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DÍOSPÓIREACHTAÍ PARLAIMINTE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

DÁIL ÉIREANN

TUAIRISC OIFIGIÚIL—*Neamhcheartaithe*
(OFFICIAL REPORT—*Unrevised*)

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DÁIL ÉIREANN

Dé hAoine, 5 Iúil 2013

Friday, 5 July 2013

Chuaigh an Leas-Cheann Comhairle i gceannas ar 10.30 a.m.

Paidir.

Prayer.

Business of Dáil

Deputy Timmy Dooley: On a point of order, Friday sittings are aimed at reforming the manner in which we do our business. The irony of the House sitting today to discuss the Brighter Evenings Bill for three hours when debate this year on 60% to 70% of Bills has been guillotined will not be lost on the public. This week alone, the legislation introducing measures enabling repossession of family homes was guillotined.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: The business of the House was ordered yesterday.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: I accept that. Debate on the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Bill 2013 was also guillotined.

Deputy Jerry Buttimer: On a point of order-----

Deputy Timmy Dooley: The Minister is well aware of this.

Deputy Jerry Buttimer: On a point of order-----

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: I will call Deputy Buttimer in a moment.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: Some 27 amendments were tabled to that Bill but because of the guillotine the debate concluded on amendment No. 8.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: These points-----

Deputy Jerry Buttimer: On a point of order-----

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: I will call Deputy Buttimer in a moment.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: It is farcical that three hours of Dáil time is being wasted on a Bill such as the one before the House today-----

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: The Deputy has made his point. I call Deputy Buttimer.

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Deputy Timmy Dooley: -----when one considers the measures that this Government-----

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: The Deputy has made his point.

Deputy Jerry Buttimer: On a point of order, there is no Order of Business today.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: -----is introducing to repossess family homes.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Deputies, please. Deputy Dooley has made his point. Today's business was ordered yesterday.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: I have the floor and wish to make a point of order.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: The Deputy has made his point and should resume his seat.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: It is clear that this Government has decided that there will be no Dáil reform. It is an outrageous situation.

Deputy Jerry Buttimer: The sun has gone to the Deputy's head.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Deputy Dooley, resume your seat. I call Deputy Buttimer.

Deputy Jerry Buttimer: On a point of order, the only item for discussion this morning is the Bill in the name of Deputy Broughan.

Deputy Eric Byrne: Correct.

Deputy Jerry Buttimer: There is no Order of Business. I suggest that Deputy Dooley stop grandstanding and playing the old Punch and Judy style politics.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: There is no grandstanding. The people who are paying our wages are appalled-----

Deputy Jerry Buttimer: Deputy Dooley is waffling.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: -----at the way in which this Government is ordering business.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Deputy Dooley.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: It has hijacked Parliament and rammed through significant legislation this week that will lead to the repossession of family homes.

Deputy Michael McNamara: The Deputy must be under pressure elsewhere.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: The purpose of today's sitting is to consider the Brighter Evenings Bill 2012 in the name of Deputy Broughan. Please allow the Deputy to make his point.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: It has not allowed for the taking of amendments, including on the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Bill 2013 and yet we are here today for three hours to discuss the Brighter Evenings Bill.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: The Deputy has made his point and should resume his seat.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: This is a sham. It is outrageous for the Government to say it has

been reforming the manner in which Parliament is operated.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Resume your seat.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: It is abolishing the Seanad on the basis that that is reform. It is an outrageous affront to the democracy of this State.

(Interruptions).

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: I call the Minister, Deputy Shatter.

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): On a point of order, to get over Deputy Dooley's disorder-----

Deputy Eric Byrne: It was a point of disorder.

Deputy Alan Shatter: -----the Deputy is welcome on a Friday morning to run the role of the Lone Ranger because he is the only representative of the Fianna Fáil Party.

Deputy Eric Byrne: Where are the other members of Fianna Fáil?

Deputy Alan Shatter: The Deputy appears to have missed the point that while his party leader made a major issue on Wednesday of the guillotining of the debate on the Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Bill, the Report Stage debate, which was scheduled to conclude at 6.30 p.m., collapsed at 5.50 p.m. The Deputy's party had so little interest in that Bill it tabled only a few amendments to it and debate on it finished 40 minutes earlier than designated.

Deputy Eric Byrne: Apologise.

Deputy Alan Shatter: If the Deputy is suggesting to the House that that legislation was guillotined, the only people who guillotined it were members of the Fianna Fáil Party who were so uninterested in the Bill they failed to table any reasonable number of amendments to it or to speak on it, other than Deputy Niall Collins-----

Deputy Timmy Dooley: That is an outrageous position.

Deputy Alan Shatter: -----who spoke on only one amendment.

(Interruptions).

Deputy Alan Shatter: If the Deputy wants to turn Friday sittings into a comedy routine, he is welcome.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: I was speaking about the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Bill 2013, with which the Minister is familiar. Debate on that Bill concluded on amendment No. 8.

(Interruptions).

Deputy Timmy Dooley: On a point of order, the Minister has misled the House again. I never raised the issue of the Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Bill. I raised the guillotining of the debate on the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Bill, which despite there being 27 amendments to it concluded on amendment No. 8.

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An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: The business of the House was ordered yesterday. I call Deputy Broughan.

Deputy Eric Byrne: Deputy Dooley is digging a hole for himself and his party.

Brighter Evenings Bill 2012: Second Stage [Private Members]

Deputy Thomas P. Broughan: I move: "That the Bill be now read a Second Time."

I thought we were going to be here until dark. The Brighter Evenings Bill 2012 has two main components. Section 2 requires the Minister for Justice and Equality to prepare and publish a report of an independent group of stakeholders addressing the costs and benefits of advancing the clocks by one hour in order that there would be brighter evenings throughout the year in Ireland. It would also mean that Ireland would be on the same time as the central European time zone. Section 3 allows the Minister to provide for the advancing of clocks in Ireland by one hour for a three year trial period under a daylight saving order. The three year experiment would adopt the single-double summer time model, which would mean that we would be an hour ahead of Greenwich mean time, GMT+1, in winter and two hours ahead, GMT+2, in summer.

Like many other citizens, I have always found the turning back of the clocks in late October to be a depressing experience. It adds another gloomy layer to the onset of winter. I raised this issue several times in my earlier years in Dáil Éireann and more recently in November 2010 with former Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Dermot Ahern.

I thank colleagues, including the Minister, Deputy Shatter, who have attended the House for this debate today, in particular those who hold a similar point of view, including Deputy David Stanton who has brought forward a number of initiatives in this regard over the past 20 years and, outside of this House, Senator Feargal Quinn who has also advocated that we move to year round summer time.

I believe that bringing our clocks forward by one hour would have a number of very positive effects for our people, including improvements in road safety, a further reduction in road deaths, improved general well-being and mental health benefits, cost savings in terms of less energy usage, improved opportunities in the tourism sector, increased evening light for our citizens to have more recreation time and, importantly, a reduction in crime. One of the principal effects of advancing the clocks by one hour would be that we would have brighter evenings for longer, even in the winter time. In current winter time we move from light into darkness at work and school from early and mid-afternoon. If we were to change to central European time, we would move from a short period of early morning darkness into a longer, brighter working and leisure day throughout the year. As Professor Brian Cox repeatedly states, members of the human race are children of the light. A move from darkness into light has never been so badly needed, both literally and metaphorically, for our hard pressed citizens than at present.

Before the middle of the 19th century, every region set its own clocks and Greenwich mean time, GMT, was originally developed by mariners to calculate their longitude. By the middle of the 19th century, GMT was being used to standardise time across the British railway system. It is interesting to note that Ireland and Britain operated under different time zones between 1880 and 1916.

The American scientist and revolutionary, the great Benjamin Franklin, was the father of the

concept of daylight saving. The idea to put the clocks forward in summer time was developed by a prominent English builder, William Willett, who campaigned for the change in the late 19th century. The British Parliament passed the Summer Time Act in 1915 in the midst of the First World War to try to take advantage of daylight saving. While daylight saving was also used during the Second World War, the clocks returned to the previous model of GMT plus one hour in summer and GMT in winter after the war ended.

A European directive of 2000 sought to have all European countries standardise their time. It provides that summer time begins in every member state at 1 a.m. Greenwich mean time in the last Sunday in March and summer time ends at 1 a.m. GMT in the last Sunday in October. The central European time zone currently counts 17 EU member states.

In the 1960s, a British Labour Party Government under Prime Minister Harold Wilson decided to test support for a system of summer time throughout the year. Not many people, even those who were teenagers at the time, remember this experiment, which lasted from 1968 to 1971. A White Paper produced by the UK Government in 1970 concluded it was impossible to accurately quantify the costs and benefits of what was known as British standard time and stated a final decision would have to be based on qualitative factors. The many positive effects of BST included a finding in research carried out by the Transport and Road Research Laboratory of the UK Department of Transport that the number of road fatalities had declined by 230 over the winter period when British standard time was in place.

Section 2(1) of the Bill requires the Minister for Justice and Equality to make arrangements for the preparation and publication of a report by an independent group of stakeholders. Section 2(3) provides that the independent group will consist of stakeholders from the Economic and Social Research Institute; Departments of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Health, Education and Skills and Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Met Éireann; Road Safety Authority; Irish Farmers Association; Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association; and other relevant non-governmental organisations. Section 2(2) provides that the Minister would have regard to the different interests of persons in Northern Ireland in preparing the independent report. It states categorically that any studies done on this issue would be submitted to our sister Parliament in Belfast.

