

Alex Salmond's last First Minister's Questions



First Minister Alex Salmond is in the last days of his role at the helm of The Scottish Government, and today he will face the Labour, Conservatives and LibDems at First Minister's Questions (FMQs) for the last time. He will stand down as leader of the SNP and as First Minister at the SNP conference this weekend.

There have been few occasions in the last seven years when he has found himself on the back foot in the Holyrood Debating Chamber and there is little doubt that today will be any different. You can watch FMQs live [here](#) on the Scottish Parliament website.

The questions tabled for the First Minister today are these:

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

- 1. Jackie Baillie: To ask the First Minister what engagements he has planned for the rest of the day. (S4F-02376)*
- 2. Ruth Davidson: To ask the First Minister when he will next meet the Prime Minister. (S4F-02375)*
- 3. Angus MacDonald: To ask the First Minister what response he has received from the Prime Minister to his recent correspondence regarding European Council fisheries negotiations. (S4F-02378)*
- 4. Kenneth Gibson: To ask the First Minister whether the Scottish Government considers that the devolution of health and safety legislation would lead to more prosecutions where serious injury or death has occurred. (S4F-02379)*

5. Graeme Pearson: To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's response is to the Law Society of Scotland's discussion paper, Legal Assistance in Scotland, which says that the current system is not fit for purpose. (S4F-02386)

6. Alison Johnstone: To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's position is on underground coal gasification and whether any licences have been granted for exploration. (S4F-02392)

When quizzed at a press conference at Bute House yesterday as to whether he will miss the First Ministerial podium and FMQs, he answered: "Yes I will miss it greatly. I love FMQs and I love the Scottish Parliament. I think the Scottish Parliament has emerged as the dominant political forum of Scotland not just in the last seven years, but over the period since 1999. We take that for granted now. We take that as an obvious statement but it was by no means taken for granted when the Parliament was reconvened in 1999. It is now the dominating force in Scottish Politics and the credit for that goes not to one administration or one First Minister but to all members of the Scottish Parliament. Of course not all requests or demands can be satisfied but the people have a voice. There are very few parliaments which have that level of transparency. I look forward to watching FMQs instead of participating.

Questioned later as to his statement that the referendum was a once in a generation opportunity he appeared to have strayed from his original position, in light of the referendum result perhaps, when he replied: "I would say that although the Yes vote didn't win the referendum, I think Scotland is in a position to gain very substantially from that process.

"I do believe that Scotland will become an independent country

and I think we are on a pathway which has been reinforced by events of the last year.”

Asked whether he shared the First Minister in waiting’s view that she will live to see an independent Scotland the First Minister confirmed that he thought that Scotland will be independent within his lifetime, saying: “Oh yes, I don’t have any intention of finding myself in a position where I could be less ambitious than Miss Sturgeon!”

As to whether the former MP will now return to Westminster, as widely predicted, he would not be drawn. This was not really the time or the place. Although today may be Alex Salmond’s last stand as SNP leader and First Minister in the Debating Chamber, he remains an MSP and we will all have to wait his next press conference for any future announcements of note.