

SCIENCE IN PARLIAMENT

The Journal of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee.

The Committee is an Associate Parliamentary Group of members of both Houses of Parliament and British members of the European Parliament, representatives of scientific and technical institutions, industrial organisations and universities.



Government's re-organisation of the DfES and DTI was done with the best of intentions, but had they thought through the knock-on impact on the existence of the Science & Technology (S&T) Select Committee? The new Department of Innovation,

Universities and Skills (DIUS), with John Denham as its Secretary of State, will give a greater focus on STEM and ensure that the work of our scientists and engineers results in more new products and better use of the knowledge that they gain.

Much of the work of the existing S&T Committee will be covered by the new DIUS Departmental Select Committee, which begins its work after the Queen's Speech, scheduled for 6 November. The plan is to build a DIUS Committee of 14 MPs, rather than the usual 11, so that a S&T Sub-Committee can be created. The current S&T Committee's Chairman, Liberal Democrat Phil Willis, will chair the new DIUS Committee.

But, will the new S&T Sub-Committee have the clout to carry out the powerful cross-cutting investigations of all Government departments and agencies that have been a feature of the current S&T Committee? It will have fewer Members on it, probably about 6, and less resources in terms of travel allowances and administrative staff. In the end, it will probably depend on the commitment of its Members and their new Chairman.

Otherwise, despite all the conference season speculation about a snap Autumn General Election, we coast towards the next Queen's Speech with the same personalities in place. A major debate should then ensue on the proposed Human Tissues and Embryology Bill. I hope that the debate on revising the 1990 Human Fertility and Embryology Act will not be completely hijacked by the inevitable abortion debate.

In this edition of SiP we include coverage of a visit by a Chinese delegation to study energy generation in the UK. Whilst their focus was on renewable resources, the P&SC took the opportunity to discuss clean coal technologies. It's a pity though that BP has decided not to go ahead with its carbon capture and storage generation plant in Scotland.

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Chairman, Editorial Board
Science in Parliament

Science in Parliament has two main objectives:

- a) to inform the scientific and industrial communities of activities within Parliament of a scientific nature and of the progress of relevant legislation;*
- b) to keep Members of Parliament abreast of scientific affairs.*



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