Section 3 refers to having a trial period of advancing the clocks in Ireland by one hour for three years by means of a daylight saving order, as defined in section 1. Section 1 further defines “advancing the clocks in Ireland by one hour” as meaning two hours in advance of Greenwich mean time during the period of summer time and one hour in advance of Greenwich mean time during winter time. Such a change would bring Ireland into line with the central European time zone.

Section 3(2) provides that the order would facilitate a three year experiment in adopting the single-double summer time model. In practice, this would mean not putting the clocks back by one hour in October of the first year and putting them forward by one hour the following March.

Section 3(3) provides that the draft daylight saving order would be put before the Houses of the Oireachtas - perhaps we will have only one Chamber by that stage - before being passed. Section 3(4) obligates the Minister to monitor the effect of the daylight saving order, while section 3(5) requires the Minister to decide on whether to continue with central European time permanently.

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Advancing the clocks by one hour would have significant health benefits. According to the Health Service Executive, seasonal affective disorder, SAD, which is also known as the “winter blues” is a type of depression that has a seasonal pattern. The condition is estimated to affect 7% of the population or 50,000 of our fellow citizens and as many as 2 million people in Britain. According to the UK national health service, SAD affects more than 12 million people across northern Europe. Clearly, therefore, the onset of dark evenings has a negative effect on the human psyche. The NHS notes that although the exact cause of SAD is not fully understood, it is thought to be linked to reduced exposure to sunlight during shorter days of the year. A discussion paper produced by the economics department of Central Michigan University links reduced sunlight to increased suicide rates, although it cautions that more research is required on the issue.

An increased number of daylight hours with brighter evenings would have a significant impact on the ability of citizens to engage in recreation activities, including walking, running, cycling and team sports. Lighter Later, a UK group which has campaigned for advancing the clocks by one hour in Britain, argues that longer, brighter evenings would enhance opportunities for people of all ages to get out and about and exercise. This is especially important given that obesity has reached an epidemic level. Researchers at University College Cork have found that Ireland’s northerly latitude means we have one of the highest rates of vitamin D deficiency in the industrialised world.

Longer brighter evenings would deliver improvements in road safety outcomes. The Road Safety Authority’s statistics on road deaths show that the early evening, from approximately 4 p.m. until 7 p.m., is the most dangerous time for road deaths. In 2012, for example, the hours between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. were the most dangerous for road users and 41 deaths or 25% of total road accident fatalities occurred during this period. In 2011, the hours between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. were the most dangerous, with 39 road accident fatalities or 21% of the total recorded in this period. The hours between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. were also the most dangerous in 2009 and 2010. The number of road deaths was found to have increased on evenings where darkness fell earlier.

I consulted Mr. Noel Brett, the chief executive of the Road Safety Authority, on the Bill and, having read the text, he provided my office with research carried out by the RSA in November 2012 under the title, *The Effect of Hour Changes during Summer/Winter Time on the Incidence of Road Traffic Collisions*. RSA staff found, from an examination of road collision data for one week periods either side of the change to and from summer time, that the start of summer time in March was associated with reductions in casualty numbers of nearly 5% in the morning and 7% in the evening. Furthermore, the research found the return to winter time in October resulted in almost 8% more road traffic fatalities in the hours around sunrise and 42% more casualties in the darker evenings. The latter is an astonishing figure. The research paper noted that road collision data are subject to other factors such as weather conditions and traffic volumes. Mr. Brett has stated that an independent report would be required before the Bill proceeds to implementation. He also argues that any move to central European time be done jointly with Northern Ireland.

Other road safety organisations, for example, Promoting Awareness, Responsibility and Care on our Roads, PARC, have expressed support for the Bill. In the United Kingdom, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has estimated that at least 80 lives would be saved on the roads each year if we moved to daylight saving time.

Opposition has been expressed against a move to advancing the clocks by one hour on the basis that it could pose a danger for schoolchildren as mornings would be darker for longer. After the trial period of retaining summer time throughout the year in the period from 1968 to 1971 in Britain and Ireland, it was decided to return to GMT because of reported increases in road deaths among school-going children, even though there was a decrease overall in the number of casualties on the roads during the period in question. It was noted in the debate on daylight saving before the joint Oireachtas committee in November 2011 that during winter time in Scandinavia, the working day starts a half hour or an hour later than during summer time. This option should be explored to ensure our children are safe.

Longer evenings should have a measurable effect in reducing crime levels. As we know, there is a higher likelihood of crimes, particularly assaults and sexual offences, being committed during the hours of darkness. Many older people and vulnerable citizens find that darker evenings, especially during winter, pose a difficulty for them leaving home, for example, to run an errand in isolated areas. In recent years, the period leading up to Hallowe'en has been characterised by mayhem in many housing estates, with miscreants tormenting and upsetting communities and neighbourhoods. I have always found it astonishing that the clocks go back at this very time and that it coincides with the school mid-term break. This does not make sense.

Between 1990 and 2008, energy consumption increased dramatically. Ireland has significant commitments at international level to reduce emissions and efforts in this regard are ongoing. This Bill would deliver positive benefits in this respect. The Lighter Later campaign in the UK has estimated that changing to central European time would cut carbon emissions by at least 447,000 tonnes per annum. Other estimates put the figure much higher. In the UK, it has been estimated that advancing the clocks by one hour would create between 60,000 and 80,000 new jobs in the leisure and tourism sector, the fifth largest industry in Britain. A paper published by the Policy Studies Institute in 2008 under the title, *The Likely Impact on Tourist Activity in the UK of the Adoption of Daylight Saving*, features a positive cost-benefit analysis of this proposal. Our tourism and hospitality industry employs approximately 180,000 people. It is a €5 billion a year industry, which is equivalent to 4% of GNP. There has been an increase in the number of overseas visitors according to recent quarterly reports published by the CSO. An extra hour of daylight in the evening would be of huge benefit to them and to Irish people when as tourists they enjoy their beautiful country in November, December, January and February. Of course, the St. Patrick's Day festival takes place on a day when darkness falls at approximately 6.30 p.m. With a brighter evening, it could go on until 7.30 p.m. to 7.45 p.m. While there would be a period in mid-winter when it would be dark until 9.40 a.m., in mid-summer one would have light until midnight. In February and March and November and December, the shortest day would end at 5.10 p.m. That would be the benefit.

There would also be benefits to the wider economy in advancing the clocks forward by one hour. At a sitting of the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality to consider whether Ireland should introduce daylight saving, Irish Small and Medium Enterprises, or ISME, was supportive of the measure. ISME's representative, Mr. Jim Curran, said an extra hour of daylight in the evening would benefit greatly the huge retail sector, especially in winter time, by encouraging people to get out shopping and stay out longer. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation also expressed its support at the committee. The Department's representative, Mr. Gerry Wrynn, said there would be obvious benefits for Ireland to have its time in line with those countries in the central European time zone to which 45% of Irish exports go. We are four hours out of kilter with the bulk of the European Union. They start an hour ahead of us,

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we have lunch at different times and they go home an hour before us. We have four hours when we are relaxing and they are working. We would gain, in effect, four hours for business, which would be very positive.

There has been opposition to daylight saving in the past from our most important industry, agriculture and food. I consulted the Irish Farmers Association, which said that while the hour in the morning would be beneficial, it might have little impact due to modern technology and lighting. The IFA also advised that we would need to move together with the UK and would prefer if we worked through the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. In the UK, however, the National Farmers Union in Britain and representatives of Scottish farmers have indicated that they have become neutral on the matter. I also contacted the Construction Industry Federation, which represents an industry I know well, An Post and other services during the preparation of this Bill and I await their detailed responses. That is one reason I hope the Minister will proceed with the Bill. It would facilitate the provision of responses from those interested parties.

Times, work practices and attitudes to year round summer time have changed since the early 1970s. On the grounds of enhanced general health, recreation benefits, improved road safety, lower energy use and costs and overall business and economic benefits, the Bill should receive serious consideration by the Government. I urge Deputies to support the passage of the Bill. I thank my friends and colleagues in the Labour Party, Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin and those Independent Members who have attended to discuss the Bill and lend some support. I appeal to the Minister not to oppose the Bill on Second Stage as the benefits of advancing our clocks forward by one hour far outweigh the drawbacks. The Minister will remember that he introduced perhaps the most famous Private Members' Bill in the House, which was on judicial separation. He might consider another Private Members' Bill this morning.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Bill. At the outset, I reiterate some of the points I tried to make on the Order of Business. It is nothing that reflects negatively on Deputy Broughan for bringing forward a Bill which is worthy of discussion. It is disappointing that the Government continues to order business in a way that ensures we see Bills like the property tax Bill, the inquiries Bill, which was guillotined during the week-----

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: We must discuss the Bill or what might be included in it. That is the purpose of our meeting this morning.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: I intend to. I want to respond to some of the points the Minister tried to make on Dáil reform, which were unfair.

Deputy Alan Shatter: Under Fianna Fáil, we did not sit on Fridays at all, except in emergencies.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: He spoke about the Land and Conveyancing Reform Bill.

Deputy Alan Shatter: Under Fianna Fáil, Members had no opportunity to introduce Private Members' Bills in this way.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Deputy Dooley, on the Bill.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: The Minister sought to cast-----

Deputy Alan Shatter: It is a pity that the Deputy must play-act on a Friday.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: I will continue. The Minister sought to suggest that the fact that the Land and Conveyancing Reform Bill had not reached a natural expiration was somehow a reflection on my party for not putting down amendments. I remind the Minister that, notwithstanding his time in opposition-----

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Deputy, we must discuss what is in the Bill.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: ----our approach to dealing with opposition has been constructive, as it will be today, which is why we are here.

