

[This chaotic Government is breaking its own laws by refusing to set out its timetable for the state pension age – Abrahams](#)

Debbie Abrahams MP, Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary,

raised a Point of Order today on the Government's failure to meet its legal deadline to set out its state pension age timetable. Debbie said:

"This chaotic Government is breaking its own laws by refusing to set out its timetable for the state pension age."

"Should they implement the recommendations of the Cridland Review, up to 34 million people will be expected to work longer."

"Given their complete failure to adequately communicate the equalisation of the state pension age for women, it is absolutely vital that this Tory Government comes clean with its plan now."

"In our manifesto Labour is committed to leaving the state pension age at 66, as part of our plans to ensure a secure and dignified retirement for the many, not just a few."

[Referring the bid to a phase two inquiry by the CMA is the Government doing just the bare minimum – Watson](#)

Tom Watson MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, commenting on Karen Bradley's statement on the Sky/Fox merger, said:

"There are no surprises in the statement today."

“Referring

the bid to a phase two inquiry by the CMA is the Government doing just the bare minimum. If the Government now accepts further undertakings in lieu instead it will throw the integrity of this process into question.

“Ofcom’s

finding that the Murdochs remain fit and proper to hold a broadcasting licence, despite ‘significant corporate failure’ at Fox News, is disappointing. If the executives who ran a company involved in systematic and widespread criminality, including phone hacking and police bribery, can pass the fit and proper test, it begs the question – is the test itself fit for purpose?

“If

Karen Bradley really wants the facts then part two of the Leveson Inquiry must go ahead to investigate the corporate governance failures that allowed the phone hacking scandal to take place.

“It’s

clear the rules need to be reviewed and the next Labour government will look again at the laws governing media ownership in this country.

“The

General Election result last month shows the Murdoch media empire can no longer deliver Tory majorities. So the Government has nothing to lose. It must not let this bid proceed.”

[This inquiry must provide answers for the Grenfell Tower community – Healey](#)

Responding

to the appointment of Sir Martin Moore-Bick as head of the public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire, **John Healey MP, Labour’s Shadow Secretary of State for Housing**, said:

“This

inquiry must provide answers for the Grenfell Tower community, find out what has gone so badly wrong, and help ensure this tragedy is never repeated.

“Two weeks on from the fire, trust is low in the community around Grenfell Tower so it is vital that the inquiry gains the trust of Grenfell families and that their voices are heard throughout this process.

“Given we do not know when this inquiry will be completed, it must not be used by the government to delay making the urgent changes we already know are needed.

“We do not need a public inquiry to tell us that tower block residents need a commitment to up-front funding for necessary remedial work, including re-cladding and retrofitting sprinklers starting with the highest-risk buildings. Ministers have failed to give this clear funding commitment, and they should do so now.

“We do not need a public inquiry to know that our system of fire safety checks and controls is failing, and that an overhaul of building regulations is urgently needed as was recommended to the government in 2013 following the Lakanal House fire.”

[John McDonnell speech – Queen’s Speech Debate](#)

John

McDonnell MP, Labour’s Shadow Chancellor, speaking in the Queen’s Speech debate in the House of Commons today, said:

***CHECK
AGAINST DELIVERY***

“Thank you Mr Speaker,

I beg to move the amendment in my name and that of my honourable and right honourable colleagues.

I have been in the House now for 20 years, never have we seen such a threadbare scrap of a document as this Queens Speech.

Let's
be grateful for small mercies, it's a pleasure to note what has not been mentioned in this vacuous notelet.

Despite
being promised in the Conservative manifesto, we have heard no plans for legislation to end the triple lock.

We
have heard nothing about legislation to end winter fuel payments.

We
have heard no legislative plans for the so-called dementia tax.

Nothing
of the policy to take food from the mouths of infants and younger primary school children.

Even the
flagship grammar schools policy seems to have been ditched from the Queen's Speech.

I
want to thank the millions of voters who rejected the Conservatives, they have
been prevented the Tories from implementing in full the cuts they promised.

Instead
the Government has been reduced to a grubby back-room deal and pork barrel politics in an attempt to cling onto office.

The
result is that we have a Queen's Speech devoid of content which offers no solutions to the pressing issues facing Britain today.

The
Queen's Speech says, and I quote,

*"My
ministers will strengthen the economy so that it supports the creation of jobs"*

*The
reality Mr Speaker, is that we are witnessing, to quote the Governor of the Bank of England, the weakest UK business investment in half a century.*

*The
growth of insecure, low paid, low skilled jobs. 1 million on zero hours contracts.*

*The
Queens Speech promises to "invest in the NHS, schools and other public services".*

The
reality is that this couldn't be further from the truth.

Spending
per pupil remains set to fall.

Police
officers, firefighters and border guards will be cut.

And the
NHS, already at breaking point, has been promised no new money.

Not our
words Mr Speaker but those of the British Medical Association.

The
Chancellor has, in various interviews, bemoaned the fact that he was hidden
away during the election campaign and that his record on the economy was not
the central plank of the Conservatives' campaign.

