

The state of the Union – Mr Trump's address

Mr Trump rose to the occasion and delivered a powerful address, seeking to bring more people into his vision of a faster growing USA with more jobs and more take home pay

He was full of the American dream, though not so full of the American dreamers that the Democrats champion. The President hopes he has done a deal on migration. He gets an end to wider family members having an automatic right to entry, and more wall across the Mexican border, in return for offering full legal citizenship to the Dreamers, the young people born of illegal migrants and brought up in the USA. Republicans are presenting the extra border wall as an extension of the Democrats 700 mile border fence. Democrats including Mrs Clinton legislated for that in 2006. The Democrats see it differently.

Mr Trump pointed out that companies are offering to pay higher wages or special bonuses to their employees following the corporate tax cuts. He reminded the nation that these pay increases are worth more with lower taxes. He told them that a family of 4 with an income of \$75,000 would be \$2000 a year better off. A married couple on \$24000 will pay no income tax. He took credit for the decision of a number of car makers to expend or establish new factories in the USA. He announced the end of "the war on American energy" as he takes measures to produce more oil and gas at home. It looks as if his tax cuts will provide a welcome boost to jobs, earnings and US investment.

He was full of praise for the USA and for Americans, as he sought to get more buy in to his idea of making "America great again for all Americans". He concluded with some history from the founding of the Republic, saying the USA is:

"home to an incredible people with the revolutionary idea that they could rule themselves. That they could chart their own destiny. And that, together, they could light up the world."

Maiden Lane Post Office

The Maiden Lane Post Office will be closing temporarily on March 17 this year on the retirement of the Postmaster.

The Post Office are now looking for a retail partner interested in running the Post Office. They can be contacted on 0845 601 6260 by anyone

interested. They might set up a new style Post Office local where the Post Office runs alongside an established local shop. It depends on future customer interest and who comes forward to run the Post Office.

Anyone wishing to tell the Post Office what they would like to see as users of the Post Office can email comments@postoffice.co.uk stating it is about Maiden Lane.

Improving the NHS

I would like to relaunch today a couple of ideas I have talked about before to improve the service and assist with efficiency.

The NHS issues large number of items to help people with their injuries and to assist their mobility. Many of these items like walking frames, crutches, wheelchairs, and various supports could be reused after a deep clean and checking, but are often left with the patient or the patient's family. The NHS could appoint contractors who would pick these items up from the patient or from the hospital after use, carry out the checks, and return them to the NHS for another patient. This should be cheaper than buying new every time, removes the costs of dumping them as waste, and would be a visible contribution to recycling.

The NHS also uses a large quantity of other supplies every day. There are two issues about this that might be amenable to improved handling. The first is to make more use of suppliers willingness these days to supply just in time, delivering to the ward or surgery that needs the item. Parts of the NHS still have a tendency to double and treble bank stocks, with a central stock, a hospital stock and a ward stock. The more you stock the more chance there is of damage or of things going out of date. It also takes up valuable space. Some pharma products need fridge storage.

The second is to have good dispensing of the product where it is needed, with guidance to busy medical staff as to which they need. Modern stock control and access systems allow precision delivery of the items needed related to a specific task. These systems also keep check of supplies and can ensure re-ordering in good time so there is also back up. Making supplies available to people discharged from hospital could also benefit from better control of stock, so people get what they need in a timely way, but are not burdened with large deliveries which turn out to be in excess of their needs.

Transport of live animals

I attended a meeting to hear reports of problems for animal welfare through long distance lorry journeys. I am keen that Mr Gove should look into this and see what can be done to improve our law for animal welfare and ensure there is proper enforcement.

There is no evidence joining the single market boosted UK growth

If you look at the ONS figures for UK growth you discover that the UK grew by around two thirds in the two decades before we joined the EEC, but grew by only around a half in the two decades that followed. The growth rate then declined a little more for the two decades from 1992 when they “completed” the single market.

Those who seem to think leaving the single market will cause growth to slow need to explain why there was no visible boost to growth when we joined. Indeed, the completion of the single market included the worst period of the Exchange Rate Mechanism, a crucial part then of their construction of a single market, which pushed us into a nasty recession.

The latest leaked reports about slower future growth have all the reliability of those Treasury forecasts of a recession in the winter of 2016-17 which proved to be so wrong.