Deputy Alan Shatter: Fianna Fáil complained yesterday that the Bill was guillotined and then did not have enough interested people to speak on it.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: We object to legislation and we bring forward alternatives. We propose amendments when necessary and we sit down when it is necessary to do so.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: This is not fair to Deputy Broughan, whose Bill we are discussing. I ask the Deputy to get back to the Bill or what could be in it.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: I accept that and intend to deal with the Bill. I wanted to reflect the concerns of my party at the way in which the Government orders its business. It is no reflection on Deputy Broughan and the issue before the House, which I will address.

My party is opposed to the Bill but recognises the fact that it should be discussed in the House. Our concern is that moving towards central European time would be impractical if it were not done in co-operation with Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Our discussions with the farming community suggest that to move Ireland's official time forward by one hour from GMT to CET would have a significant impact on the way in which farmers do their work. Farmers have indicated to us that much of their work is done in the early morning. While I accept Deputy Broughan's point on improved lighting systems and technology, there is a very large cohort among those working in the agriculture sector who find themselves out in the early mornings and for whom natural light makes their business easier. Certainly, it leads to a safer working environment. We have worked very hard with various State agencies to reduce the level of accidents on our farms. Working in a darkened environment will make it more difficult to maintain safety levels.

Daylight saving time was first introduced to protect children on their way to school. That continues to be a real concern, notwithstanding the view of the Road Safety Authority. Many parts of rural Ireland do not have street lights and children there cycle to school or walk to meet a bus. The change would create very significant difficulties there. It is fine in towns and cities where there are street lights and people can get around freely. I am also concerned about postal and construction workers, to whom Deputy Broughan has referred. While I recognise that they have not communicated back to the Deputy, our view is that in a construction environment, issues of safety arise. Sadly, there are not that many people working in construction in the current economic climate, but we will emerge from recession and people will go back to work. When the evenings get short, construction workers finish early. If the change is implemented, construction workers will still face the same length of day and I do not see the benefits.

Some of our most serious concerns involve the impact if Ireland were to move out of sync with our nearest neighbour, not just on industry but on trade and communications.

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Deputy Thomas P. Broughan: We have a different currency.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: I accept that and note that it has posed its own problems. A different time zone would create much greater problems given that there is so much trade between Britain and Ireland. It has been suggested to me that the level of trade we do with the United States of America would be affected. It is not as significant an issue and I am sure they would get over it. However, many large multinationals have bases here and work around the five-hour time difference. To change that to place us out of sync with the UK and North of Ireland has the potential to impact negatively and we have not seen what the potential benefits might be.

11 o'clock

That is our view. The United Kingdom is our closest trading partner with strong connections in the time-sensitive financial sector and Northern Ireland is an intrinsic part of the life of the island and cannot be separated in an artificial way based on time. Separating the island into two separate areas would be unsustainable given that it would have a disproportionate impact on communities in the Border region which are inextricably bound together across economic and social spheres. We are all familiar with people who live along the Border. They travel north and south to work. The farcical notion of trying to change the clock or watch as they travel three or four miles over the road is unsustainable.

I find it difficult to oppose Deputy Broughan's Bill because he has put forward a good case, but the practicalities of the proposition in practice are such that it would make life more difficult for some sectors of society. I do not see the potential gain on the other side although I take the point in respect of the increased retail opportunities.

I have no wish to be overly political but I believe the difficulties in the retail sector at the moment have more to do with where the economy is than whether people have an opportunity to get out to shop. I recall that during the better times, the boom times, stores stayed open 24 hours, seven days a week and facilitated people shopping if they wished to. It is not a lack of daylight that is preventing the retail sector from thriving but a lack of money, unfortunately. I do not believe that this measure of itself would or should be enough for us to move in that way.

There would be some unforeseen consequences as well. The benefits of extending daylight hours in the darkness of winter are all too attractive to Irish people who are used to the protracted darkness of the winter months, but shifting the time forward one hour could potentially have unforeseen consequences which would outweigh the benefits to which Deputy Broughan has referred. The alleged reduction in road accidents fails to take account of the impact of the reduced light in the morning rush-hour and its inevitable consequences. Many in the House often find themselves on the road early in the morning. During the better times there was, to the surprise of some, a considerable level of activity before lighting-up time in the morning. A large cohort of people would be affected by the proposed change and this could have the potential for the negative consequences to which I have referred. Expanding the hours of darkness in the morning would increase the risk of accidents in the morning, especially on the daily school run when vulnerable children are crossing our streets. I have already referred to the impact in rural areas where there are no streetlights. The benefits to retail footfall and for amenities may be overstated because, regardless of the time, the number of sunlight hours is limited to seven or eight at that time. Therefore, playing around with this via the time zone will yield limited benefits.

For these reasons we are not in a position to support the Bill. However, we recognise the importance of at least having a debate on these issues and having them thrashed out. If the change were carried out based on a review of the time zones generally throughout the globe then some changes could be considered, but without our nearest neighbour or a broad-based European analysis of the time zones as they work around Greenwich mean time I believe it would be unwise to proceed.

I will not suggest to the Minister how he may wish to take Second Stage or whether he will allow the Bill to remain on the Statute Book. I do not believe that would necessarily cause any major problems, but I believe it is important not to proceed with the enactment of the legislation until there is a broader debate at European level.

Deputy Michael Colreavy: I appreciate the objectives of Deputy Broughan and his motivation in putting forward this Bill. Certainly, Deputy Broughan has made a strong and trenchant case for the Bill, but I have one serious problem with it, which I will get to later. Aristotle once said that time is the most unknown of all unknown things. The House can legislate for many things, from taxes to peace and war, but we cannot legislate for something that, I imagine, most of us would desire, that is, more time. Often, we have arguments in the House - there was a particular exchange of views this morning - about allowing greater time for this and greater time for that. We shout and condemn each other for not carrying through on our promises on time. However, the one thing we cannot do is create new time. We only have the ability to manage the time we are given. Let us imagine an Oireachtas in which we could create time to achieve all the things that we set out and aspire to achieve. Regardless, unfortunately, we must use the time we have here to the best of our ability.

I will discuss daylight savings now, as distinct from time. Daylight savings is common in countries where the hours of daylight vary depending on the season. The practice was first suggested by Benjamin Franklin in 1784 as a means of reducing the amount of money that people had to spend on candles.

Between 1880 and 1916 Ireland operated a different time zone to Britain. Dublin mean time, as it was called, was measured by the Dunsink Observatory. This was changed in 1916 when Irish time was brought into line with Britain and daylight saving time was introduced as well.

We are discussing single-double summertime - this is very complicated-----

Deputy Alan Shatter: We will give Deputy Colreavy the time to go through it.

Deputy Michael Colreavy: It is very difficult to get my head around this. Single-double summertime is the method proposed in the Brighter Evenings Bill. How much time have I left a Leas-Cheann Comhairle?

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: You have 12 minutes left.

Deputy Michael Colreavy: Is that all I have left? Single-double summertime is the method proposed in the Brighter Evenings Bill. It proposes to move the clocks forward by one hour all year and then to continue the practice of moving the clocks back in the spring and forward again in the autumn. To implement single-double summertime in practice, in year one the clocks would remain on summertime in the autumn, then they would go forward one hour the following spring and then go back one hour the following autumn. This is complicated stuff.

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One problem with the proposal is that we have no real studies of the potential impact. We have an instinct that certain things will happen but no real studies have been done on the potential impact of changing the daylight saving system. For example, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources was asked a question about how much potential energy savings could be delivered by not putting the clocks forward. He replied that he had no estimate of what any savings would amount to. I imagine in 1784 Benjamin Franklin knew how much he would save on candles when he came to his proposal. We need more in-depth study on the potential consequences, financial and otherwise, of changing the daylight saving system before we adopt any legislation. While there have been no extensive studies carried out in Ireland on how it would affect us, there has been some research in Britain into moving time forward one hour for good. However, the findings could not be directly applied to Ireland because of the differences in industry and energy consumption in both countries. One study concluded, for example, that changing the daylight saving system could save the equivalent of 74% of the domestic energy consumption of Glasgow, which is a not inconsiderable figure. However, another report examined the possibility that it would increase the use of electricity because the darker mornings would mean that people would switch their lights on in the morning and then leave them on all day. There are different views in this regard and when one asks different people the same question, one gets different answers. There also were concerns that having the same peak time for energy use as other European countries would in fact drive up energy costs. One must consider this issue at a pan-European level because as we move towards a pan-European energy distribution grid, it will be necessary to take into account matters such as peaks and falls in consumption, as well as costs.

There is also the issue of brighter evenings and road accidents. While it is logical and rational that brighter evenings would lead to fewer road accidents, this may not translate to a general overall reduction in road accidents because were the evenings to be extended, the consequential darker mornings may become more hazardous for schoolchildren. This is another area that would require further examination. An interesting aspect to brighter evenings, which appears to make good sense, is the impact the Bill could have on leisure time. An obesity epidemic is about to hit this country - if it has not already done so - and brighter evenings may form part of a good response in this regard. If children can be encouraged to spend less time in front of the television in the evenings and more time outside playing sport and engaging in physical activity, surely that could only be of benefit. However, I would seek further studies into this possibility before making a decision to change the length of the evenings. Many remain of the opinion that daylight saving systems were introduced to help with agricultural work. While this certainly was true and an important factor in the past and still is true in certain circumstances, it probably is no longer as critical as it once was. In the past, farmers were obliged to bring milk to the creamery whereas today, milk is collected and farming technology has improved. Consequently, this factor is not as critical as it once was.