I agree.

I wish he
had been more to the fore in the campaign and his record more widely exposed.

Because
if it had been, Labour would be in government now.

I don't
believe that, so far, the Rt Hon gentlemen has been afforded his proper place
in history.

For those
Hon Members who were not in this place 8 years ago, let me explain that the
Chancellor was, prior to 2010, the Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

And as an
ardent neo-liberal, the Chancellor, in his role as Chief Secretary, was the
Architect of Austerity.

It was he
who designed the detail of the economic programme rolled out by his mentor
George Osborne after 2010.

He has
been at the heart of the Austerity cabinet throughout this period.

He should
not hide his light under a bushel.

In his
recent Mansion House speech he referred to his Government's record as, "a
record of which we are proud".

The foundation of the chancellor's record is his adherence to neo-liberalism – trickle-down economics.

A theory which argues that, if you cut taxes for the rich and for corporations, and turn a blind eye to tax avoidance and tax evasion, then somehow this wealth will somehow trickle down to the rest of society.

The Chancellor has certainly adhered to tax cuts for the rich and for corporations.

Corporation tax, capital gains tax, Inheritance Tax and the Bank levy have all been slashed.

Independent analysis demonstrates that OBR costings of tax cuts introduced by the Conservatives on these four measures alone since 2010 will have cost tax payers over £70bn between last year and the end of this Parliament.

The corporation tax cuts were meant to lead to a large scale increase in Business investment in our economy.

But last year business investment fell for the first time since 2009 and remains lower than in the rest of the G7, with the exception of Italy.

Corporations are now sitting on £580 billion of earned income that they are not investing.

Some have been exposed as being involved in share buy-backs to boost performance statistics and bonuses.

Seven years of Tory austerity have done nothing to address the grotesque and widening levels of wealth inequality in the UK.

A report last year by Credit Suisse found that the richest 1% of people in the UK now own almost a quarter of the country's wealth.

The Sunday Times Rich List told us that the richest 1000 families in the UK had more than doubled their wealth since the financial crash.

This is

the record of which the Chancellor is so proud.

Let's
measure the impact of this record on the rest of society.

It's
important we do because this Queen's speech promises just more of the same.

This
could have been the Queens Speech that ended austerity once and for all. It certainly doesn't.

Is it a
matter of pride for the Chancellor that nearly one and a quarter million food parcels were handed out by food banks last year?

Are we to
be proud of a government that can't feed its people?

How can
anyone be proud that over 77,000 households were in temporary accommodation this year- an almost 8% increase on last year?

Rough
sleeping has increased by 134% since this Government came to power.

There are
1.2 million households on the housing waiting lists.

Nearly
70,000 children are being brought up in temporary accommodation whilst house building has fallen to its lowest level since the 1920s?

Are we to
be proud that we have a government that can't adequately house its population?

Is it a proud
record that four million children are trapped in poverty in our country?

Two
thirds of these children are in working families.

And it's
not just children.

The
latest figures show that 14 million people are living in poverty in the UK.

This includes
nearly two million pensioners – the very people the Conservatives were going to
hit with ending the triple lock, means testing winter fuel payments and

introducing a dementia tax.

Over 80%
of the austerity measures have fallen on women.

But some
of the hardest hit have been disabled people.

According
the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, almost half of those in poverty are disabled
or
live in a household with a disabled person.

The
brutality of the Work Capability Assessment has been associated with over 590
suicides.

Is it a
record to be proud of that his cap on public sector pay has contributed to
wages falling by 10% since 2008?

We have
witnessed the longest fall in wages on record.

Nearly
six million people earn less than the living wage.

People
were shocked when the RCN revealed nurses pay had fallen by 14%, forcing some
nurses to rely on foodbanks.

Is it
something to be proud of that the UK is the only major developed country that
has seen economic growth but falling wages?

Yesterday
we had the chaos of mixed messages coming out from Number 10 and the Treasury
over hints that the pay cap was to be scrapped.

Last
night the coalition of the Tories and the DUP voted down our motion to
support
public sector workers securing a fair pay rise.

Ministers
have been quick to praise the devotion and bravery of our emergency services
in
the aftermath of the tragedies we have seen in recent weeks.

But last
night they could not extend that generosity to give those men and women that
put their lives on the line to keep us safe, a pay rise.

The proper governance of this country is being undermined by the disputes between the PM and the Chancellor.

Let's look at the desperate state of our public services.

How can anyone take pride in:

Spending per pupil set to fall by 8% between 2015-16 and 2019-20

Over 46,000 children's operations have been cancelled over the last four years

Police numbers have been cut by 20,000 since 2010

Firefighter posts have been cut by 10,000 since 2010

20,000 soldiers cut from 2010.

So we have a government that can't feed our people, can't house our people or protect our children and older people from poverty.

It cannot ensure that when people go to work they earn enough to live on.

And it can't maintain our basic public services.

That's a government that doesn't deserve to remain in office.

