



House of Commons
Scottish Affairs Committee

The Referendum on Separation for Scotland: Unanswered Questions

Sixth Report of Session 2010–12

*Report, together with formal minutes and
written evidence*

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The Committee Name

The Scottish Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Scotland Office (including (i) relations with the Scottish Parliament and (ii) administration and expenditure of the offices of the Advocate General for Scotland (but excluding individual cases and advice given within government by the Advocate General)).

Current membership

Mr Ian Davidson MP (*Labour/Co-op, Glasgow South West*) (Chair)
Fiona Bruce MP (*Conservative, Congleton*)
Mike Freer MP (*Conservative, Finchley and Golders Green*)
Jim McGovern MP (*Labour, Dundee West*)
Iain McKenzie MP (*Labour, Inverclyde*)
David Mowat MP (*Conservative, Warrington South*)
Pamela Nash MP (*Labour, Airdrie and Shotts*)
Simon Reeves MP (*Conservative, Dewsbury*)
Mr Alan Reid MP (*Liberal Democrat, Argyll and Bute*)
Lindsay Roy MP (*Labour, Glenrothes*)
Dr Eilidh Whiteford MP (*Scottish National Party, Banff and Buchan*)

The following members were also members of the committee during the parliament:

Cathy Jamieson MP (*Labour/Co-op, Kilmarnock and Loudoun*)
Mark Menzies MP (*Conservative, Fylde*)
Graeme Morrice MP (*Labour, Livingston*)
Fiona O'Donnell MP (*Labour, East Lothian*)
Julian Smith MP (*Conservative, Skipton and Ripon*)

Powers

The committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the internet at www.parliament.uk/scotaffcom. A list of Reports of the Committee in the present Parliament is at the back of this volume.

The Reports of the Committee, the formal minutes relating to that report, oral evidence taken and some or all written evidence are available in a printed volume.

Additional written evidence may be published on the internet only.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Dr Rebecca Davies (Clerk), Duma Langton (Inquiry Manager), James Bowman (Senior Committee Assistant), Gabrielle Hill (Committee Assistant) and Ravi Abhayaratne (Committee Support Assistant).

Contacts

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1 Introduction

The inquiry

1. On 12 October 2011, we launched two separate inquiries simultaneously on the proposed Referendum on Separation for Scotland. The first of these inquiries focuses primarily on the process and mechanics by which such a referendum would be organised and conducted. The second inquiry focuses on the many unanswered questions which will need to be addressed if the voters of Scotland are to make an informed choice when they are invited to vote in a referendum- potentially in the Autumn of 2014.¹

2. This short report will focus on the second of the two inquiries- namely the substantive policy questions and issues which need to be addressed prior to the referendum. The terms of reference for the inquiry are attached below:

The inquiry will seek to identify those issues which will need to be resolved before a referendum is held in order to allow voters to make an informed choice. Rt Hon Michael Moore MP, Secretary of State for Scotland, has identified six areas where clarification is required:

1. Bank regulation
2. Pension payments
3. The national currency
4. Membership of international organisations
5. Scotland's defences
6. Costs of Separation

At this stage the Committee would welcome suggestions as to: What matters require to be clarified amongst these broad themes? What additional issues need to be resolved or clarified in advance of a referendum?

3. Initial submissions were invited to be received by 11 November 2011. We thank all who submitted evidence to this inquiry, a full list of which is appended to this report. In addition, on 14 November, the *Daily Record* launched a campaign in support of our inquiry, inviting the people of Scotland to submit their views and concerns to the Committee.² We thank the Daily Record for its support for our inquiry, and to those who took the time to submit their views.³ What follows is a broad summary of the issues and un-answered questions which were raised with us.

1 The terms of reference for both inquiries can be found at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/scottish-affairs-committee/news/referendum-inquiry-tor/>

2 *We want your views on independence referendum, say Scottish MPs*, Daily Record, 14 November 2011 .
 Subsequently, comments on the responses were published on 28 November 2011, *Record poll on independence reveals readers' biggest worries are over finance and defence*.

3 Those submissions have been printed with this report.

2 Unanswered questions

4. While this list is not exhaustive, it indicates the scale and complexity of the issues which need to be resolved. Many relate to specific policy areas- where the answers would most likely vary according to which political party or parties formed a Government in a separate Scotland. While it is fair to raise these questions, as they will be crucial to voters in determining which party they might vote for in any Scottish General Election post-separation, the main structural and institutional issues, which will form the constitutional architecture of a post-separation Scotland, are more pressing in terms of enabling the electorate to make a choice on how they would vote in a referendum on Separation, and will therefore be our focus.

The Referendum

5. While questions relating to the process and mechanics of the referendum itself are the subject of a separate inquiry, several of the submissions we received raised questions in relation to the referendum- which are worth noting here. Correspondents asked:

- 1) Should there be more than one question on the ballot paper?
- 2) Should there be a minimum threshold for voter turnout?
- 3) If the referendum is a mandate to negotiate, would a second referendum be required in order to allow the Scottish people to accept/ reject the package?

Finance

6. Many questions were raised in relation to finance: both in terms of the costs of establishing a separate Scotland, and what the potential fiscal and monetary policy of a separate Scotland would be. Key questions include:

- 1) What is Scotland's share of the national debt?
- 2) How would North Sea oil revenues be defined and distributed?
- 3) Would Scotland retain the use of Sterling? If so, would it be fiscally independent?
- 4) Would there be a Scottish Central Bank?
- 5) Can the population of Scotland produce sufficient tax revenue to sustain a separate Scottish economy?
- 6) What would be Scotland's credit rating?
- 7) What is the income derived from Scottish exports, and how much does Scotland pay for imports?
- 8) What is the potential impact, in both the immediate and longer term, of constitutional uncertainty on inward investment into the UK as a whole, and Scotland specifically, in the period before a referendum?

7. In addition to these major economic issues, many questions were also raised concerning specific policy issues in relation to fiscal policy, for example, whether the Scottish Government would meet existing UK Government state and public sector pension commitments. A range of questions were also raised in relation to potential levels of income tax, national insurance contributions, corporation tax, road tax, fuel duty, VAT and welfare benefits in a separate Scotland.

Defence

8. The primary focus of concern expressed in relation to the defence of Scotland was the question of whether Scotland would have separate armed forces, and if so, how they would be constituted, configured, funded and equipped. Correspondents were specifically concerned about jobs, contract and defence procurement. Questions were also raised in relation to the type of role Scottish Forces would have. A further issue raised was whether Scottish citizens would, or could, continue to serve in English, Welsh and Northern Irish regiments, and vice versa. Scotland's position in relation to international organisations, for example, NATO and the United Nations, also remains unclear.

9. Uncertainty was expressed as to how the scale and nature of any Scottish defence estate would be established. Would the Scottish defence estate be configured on the basis of a proportion of the UK's defence estate, or based on another formula? Questions were also raised as to how Trident would be managed – and what the future might hold for Faslane and Coulport. Finally, correspondents raised issues around Scottish border controls and security.

