

NEWS RELEASE

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Treasury Minister gets behind Lazarowicz's Bill

Further backing from Primarolo in Committee

The Co-operative Party achieved another political success this week when Mark Lazarowicz's Employee Share Schemes Bill was approved by a key Parliamentary Committee.

Paymaster General Dawn Primarolo gave unequivocal support to the two major clauses of the Bill, proposing to democratise employee share schemes and make it easier for companies to be transferred into employee ownership. She also proposed that the Bill would be strengthened by the addition of further tax incentives for share transfers for employees.

The continued progress of the Bill, which passed its Second Reading unopposed last month, means that it is now almost certain to become law before the summer recess.

A number of Labour and Co-operative MPs gave their support in Committee, including Adrian Bailey, Linda Gilroy, Doug Naysmith, and Meg Munn. There was no opposition from the Conservatives.

National Secretary Peter Hunt said: "The smooth progress made by this Bill so far demonstrates how effective we are becoming in getting our message across in Parliament. Thanks to the work of the Co-operative Group of MPs, the Government has recognised that the measures we are proposing can help deliver greater productivity through promoting share ownership and involving employees in decision-making.

“The Co-operative Party believes in promoting democracy and accountability throughout society. It is only right that proprietary businesses should have the opportunity to take on board some of the progressive practices that mutuals and co-operatives have pioneered so successfully”.

Mark Lazarowicz commented: “I am delighted that the Employee Share Schemes Bill has attracted such wide support from MPs and Ministers. The Government is keen to promote an enterprise culture in the UK; once again the Co-operative movement has proved its ability to deliver workable legislation in support of a key Government objective.

“The Bill returns to the Chamber for a Third Reading in June, and I will be urging my Parliamentary colleagues to attend the House to support the Bill before it progresses to the Lords”.

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