

A short Committee meeting with a big consequence

Sir William Cash, I and others opposed the delay to our exit from the EU when the government embarked on it. We complained about the way the government agreed to the delay on the terms offered by the European Council and rushed it through in UK law by a Statutory Instrument that was not even debated. Yesterday, after much delay and argument, the government allowed Sir William a ninety minute debate in a committee where there was a secure opposition and government majority to approve the Statutory Instrument anyway. I am grateful to him for securing this debate and for submitting an important legal case about the way the government pushed through delay to our exit.

Many of us attended the Committee though we had not been included as members of it because we wished to put the case against delay, and to support Sir William's legal case concerning the imperfections of the Statutory Instrument which in his view made it void. In the Commons any MP can attend and speak at a committee, though only those made members of the committee can vote. Time did not permit speeches from most of those wishing to speak, though a series of lively interventions made sure the case for exit did not go unheard. I was allowed a couple of minutes at the end of the proceedings.

I said that it was sad day for Parliament when something of this magnitude fell to be debated in a small committee over just 90 minutes, As it entails the spending of additional £7bn or more on EU contributions, and submits us for many more months to EU laws and requirements, it should be debated by the whole House and voted on by every MP. I drew attention to the growing gap between many members of the public and Parliament over honouring the referendum decision. Many voters believe MPs should keep their pledges from the 2017 General Election when both Conservative and Labour promised to get us out of the EU by 29 March 2019 in accordance with the laws Parliament passed and the wording of the EU Treaty. I explained why our democracy needs us just to get on with it, to leave. When we voted to renounce the EU Treaty we did not vote to lock ourselves into two new Treaties.

The conventional media decided to ignore these heated and important exchanges between pro Brexit MPs and the combined ranks of the Conservative and Labour establishments. Labour simply failed to speak up for leaving and would not oppose the government.