Constitutional issues

10. The main constitutional issues raised related to the Monarch's status as the Head of State, and whether Scotland would be a Commonwealth country. Questions were also raised as to the practical nature of the relationships between Scotland and the remainder of the UK:

- 1) Will a passport be required to travel?
- 2) Will Scottish citizens have free access to NHS services in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and vice versa?

The broader issue of the consequences of the Separation of Scotland for the constitutional status of the remainder of the 'UK', and specifically whether the constitutional relationships between England, Wales and Northern Ireland would need to be re-configured, was also identified.

Shared institutions

11. Many correspondents raised questions as to the future of existing UK wide institutions in Scotland. For example, there was uncertainty as to whether the BBC would remain as the main public broadcaster in Scotland. Similar questions were raised in relation to other organisations such as the Royal Mail and the NHS, and shared standards and regulatory bodies.

Europe

12. Finally, a number of questions were raised in relation to Scotland's relationship with the European Union:

- 1) Would Scotland automatically become a Member of the EU, or would it have to apply through the normal membership procedures for candidate countries?
- 2) Would adopting the Euro and Schengen be conditions of entry?
- 3) Would Scottish membership of the EU (and potentially the Euro), be subject to a referendum?

Conclusion

13. Having identified these key questions, we will shortly begin a series of evidence sessions which will explore these issues in greater depth – and will report on each of these in due course. We recommend that, as a matter of urgency, the Secretary of State for Scotland, first; takes responsibility for clarifying the UK Government's position on appropriate matters, by co-ordinating work across the Cabinet, and second; undertakes to work with the Committee to provide a joint provision of factual and unbiased information to the people of Scotland.

14. We also recognise that other Select Committees might wish to examine possible impacts arising from the break-up of the United Kingdom. While they will mainly, and properly, be concerned with the departmental and policy consequences of Separation upon the rest of the United Kingdom, we would welcome their help both in identifying issues which will need to be resolved as part of any 'divorce' settlement, and in identifying those matters which we may have overlooked. Accordingly, we will approach the Liaison Committee to ensure that any such inquiries are established in as helpful and constructive a manner as possible.

15. Similarly, in a spirit of mutual respect and co-operation, we would expect the Scottish Government to provide such answers as it has already formulated to the questions that have been raised and to work with us, and others, to shed light upon knowns, unknowns and all variations thereof.

16. The people of Scotland will soon be invited to make a historic decision. We recognise our role and duty, as the Select Committee responsible for all matters Scottish, to work on behalf of Parliament, our electorate and the Scottish people, to ensure that the choices are clear, the vote is fair and the issues are understood.

Formal Minutes

Wednesday 8 February 2012

Members present:

Mr Ian Davidson, in the Chair

Fiona Bruce
Mike Freer
Jim McGovern
Iain McKenzie

David Mowat
Pamela Nash
Mr Alan Reid
Lindsay Roy

Draft Report (*The Referendum on Separation for Scotland: Unanswered Questions*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 16 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Sixth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Written evidence was ordered to be reported to the House for printing with the Report.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 22 February 2012 at 1.30 p.m.]

List of printed written evidence

1	Frank Cain	Ev 1
2	Alan Graham	Ev 1
3	Tom Clode	Ev 1
4	Mairi Logie	Ev 1
5	John H Burns	Ev 1
6	Margaret Anderson	Ev 1
7	Susan Bowie	Ev 2
8	Ian Sharpe	Ev 2
9	Bill Beattie	Ev 2
10	David Mcfarlane	Ev 2
11	Jas M Menzies	Ev 2
12	Ronnie McClelland	Ev 2
13	Brian McNally	Ev 3
14	Hugh Pollock	Ev 3
15	Gordon Shaw	Ev 3
16	J. Breen	Ev 3
17	John Duguid	Ev 3
18	Peter Ovenstone	Ev 3
19	Keith Coats	Ev 4
20	Richard MacKinnon	Ev 4
21	Sarah Atkin	Ev 4
22	Linda Murie	Ev 4
23	Richard Irvine	Ev 4
24	Alan Graham	Ev 5
25	Esther McLinn	Ev 5
26	Hugh Gaffney	Ev 5
27	Anonymous	Ev 5
28	Victor Chamberlain	Ev 6
29	Patrick Lennon	Ev 6
30	Frank Orrock	Ev 7
31	Thomas Davidson	Ev 7
32	Nancy Macleod	Ev 8
33	Iain Cameron	Ev 8
34	Andrew Glen	Ev 8
35	Andrew HN Gray	Ev 8
36	A Walker	Ev 9
37	Paul Kirkham	Ev 9
38	Mike Cowley	Ev 10
39	Ruth Black	Ev 10
40	William Hodgson	Ev 11
41	Archie Borland	Ev 11
42	Professor Anthony J Trewavas	Ev 12

43	Roddy Hamilton	Ev 13
44	Alasdair Macdonald	Ev 13
45	M Little	Ev 14
46	Nell Whitelaw	Ev 15
47	John Lind	Ev 15
48	Anonymous Contributors	Ev 15

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2010–12

First Report	Postal Services in Scotland	HC 669 (HC 884)
Second Report	Video Games Industry in Scotland	HC 500 (Cm 8076)
Third Report	UK Border Agency and Glasgow City Council	HC 733
Fourth Report	The Scotland Bill	HC 775
Fifth Report	Student Immigration System in Scotland	HC 912 (Cm 8192)

Written evidence

Written evidence submitted by Frank Cain

Will Scotland lose out financially if it becomes an independent Scotland under the SNP?

Will it affect fuel, poverty, education and other OAPs financially? We are struggling under the present day government cuts today to try and live, are they going to kill us before they say, "we shouldn't have done that."

When I was talking about fuel, poverty etc you have given us a 3% rise and the energy is going up more than this (5%) so how can you justify this? This is what I mean by trying to kill us as we can't afford the cost of living and in today's papers the government in England are putting the fuel up again at 3p per gallon and that means everything else goes up afterwards. So would an independent Scotland will be better off financially? "I don't think so!"

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Alan Graham

I would like answers to the following:

What will the Income Tax Rates be in an Independent Scotland?

What will the NI rate be?

How will the NHS be funded?

Will there be a TV tax/license fee?

What level of VAT will there be?

Will the current level of pensions being paid to those that are retired be honoured by a Scottish Government?

Will there be a Car Road Tax—and how will this be set—a flat rate or a sliding scale s at present?

Fuel Duty—how much and by type?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Tom Clode

I have a question with respect with regards to Scottish separation: assuming Scotland will have no independent armed forces, can our nation have any legitimate right to be part of international alliances, particularly military alliances such as NATO?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Mairi Logie

I would like to know in detail how independence in Scotland will work (effects on business, economically, change of currency, being part of Europe, defence, etc,) how much it will cost to implement and how exactly will independence benefit every person in Scotland?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by John H Burns

What is the definitive position on membership of the EU, if separation took place?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Margaret Anderson

I would like to ask why there has been no mention of the defence of Scotland. Will Scotland have its own army, air force and navy? If so, will the Scottish Government recruit and pay for the forces personnel and if not, will Scotland be left without any defence force. I am also concerned that Alex Salmond feels he has no need for the public. ie the voters, to know exactly what we will be voting for. I am also concerned about pensions, how will the Scottish Government pay for these?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Susan Bowie

What would we pay the benefits with? Who would protect the vulnerable?

