy in or to be given permits to do so. The movement to “price carbon” can make things dearer and deprive more low income people of good products but it cannot transform the current state of technology or make people fall in love with green solutions they think are inferior. There is a danger that the richer people buy in to green theory in the knowledge they can still afford their petrol car and their jet flights whilst seeing the higher prices for carbon based travel or heating as the way to ration lower income families away from them.

The carbon revolution needs iconic and good products that people want to buy. Governments do not need to legislate or to subsidise to get people to buy smart phones and tablets. They do so because they like these products and the services they allow. Meanwhile in the UK many people will not even accept a smart meter offered with no specific charge to them for having one, such is the suspicion of the estabishment motives. We still do not see the iconic Mini or Beetle of the electric car world. Nor do we yet have the ubiquitous replacement for the domestic gas boiler that will take over our homes in the way tvs and washing machines did in the 1960s and 1970s. Revolutionaries need willing tidal waves of supporters which will only come from having superior products with something better more people want.

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My speech during the debate on the Internal Market Bill on New Clause 4, 29 September 2020

Sir John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): I support the Government's amendments to the legislation for the reasons outlined admirably by the Minister—it did need a little strengthening and this is a welcome clarification—but I rise

mainly to oppose new clause 1.

I am disappointed with the official Opposition, because I was delighted after the clear decision of the people in the last general election that the Opposition said that they now fully accepted the result of the referendum, although it took place years ago—the previous Parliament blocked its timely implementation. We had a rerun in the general election and the Opposition fully accepted the verdict of that general election, yet here we are again today, with new clause 1 deliberately trying to undermine the British Government's sensible negotiating position in the European Union.

Whenever there is a disagreement in interpretation of that original withdrawal agreement between the United Kingdom and the European Union, the Opposition and most of the other opposition parties rush to accept the EU's—very political—interpretation of the situation and rush to say that anything the UK Government wish to assert in this Parliament, or in a court of law if it came to that, is clearly illegal.

It is preposterous that we have so many MPs who so dislike the people of this country that they are still trying to thwart the very clear wish to have a Brexit that makes sense.

Karin Smyth (Bristol South) (Lab): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir John Redwood: I must not take up too much time. I wish to develop my argument quickly.

We have to recognise what we are dealing with here. The EU withdrawal agreement was pretty unsatisfactory and one-sided because the previous Parliament stopped the Government putting a strong British case and getting the support of this Parliament in the way the British people wanted. The Prime Minister wisely went to Europe and did his best to amend the withdrawal agreement but it was quite clear from the agreed text that a lot was outstanding and rested to be resolved in the negotiations to be designed around the future relationship, because we used to say that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed and that the withdrawal terms had to run alongside the future relationship.

The EU won that one thanks to the dreadful last Parliament undermining our position all the time. This Prime Minister is trying to remedy that and the only reason I was able to vote for the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018—much of it was an agreement that I knew had lots of problems with it—was that we put in clause 38, a clear assertion of British sovereignty against the possibility that the EU did not mean what it said in its promises to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and did not offer that free trade agreement, which was going to be at the core of the new relationship. We therefore needed that protection, so I am pleased that the Government put it in.

That made me able to vote for the measure to progress it to the next stage, but I was always clear that the EU then needed to get rid of all its posturing and accept what it had said and signed up to—that the core of our

new relationship was going to be a free trade agreement. We were going to be a third country, we were not going to be under its laws and we were not going to be in its single market and customs union, but it has systematically blocked that free trade agreement. The UK has tabled a perfectly good one based on the agreements the EU has offered to other countries that it did not have such a close relationship with, but it has not been prepared to accept it. Well, why does it not table its own? Why does it not show us what it meant when it signed up to having a free trade agreement at the core of our relationship? If it will not, we will leave without a deal and that will be a perfectly good result for the British people, as I said before the referendum and have always said subsequently.

Of course, it would be better if we could resolve those matters through that free trade agreement. As colleagues will know, many of the problems with the Northern Ireland protocol fall away if we have that free trade agreement, and we are only in this position because the EU is blocking it.

Why is the EU blocking the agreement? It says that it wants to grab our fish. I have news for it: they are not on offer. They are going to be returned to the British people, I trust. I am always being told by Ministers that they are strong on that. The EU wishes to control our law making and decide what state aid is in the United Kingdom. No, it will not. We voted to decide that within the framework of the World Trade Organisation and the international rules that govern state aid—rules, incidentally, that the EU regularly breaks. It has often been found guilty of breaking international state aid rules and has been fined quite substantially as a result.

I support the Government's amendments, and I support this piece of legislation. We need every bit of pressure we can to try to get the free trade agreement and the third-country relationship with the EU that we were promised by it and by the Government in the general election. We can then take the massive opportunities of Brexit. It is crucial that new clause 1 is not agreed to, because it would send a clear message to the European Union that this Parliament still wants to give in.

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My intervention during the debate on the Internal Market Bill, 29 September 2020

Sir John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): Will the Minister confirm that Brexit is a huge opportunity to increase the powers both of this House—over our own internal market and economic prosperity—and of the devolved Administrations, which will gain power? Should everybody not cheer up and welcome the fact that both the devolved Administrations and the Union Parliament can take back control?

Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy), Minister of State (Mr Paul Skully): I thank my right hon. Friend for the opportunity to absolutely agree with him that this gives us a great opportunity to come together as the United Kingdom, to give that sense of certainty to businesses and, just as importantly, to grab hold of the opportunities provided by leaving the European Union.