

The Brexit Bill and the bill for Brexit

The government is pressing on with Brexit preparation. Labour now say they wish to amend the Bill and maybe even vote against it. That's strange as they put an identical Bill into their Manifesto. Their overriding request that all EU employment rules become good UK law will be met by the Bill as drafted. The government can win the votes without them if needed. Their own Leave voters will be right to ask why they are doing this after their promises, and after their vote to send the Article 50 letter.

There are still too many UK interests wanting to give ground on paying money to the EU. The legal position is clear. We only owe our regular contributions up to the date of departure. We do not have to pay extra to trade. If they insist the only way they can make us do that is by imposing WTO tariffs. That would be a far cheaper route for us than them, and far cheaper than any of these so called bills they have been talking about.

Under WTO tariffs the UK government would gain around £12bn of tariff revenue at the expense of UK consumers, which it could give back as tax cuts.