What if Shetland say 'its wir oil'. Or if UK says its their oil?

What gunboat are they going to send up to take it back?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Ian Sharpe

The question for a referendum should be a simple yes/no in clear and unambiguous language. For example, "Do you want Scotland to be an independent nation not part of the United Kingdom?" The referendum should also be a once and it's done referendum, obviously if Scotland votes for secession it will be forever, so voting not to cede should be a one and forever event.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Bill Beattie

I believe that Scotland should be an Independent Nation again. For too long now we have been held under the yoke of an unfair political union with our English neighbours, it's time we stood on our own two feet again. We have been told repeatedly that we get a good deal out of the "Union", in fact a better one than our English neighbours. This seems in conflict with the slogan "stronger together weaker apart", make your mind up it can be both. As the prospect of a referendum draws close the threats from the "Unionists" naysayers are becoming more and more desperate, this in my opinion only reinforces the fact that they need us more than we need them. Let's take responsibility for our own actions and grow up, no more whingeing about our lot. We have the natural resources and the ability to do it, goodness knows Scots immigrants have shown time and time again their ability to prosper—so why not at home?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by David Mcfarlane

What will Scotlands share of the UK national debt be?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Jas M Menzies

If we were to get Independence (God help us if we do), who will pay my Government pension? what will happen to the NHS? and all the other 999 services? If I travel to England, on holiday will I have to pay for medical care if I need it? What is going to happen to the military personal and bases in Scotland? Who is going to make up for the cash we receive from Westminster, as present? What type of Passport will I require? Who will I pay my car road tax to Swansea or where?

Why do you think it is Scotland's oil? it is outside the UK limits in the North Sea. I am a proud Scott, but DO NOT want to see a split, remember united we stand divided we fall. I for one will not let one man's self centred overinflated ego take us down the path of disaster. Remember you don't know what you have till it is gone.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Ronnie McClelland

Q. What type of military does Mr Salmond envisage to have on all three fronts, Army, Navy and Airforce?

Q. What type of equipment will he use in the army all high tech equipment or just convention small arms, will he have proper sea going navy vessels or just small coastal boats. What will his airforce consist of and who will train them?

I am a SNP supporter within the UK but will not vote for separation.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Brian McNally

As a 74 year old, who voted Labour for decades, I have joined the tens of thousands of ex-Labour supporters in favour of the SNP.

With Iain Gray, and his acolytes, continuing to attack the incumbent Government in Holyrood, regardless of whether what is mooted is good, or bad, for Scotland and without alternative input, finds me in contempt of a once favoured Party, bent on the destruction of our Parliament's efforts to govern.

I thought that last term's unremitting onslaught, by Labour, would have been recognised as the failure it generated, and that lessons would be learned. Not a bit of it! The proverbial cudgels of disharmony are being wielded once again, in preference to what we voters hoped to hear—a resolute effort for the betterment of our Country.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Hugh Pollock

Questions I would like to ask:

Why do you want to join Europe when it is falling apart?

Will immigration be curtailed?

How would you fund the following:

1. Armed Forces.
2. NHS.
3. Education.
4. Pensions.
5. Employment.
6. Police Force.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Gordon Shaw

The big question is:

How much will it cost to create an independent Scotland?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by J Breen

If, with their current majority, the SNP somehow manages to wangle a vote for independence, is it for keeps, is there any going back, would a future majority government in Scotland, be able take us back?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by John Duguid

If or when the Scottish people get to vote on independence, then only one question should be on the voting paper. Also, are the Scottish people voting for Scotland to be in Europe or are they going to have any say on whether they want to join Europe or not? The SNP say they will keep the pound sterling. Would this need the Bank of England's approval for an independent Scotland?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Peter Ovenstone

1. If Australia, Canada, New Zealand and India have Queen Elizabeth the Second as head of their independent state is it unreasonable to believe the people of Scotland should have the right to decide whether to join them or not ?

2. If, as a voter in Scotland, I believe that that the Westminster Government is not in the long term interest of Scotland but an independent Scottish Government is, or hold the contrary view, should I not be able to say so in a referendum, regardless of any political beliefs I may have ? If not, why not?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Keith Coats

I am worried that the SNP will get their two questions on the ballot paper, why can't Westminster take control? The UK government has the constitutional powers, so why are you letting the SNP take control of a situation that could end our United Kingdom?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Richard MacKinnon

I support a referendum on Scotland's constitutional future not because I am a nationalist but because I believe Scotland is massively over governed. So I will vote yes in the referendum because it is only a yes vote that will remove a tier of Scottish government. However if there was another proposal on the table I would consider it.

So my question to this Westminster committee looking at the constitutional question is this "do they agree that Scotland is over governed and what are their proposals to rationalise Scottish governance?"

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Sarah Atkin

Cross Border/British institutions—what happens to them?

1. BBC. Surely Britain would just be England and Wales and Scotland would lose out culturally. Could Scotland afford to fund its own public service broadcaster and one with such a global reach/reputation? As a pioneering institution, the BBC is pretty much a global "one off". The population would surely miss it.

2. Monarchy: it's a nonsense to suggest the Queen could be Head of State of an independent Scotland.

3. Universities and other higher education institutions (Royal Colleges of Music etc): There is a benefit from being part of the UK. Scotland punches well above its weight in this sector and makes a massive contribution. This is not an accident. Compare with Republic of Ireland?

4. Museums/Cultural institutions: cross-cultural links and shared expertise. Again, these institutions are WORLD CLASS! Relationships are bound to be eroded. Scotland would turn in on itself and become culturally insular.

None of the above will continue just because Alex Salmond "commands" it to be so.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Linda Murie

I would like the subject of state pensions to be addressed should Scotland become independent. Would the payment of pensions become the responsibility of an independent Scottish government and, if so, would future increases be safeguarded to fall into line with the rest of the UK?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Richard Irvine

As a trucker I would like to know what effect independence will have on the current VOSA setup within the Transport Industry.

As it stands VOSA can pull vehicles into checkpoints like the one at Bridge of Allan and also do roadside checks with regards to Tachograph on the spot checks.

Will the current VOSA setup within Scotland be scrapped under an independent Scotland?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Alan Graham

1. What will happen to the British Passports that people currently hold. How will an Independent Scotland handle the reissuing of these and how quickly could you do it.
2. The Post Office/Royal Mail are British Companies run from England. What infrastructure will be put in place to compensate there withdrawal from a Separate State.
3. Will the current Scottish Government be able to provide EVERY Scottish Voter with a HARD Copy of their Business Plan for an independent Scotland. Covering the following areas: Your first 12 month fiscal plan. Your 5 year plan and finally a 10 year forecast. Can you Mr Salmond do this.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Esther McLinn

Questions:

1. Armed Forces.
2. NATO.
3. Coast Guard/Customs.
4. Lifeboats.
5. EU—in/out.
6. Euro/Sterling.
7. Head of Country ie President or Queen.
8. North Sea Oil.
9. Shipbuilding and related industries.
10. Education ie Universities free for whom?.
11. Border Control? Scottish Passports? etc.
12. Immigration.
13. Civil rights etc.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Hugh Gaffney

What Happens?

