

My Intervention at the Ministerial Statement on Energy Security

Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP (Wokingham) (Con): Over the last 48 hours, wind has generated as little as 1% of our electricity, and it was at 2% when I checked this morning, while of course most of the homes we represent use gas for heating. Will the Secretary of State confirm that we need to get on with issuing more production licences for domestic oil and gas, which cuts the carbon dioxide involved and will enable us to keep the lights on, which we cannot do when the wind does not blow?

Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: My right hon. Friend is characteristically correct that we cannot always rely on a single form of electricity generation. As the French have found out, we cannot always rely on nuclear. I think France has 71 nuclear power stations in its fleet, but about half of them are down at the moment, so it cannot rely only on nuclear. I was discussing this very fact with my opposite number yesterday. I know that my right hon. Friend welcomes the £700 million development approval cash that we have put into the first new nuclear since the 1980s, and he is absolutely right that we need a broad spread of different energy forms to ensure that we can provide the cheap power we require at all times.