I reiterate that while I fully understand and appreciate Deputy Broughan's good intentions in proposing this Bill, the major reason I cannot accept it at present is that it does not make sense to have different time zones in the Twenty-six Counties and the Six Counties. I live in a wee place in north County Leitrim called Manorhamilton and my neighbours and friends live five miles away from me in County Fermanagh. This simply would not be workable. We had too much of a border in place for far too long and one would not wish to have a border imposed by time management measurement. Consequently, at a minimum it would be necessary to effect an island-wide change in respect of whatever change was made. Were we to get the people in the Six Counties to move towards this measure, I would be fully in support of it but until that

can be done, I must oppose it. I reiterate it would have to be on an all-island basis.

A Leas-Cheann Comhairle, it is Friday and the Chamber now is quiet after the earlier shout-fest. With your indulgence, I wish to conclude with a little reflective poem to throw some light on the situation, if Members will forgive the awful pun. It was not written by me but by a lady named Bridgitte Williams:

It is almost that time again.
When does 2013 Daylight Savings Time begin?
Well, it happens on March 10.
You lose one hour of sleep, my friend.
Spring forward and yawn.
Wonder where the time has gone.
Daylight Savings or Daylight Saving.
This change of time, I am hating.
Our poor pets get so confused.
It's terrible time abuse.
I like my extra hour at night.
So, here, I am going to whine.
I will stay in bed, and be just fine.
Happy Daylight Saving Time!

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: As no one from the Technical Group is in the Chamber at present and while Deputy Stanton is on the speaking list, I believe the Minister is due to speak first.

Deputy Alan Shatter: I do not mind if Deputy Stanton speaks before me.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Deputy Buttimer also has indicated.

Deputy Alan Shatter: I am happy to let Deputy Stanton go ahead of me.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Very well. The Minister will be speaking twice, if he wishes.

Deputy Alan Shatter: I am sure Members will have enough of me once but-----

Deputy Timmy Dooley: There will be no guillotine anyway.

Deputy David Stanton: I congratulate Deputy Broughan on introducing the Bill. He and I have had an interest in this issue for quite a number of years and have been raising it periodically in debates, tabling questions on it and so on. As he rightly noted, the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality, which I chair, held a session on this issue on 30 November 2011.

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The IFA and IBEC appeared before the joint committee, as did some representatives from various Departments and there was a very interesting discussion. The issue has also been debated in the House of Commons, where Rebecca Harris introduced a Private Members' Bill and a report also was drawn up. In the main, there appears to be much support for the proposal in both islands. I take the point of the Deputy opposite, who suggested we should not copperfasten the Border any further by having two different time zones and he is absolutely correct. I believe this might only work on a European-wide basis and I note that EC Directive No. 84 of 2000 establishes summer time arrangements for the 28 member states. Colleagues also have raised this proposal in the European Parliament a number of times and I believe all European Union member states must agree and jump together in this regard.

I first became alerted to this issue while visiting the United States, when I noticed the time change there took place at a different time of the year. In 2007, the United States extended the use of daylight savings time in the hope of optimising further the available sunlight and reducing energy costs and carbon emissions. Before 2007, the dates in the United States for daylight saving time were the same as those which obtained in the European Union, that is, it would start on the first Sunday in April and would end on the last Sunday of October of each year. However, from 2007, daylight savings time was changed to begin at 2 a.m. on the second Sunday in March and to end at 2 a.m. on the first Sunday in November. In 2008, the United States Department of Energy produced a report stating that the change had saved enough energy to power 100,000 homes for more than a year, that is, 1.3 trillion watt-hours per day. This translated into financial savings of \$76 million and while the United States is far bigger than Ireland, were this done across the European Union, the figures might be comparable. In addition, declines of between 8% and 11% and between 6% and 7% in pedestrian and vehicular crashes, respectively, were reported in the weeks following the switch to daylight savings time. The aforementioned report stated further that this was due to the increased ability to see during twilight hours versus hours in the dark and that extending the daylight savings time period increased the length of time during the day that vision for drivers was optimal and led to awareness among drivers that prevented crashes.

There have been multiple investigations in the United Kingdom on the subject, which have revealed multiple benefits, quite a number of which Deputy Broughan already has outlined. There was a recent proposal to enact single-double summer time and while this is quite complicated, Deputy Colreavy has explained it in great detail and clarity. I thank him for that, as I now am not obliged to do so.

Deputy Michael Colreavy: I do not claim to understand it.

Deputy David Stanton: This would have the result of lining up the United Kingdom with mainland Europe's time zone permanently. Estimates have indicated that more daylight in the early evenings would deliver a boost to British tourism of an estimated £2.7 billion per annum and something similar would happen here. Deputy Broughan has spoken of the benefits in respect of reduced crime levels, tourism obviously, road safety, and both mental and physical health - people would be able to exercise more, sport and so forth. Moreover, were we aligned with Europe, there would be greater opportunities to conduct business there. There is a sticking point, which concerns our colleagues in the Outer Hebrides, who would not see the sun rising until some time after 11 a.m., and who are not too happy about that. I believe that was one of the main reasons this proposal has not been brought forward further in the United Kingdom and it would be useful were everyone able to agree on this.

I suggest the Minister might consider examining what was done in the United States on an interim basis. That would mean extending summer time in the spring and in the autumn. In other words, the clocks would be put forward earlier in the year and put back later in the year. That would give us an extra four, five or six weeks, which would be a start. We could then see how that would work.

I was in school around 1970 when the experiment was done in this country that involved not changing the time. I remember being in the classroom looking out the window at the sun rising over the distillery in Midleton, which was being built at that time. It was dark when we were going to school, which was quite spooky, but it was also eerie to be in the classroom in the darker morning, although we had longer evenings. At that time many people walked or cycled to school, and students should walk or cycle to school even though the argument has been made that most students now are driven to school. We should continue to encourage students to walk or cycle to school.

One way out of this would be to consider a compromise and, after all, politics is the art of compromise. We should consider extending the time at both ends initially, across Europe if possible, as they have done in the United States, and the Minister might use his good offices in this respect, to see how that works. If that works we could go a step further. Deputy Broughan's suggestion might be a little too much too soon, and practically I do not believe we would get agreement to do it from our European colleagues at this stage, but there are huge benefits. The debate is important and worthwhile for all the reasons that have been outlined.

It might be useful also if some additional research on this proposal was done here. That would be important in that we would know exactly where we stand. Reducing carbon emissions would be a benefit, which is also important.

Senator Feargal Quinn has been pushing this proposal for some time and has been active in this area, and I want to acknowledge that. As colleagues have stated, this issue goes back a long time. Changing the clocks was first introduced in the United Kingdom in 1916 to allow farmers extra time to work on fields. That has been a bone of contention over centuries. I understand at one stage there was a Dublin time and a proposal to link that with the UK but around 1916 some people did not want to do that because it would align us more with the UK. I recall reading that there was a major protest in Limerick about it at the time.

This is important legislation. I must make reference to Earth Hour, an annual event held in March that encourages people to turn off their lights for one hour at 8.30 p.m. local time to show their support for action on climate change. Reducing energy emissions and so on is linked to climate change. That initiative calls on householders, business owners and buildings managers around the world to turn off the lights in their premises for one hour and register their actions online. It is the world's largest climate change initiative. Some 50 million to 60 million people mark that event each year.

I note that a number of British premiers, including the former Prime Minister, Mr. Gordon Browne, the current Prime Minister, Mr. David Cameron, and others, have stated that this idea is worthy of consideration. There may be opportunities to raise it in our North-South intergovernmental committees with the possibility of having a discussion on it. I suggested that to some of our colleagues on those interparliamentary bodies. I do not believe it has happened yet but it is something the members of those bodies might consider putting on the agenda for discussion.

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There is considerable support for this proposal. Each year for the past few years I raised this issue, although not this year. One correspondent tweeted recently that he was expecting me to issue a press release on it, which I did not do this year for some reason. For this to happen we have to get it done across Europe. It is a good idea for discussion. A compromise is possible. I compliment Deputy Broughan on bringing forward the Bill and I look forward with great interest to what the Minister has to say on it.

Deputy Jerry Buttimer: I commend Deputy Broughan on his initiative in bringing forward the Bill. In doing some research for today's debate I was struck by the fact that the majority of us would probably be in favour of the change. The song "Summertime" includes the words "and the living is easy". On a day like today it would be very difficult to oppose Deputy Broughan's proposal, and I commend him on it.

In his Bill the Deputy asks that, first, the Minister for Justice and Equality would investigate the costs and benefits of advancing the clocks by one hour, which would be worthwhile, and, second, that this would be done for a three year period. Deputy Broughan quoted Dr. Hillman from the Policy Studies Institute in the University of Westminster. I acknowledge the work done on this by Deputy David Stanton, Senator Feargal Quinn and Deputy Eoghan Murphy but the argument put forward by opponents of what we are asking Government to consider this morning centres around the major issue of children going to school in darkness. However, if we put that into context, most of what we do is done in daylight, with the exception of late afternoon and evening in winter time, which is in darkness. I am of the view that as far as possible most of our waking hours should be spent in daylight, allowing for the variances in climate and so on. According to Dr. Hillman's study, most people are awake five hours before midday and ten hours after midday. That is a huge dichotomy in terms of the length of the day. I ask people to dwell on that because it is important that the majority of what we do is done in daylight, and ten hours of daylight after midday is a huge chunk of time.

