

First Minister to resign



On the day after the historic Scottish Independence Referendum the First Minister called a press conference at Bute House to issue his resignation as leader of the SNP and as First Minister by the time of the SNP conference in November.

Mr Salmond said he would not accept nomination for leader at its Scottish National Party's annual conference in November and, after the party membership ballot there, he will stand down as First Minister.

In what was described by some journalists in attendance as an emotional press call the First Minister said:

✖ “I’m immensely proud of the campaign which we have fought and of the 1.6 million voters who rallied to that cause by backing an independent Scotland. I am also proud of the 85 per cent turn-out in the referendum and the remarkable response of all of the people of Scotland who participated in this great democratic, constitutional debate and of course in the manner in which they conducted themselves. We now have the opportunity to hold Westminster’s feet to the fire on the vow that they have made to devolve further meaningful power to Scotland; this places Scotland in a very strong position.

“I spoke to the Prime Minister today and, although he reiterated his intention to proceed as he has now outlined, he would not commit to a second reading vote on the 27th of March on a new Scotland Bill. That was a clear promise laid out by Gordon Brown during the campaign. The Prime Minister says such a vote would be meaningless; I suspect he cannot guarantee the support of his party. But today the point is this; the real guardians of progress are not the politicians at Westminster,

or even at Holyrood, but the energised activism of tens of thousands of people who I predict will refuse to meekly go back into the political shadows.

“For me right now, therefore there is a decision as to who is best placed to lead this process forward politically. I believe this is a new exciting situation that is redolent with possibility, but in that situation I think that Party, Parliament and Country would benefit from new leadership. Therefore, I have told the national secretary of the Scottish National Party that I will not accept nomination to be a candidate for leader at the annual conference in Perth, on the 13th to the 15th of November. After the membership ballot I will stand down as First Minister to allow the new leader to be elected by due parliamentary process. Until then I will continue to serve as First Minister, after that I will continue to offer to serve as Member of the Scottish Parliament for Aberdeenshire East.

“It has been the privilege of my life to serve Scotland as First Minister, but as I’ve said often during the referendum campaign, this is not about me or the SNP, or any political party – it is much more important than that. The position is this. We lost the referendum vote but can still carry the political initiative. More importantly, Scotland can still emerge as the real winner. For me as leader, my time is nearly over but for Scotland, the campaign continues and the dream shall never die.”

According to reports on Twitter journalists from some newspapers such as the Daily Telegraph were excluded from the press conference. We are sure this cannot have been much of a surprise to them given some of the press coverage directed at the First Minister in the last two years, but we are sure that many people in Scotland will be surprised at his decision to resign.

Politicians are often called upon to step down after a

decision as monumental as that taken on Thursday, but seldom do so of their own will.

Alex Salmond has twice been leader of the SNP, and has been credited with their rise to prominence in the last two governments. The landslide victory in 2011 was something that was not meant to happen in The Scottish Government, but nonetheless 69 MSPs were returned to Holyrood with an outright majority and a mandate to hold the independence referendum.

He left Edinburgh soon after the press conference with his wife Moira to go home to Aberdeenshire but is due to make a speech at Holyrood on Tuesday.

Heading home to Strichen. With love and thanks from Moira and I for all your kind messages of support.
pic.twitter.com/MrRy1De2XK

– Alex Salmond (@AlexSalmond) [September 19, 2014](#)