1. Postal service for Scotland.
2. Will we have Royalty or Presidency.
3. After separation of UK do we divide ourselves with religion.
4. What public services can we reclaim.
5. Can we hold the Football World Cup or will our football be junior standards?
6. How much do we make from exporting goods.
7. How much do we pay for importing goods.
8. Can we give the youth hope or false promises.
9. Will we get rid of the Nuclear weapons.
10. Will Scotland become Industrial Graveyard like Ravenscraig.

Proud to be Scottish but not Nationalist.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Anonymous Contributor

I gather from Ian Davidson MP that you're looking for questions about the implications of Scottish independence. Here are some of mine:

1. Why is it better to use the money from North Sea oil to benefit well-off people in Scotland than to use it to combat poverty in places like Middlesbrough and Merthyr Tydfil?
2. The actual terms of independence have still to be negotiated. Can the SNP envisage terms so bad that they would reject them?

3. If Scotland breaks away, border controls in what's left of the UK (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) would remain the responsibility of the Westminster government. What guarantee is there that the UK government would not require people living in Scotland to have a passport in order to travel to England? If you live in Gretna your nearest large supermarket is in Carlisle—the introduction of passport controls on the border would affect people's everyday lives.
4. Many large private employers in Scotland have their headquarters elsewhere in the UK (eg Tesco). Independence would turn these into foreign companies overnight. Would this benefit those companies' Scottish employees or the Scottish economy in general? If so, how?
5. Where will people living in the Border TV region receive their television from?
6. Will independence make it easier or harder to develop speedy direct rail links between Scotland and the European mainland via the Channel Tunnel?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Victor Chamberlain

A few questions I would like answered:

- (a) Will there be an option in the referendum to say NO to independence from the UK?
- (b) If the vote is YES—would we HAVE to Join the EU—and even more crucially would we HAVE to join the EURO?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Martin Patrick Lennon

QUESTIONS WHICH OUGHT TO BE CLARIFIED BEFORE A REFERENDUM

Europe and International Organisations

7. Would Scotland aim to join the European Union? If so would they be likely to be accepted? Which countries (esp Spain) have expressed support for or opposition to break away states joining the EU? Could Scotland join without adopting the Euro? What impact would the loss of EU funding for the Highlands and Islands have? What impact would Scotland's membership of the EU have on its finances in terms of being a net contributor/recipient?
8. Would Scotland join/remain a member of Nato? If so under what conditions? Would Scotland, like Ireland, become a neutral country?
9. Would Scotland remain a member of the Commonwealth?

Currency

10. Would Scotland be able to join the EU without adopting the Euro? If Scotland did not join the Euro would it create a new currency? If it is to keep using sterling under what conditions would the Bank of England allow this to happen? Fiscal controls?

Constitution

11. Would Scotland become a republic?

Referendum

12. How many questions? How many answers? Option to vote for fewer powers to Holyrood?
13. Who will oversee it? When will it take place? What rules should govern who can contribute/how much they can contribute to a campaign?
14. When will it happen?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Frank Orrok

I would like clear, concise statements by the SNP about the following subjects before any independence referendum.

STATE PENSIONS

Would the British or the Scottish government be responsible for the payment and funding of state pension and would they continue to be index linked?

DISABILITY

The same questions as for state pension for disability allowances.

INCOME TAX

Would this remain at the same rates and allowances or are increases likely?

ROAD TAX

Would the Scottish government be responsible for the allocation of road tax and would they use a greater portion of this fund to maintain Scottish roads?

NATIONAL SECURITY

Would a Scottish government increase the depleted level of security on our ports, airports and coastline?

FISHING

Would the Scottish government increase the protection on fish stocks in Scottish waters from foreign boats?

NORTH SEA GAS/OIL

Would the Scottish government seek to restore the "border lines" extending into the North Sea that Margaret Thatcher moved when she was in power and so brought a great number of gas fields under English control. This is when she thought Scotland would maybe get independence while she was in office.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Thomas Davidson

I think it would be virtually impossible and/or impractical for Scotland to try to achieve full independent status. However, in the unlikely event of independence being achieved Scotland would need to establish a foothold for trade and commerce in over 200 countries worldwide by means of Scottish embassies in those countries.

Since the mid 1800s UK has formed firm footholds via embassies across the world and because of their knowledge, local people are employed, thus providing business leads and other various opportunities to British business and commerce. To think a small country like Scotland could acquire the expertise and knowledge to meet the above needs in line with that which is already provided through well established British embassies would seem to me to be incredibly difficult to say the least.

There are however other aspects of constitutional reform, with some restrictions, that I feel many Scots may be in favour of, irrespective of the costs involved etc. These are namely:

1. Equal status with England as part of the union.
2. Control of everything apart from foreign affairs and defence.
3. Control over everything but with a shared economic policy.

Should full independence ever materialise then I feel we would all need the help of a crystal ball to try to evaluate the overall effect on Scotland becoming an independent nation.

How would SNP deal with the foregoing?

Other questions I would like answered are:

- Would an independent Scotland be able to encourage overseas investment?
- How would benefits and pensions be affected?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Nancy Macleod

I thank you for asking our thoughts about going it alone. I do not think we would be strong enough to survive, things are bad at this present time and Scotland is not strong to do this. Thanking you for again giving us a chance to put forward what we think.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Iain Cameron

There are so many issues relating to independence that Alex Salmond and his team cannot legislate for in a referendum.

Just three years ago Alex Salmond was vigorously extolling the virtues of the age of prosperity and how Scotland could be part of this. Then comes the economic collapse, where would a Scotland on its own have been if we had been independent.

Scotland is not immune in the world of economies no matter how much oil there is off the coasts of our country.

The virtual collapse of the euro would have been devastating to Scotland.

Alex Salmond as usual has all the answers, what about pensions, civil service, jobs, defence jobs. The list goes on and on. Do the SNP take for granted that large firms, multi-national companies will invest in our country given a low tax threshold. If Ireland is the example, then perhaps the SNP should take their message over the Irish Sea.

As a Scot and proud to be one, do the SNP think that by taking the country down the independence route would somehow make this country a more attractive investment opportunity?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Andrew Glen

As regards the "Independence Referendum" I am rather puzzled and even dismayed at the ease with which Alex Salmond (and the SNP in general) have been allowed to dictate the agenda on this issue which is above all a UK one as it affects the country as a whole, especially when Labour alone has a majority of 10 to 1 over the SNP in the UK Parliament!! In actual fact the Referendum should be headed one of "SEPARATION" rather than the emotive word of "Independence" (which I actually feel insulting as I feel "Independent" as it is but "ONE" with the rest of the UK).

