

SNP conference 2013 – Salmond already heading back to Edinburgh..



The Edinburgh Reporter is at the SNP conference to meet Edinburgh MSPs and councillors to find out what they have to say about independence and how it might affect the capital. Provost Liz Grant welcomed delegates to the Concert Hall.

Councillor Norman Work is here...

[@AlexSalmond](#) opening [@theSNP](#) [#snp13](#) conference in Perth pic.twitter.com/iGCjYzXoyc

– Norman Work (@CllrNormanWork) [October 17, 2013](#)

MEP Alyn Smith is here:-

Hitting the road for Perth and [#snp13](#), looking forward to seeing a cast of thousands (literally) from up and down the country ☐

– Alyn Smith MEP (@AlynSmithMEP) [October 17, 2013](#)

The First Minister opened the conference shortly after 2:00pm with these words:-

“Next September the 18th is Scotland’s date with destiny, the biggest opportunity the people of this country have ever had – the opportunity to choose independence and a better future for Scotland.

“I believe that people will choose the hope of a Yes vote, rather than the fear offered by No. And no-one now denies the reality that Scotland has got what it takes to be a successful, independent country.

“We know that ‘Project Fear’ – as people in the No campaign christened it – will say anything to talk down Scotland’s abilities. They peddle nonsense such as mobile phone roaming charges after independence, the threat to annex Faslane, no whisky in embassies! – nonsense which even they are forced to retract.

“But people in the No campaign cannot deny the economic viability and potential of people-talented, resource-rich Scotland. And how could they:

“Per head of population, Scotland has more top universities than any other country.

“We are the largest oil producer in the European Union, and have a quarter of Europe’s offshore wind and tidal resource.

“We have huge success in life science innovation, and a thriving creative industries sector.

“We have a quality food and drink industry aiming to turnover £16,000 million a year, and our astounding natural beauty and heritage support a tourism industry which employs nearly 200,000 people.

“When even the most bitter opponents of Scottish independence agree that Scotland has got what it takes, then it’s clear that the only thing people have to fear is ‘Project Fear’ itself.

“The real debate, the central question people will answer in next year’s referendum, is who can be trusted to make the best decisions for Scotland – our own parliament in Scotland, or a Westminster system which rarely represents the votes or

values of the people who live and work here?

“By a factor of nearly four-to-one, people trust the Scottish Government rather than Westminster to govern Scotland – and they believe that Scotland’s Parliament should make the decisions on tax, welfare and pensions. That is the natural majority which exists for Scottish independence – and why I believe it will be reflected in a majority for Yes next September.”

Alex Salmond has already left the conference hall to head back to Edinburgh for face to face meetings with Ineos and Unite which he mentioned during his speech.

The Grangemouth dispute over recent weeks has taken up many column inches, but appears to have been resolved, although the plant will not be reopened immediately.

The First Minister said yesterday:-“The Scottish Government will continue to assist with talks and impress the importance of a resolution upon both management and Unite. Grangemouth has a long-term future as a successful petrochemical site in Scotland but this will only be possible if underlying issues with management and unions are resolved.

“Governments themselves cannot force or compel agreement between unions and management – they have to do that for themselves. We can impress upon both sides the importance of this facility to Scotland, and that is what we will continue to do.

“As things stands, there is no threat to fuel distribution or the Forties pipeline. But what is important – and what now is at stake – is the future of Grangemouth as a chemical complex and a refinery in Scotland, and that can only be brought about by investment in the plant. The Scottish Government is happy to assist with such an investment package, but before that can happen there needs to be goodwill on both sides between

management and the unions.”