All this suffering by ordinary people under austerity to protect the rich and the corporations has been for what?

On the government's own metrics it has significantly failed.

They promised that the deficit would be eradicated in five years- now it will be 15 years at best.

They have added £700 billion to the national debt, leaving £1.7 trillion of debt for

future generations.

In the first quarter of this year growth has fallen to 0.2% while inflation has increased to 2.9% – below wage growth.

Last year saw the slowest rate of business investment since 2009.

Wages are lower today than when the Tories took office in 2010.

Unsecured debt per household will reach a record high this year.

It's not just the Labour Party that is highlighting the consequences of the Tories' failed economic approach.

Last week, the Governor of the Bank of England warned of "weaker real income growth".

He spoke about "markedly weak investment" and "rapid consumer credit growth".

And worryingly he warned that "the extent to which the UK's [current account] deficit has moved closer to sustainability remains an open question", as we continue to rely on the "kindness of strangers" to fund us.

The Bank's Chief Economist said last week that 7 per cent of the entire workforce could be on zero-hours contracts in a decade.

The Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies has called the lost wage growth in this country "completely unprecedented".

The IFS have also referred to the "unacknowledged risks to the quality of public services" under the Conservatives, and judge that their austerity plans would be so harsh as to potentially be undeliverable.

A Queen's speech which is devoid of any serious measures to address the economic challenges facing this country and the pressures ordinary people and our public services are under.

Austerity continues to impact on our schools, health services, emergency services and

peoples living standards.

In the
Autumn Budget, it will be interesting to see how the Chancellor covers the
black hole derived from his last disastrous budget. At least £2bn we are
aware
of and according to some commentators growing to anything up to £7bn.

In particular
it would be helpful if the Chancellor explained today how he covers the cost
of
the £1bn grubby bribe to the DUP to keep his party clinging onto office.

£100m a
vote the cost of the deal.

If I were
a Tory backbencher I would start to negotiate now for a slice of that action.

After the
miraculous discovery of funds for the DUP deal I don't expect to hear much
more
about magic money trees from the other side.

£1bn
found for the DUP but nothing to address the fundamentals of our weak and
precarious economy which is now faced with the challenges of BREXIT.

Increasingly
people are waking up to the fact that a government lacking a strong and
stable
leadership is incapable of securing a deal which protects our jobs and
economy.

Divisions
at the top of Government, a Cabinet divided.

Rows
between members of the Government's negotiating team are breaking out on a
daily basis as they position themselves for their own leadership challenges.

As a
result we witness weekly changes of direction in the Government's own
negotiating stance.

That
includes even changes in direction by the Chancellor.

Only
weeks ago he was threatening no deal – walking away to set the UK up as a tax
haven off the coast of continental Europe.

Now it is

reported he is potentially looking to the customs union and a long and uncertain transition period.

Only months ago he went along with the Government prioritising immigration control over the protection of jobs and the economy. Now he claims to want a jobs first BREXIT.

All this, the failed and deeply unpopular austerity programme, the deeply divided rudderless cabinet and the directionless Brexit negotiating strategy, a content-less Queen's speech surely confirm it is time for this government to go.

It's time for change.

As the Labour Party demonstrated during the general election campaign: there is an alternative.

We can address the deep-rooted problems our economy faces.

The Labour Party has forged ahead with a serious, credible alternative to the Governments failed approach.

Our society can afford decent public services.

We are the fifth largest economy in the world.

If we have a fair tax system, we can end the cuts in schools budgets.

We can end the horrific sight of children sleeping on chairs in hospital corridors.

We can end the bedroom tax and the punitive benefits sanctions regimes.

And we can do that – as confirmed by the IFS – while remaining on target to eliminate the budget deficit in accordance with our Fiscal Credibility Rule.

But it's not just about a fairer tax system: we need a government to invest what's needed to secure our future.

Not the derisory numbers floated by the Chancellor in the Autumn Statement with so little to back them up.

A serious, long-term vision of the economy which tackles the regional disparities and the changes taking place in the labour market.

A commitment to drive up productivity by increasing investment – as demanded by the CBI and many others – and delivering a serious industrial strategy.

It's a transformative programme we look forward to implementing in Government.

This Queen's Speech does nothing to solve our problems.

It confirms a Government isolated from the real world in which our people live.

Labour's amendment today sets out the alternative our country so desperately needs.

I urge all Honourable members to support the amendment."

[The Justice Secretary must deal with the epidemic of violence, drugs, overcrowding and understaffing in our Prisons – Burgon](#)

Richard Burgon MP, Labour's Shadow Justice Secretary, commenting on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons' report on Birmingham prison which is published tomorrow, said:

"As the evidence of the Conservative-created crisis in our prisons continues to mount, the Queen's Speech shows the Government has given up trying to sort out their mess.

"The
Justice Secretary must deal with the epidemic of violence, drugs,
overcrowding
and understaffing, which was left to fester over the election campaign. To
help
get a grip of the situation, Labour would recruit 3,000 prisons officers."