

Parliament will be sovereign

Parliament can make mountains out of any molehill in the UK, once we have left the EU. It is curious that those most hostile to our departure from the EU now claim to be the most protective of the very Parliamentary sovereignty they so wantonly gave away. They need not worry. Out of the EU, Parliament can debate and vote on anything it wishes. It can hold government to account and change the law any day it likes.

The synthetic anger over the so called Henry VIII clauses in the Great Repeal Bill are just such a phoney war and a false tenderness towards the UK Parliament. The government has made clear that all substantive changes to EU laws, ranging from a new immigration policy to a new fishing policy, will of course need primary legislation. Parliament can shape and influence that to its heart content, in a way it could never do when the rules were laid down by the EU.

The so called Henry VIII powers, often used to drive through EU matters, will only be used for government to make technical changes to existing EU law to make sure it does still work as UK law! That surely is something the Remain people should like, as presumably they welcome the continuity of much EU law as UK law.

It is a curious feature of the modern debate that the Remain supporters in Parliament want us to talk about nothing but Brexit the whole time, and then complain that we do not debate and vote on it enough. As one who welcomes Parliamentary scrutiny and debate on the use of power I have no problem with Parliament doing this. Parliament does, however, need to have some sense of balance and proportion. We need to complement the many hours of debate and scrutiny of the UK's position on Brexit with proper use of our powers in many other areas, and more debate of the needs and tactics of the rest of the EU.

It is fine for the Opposition to criticise or demand more of the government. It should also be the loyal Opposition, recognising the impact its words may have on the UK's position in the EU talks.