I would therefore wish all MSPs and MPs only to use the word "*Separation*" in the lead up to a Referendum (though of course SNP MSPs will continue to use the word "Independence" as it gives them a "one up" on the rest putting forward the "oppressed me" scenario). As a compromise, perhaps a Referendum could be a name that suits all, namely "*Independence/Separation*". What is certain is that Alex Salmond (and the SNP) must not be able to orchestrate a Referendum on their own but it must be an all-Party affair AND a strict "YES" or "NO" vote.

The thought of the MoD facilities in Scotland (in particular the "Polaris" submarine base closing) is enough to make one pause for thought.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Andrew H N Gray

I am writing to you as a concerned voter living in Scotland. Although my name may not be familiar to you, I am a regular contributor to the debate in the Letters column of "*The Scotsman*" and, I expect, I am noted for my pro-Union views.

As you are, I understand, chairing the committee examining the referendum which is being championed by Mr Salmond and the SNP, I hope you will not think my comments amiss as a riposte from the rather larger part of the Scottish population which opposes this attempt to break up the existing state in favour of a new and, to be blunt, somewhat uncertain future.

I am concerned that the date upon which Mr Salmond's party wishes to hold its referendum may well be on the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn. For a party that claims not to be racist, I hope you will forgive me for wincing at the coincidence of (a) English and other, British students being charged tuition fees at Scottish universities, when all other EU students obtain their education in Scotland free and then, (b) a referendum on breaking up the United Kingdom just happening to coincide with a Scottish victory over the English a very long time ago. I am sure that the SNP will swear blind that this is just chance and that they absolutely adore the English with every fibre of their being, just as long as they don't have to be in the same

country. I am perturbed, however, as I am when another contributor to the same Letters column tells of threats he has received because of his equally staunch position on the Union. Having narrowly avoided being attacked by a gang when going to a restaurant in the Old Town last year who demanded to know if I was English, though why was not clear (my wife and I managed to duck into the restaurant), I am very concerned at the xenophobia being expressed by a generation who have had no education about their British identity and who view the very term as alien.

Let me address the matter about which I am writing and do feel free to distribute this to your colleagues on the committee. I must make a strong representation to your committee about the way the referendum is being (apparently) finessed through by Mr Salmond. Astute politician as he undoubtedly is, he is attempting to make out that Westminster has no remit to hold this referendum and there must be a clear statement that ONLY Westminster has that power. Moreover, you must endeavour to make it plain that the rest of the United Kingdom is standing by the Scots. I note that even the *Daily Telegraph* seems to be falling for Nationalist propaganda in believing that “the Scots” want to break up the Union. This is simply doing Mr Salmond’s dirty work for him.

It seems clear to me that any change in the status quo must be actively required by an absolute majority of Scots. A *failure to vote* on a matter which requires an active step to be taken to break up the UK simply cannot be taken as an acceptance of the proposition that the Union should end. By definition, in a vote, an *active demand* cannot be dependent upon a *passive* lack of response, QED. Thus, any referendum that seeks to change the status quo must be given an active backing by at least 50% + one of the Scottish electorate, not just by a majority of those who vote, in order to succeed. If it is to be decided by the settled will of the Scottish people, then so be it. It must, however, be decided by a real majority of the people.

A further point which has been debated, is the matter of the number of questions. Clearly, the SNP realise that they will not achieve a majority in favour of independence, especially in the current economic climate. Their attempt to split the questions into one for independence and another for maximum devolution versus the status quo simply helps him to split the Unionist vote. This cannot be allowed to happen. If it were to, then Westminster would simply be handing him the break-up of the UK on a plate. In fact, rather than the existing suggestions, I would suggest a choice between independence and a return to Westminster government, but I doubt that that will ever be offered to us and a running sore will remain at Holyrood.

I hope that you and your colleagues will be in agreement with the opinions I have expressed, at least insofar as they relate to the absolute majority required for the SNP to destroy the United Kingdom and the need for a simple choice of independence or the status quo for the vote. The future of both Scotland and of the United Kingdom are in your hands. The great majority of sensible, quiet Scots are looking to you to do the right thing. Please do not let us down.

November 2011

Written evidence submitted by A Walker

I have just read that the Scottish Affairs Committee are putting forward questions about independence from the Scottish people. I apologise for my rather simple question but here it is:

Scottish people hold British passports (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); will the Scottish government be covering the costs of replacing these passports with Scottish passports? Or will Scottish people born pre- independence be allowed to continue using their passports because they were born Scottish/British. Do the Scottish government have the right to say that individual people are no longer British citizens even if they do not vote for independence?

I realise this may seem an unimportant question in the scheme of things but if the simple questions can’t be answered I worry even more about the bigger picture. Thank you.

November 2011

Written evidence submitted by Paul Kirkham

I have become increasingly concerned by the spectre of Scottish independence.

Thanks to the skillful manipulation of the leader of the SNP this issue is becoming rapidly more urgent as a likely possibility.

I am concerned by the apparent lack of any clear intention coming from Parliament on this matter, which seems happy for this to be left as a Scottish issue.

I am concerned because this is not only a Scottish issue: it is a national issue for all citizens of the UK. As such it is an issue which can only be addressed through the seat of government at Westminster, which alone can authorize a referendum on the matter—as distinct from an opinion poll, which has no binding authority.

I am also disturbed by the increasing contempt Westminster seems to be held in by the SNP. Like many, I find it a bit rich that whilst Scottish nationalists portray Westminster as remote and disconnected from Scottish

affairs it is in fact greatly over represented in Parliament and ministers from Scottish seats have had a disproportionate—and not always benign—influence on the affairs of state that also affect us south of the border.

The spectre of nationalist politics has haunted Europe for several centuries now—far too long—and it has caused untold misery and bloodshed. It is something we should now be transcending not reinforcing. From innocuous beginnings zealots have repeatedly seized on minor grievances in order to create mayhem and a *cause celebre* justifying their own rise to power which really leaves no one better off. The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire is a salutary case in point.

I would hope that the United Kingdom will not disintegrate by default, because no one will defend the *status quo*.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Mike Cowley

As a Labour Party member and Trade Union lay official and lecturer at Edinburgh's Telford College.

My view on independence is informed by some basic socialist principle: would an independent Scotland mean equality, improved public services and benefits, industrial democracy, decent low cost housing and a more regulated economy and tax system predicated on the basis of justice for all?

The SNP's reliance on the European Union is a significant concern. Given its current economic record, and the dictating of domestic policy over the heads of the Greek and Italian peoples, I am not persuaded of the merits of erecting further borders which both divide people and are at any rate not taken seriously by international capital and its institutional representatives.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Ruth Black

Before we even consider a referendum on independence, it is vital that the people of Scotland feel fully informed in terms of national security; fiscal security and the security of our country's infrastructure.

National security is a major issue in terms of border control, the robustness of our armed forces and government's ability to equip our services.