There would be major benefits from this proposal for a three year period. My only concern would be that we would have a different time zone from that of our fellow citizens in the North of our country, which would in one way create another artificial barrier that is unnecessary. Deputy Stanton and Deputy Broughan referred to the research from Westminster but I am conscious that is probably a spurious argument, although for some of us it is not necessarily so.

I agree with Deputy Stanton on the issue of doing this even for a trial period if Deputy Broughan's Bill is not accepted, and I do not want to pre-empt anything. I agree with Deputy Stanton on the issue of changing summer time and winter time so that it is in sync with the United States model.

Another point I would make, and it is probably a hang-up of mine, is that our seasons are different. Our autumn begins in August, which is still summer time to many of us. Our spring starts in February, which is still winter time to many of us. We should consider how we could change that also because the month of August is probably the time we get our best weather. It is the traditional festival time in terms of gathering the harvest and so on but that too has changed. I wonder what would be the implications of changing our designation of spring, summer, autumn and winter. The shortest day of the year is 21 December but the longest day is 21 June, which means we have only a six weeks summer period whereas we have the four weeks in August, which is designated as autumn. I may be a bit quirky about that but it is something we should examine.

The majority of people spend winter looking forward to summer. On Sunday we will be heading to Killarney, Cork and Kerry. It is the height of the summer, the first weekend of July. Would it not be great if we could extend summer time as opposed to daylight saving time?

I listened to what Deputy Dooley said and from our point of view as Members of Oireachtas Éireann, would it not be great if we enacted this Bill in order to prolong our evening sittings? That might perhaps help in reducing some of the hyperbole uttered by certain individuals, including myself. I wish to point out to Deputy Dooley that the Government has reformed how the Oireachtas does its business. We sit longer - both in terms of the number of days on which we are here and the number of hours for which we sit - and the Government has not guillotined as many Bills as Fianna Fáil did when it was in power. The Parliament operates much better as a result.

I am of the view that the Bill would prove to be of enormous benefit to the country and its people. As Deputy Broughan correctly points out, research shows that the number of road casualties has been reduced in jurisdictions in which a change of this nature has been made. It has also had an impact on people's attitudes. We all get the winter blues. When it gets dark at 4.30 p.m. at certain times of the year, one can feel almost claustrophobic. The issue of health is important. I am aware of the vagaries of our climate - namely, the fact that it might be wetter and colder here than elsewhere - but the change proposed in the Bill would provide people with the opportunity to involve themselves more in recreational and leisure activities. I went out walking last night and I must have counted 40 other individuals who were out doing the same thing. Those people were in tremendous humour because it was bright and they were able to exercise. In my constituency we have a marina and there is also the walk from Carrigaline to Crosshaven and people use both for the purposes of leisure and recreation. Imagine if they were able to do so on winter evenings. Even if the weather were crisp and cold, they would still be able to go out and they would not be worrying about it getting dark. People would not be frightened. Deputy Broughan was correct in stating that crime statistics would fall as a result of the proposed change.

The important point is that the Bill deserves to be considered. There is, however, one aspect about which people are concerned. Deputy Stanton referred to his days in school and I am not sure whether he was referring to when he was a teacher or when he was a student. An issue arises in the context of children going to school when it is dark. It is probably fair to say that the change proposed in the legislation would not have the same impact in urban areas, particularly in view of the number of footpaths and street lights and the availability of public transportation. I do not mean to be deliberately negative but in rural areas children who are obliged to travel some distance to school are picked up by school buses at crossroads and junctions where there is no public lighting. In some cases, these children would be obliged to wait on their own for the arrival of their school buses. This is an issue to which consideration must be given. We could circumvent this difficulty by moving the time at which school starts to 10 a.m. or 11 a.m. and extending the school day to 4 p.m. or 5 p.m. This could give rise to the possible benefit of alleviating early morning traffic congestion. There is an argument for children going to school later and for their parents to commence work later.

There are benefits to be had from the change proposed by Deputy Broughan. The issue of people's physical health and well-being is also one on which we must focus. In that context, people who suffer from vitamin D deficiency, osteoporosis and other medical conditions may benefit from the proposed change. We must not be afraid to change if we are of the view that it is the right thing to do. We should embrace change. The Government is introducing change

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in a multiplicity of areas and I do not understand why it would not be possible to introduce it in this instance, particularly as there would be major benefits. Dr. Hillman's study in respect of the north of our country indicates that benefits could accrue to us. It is worth giving consideration to making the change.

Deputies Broughan and Colreavy referred to farming. I am sure farming organisations and lobbyists will have an issue in respect of this matter. However, I return to my point relating to the hours before and after midday and when one does most of one's work.

We must also consider this matter in the context of energy consumption and our carbon footprint. This morning, the Joint Committee on the Environment, Community and Local Government is discussing climate change. This is an issue to which we must give consideration in the context of the Bill. Making the change proposed by Deputy Broughan could lead to a reduction in the level of greenhouse gases we produce as a result of a reduction in demand. People will argue that this might not happen as a result of the cold weather we experience in winter but calculations indicate that it would have a positive impact in reducing greenhouse gas levels.

I am of the view that the majority of people will favour the introduction of this change, even for a trial period. The change will give rise to major benefits. The Bill is certainly worth considering in the context of the medium to long-term position. It is definitely worth considering in the short term in respect of how we might make what is proposed work better for us. I have not spoken to him but I hope the Minister will consider not causing a division on the legislation, which many of us would like to come into effect for a trial period at least. If the change did not work, we could reverse our decisions. I am of the view that the benefits outweigh the negatives. I commend Deputy Broughan on his work on the Bill. I also commend Deputy Stanton on the work he has done in this area. I hope the information Deputy Broughan is seeking in the context of what would be the impact and the cost benefits of implementing the legislation will be published.

Deputy Patrick Nulty: I commend Deputy Broughan on bringing this legislation forward. The debate on this matter is both timely and important and I commend the Minister on being present for it.

The aim of the Brighter Evenings Bill is to require the Minister for Justice and Equality to prepare and publish a report on the costs and benefits of advancing the clocks by one hour to allow for brighter evenings and to bring Ireland into the central European time zone. Moving the clocks forward would make the winter evenings brighter for longer and numerous benefits - to which I propose to refer during my contribution - would flow from this. An attractive feature of this Bill is that it allows the Minister to advance the clocks by one hour for a three-year trial period. As Deputy Buttimer indicated, such a period would allow us to review how matters are progressing. It would also give us some breathing space if unforeseen difficulties arise. If, after the three-year trial period, the approach was deemed to have worked, we could then make it a permanent feature of our calendar.

When investigating this issue, I was impressed by both the range of research available and the passion and advocacy of those seeking change. The Lighter Later campaign group, based in Britain, has done much of the running on this issue and the debate on it is very much alive across the water. Among the arguments put forward by Lighter Later is the fact that moving the clocks forward by one hour would cut CO2 pollution, save lives and prevent serious injuries on our roads and lower our electricity bills by maximising the amount of available daylight and

reducing peak power demands. The latter is particularly important for those on lower incomes. Moving to central European time could lead to the creation of new jobs in leisure and tourism and, as Deputy Broughan stated, reduce crime and the fear thereof. The Lighter Later campaign argues that it would help to improve people's health and tackle obesity by giving them more time to exercise and play sport outside in the evening. The campaign also argues that it would improve the quality of life of the elderly. To use economic language, there are many positive externalities to the legislation which would really help to improve our society, economy and collective well-being.

A further interesting suggestion is that the brighter evenings could help reduce the effects of seasonal affective disorder, a condition by which some people are affected. I have been impressed also by the arguments of the group 10:10, which is also based in Britain. That group's campaign manager, Mr. Daniel Vockins, is on record as stating:

We commissioned research into a whole host of policy measures through which government could rapidly and painlessly reduce UK emissions. Reforming daylight savings hours came out top because of its substantial energy savings and a whole host of co-benefits. The extra hour of daylight in the evening saves energy because people end up using artificial light for a smaller portion of the day.

It is worth putting on the record that this debate is not new. During the Second World War, British clocks were set an extra hour forward throughout the year to increase workforce productivity and save energy. However, times went back to normal after the war. Between 1968 to 1971, the UK tried out GMT+1 all year round.

This is a very welcome debate and I hope the Minister will look on the Bill sympathetically and take up the opportunity for a review of this proposal and that we might have consensus in the House on this issue. I commend Deputy Tommy Broughan on his Bill and also the work of Deputies David Stanton and Eoghan Murphy and others on it.

Deputy Eoghan Murphy: I very much support this idea and congratulate Deputy Broughan on bringing this Bill before the House. When I was elected I sought a research paper on this because I had an interest in it but I failed to pursue it, so I congratulate Deputy Broughan on taking the time to draft a Bill, bringing it to the House and having it selected for Second Stage. I am not an expert on this area and I very much agree with Deputy Stanton's comments and note the work he has done on this area also. It was debated before in this House and at committee and we have spent much time talking about it. It is a good idea and having listened to the debate today, I very much believe the pros far outweigh the cons. I do not believe the cons have sufficient weight behind them to stop us from proceeding in this direction.

