

SNP disappointed over Scotland's week at Westminster



The Scottish National Party says Westminster is falling short on delivering more powers for Scotland following a week of let-downs in Westminster.

*Published on Monday, the UK government's Command Paper fell short of the promises made in Westminster's 'Vow' with no mention of "extensive new powers", which was what was promised in the two days before the referendum. In addition, the paper states that the introduction of more powers for Scotland will have to be considered "in the round" with constitutional change across the UK – which was not mentioned in the 'Vow'.

*On Tuesday, the House of Commons debated devolution following the referendum yet the debate was hijacked to discuss English votes for English laws.

*On Wednesday during Scottish Questions, Scotland Minister David Mundell was unable to answer a question from SNP Westminster Leader Angus Robertson on what "extensive new powers" Scotland would receive, before Tory backbencher Neil Carmichael raised English votes for English laws.

*On Thursday, Gordon Brown's debate on more devolution for Scotland was just half an hour and he failed to accept an intervention from the SNP. During the debate Pete Wishart MP asked the Scottish Secretary if the Barnett Formula was safe – seventy members of Parliament have signed a motion calling for a debate reviewing the Barnett Formula.

Commenting, Pete Wishart MP said: "Scotland's 'week in

Westminster' has fallen flat. "Monday's Command Paper was inadequate. It was well behind the pace of what people in Scotland need and want. It was a disappointment to the people who voted No for extensive new powers, as well as the 1.6 million who voted Yes.

"Scotland was told in the 'Vow' that extensive new powers will be delivered for our Parliament, but this core promise was nowhere to be seen in the paper, or in the debate in the House of Commons. In Scottish Questions, we raised this issue with the Scotland Minister but he couldn't give us an answer.

"It took two hours for the Prime Minister to come up with English votes for English laws after the referendum. And now it's just taken four weeks for the Barnett formula to be threatened. Seventy Members of Parliament have signed a motion for a debate for Barnett to be reviewed. Barnett was in the Vow and Alistair Carmichael can't guarantee that the Barnett Formula is safe.

"The SNP are working constructively within the Smith process, and we want the outcome to meet the high expectations of the people of Scotland as expressed in the referendum, given the various promises of 'devo max', 'near federalism' and 'home rule' which were made by the Westminster parties.

"A new poll shows superb trust ratings for the SNP and Nicola Sturgeon on more powers – as Labour's woes in Scotland continue, with only one per cent of people trusting Ed Miliband most to deliver extensive new powers.

"Our key focus is on delivering powers for a purpose – that means proposals that will deliver real change for the people of Scotland and better equip the Scottish Parliament to create jobs, protect public services and tackle inequality."

Meantime the Secretary of State for Scotland Alistair Carmichael said that the First Minister in waiting, Nicola Sturgeon, should accept the decision made in the referendum

and work with the UK Government who are working to deliver further devolved powers to Scotland.

He said: “Nicola Sturgeon will take the reins at a time where most Scots are moving on with their lives after the long and passionate referendum campaign. We have hit the ground running and are already working hard to deliver the further devolution which we promised.

“During the referendum campaign we set out a timetable for the devolution of further powers and we’re not only meeting it, we’re beating it.

“I would call on Nicola Sturgeon to show genuine leadership and accept the result. There have already been cries of reneging on the more powers vow even though the Smith Commission hasn’t even proposed anything yet. The betrayal bandwagon is already getting dusted down. This is simply not good enough. The Scottish people have made their democratic decision and it must be respected.

“I appreciate the emotional intensity of the campaign but the UK Government respected the victory of the nationalists in 2011, recognised the will of the Scottish people and took measures to devolve the power to hold the referendum. Both sides signed the Edinburgh Agreement in good faith and it is that good faith which we need to see from the new First Minister.

“The referendum gave us a decisive result. This was the most democratic decision we have ever made in Scotland. More than 3.6 million people voted. One question was put to the electorate and the overwhelming majority of people in Scotland answered by saying they want to remain part of the United Kingdom.

“We are now working to build a stronger Scottish Parliament. Calling for a second referendum and reflecting on what could have been is entirely inappropriate. The Scottish Government

wanted to divide the United Kingdom but if they carry on as they have for the past month then they risk dividing Scotland.”

This was the statement made by the Prime Minister on the morning after the Scottish Independence Referendum: