Sarah Wollaston (Totnes, Conservative)

I congratulate the Minister on securing an increase in the quotas for cod and whiting in the south-west and for plaice and sole in the channel. How quickly does he think it will be possible to roll out the catch quota scheme to further eliminate discards?

Richard Benyon (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Natural Environment and Fisheries), Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Newbury, Conservative)

I was really pleased that fishermen in my hon. Friend's constituency entered the scheme last year. I want many more vessels to do so, because fully documented fisheries are the only way forward, not only to have proper management of our fisheries, but to address the concerns of all our constituents—even mine—inland who are affronted by the idea of perfectly edible fish being thrown away. Through schemes such as the catch quota scheme we can give assurances to our consumers and make life better for our fishermen, who are landing more and being better rewarded for it. This is an entirely virtuous circle.

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