National Security is my main concern and I would like to see what strategies are in place in terms of providing an army, navy and air force for Scotland, were we to become autonomous. Would we be entitled to "hive" off a certain proportion of the existing UK forces, having contributed to their costs and upkeep already? If so, what formula would be applied in order to ascertain the percentage due to Scotland? Would this be calculated on a permutation of a "Barnett" style formula?

Clearly, defence is not an area that is currently subjected to a Barnett calculation, but could a formula with the same basic premise be forced into a devolution deal? And would the Scottish settlement be reduced on a sliding scale dependent on the degree of 'protection' already enjoyed by Scottish citizens? How would this "protection" be measured? From what date would the "protection" be calculated?

If we were not entitled to retain a portion of existing UK services, how could we realistically expect to build up an army, navy and air force capable of defending our borders and ensuring that we efficiently participate in any foreign joint actions we are committed to? On that note, would we be prepared to commit any of what would clearly be a significantly reduced defence capability to joining forces with other nations, whether EU or otherwise?

What would be the resultant status of Scottish citizens currently serving in the UK armed forces? Is it acceptable for a citizen (and resident) of one country to be a serving member of what would effectively be, a foreign service?

How could we guarantee the number of service personnel required from a population that is currently shrinking and ageing?

Are we prepared to increase border and shore controls in terms of illicit trafficking of people, drugs and contraband? How would that be funded?

Do we have an available skills base in terms of the trades required for shipbuilding, aircraft construction and maintenance and associated skills? In light of the fact that since the Thatcher years our trades in shipyards and both light and heavy industry have declined rapidly, should we not be concerned that we have a shortage

of these skilled trades people? In view of the drive to retain Scottish jobs for Scottish people, it would be entirely inappropriate and hypocritical to encourage migrant workers to fill these posts.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by William Hodgson

Before a vote is taken on independence Alex Salmond will have to enlighten the Scottish electorate on the following issues:

If an independence vote was successful will he then have a referendum on whether the Scottish people wish to enter the European Union or take part in a single currency?

What guarantees can he give that we will still be able to obtain MOD contracts and secure the jobs of shipbuilding workers in Rosyth and on the Clyde?

What would happen to the military bases when England withdraws its troops from Scotland?

What system would we adopt for the licensing of motor vehicles etc and where would it be located?

What tax system would we adopt because we could not have it run by a Westminster government?

When you sit down and think about all the different issues which would have to be addressed and the enormous cost to the Scottish public the mind boggles?

As soon as Wee Alec can come up with the answers and cost of Scottish Independence then the only question he needs to ask in his referendum is a simple one. YES or NO?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Archie Borland

I assume the Records editorial policy is against independence and if this is the case think it would be useful if you made the Scottish people aware as to why the union happened in the first place. Many people do not seem to realise the first step to the union came about when a Scottish King took over the English throne and this was followed by the parliaments combining some time later. This only came about because due to foolhardy and failed commercial ventures Scotland were bankrupt. Without the union Scotland's economy would have collapsed. Sounds a bit like the banking crisis.

I would like the Scottish Affairs Committee to consider the following:

REFERENDUM

Bearing in mind the SNP got less than 50% of the votes cast at the last election do they in fact have a mandate for a referendum? Further is the referendum a devolved matter within the scope of the Scottish Parliament and if not can they use tax payers money to pay for what is a political strategy? It should also be considered if a two question referendum is in fact fair. My view is that if the first question is independence and the second devolution max if people vote no to the first question they may cast a sympathy vote in favour of the second.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE EEC

Is it correct that an independent Scotland would automatically become a full member or would we need to go through a selection process? In either case would a condition of entry be that we adopt the euro?

CURRENCY

Would we have the euro or the pound? If we keep the pound does this effectively mean Scotland will not control its own economy and would the English people not have to approve this?

BANKING

If Scotland had been independent at the banking collapse what would our position have been bearing in mind RBS and BS were bankrupt?

NATIONAL DEBT

What proportion would Scotland be liable for and could this be satisfactorily handled within Scotland's economy?

TAXATION

Would tax rates more or less at present levels meet Scotland's needs?

EMPLOYMENT

Many Scottish jobs such as shipbuilding and support industries are defence related. How many would be lost as it seems obvious England would not place contracts in Scotland and would close the present bases.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Would companies see Scotland as an attractive place to invest in bearing in mind we have no recent track record of running our own affairs?

ARMED FORCES

How many Scots form part of our armed forces at present and what would happen to them at independence? Again it seems obvious we could not expect them to be retained by a foreign country defence force?

PENSIONS

How would Scottish pensions be funded and what would the position be for Scottish private pensions paid in England? Indeed what about any income earned in England?

BENEFITS

Could we support benefits at the present level within our present tax rates?

OVERALL ECONOMY

Would Scotland's income be sufficient to support the country with tax rates more or less at present?

CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

What would this be?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Professor Anthony J Trewavas

My question is how to judge the outcome.

For something as dramatic as independence there should be insistence that it should be voted for by a majority (>50%) of the electorate, not a majority of those who vote. This present government got just over 20% of the electorate and is only there because the opposition is split many ways. Salmond's desire to have two questions is a simple device to ensure he gets separation anyway which he will claim because there is no adequate first question. The ballot paper should be arranged as follows. The first question should be: Are you content with the present situation of a Scottish parliament with its present powers? If the elector crosses yes, then no further vote is needed. If the answer is no then you can have further questions such as either money raising powers or separation.

You ask what is lacking.

We do not have a credible energy policy for Scotland. The Institute of Mechanical Engineers report "*Scottish Energy 2020?*" published this month reveals only too starkly that we are heading for disaster unless the first minister eats some humble pie and admit his erroneous claims for what renewables can contribute and listen to those qualified to say what can be achieved, ie engineers both electrical and mechanical. Every Scottish MP of any kind should be made to read the document.

Fuel poverty in Scotland is running at over 30% and has increased sharply while this SNP government has been in power. When is the labour party going to start shouting?

Renewable electricity is much more expensive than either nuclear or fossil fuelled power. Large landowners are making enormous sums of money by renting some of their land to wind farm companies. All of us pay for this electricity through rapidly increasing and expensive fuel bills. Is it not a moral issue that the labour party should be fighting when the poorest are paying the richest in our community. I should add that Cameron's father-in-law makes a "modest" income of £350,000/year for a wind farm on his land and for doing nothing.

When is the labour party going to do something about the disproportionate distribution of land in Scotland? Andy Wightman's book "*The poor had no lawyers*" reveals the shameful situation only too well.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Roddy Hamilton

I feel that it is often taken for granted by many in the Labour party that Scottish Labour party members, supporters and potential supporters are either “unionist” or “devolutionist” or that they should be; many people I know that fall into one of these categories are open to the idea of independence and often keen on the idea of federalism.

If the argument was purely about practicalities then I would mostly see the upcoming referendum as a distraction from real important issues however it is clearly to a massive extent about identity and symbolism, and these are important for our relationships with our neighbours and countries and people throughout the world and in terms of “animal spirits”.

