

My interventions in the Opposition Day debate on the Delivery of Public Services

Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP (Wokingham) (Con): Does the right hon. Member agree with me that if you wish to improve service you do not go on strike and if you wish to pay for higher wages you do not go on strike? Will he give that advice to the rail unions?

Pat McFadden, Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Lab): I had anticipated one or two interventions on strikes, so let me say to the right hon. Gentleman that whoever's responsibility the strikes are, it is certainly not that of a party that has been in opposition for 12 years. He and the Ministers he supports will have to take responsibility for the industrial strife they are presiding over. I say that to him in the anticipation of other interventions in the same vein.

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Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP (Wokingham) (Con): When I asked representatives of the Health Department how many chief executives there were in NHS England, they said that they did not know. Has my right hon. Friend had any more success than I have in finding out how much senior management there is, how it is aligned with the interests of patients and how wisely it is going to spend the extra money he is giving it?

Simon Clarke, Chief Secretary to the Treasury: My right hon. Friend is right to say that with this budget for the NHS comes a responsibility for that organisation to be absolutely open and candid—in a way that, frankly, it has too often not been—about where its resources are deployed, and certainly to avoid funding a culture of managerialism at the expense of the patients. We have had recent success in securing some of the data that we have been looking for, but this is a subject where ongoing pressure from across the House for greater transparency is welcome. Certainly if there is any data that we hold that my right hon. Friend would like to see, I will do my best to facilitate that.