It should be noted that we could achieve what we want with this Bill by just changing our behaviour, as they do in countries such as Norway and Sweden. However, I have nothing against preparing a report to look at a cost-benefit analysis of this. I do not believe we should automatically move to a three year trial period, although I have nothing against it in principle. At all stages, we should bear in mind what is happening in the UK because it is coming very close to initiating another trial period in this area and we have to be ready to move with it if it does because it would make absolutely no sense if we did not do so. That is why this legislation is very timely and I would like to see it proceed to Committee Stage, which is important, and for us to debate further the benefits. There are known benefits around energy costs, tourism, health and fitness, business and trading with the EU and the BRIC countries. All of those things need

to be fleshed out in detail.

Unfortunately, no such Bills have made it to Committee Stage, even those which have passed Second Stage, but we should be ready with legislation, in particular, if our partners in the UK decide to make such a move and also because there are so many positives. We should not be afraid to try new things. It is a very simple thing and it could have great benefits for the country.

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): I thank Deputy Broughan for his Bill and for creating this very interesting debate. It could be said we are time travelling this morning. I see Deputy Dooley, who was very exercised at the start, did not have the time to stay with us for the debate, having engaged in a grandstanding exercise. This Bill is an example of part of the reform the Government introduced where Members on all sides of the House have an opportunity on a Friday to debate legislation and to bring forward Private Members' Bills. That did not happen when Fianna Fáil was in government for 14 years but it is an important Dáil reform. I was about to say it is disappointing to see the sort of play-acting Deputy Dooley engaged in on this measure this morning, in particular, as the Fianna Fáil Party has not done the courtesy of having a single Member in the House for the debate, but I welcome him back.

In regard to what is in this Bill and what is proposed, I got into trouble some months ago - Deputy Finian McGrath got particularly engaged - when I described myself as the Minister responsible for time. The oddity of political life is that the issue of time and the change of time every six months is the responsibility of the Minister for Justice and Equality. One is entitled to regard it both as a serious issue and to be a little amused by it. I mention Deputy Colreavy's contribution, in particular. We should encourage more poetry in this House. It was a mixture of a serious and an amusing contribution. If we could debate issues in that way, it would certainly improve the atmosphere in the House.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this Bill as it gives us an opportunity to focus on the issue of our time zone arrangements. As can be seen from the Bill and the contributions made today, there are many different aspects to this to be considered. Deputy Broughan's Bill has two general focal points: the preparation and publication of a report on the costs and benefits of advancing clocks by one hour, and the conducting of a three year trial during which clocks would be advanced by one hour.

The Bill is interesting not least because of its specific requirement that in preparing the report, the interests of the people of Northern Ireland must be considered, an issue raised by some speakers. I will return to this specific aspect of the Bill at a later stage.

Currently, Irish clocks are aligned not only with those in the United Kingdom but, interestingly, Portugal. This means that our winter time begins at 1 a.m. Greenwich mean time on the last Sunday in October every year when clocks are put back one hour. Whoever happens to be the Minister for Justice and Equality, tends to issue a statement 24 hours beforehand to remind people of this. Winter time ends at 1 a.m. GMT on the last Sunday in March of the following year when clocks are put forward one hour, signalling the start of summer time. My statement this year seemed to generate interest and excitement. I thank the media for the extent to which they covered it. None of them, other than RTE news in the context of "It Says In The Papers", seemed to notice that the general excitement, including that of Deputy Finian McGrath, calling on me to resign, occurred on 1 April. Perhaps next year they will be a little more cautious before they jump into the mode of condemning people-----

Deputy Timmy Dooley: They do not understand the Minister's sense of humour.

Deputy Alan Shatter: -----and notice that, just on occasion, politicians can have a sense of humour also. The media may not always appreciate that.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: It is an acquired taste.

Deputy Alan Shatter: I gather some people think I am far too serious, so apparently it is a shock if one has a sense of humour in political life.

The arrangements we apply are set out in the Winter Time Order 2001 which gives effect to European Directive 2000/84/EC of 19 January 2001. As a result, all EU member states start summer time simultaneously which, in turn, means that time differences between member states remain constant throughout the year. The EU requirements are such that it would not be possible without the agreement between all 28 members states to implement the suggestion of Deputy Stanton because it would require that everyone agree simultaneously to the type of change he suggested.

Bringing Ireland into the central European time zone would mean that the SDST model would be adopted wherein the first year clocks would not go back in October. They would stay one hour ahead until March when they would then be put forward by an hour. After this first adjustment, clocks would continue to go back and forwards as usual but they would be an hour ahead of our current Greenwich mean time and GMT+1 system - that is, to GMT+1 in winter and GMT+2 in summer - and bring Ireland into line with central European time. By way of example, were Ireland's time zone in line with central European time in 2013, this would mean that in areas in the north west - for example, Sligo - sunrise would not occur on Christmas Day 2013 until 9.54 a.m. while on 21 June 2013 sunset would not have occurred until 11.12 p.m.

The Brighter Evenings Bill requires me, as Minister, to prepare a report on all the potential costs and benefits of advancing clocks by one hour to bring our time arrangements in line with central European time. In addition, the Minister for Justice and Equality must establish an independent group to oversee the preparation of the report proposed. Reflecting the many aspects of this matter, membership of the group must comprise stakeholders from various Departments and agencies as well as non-governmental organisations, including the Economic and Social Research Institute, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the Department of Health, the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, as well as the Road Safety Authority. The Bill further requires the Minister for Justice and Equality to publish the report within 12 months of the Bill being passed and that copies of the report be sent to the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Northern Ireland Assembly. Deputy Broughan's Bill is similar to the recent UK Private Members' Daylight Saving Bill which failed to complete its passage through the Westminster Parliament in early 2012. That Bill would have required the UK Government to conduct a cross-departmental analysis of the potential costs and benefits of advancing time by one hour for all or part of the year. If this analysis found that a clock change would benefit the UK, the Bill required that the Government initiate a trial clock change to determine the full implications. Deputies will be interested to note that in recognition of the key consideration of the close links between our respective states the UK authorities sought our views on the Bill at an early stage in its life. In this regard officials from my Department met the Bill's sponsor, Ms Rebecca Harris, MP, in February 2011. I will return to this key consideration at a later stage.

On 13 August 2012, some months after this UK Bill fell, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills - the UK equivalent of our Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation - published a report entitled *Review of the Scope, Quality and Robustness of Available Evidence Regarding Putting Clocks Forward by One Hour, the Year round, in the UK*, which was prepared on the Department's behalf by David Simmonds Consultancy. The consultants were requested to carry out a review of the scope, quality and robustness of available evidence that could be used to assess or monitor the potential effects of a policy to move the clock forward the year round in the United Kingdom. Such a change would effectively move the UK to "single-double summer time" or SDST, and would set clocks in the UK to the same time as those in the majority of western European countries, matching central European time. The work conducted was not a full cost-benefit analysis of the matter but simply a review of the available evidence. That said, the consultants reported that following the search of a range of sources, 118 references had been examined. These were studies based on the whole or parts of the UK as well as studies which looked at the impact or potential impact in other countries. In spite of the many sources examined the consultants reported, "Our overall conclusions are that we believe a formal *ex ante* cost-benefit analysis of the single/double summer time proposal would be possible, but that more research is needed to inform it, particularly in relation to how people would respond to the change in terms of carrying out different activities at different times".

Section 3(1) of the Brighter Evenings Bill states that the Minister for Justice and Equality may make provision for advancing the clocks in Ireland by one hour for a three-year trial period under a daylight saving order. I note that the explanatory memorandum accompanying the Bill is more definitive in this regard when it states, "In addition under this Bill, the Minister must then advance the clocks by one hour for a three-year period, and then permanently if required." I am sure Deputy Broughan can clarify this apparent contradiction, as it is the wording of the Bill as opposed to the explanatory memorandum that would apply if the Bill was enacted. Deputy Broughan's Bill also provides that the Minister for Justice and Equality must monitor the effect of the daylight saving order throughout the three-year trial period and at the end of the trial period decide whether to abandon the experiment or to advance permanently our clocks by one hour.

Trial periods during which a country's time arrangements are altered are nothing new, as some Deputies have already indicated. For example, in the 1960s the UK Government decided to test the support for continuous summer time. A three-year experiment was introduced from 1968 to 1971 when summer time applied throughout the year. The experiment was debated in the Commons in December 1970 and by a vote of 366 to 81, the experiment was discontinued. Ireland followed suit and the Standard Time Act 1968 was introduced, which set time at GMT plus one hour throughout the year, and in 1971 the Standard Time (Amendment) Act became law. It is notable also that Portugal, which is in the same time zone as Ireland and the United Kingdom, converted to central European time in the periods 1966 to 1976 and again in 1992 to 1996.

It may be over 40 years since our 1968 to 1971 trial period ended but the issue of our time arrangements has been the subject of parliamentary questions, some of which were asked by Deputy Broughan, and recent debate. Against the background of the eventually unsuccessful passage of the Daylight Saving Bill through the UK Parliament Deputy David Stanton, who has a long-standing interest in the issue, raised the issue in a Topical Issue debate on daylight saving time on 26 October 2011. Subsequently, the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality discussed moving Ireland to central European time when it held a meeting on the so-

cio-economic and other implications of autumn and spring time adjustment arrangements on 30 November 2011. During the meeting the committee heard statements from and asked questions of representatives of the Irish Farmers' Association, the Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. It is interesting to note, although not surprising, that many of the contributors to this discussion referenced the Daylight Saving Bill and various UK research papers.

