

Scottish Independence Referendum – Round up of comment



A smattering of the remarks and comments and pointers to articles about the Scottish Independence Referendum which we have found on the web today.

Today marks 364 days until the people of Scotland are invited to vote in the referendum on independence from the United Kingdom.

The question which will be asked on 18 September 2014 is “Should Scotland be an independent country?”

Whether you intend voting Yes or No to that question, your views, and those of others, have a place here. We invite comments and we also invite you to write about what you think by using our Submit your Story feature [here](#).

The First Minister, Alex Salmond started off yesterday’s debate on independence thus:-

“It will give me enormous pleasure to move the motion in my name. In exactly a year’s time, the people of Scotland will choose whether to become an independent country. It is a precious thing for any country to be able to decide its own future through a democratic vote, following a free debate. That places a responsibility on each and every one of us.

When this Parliament was reconvened in 1999, Donald Dewar said in what, in my estimation, was his best-ever speech, that devolution was

“about more than our politics and our laws. This is about who

we are, how we carry ourselves.”

How we carry ourselves—how we conduct the arguments—will be more important than ever over the next 12 months. Both the yes and the no sides must live up to the standard set by the Edinburgh agreement, an agreement that brings credit to both the United Kingdom Government and the Scottish Government. The debate over the coming year must be respectful as well as vigorous, constructive as well as passionate, and influenced by empathy, not enmity. That is the best possible way of ensuring that Scotland emerges next September as a stronger nation. Although both sides will ask searching questions of the other, it is important for both sides—actually, it is incumbent on them—to set out a positive vision. History tells us that fearmongering is likely to be counterproductive.”

Contributions to the debate from some of the Edinburgh and Lothian MSPs included:-

Margo MacDonald Independent MSP for Lothian in response to Ruth Davidson’s remarks about Scotland being stronger as part of the UK armed forces :-“I wonder whether Ruth Davidson is aware that there are fewer men under arms in the British army and other services now than there were at the start of the battle of Waterloo. In a recent news story about Syria, it was reported that the American fifth fleet had been moved into the Persian gulf and the sixth fleet had been moved up to the eastern Mediterranean, while the British had a submarine somewhere off Cyprus. Are we joking about this Great Britain defence?”

Later Ms MacDonald said during her own speech:-“I believe that our aspirations will rise if we go for independence, because our self-respect, our feeling of pride in ourselves and our boldness will grow bigger—just the same as everybody else’s do—and the opinions of people outside Scotland will reflect that. Independence will not make us a world power, but do we

want to be a world power? I do not think that anybody wants us to be, but neither does it hold much attraction to stick with Britain and therefore fall into the category used by President Putin's adviser, who described the country formerly known as Great Britain as an unimportant little offshore island that nobody bothers about."

Neil Findlay Labour MSP for Lothians commented:-"I do not—and never will—question anyone's commitment to their country or community, and I hope that no one will ever question mine. Opposition to independence is not anti-Scottish, unpatriotic or an act of treachery. It is my deeply held view that the SNP's version of independence is fundamentally flawed and absolutely not in the interests of working people in Scotland or beyond our borders. As Alex Bell, the First Minister's former adviser, has said:

"Scotland's problems are common to "all countries in the developed world".

That is very true.

Currently, poverty and inequality in Scotland are at appalling levels. If someone is born into a poor household and community, they are likely to become ill and die sooner than a more affluent Scot who may live in the next street or the next community."

He then continued:-"I would like us to learn from past mistakes. Last week, 25 senior academics, trade union leaders, politicians and activists launched, "Class, Nation and Socialism—The Red Paper on Scotland 2014". It is in the Parliament's shop. I recommend that the First Minister get a copy and educate himself. The book promotes a positive agenda for political change in Scotland—one that argues for a major political and democratic reform to free up and re-empower local government so that it can work in the interests of citizens and not just obey the diktat of central Government.

It argues for an economy that is more democratic, with forms of social, co-operative and public ownership so that we can balance societal, environmental and economic considerations for the wellbeing of the entire society, with the renewables industry being a prime example of where that can be achieved. It argues for an industrial policy where Government support and intervention create and sustain jobs and investment. The Forth Bridge contract is the greatest missed opportunity that we have had in that regard. We need a taxation system that supports and services communities, not financial institutions and transnational companies.”

Malcolm Chisholm Labour MSP for Edinburgh North referred to the First Minister’s photo call at a nursery in Pilton yesterday morning and commented:-“The Scottish Government can do far more on childcare now, as it can on other policies. Devolution can do a great deal and more enhanced devolution can do even more—that is the message that I will be speaking about in the next twelve months.”

The newest MSP Cameron Buchanan Conservative MSP for Lothians stood up to make his maiden speech and said:-“Scottish products and services are sold in large numbers throughout the United Kingdom: 84 per cent of mortgages provided by Scottish firms are sold to people living elsewhere in the UK; 67 per cent of individual savings accounts are sold to people living elsewhere in the UK; and 70 per cent of the pensions sold by Scottish firms are sold elsewhere in the UK. When we set out those terms, we see just how important the UK is to Scotland and, indeed, Scotland is to the UK. How vital it is for our future success to have continued access to that market for our services and goods on an equal and competitive footing.”

Christine Grahame SNP MSP for Midlothian South Tweeddale and Lauderdale said:-“In the meantime, the oil and gas revenues have been producing wealth and revenue for the UK Exchequer for 40 years and they have decades to go. Do we have an oil fund worth trillions—that sounds a lot to me—like that of

Norway, a small, independent country that discovered its reserves at the same time as Scotland's were discovered? Of course not. That Norwegian fund has 1.78 per cent of European stocks and is said to be the largest stock owner in Europe. It can be choosy and authorises only ethical investments. The Norwegians have so much money that they have to think of more ways to invest—talk about money in the bank for a rainy day.

Compare that with the dismal report card of UK Governments over decades: oil and gas revenues squandered, the rich getting richer and the poor, poorer, and more of the same. If I was offered a guarantee that I would get the Government that I voted for and the chance to have my nation's wealth under proper stewardship so that it could be used for investment in Scotland's people and a more just society, it would not be a hard choice.

Independence for Scotland is just that guarantee. All the rest—the daily diet of negatives from the no campaign—is a desperate distraction from that simple truth.”

Kezia Dugdale Labour MSP for Lothian said:-“There are two types of facts coming from the Scottish Government, depending on what it is being asked. If it is asked about a popular policy, the answer to the question is, “Don't worry. That is guaranteed under independence. We will make it so.” If the question is a bit harder, or if there is division over the answer to the question, it is suddenly a matter for the Government post independence. The Government can hardly be surprised that that inconsistency fuels a sense of cynicism in the public debate around the independence referendum.”

The Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon ended the debate in this manner:-“Whatever way we cut the figures, Scotland's public finances are in better shape than the UK's public finances, but the benefit of independence is having the powers to grow our economy faster and create more wealth so that we can challenge some of the issues that we face. You know what?

Being one of the wealthiest countries in the world while having some of the highest levels of child poverty cannot be an argument for staying the same. It is an argument for doing things differently and better. It is an argument for being independent.”

Some others are looking forward to the rally planned for this weekend on Calton Hill.

*I'm DJing at the [#IndyRally](#) After Party [@BongoClub](#) this Sat:
<http://t.co/gbK906Yv27> ...*

– Johnny Gailey (@johnnygailey) [September 19, 2013](#)

At First Minister's Questions at Holyrood today the First Minister assured Scotland that the Royal Mail would be renationalised in an independent Scotland

*Alex Salmond to re-nationalise Royal Mail in an independent Scotland in a move that could cost more than £300m
<http://t.co/zjR5FeYf0J> #SP4*

– Scottish Express (@ScotExpress) [September 19, 2013](#)

*Video archive of today's FMQs now available:
<http://t.co/NhUK8uynXN>*

– Scottish Parliament (@ScotParl) [September 19, 2013](#)

Chair of Better Together, Alistair Darling, said:-“The experts confirm that within the United Kingdom Scotland enjoys public

spending that is more than £1,200 higher per person than the UK average. It is this higher spending on public services that underpins the success of our Scottish Parliament. This is evidence that we get the best of both worlds – devolution delivering for Scotland backed up by the financial security of a bigger United Kingdom.”

Countdown to the referendum. Video from @nicolasturgeon: Scotland's Future in Scotland's Hands <http://t.co/hNsjerCizN> #indyref

– Christina McKelvie (@ChristinaSNP) [September 19, 2013](#)

Our next Newsnight #indyref debate is on arts & culture on 30/9/13. Apply to be in the audience here... <http://t.co/kTgMENpy6o> #newsnight

– Newsnight Scotland (@NewsnightScot) [September 19, 2013](#)

“The campaign to keep Scotland in the UK is winning the referendum battle with less than a year to go” <http://t.co/34bDLrfJDs> #indyref

– Union Jock (@Union_Jock) [September 19, 2013](#)

The Scottish Government is looking into what independence might mean for Scottish sport

An expert group is to examine the development of Scottish sport and the opportunities for sport with independence.

The Working Group on Scottish Sport, set up by the Scottish Government, will consider how the country can remain at the

leading edge of sports development, and the additional opportunities for athletes to compete on the international stage, following independence.

The group will be chaired by former First Minister Henry McLeish, with a final report being produced by spring 2014. Among the topics it will consider are:

- The action necessary to ensure Scotland can be successful in future Olympics and Paralympics in its own right;
- The continuing development required to ensure that Scotland remains a country of sporting excellence, with opportunity at all levels;
- The potential for sharing facilities and resources across the Home Nations and abroad.

Sport Minister Shona Robison said:-“This Government has a proven track record in investing in sport and next year, Scotland will host the Commonwealth Games and the Ryder Cup, two of the biggest global sporting events. We enjoy world-class competition and training venues, support for high performance athletes and opportunities for all at new or upgraded grassroots facilities across the country. I want this to continue with independence.

“Sport and physical activity has a significant impact on people’s health and wellbeing, so the referendum in September next year gives us the chance to consider how Scottish sport could be better off with independence, with more opportunities to compete on the international stage, and a greater say on how best to develop our athletes.

“I’m very pleased that Henry McLeish has agreed to chair the Working Group. Henry’s lifelong passion for sport and

experience of government will help produce a blueprint for a world class sporting system in an independent Scotland and a model for the continuing development of Scottish sport.”

Henry McLeish said:

“Scotland has a proud history of sporting achievement, both at an elite and grassroots level, which gives us a great platform on which to plan for the future. I welcome this opportunity to work with an experienced and diverse group to give independent and considered views on what will deliver the greatest opportunities for sport and physical activity in Scotland in the coming decades.”

Yes Scotland published this video:-

The Edinburgh Reporter will round up a selection of views we find across all media as often as we can.

This may be a daily article if there is a lot of chat about the independence referendum, or less frequently if we have too much else to do. If you would like to write about your views on independence then please feel free to submit your article using the Submit your Story feature [here](#). The Edinburgh Reporter does not have a stance on the independence question, but hopes to help you make your mind up about the vote on 18 September 2014 by providing as much unbiased coverage as possible.

There are two main websites where you can obtain further information:-

Yes Scotland can be found here <http://www.yesscotland.net>

Better Together has a website here <http://bettertogether.net>