“Independence” will sell to those whose nationalistic patriotism is an important part of their political belief but it also seems antagonistic and hostile to England and the rest of the UK (even if little else changes functionally than changing the word “devolution” to “independence”) and a lot of people have an issue with that. Equally however the concept of “Devolution” for many who don’t understand it and even many who do is difficult to get that excited about.

I would like to see federalism as to me this would symbolise movement towards a United Kingdom based on equitable relationships. I do realise that this argument is simplistic: that the case for saying the status quo is based on a mutually agreed Act of Union is strong, that many would argue that Scotland has the better deal and that devolved powers are adequate for ensuring a good relationship, but the sense of domination by, rather than equal relationship with, England as the larger country and with London as an elitist concentration of power is palpable. A federal constitution would also solidify the notion of equality and modernisation—which could be seen as part of the devolution process—away from what often seems to be an archaic British state, which new devolved policy sits on top of but could hypothetically be taken away (the hypothetical is important in terms of perception). It would appear that a mandate/desire to address this has been given/expressed by the electorate.

As is often said “devolution” is a process or “journey”; this notion is appealing as it gives a name to dynamism and—for the most part—progressive change in Scotland but a federal settlement would be a relief, providing a symbolically tangible “destination” for this apparently indefinite “devolution journey” and I believe would satisfy a desire for this which many would otherwise look to Independence for.

Also on my Christmas wish list, I’d like it if the new federal Scottish state could do away with the British monarchy but we could have a new sort of meritocratic monarchy ... an annual televised competition where a king or queen for the year is chosen from the arts and sports?? Maybe the queen could remain joint head of state only within the bounds of royal properties in Scotland as a politically acceptable compromise to her being the Scottish head of state as the SNP promote in their “vision for an Independent Scotland”?

As I see it the Labour movement and parties are about social justice, quality of life and sustainability with other policies being defined by these principles rather than a party fundamentally defined by nationalistic symbolism and that’s why I’m a member! However it is apparent that these principles leading to an internationalist view-point (which I share) and so aversion to nationalism or further, patriotism (which I don’t) means that many (but again not all, and I don’t think the proportion should be taken for granted) Labour party members and supporters are pro-devolution rather than federalist or pro independence and see any change based on the politics of national identity as irrelevant to a leftist agenda, or they simply want to be different from the SNP which is just plain stubborn and unimaginative. I believe that the Scottish Labour party should not take the upcoming referendum as a rock thrown in the way by the SNP; instead we should see it as a chance for progress for the people of Scotland and as such be taken as the next landmark, far more important at the moment than looking towards the Holyrood election as many seem to do. I think that regardless of views on independence—my preference—federalism or devolution, visions for how each of these could be taken forward based on Labour’s values should be developed.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Alasdair Macdonald

My questions are these:

1. How should the governance of Scotland and, indeed, the whole of the United Kingdom be altered to suit the 21st century? Should there be a devolved Parliament for England and, given the population of England, should there be powerful regional English Assemblies along the lines of, say, the German Laender or the Spanish autonomous regions.
2. Why has Labour abandoned “home rule” as a subject for policy?
3. Why are the unionists afraid to present unpartisan information to the people of Scotland? There are complex issues to be examined for which there are no unequivocal answers. But people face such issues in their lives and can handle them and come to decisions.

4. Why did the Labour Governments of the 1960s and 1970s give dishonest information about the scale of the revenues from oil from Scottish waters? These revenues were used by the government of Mrs Margaret Thatcher to fund the destruction of British industry, the weakening of trade unions, and the empowerment of the City of London.
5. If the union is so essential, why does Westminster want to retain it? (Assuming, and it is a huge assumption, that the people of England speak with one voice, which they do not. There are large areas of England which are in much poorer shape economically than Scotland, which could do with some devolved powers.) If Scotland is an essential part of the union it must bring something of value to it. It is surely more than a collection of wee, incompetent, dependent whingeing people.

I have voted in every election and referendum since I came of age. I have never voted SNP. I have an open mind about independence. Finland, Norway, Denmark, Ireland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovenia, Portugal, Austria, Slovakia, The Czech Republic, etc, etc, appear to have managed things reasonably well for much of their history. Are the residents of Scotland a lesser species of human? I am prepared to consider increases to the scope of devolved powers. I am prepared to consider the status quo.

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by M Little

Here are some questions for the Committee to ask:

Why are the Scottish government trying to block an FOI request into their legal advice about EU membership under section 18? It would appear they are trying to deny the legal advice even exists.

Would Scotland lose its representation on the UN security council that it currently has through the UK?

Given that Scotland has an older population than the UK as a whole, what steps would be made to ensure that pensions remain affordable?

Currently the top Scottish Universities gain from membership of the elite UK Russell group? Bearing in mind that the group encourages cross-university research and as a result, drives up research standards, will Scottish Universities still be able retain membership?

How will an Independent Scotland retain the Pound Sterling while looking to join the Euro, when in order to achieve EU membership we would have to join up to ERM2? This would require RUK to do so as well.

What would be Scotland's share of the national debt and what interest rates (and credit rating) would we have as a result?

If in a referendum, a yes vote was delivered, but a region (let's say for example the Lothian's region) voted against. Would that region then be forced to join an independent Scotland? Or would it (as the precedent set by Northern Ireland shows) be allowed to remain part of the UK, as is the democratic mandate stipulated by the people living there?

What is the Scottish Government strategy for when the oil runs out?

What would an independent Scotland's foreign policy towards Europe be, bearing in mind that Spain, France and Belgium have their own separatist movements who will be emboldened by an independent Scotland?

What is the Scottish Government strategy to ensure that UK businesses with HQs in Edinburgh do not flock southwards?

What would an Independent Scotland's Immigration policy be?

Would Scots be able to claim dual nationality of Scotland and Britain?

Would the Scottish Government commit themselves to a large Scottish Navy in order to save jobs on the Clyde that will be lost due to losing Royal Navy contracts?

Do the Scottish Government expect emigration from Scotland as a result of Independence?

What would the RUK share of the oil fields be?

Would the nationalists commitment to cutting corporation tax in an independent Scotland result in higher taxes for ordinary people?

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Mrs Nell Whitelaw

I work for Murgitroyd & Company, a firm of European Patent and Trade Mark Attorneys. Our head office is in Glasgow.

It would appear that the likelihood of a referendum is on the horizon. I am unsure as to how independence would affect Murgitroyd & Company.

Do you know what the plan is for Intellectual Property in an Independent Scotland? Are we going to have Scottish Patents and Trade Marks and a Scottish Patent and Trade Mark Office? Are we going to recognise UK Patents and Trade Marks and will we have a separate qualification system and Institute etc?

While the debate will no doubt centre around issues such as oil revenue, passports, social security numbers, foreign embassies, income tax and armed forces, I think it is important that someone in the Government is looking at IP issues.

January 2012

Written evidence submitted by John Lind

How much Corporation Tax, National Insurance and Income Tax from Scottish North Sea Oil companies is counted as English due to wages, etc. being paid in London?