Since becoming Minister for Justice and Equality it has repeatedly been brought to my notice that there is no "correct" time zone for our country or indeed, any other state; this point has been made in parliamentary questions, Topical Issue debates and joint committee discussions. Today's debate has reinforced this point. There is no scientific or mathematical formula which determines the correct time zone for a state to adopt. Ireland, along with other countries, has made decisions to change its time zone arrangements at different times during the last century and such decisions, which are made taking many issues into account, are policy decisions and not formulaic in nature.

When considering which time zone we should select it is evident that we should take into consideration the implications of Ireland being, for example, one hour ahead of Northern Ireland, and Deputy Broughan's Bill acknowledges this. We must also consider what is happening in the UK as a whole, not least because we have the same time arrangements, it is our biggest trading partner and we share a Border with Northern Ireland. During the 42nd plenary of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly in Cork in June 2011 it was stated that Britain does more business with Ireland than it does with Brazil, Russia, India and China combined.

I am all for making informed decisions regardless of the subject matter. I cannot accept the Brighter Evenings Bill in principle. I do not believe legislation is necessary to consider this matter and this issue is already kept under regular consideration as recent parliamentary questions and the Topical Issue debate demonstrate. If the aim of the Brighter Evenings Bill is to have an extra hour of daylight in the evening, rather than the mornings, this could be achieved without legislation by people getting up, going to work and finishing work an hour earlier, which I understand is common practice in Norway and Sweden. Whereas Deputy Broughan's Bill is interesting and acknowledges the wide diversity of views that the issue generates, the key issue lies in the many interlinked connections between us, Northern Ireland and the UK as a whole. Deputy Broughan's Bill, while acknowledging the Northern Ireland connection, is silent on the rest of the UK, so is he suggesting that we should consider conducting a three-year trial in which Ireland would set clocks one hour ahead of those in Northern Ireland or Great Britain or the UK as a whole in order to establish the implications of doing so?

Realistically, Ireland is not going to put itself in a different time zone from Northern Ireland or the UK. I agree with the thrust of Deputy Broughan's Bill, which proposes that full consideration be given to the broad range of areas that our time zone arrangements impact upon, including the agricultural community, industry, schools and individual people with work commitments. I note that the Bill proposes the establishment of an independent group to oversee the preparation of a report on all the potential costs and benefits of advancing clocks in Ireland by one hour. However, I also note from the joint committee's meeting of 30 November 2011 on the socioeconomic and other implications of autumn and spring time adjustment arrangements that Mr. Jim Curran, head of research at the Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association stated that the "main body of evidence on these arguments is centred in the UK, with little if any evidence on the impact a change would have on Ireland."

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I acknowledge that the Deputy has not proposed that research be commissioned on the matter but there appears to be an absence of Irish-based research dealing with the issue. For the record I am of the view that the commissioning of research into this matter would be expensive and is unlikely to be persuasive either way, so it cannot be justified in current economic circumstances. While recognising his interest in the issue, I ask Deputy Broughan to adjourn this matter for further consideration rather than putting the Bill to the House for a vote. If he does so, I propose to write to the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality to ask for further examination of the matter and to seek submissions from interested parties. I will also suggest that the committee engages with members of the Westminster Parliament, along with those in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Having completed that process, I will ask it to publish a report detailing the advantages and difficulties relating to any change in time and its conclusion on the matter.

Due to its workload, the committee might consider establishing a sub-committee to invite submissions and conduct hearings, which in turn could report to the main committee and thereafter to the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Minister responsible for time. I hope Deputy Broughan will accept this proposal, which would be welcomed by the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality, not least because its Chairman, Deputy David Stanton, has contributed to the debate and has a personal interest in the subject.

12 o'clock

I suggest to Deputy Broughan, in the context of the conclusion of what is an interesting debate on which there cannot be a definite view as to where we should go, to consider simply adjourning the debate on the Bill and to allow for the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality to take up the matter, but to give the committee the time it requires because of the burden under which it currently labours with the large amount of business that is before it.

Acting Chairman (Deputy Peter Mathews): The Members will probably have noticed that I infused a little flexi-time to the Minister's 15 minutes.

Deputy Alan Shatter: I got extra time.

Acting Chairman (Deputy Peter Mathews): As we are debating the concept of time, I invite Deputy Broughan to make his concluding remarks and give us his observations on the summary conclusions of the Minister.

Deputy Thomas P. Broughan: I thank the Minister for his response. He has always been a big fan of "Star Trek" and fought one campaign, I believe, in Captain Kirk's uniform, but I did not realise he was a Time Lord as well. I know he is a football man, which is also important.

I thank all the other colleagues who took part in the debate today - I have it here in my notes that the debate was to take place in the afternoon because I was not expecting that we would be discussing it so early - especially all of those who have a particular interest in this over many years, such as Deputies Stanton and Eoghan Murphy.

I accept the Minister's offer to adjourn the matter, although I would prefer if it was left on the Order Paper.

Deputy Alan Shatter: That is the suggestion.

Deputy Thomas P. Broughan: If it was left on the Order Paper, I would accept and wel-

come it. One of the dispiriting outcomes for us on the backbenches has been that we have debated various excellent Bills from colleagues on all sides of the House over the months as this experiment has gone on and, obviously, Members would like to present a Bill which could have a chance of becoming law or, at least, in this case would start a serious investigation, as I tried to say throughout my first contribution. This would have meant we would have done our own analysis and be ready if our British neighbours and friends decide to move and we must jump with them. Certainly, in the United Kingdom, it is a serious proposal which the Prime Minister, Mr. Cameron, supports. How it would be done, for example, with Scotland and Northern Ireland, are issues which they would have to address.

I would accept the Minister's offer. What I would welcome about that, of course, is that Deputy Stanton would maybe take charge of the substantive issue of developing it because he has had similar ideas down through the years and could bring in all of the interest groups. I would be delighted to attend the committee of which he is Chairman where we could bring forward a reasonable and well-analysed report for the Minister to see whether we could proceed. That would be a good development.

I thank my former parliamentary assistant, Ms Elaine Deegan, who did much work and research on the drafting of this Bill, and my current parliamentary assistant, Ms Aisling Dillon, who also helped me at length to prepare for the speeches today and for the presentation of the Bill.

The Bill is a modest proposal in that I only asked, in section 2, that the Minister would prepare a report on the costs and benefits of advancing the clocks in line with the central European time zone. I feel strongly that our sister Assembly in Belfast should be deeply involved, first and foremost.

On section 3, the Minister stated we were a little at variance as to whether he may or must proceed to a new system. The onus we sought legally was, after much serious consideration, the Minister might take that decision.

The core of the Bill is to utilise the sunlight resource of our northerly latitude to the best possible effect for our people's well-being and greater happiness. Of course, it was good to hear the poetic speech of my colleague, Deputy Colreavy, although I would caution him that there was a Deputy in the previous Dáil who occasionally used to sing part of his speech. Unfortunately, he is no longer with us, although he recently released a video of his latest album of songs.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: We also had a poet who became President. Perhaps it is inspiration.

Deputy Thomas P. Broughan: We will be expecting a book of poetry now from Deputy Colreavy.

Deputy Alan Shatter: I am very disappointed Deputy Broughan did not mention my novel.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: We need darkness for that.

Deputy Patrick Nulty: It is too early in the morning. It is not yet past the watershed.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: That is not one for daylight.

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Deputy Thomas P. Broughan: The strong Lighter Later campaign was mentioned by Deputy Nulty and others. There are 80 campaigning groups across British society which are strongly of the view that the United Kingdom should move to GMT+1 and GMT+2. If one looks at the graphs of the total amount of daylight available to us in a year, the annoying part of it is that we are asleep for part of it and perhaps we do not utilise it to the best possible effect. Lighter Later has estimated that we would have at least 300 more hours of sunlight in which to work if we made this change and Scotland would have approximately 200 hours. I note, as Deputy Stanton stated, that the further north one goes, the more difficult it gets.

A few of us, as I stated, those of us who were teenagers or children at the time, can remember how the 1968-71 experiment panned out. I gave a few examples, in my speech introducing the Bill, of what would be the reality if we moved to single-double summer time, SDST, this complex-sounding new system. For example, it would mean that when daylight fell to seven hours and 55 minutes on 30 November, sunset would be reached at nearly 5.15 p.m. rather than, as under the current system, 4.15 p.m.; from 10 December to 21 December, the average seven hours and 35 minutes of daylight would end at just after five o'clock under the SDST model rather than, under the current model, at just after 4 o'clock, and sunset would be much later; on 1 January, 15 January and 31 January, sunset would move to 5.17 p.m., nearly 5.40 p.m. and 6.10 p.m., respectively, as opposed to an hour earlier under GMT; and, in February and March, the brighter evenings would really stretch to 6.30 p.m. on 14 February, just after 7 o'clock on 28 February and 7.30 p.m. on St. Patrick's Day, which would be very valuable for the tourism sector.

As I stated earlier, I do not underestimate the impact of darker mornings due to continued summer time. Deputies Dooley and Colreavy both mentioned that clearly. For example, from 21 December to 4 January, there would not be daylight in much of the country until approximately 9.40 a.m., which, clearly, would have implications for the schools and agriculture. From 14 February, when sunrise would be at 8.45 a.m., to 28 February, when it would be at 8.15 a.m., the mornings would be brightening up. From mid-November to mid-February, we would have a profoundly better situation.

In summer time, the proposed move to GMT+2 would result in sunsets at 9.30 p.m. on 15 April, nearly 10.20 p.m. on 15 May, almost 11 p.m. on the midsummer solstice, which means we would have light up until midnight, and 10.45 p.m. on 15 July. Deputy Buttimer correctly pointed out how important August is for the festivals all around the country. In mid-August, there would be light up to 11 p.m. and that would be most valuable.

I have tried to put the case for health, recreation and general well-being as a most positive one. The additional hours of sunlight in the evening would be a great boon for sports and recreation, as I stated, with sunsets moving to at least 7.30 p.m. and 8 p.m. from mid-February to mid-October. There would be welcome opportunity for exercise for walkers, joggers and cyclists in the general population after work and school. In my first speech, I touched on the SAD syndrome and seasonal depression. I believe the new system would be much better from a health perspective.

It is clear also that there would be major benefits for road safety given the long-standing statistics relating to road deaths compiled by the Road Safety Authority. I noted earlier research carried out by Noel Brett, director of the Road Safety Authority, and his staff which showed the start of summer time in late March was associated with reductions in road casualty numbers while the onset of winter time in October showed the opposite with a significant increase in

casualties.

My experience as a representative echoes findings that people are safer from crime in longer brighter evenings. Much serious crime and attacks on citizens take place in the hours of darkness. Long, dark murky evenings have always been a godsend for anti-social and criminal elements who plague vulnerable families in many urban estates. Longer evenings would also greatly assist youth diversion schemes such as the brilliant football scheme run by members of An Garda Síochána, the Dublin local authorities and the FAI.

The level of peak demand in energy consumption and the consequent amount of CO2 emissions would clearly be moderated and fall if we changed to summer time and GM+2 all year round. Deputy Colreavy's point about people leaving on lights is well taken. The Lighter Later campaign in the UK estimates that up to 500,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions would be removed from polluting the environment if the UK adopted British summer time on a permanent basis. There are powerful arguments that moving to single-double summer time, SDST, would enhance the Irish economy and provide sustainable growth. Clearly tourism, which is a €5 billion industry, would benefit and the terrific efforts of the hospitality industry in the winter and early spring periods would clearly be helped if we changed.

I noted the evidence of ISME to the Oireachtas joint committee that the critical retail sector would benefit in winter and early spring. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation made the point that if we were on central European time we would be more in sync with our European neighbours. I note the points made by Deputies on this, in particular Deputy Dooley.

The key objection to moving to SDST and year-round summer time was posed to me by Deputy Kelleher on the day the Bill was published. He asked me why I did not call it the darker mornings Bill. The one downside of moving the clocks forward by one hour is that the sun would rise an hour later throughout the year. However, for all the reasons that have been put forward an extra hour of light is more valuable for the majority of people in the evenings than in the mornings. As stated in the major UK Lighter Later campaign, this extra hour of light is so valuable because "most of the population sleeps through the first hour of sunlight for much of the year".

Besides concerns for our young schoolchildren and farming communities, opponents of the change often cite the experience from 1968 to 1971, to which many Deputies and the Minister referred. They mentioned the opposition of Scotland and the perceived serious difficulties of the Irish Republic changing unilaterally without the UK. I carefully included in section 2(5) with regard to our colleagues in the North and I fully accept that moving to year-round summer time and CET without the UK presents a serious difficulty for our economy and society.

The point I make continually is that the British, from the Prime Minister, Mr. Cameron, down, are seriously considering making this change and there is wide-ranging support for the move across the Labour and Green parties and the Liberal Democrats. Deputies referred to a succession of Bills tabled over the past 20 years in the British Parliament. Viscount Mountgarret introduced a Central European Time Bill in 1994. The Bill emerged from the House of Lords but did not pass through the House of Commons. A parallel Bill, the British Time (Extra Daylight) Bill 1995 was moved in the House of Commons. Viscount Mountgarret introduced a Western European Time Bill covering all of the UK in 1995, but this also failed in the House of Commons. His first Bill covered only England, Wales and Northern Ireland and he was prepared to let Scotland do its own thing. A further serious attempt to change the clocks was

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made in June 2004 when a House of Commons Bill from Nigel Beard, the Lighter Evenings Bill 2004, which extended only to England and Wales, ran out of parliamentary time. A similar Bill was introduced in the House of Lords by Lord Tanlaw in 2005. Reference has been made to Rebecca Harris's Bill which resembles this Bill and the Energy Saving (Daylight) Bill introduced by Tim Yeo in 2006 which proposed a move to CET.

All of the above debates referred in detail to the British standard time experiment of 1968 to 1971, which Ireland also followed. By the end of 1970, a majority of Scots favoured a return to GMT, but it is striking that opinion polls conducted by British newspapers and companies in the run-up to the changeover showed a distinct majority were in favour of retaining British summer time. Approximately 50% were in favour and approximately 40% were against GMT+1. Several newspapers campaigned against year-round summer time on the basis of accidents involving children going to school but later analysis by the UK's Transport and Road Research Laboratory confirmed studies at the time showing a net fall of 2,700 people killed or seriously injured on the roads between morning and late afternoon in 1970 and estimated there would have been far fewer casualties during the 1980s if SSDT was in place.

One of the strongest supporters for the change to CET in the UK is the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. It states 450 fewer road deaths and serious injuries would occur if the change was made and that Scotland's road collision rate would also decline. This brief review of the British campaign to move to CET shows how persistent and serious it is, not least from environmental and road safety groups. I hope one small effect of today's debate, and perhaps future debates and discussions at the committee chaired by Deputy Stanton, will be to strongly place a move to permanent summer time on our social and political agenda. We would also be ready if the other countries on these islands decide to move to a new system.

Some opponents of the change I advocate point to the third country in the GMT time zone with Ireland and the UK. As the Minister stated, Portugal converted to CET from 1966 to 1976 and later again from 1992 to 1996 and then reverted. If one travels from Portugal to Spain, which are both on the Iberian Peninsula, one changes time zones and I make this point with regard to the population in Northern Ireland. A key problem identified in literature about the change was the difficulty of getting children to sleep; the summer nights were so long the kiddies would not go to sleep. Latitude is important, as the further north one goes the less sunlight there is. Portugal is much further south which was a factor with regard to the length of the day and night and it may not be as important there as it is here.

In the above remarks and in my introductory speech, I hope I have made a clear and compelling case for this country to move to the single-double summer time model whereby clocks would stay at GMT+1 next October and in spring 2014 we would move a further hour to GMT+2. Long, bleak and often murky winter nights would be shorter and our people would have the widespread benefits of brighter evenings. These benefits include general health, recreation, road safety, tourism, energy and clear economic gains due to brighter evenings in winter and early spring. As the explanatory memorandum of the Bill makes clear, putting the clocks forward for good to ensure brighter evenings is back on the agenda. Our closest neighbour, the UK, may proceed with the change in the next five to ten years, and the Minister agrees we should at least strongly research and get ready for any change. I believe we should move but practically it would be better for all countries on these islands to move together.

I thank everybody who contributed to the debate today. I accept the Minister's point on the basis the legislation will remain on the clár.

Deputy Alan Shatter: Yes. The amended legislation will remain on the Order Paper. As I stated, I will formally write to Deputy Stanton, who I know will be interested in following up the matter.

Deputy Thomas P. Broughan: I thank the Minister.

Acting Chairman (Deputy Peter Mathews): I thank the Minister and Deputy Broughan. The agreement reached in the debate is commendable. I have enjoyed the discussion and learned a lot. I am in a technical dilemma as I am advised by the Clerk the question must be put to the House, which is unfortunate because the debate has arrived at a-----

Deputy Thomas P. Broughan: On a point of order, is it possible to adjourn the debate?

Deputy Alan Shatter: We can simply adjourn the debate. There is no need for the question to be put.

Acting Chairman (Deputy Peter Mathews): Except and in so far as the order of the Dáil states that the question be put. I am all in favour-----

Deputy Alan Shatter: I propose that with agreement on all sides of the House the debate be adjourned. If a difficulty arises I am sure it can be dealt with by agreement by the Whips early on Tuesday.

Acting Chairman (Deputy Peter Mathews): I am in favour of that.

Deputy Timmy Dooley: Notwithstanding my concerns about Dáil reform, I am also happy to allow the debate to be adjourned.

Acting Chairman (Deputy Peter Mathews): There is no problem in the House. Is it agreed that we will adjourn the debate? Agreed.

Deputy Thomas P. Broughan: I thank the Minister for this initiative, which is good for the Parliament and I hope other Deputies will have similar facilities in the future.

Acting Chairman (Deputy Peter Mathews): It is tremendous, creative and constructive. A friend of mine, who is a good golfer and bridge player, recommended the book *Longitude* to me. It would have a very good context-----

Deputy Timmy Dooley: It stood the Acting Chairman well in his entry to politics.

Acting Chairman (Deputy Peter Mathews): If one has an hour or two to read over the holidays, I recommend it.

Deputy Alan Shatter: In that context, I thank the Acting Chairman for his latitude.

Acting Chairman (Deputy Peter Mathews): And the Minister for his fortitude.

Debate adjourned.

The Dáil adjourned at 12.20 p.m. until 2 p.m. on Tuesday, 9 July 2013.