Why does Westminster insist on a Centralised regime, withholding key economic powers such as Corporation Tax?

Would an independent Scotland form a new Central Bank or use an existing bank as a Central Bank?

Why is it that Scotland has been left with just one airbase whilst Norway, a similar nation to Scotland, has five?

Why can it not be pronounced properly?—it's "independence" not "separation".

How many independent nations can Ian Davidson think of that actually have been separated from the rest of the world since independence?

Why is it that in a nation with vast energy resources, many pensioners have to choose between heating their homes and feeding themselves?

Why is it that in a nation with vast energy resources, motorists pay some of the highest prices in Europe?

Would an independent Scotland be due compensation for assets lying outwith Scotland or would a lower share of the UK National Debt be apportioned?

Why is it that Luxembourg has one MEP per 85,000 people whilst Scotland has one MEP per 870,000 people? Is it not the case that an independent Scotland would be better represented within the EU?

Why is it that Norway has some of the best social provisions in the world whilst Scotland within the Union has high levels of deprivation?

December 2011

Written questions submitted by anonymous contributors

Will I be able to keep my Premium Bonds if Scotland becomes independent?

Will I be able to buy more Premium Bonds if Scotland becomes independent?

Will I be able to use my UK driving licence abroad if Scotland is a separate country?

I was badly wounded in France many years ago, who will pay my War Disablement Pension if we break from the UK?

I Live in Annan but work in Carlisle, where will I pay income tax NI etc?

My dad is only alive today because of specialist heart treatment he received at the Freeman in Newcastle. Will he and others like him still be able to use these world class facilities?

I live in Gateshead but work on the rigs off Shetland. Will I have to pay Scottish as well as UK taxes?

My son and his family live in Coventry. Will they need passports to visit me here in Motherwell? Will I need a passport to visit my grandchildren down south?

I work for a company specialising in patents and intellectual property. Who will regulate these matters after separation and will there be a separate Scottish Patent Office?

I invested some of my retirement lump sum in a cash ISA and my husband also invested some money in his name. Will these government backed schemes be maintained if Scotland becomes a different country?

I run a small internet business from my home selling knitting patterns and specialist wools. Over 80% of my business comes from England. Will I face additional costs if England becomes an export market?

Will the Royal Marines at Arbroath be a Scottish or a British Regiment?

Will the DFID office here in East Kilbride have to close? What will happen to the almost 500 staff?

How long would it take to close Faslane and transfer all the facilities to a base elsewhere in the UK?

Will people who work at Faslane who lose their jobs be paid redundancy by the UK or Scottish government?

How much of the National Debt is ours?

Who gets to keep the lovely embassy buildings in Paris, Moscow, Washington and other capitals around the world?

What nationality will the Queen be?

Who will Scottish soldiers and Scottish police officers swear allegiance to?

Will I still be able to buy wine from the Sunday Times Wine Club?

My son studies at university in England; would he suddenly become an international student and face even higher fees?

If Scotland became independent and we were still in the EU, would all English students be able to get free university places in Scotland the way Irish and French students do at the moment? How much would that cost?

Who or what would take over the work of the British Medical Association and how long would it take?

I love watching Match of the Day, would it become part of a subscription channel like Sky Sport and ESPN for Scots who were no longer paying the TV Licence fee?

Americans can only watch many quality BBC programmes through subscription channels, will that be the same for an independent Scotland.

If someone threatened to invade an independent Scotland how would we defend ourselves?

Will a separate Scotland be a member of NATO or will we stay out because it's a nuclear alliance?

In any referendum, will the question be available in Gaelic?

Will Scots living temporarily elsewhere in the UK at the time of the referendum be able to register for a vote?

Why should European migrant workers who have every intention of going home in a few years time have a vote in the referendum but Scots in London or Birmingham, who have every intention of coming home one day, be denied a voice in the most important decision Scotland has made in centuries?

Could Orkney and Shetland, or any other part of Scotland, decide to stay part of the UK a bit like Ulster in the 1920s?

What sort of border controls, if any, would there have to be at Berwick and Gretna?

Is Rockall Scottish?

Who will own the contents of institutions such as the British Library and the British Museum based in England but hosting great British collections?

Would the new Victoria & Albert Museum in Dundee have to close?

If the UK government owns most of the Royal Bank, will it be a Scottish or a UK bank after any move to independence? Would RBS have to move to London?

Who decides which fishing areas and oil fields are Scottish and which still belong to the UK? How long will it take to settle these issues?

Will the UK government continue to place contracts with Scottish suppliers and manufacturers?

What happens to Scottish companies which depend on UK government contracts? Do they keep their contracts, move south, or go bust?

The day after independence, who will collect my taxes? Will a complete parallel administration have to be set up in advance?

Why are we only being offered a referendum on the idea of independence? Surely we should be allowed a second referendum vote on the actual detail of any negotiated deal.

Will Scotland keep the National Minimum Wage?

-
- If Scotland cuts business taxes will services have to be cut to pay for it?
- Will England pay for High Speed Rail to reach the border of an Independent Scotland?
- Will slots at Heathrow be kept for flights from Scotland?
- Will my pension be the same as in England?
- What will happen to Radio 4—will we still be able to hear it?
- Will the overnight sleepers to London be kept on?
- Will the Royal Mail continue to deliver letters to rural areas for the same price?
- Will stamps cost less to send a letter in an Independent Scotland?
- Will it cost more to send a letter to Liverpool if England is abroad?
- Would Scotland be entitled to claim, or forced to take responsibility for, any of the Crown Dependencies? The Isle of Man, for example, was ceded by Norway to Scotland by international treaty in 1266.
- Will Scots have full rights of citizenship in England and Wales following any split the way people from Eire have? Does this depend on whether Scotland is in the EU or not.
- If Scotland was not in the EU, could Scots moving to England be covered by immigration rules and vice versa?
- If I drive my car into England from an independent Scotland will I have to buy international travel insurance?
- If Scotland is allowed to Britain—will Shetland be allowed to leave Scotland?
- Who will own the oil and gas?
- Will the DVLA in Wales still be the people issuing driving licences—and what will they cost?
- How much is added to my electricity bill to help subsidise wind farms? If Scotland were separate, how much more would I be paying?
- Who pays for the subsidy for wind farms and renewables in Scotland?
- If everybody in Britain pays for Scottish wind farms to produce electricity, does that mean in a separate Scotland we would pay more on our bills, or would the subsidy be lower?
- How much does it cost per bill in Britain to subsidise renewable now? And how much would that be if only Scottish bill payers' subsidised Scottish production?
- Who pays for the upgrade in the national grid recently announced? Who would pay for that in a separate Scotland?
- In a separate Scotland, and without a connection to Norway etc, where will we import electricity from when the wind is not blowing?
- If England chose not to import electricity from a separate Scotland, where else could they buy it from?
- What proportion of electricity in Scotland comes from the two nuclear power stations? And what will happen if they are not replaced?
- How much will the Beaulieu-Denny line cost to upgrade?
- Who pays for the upgrade in power lines?
- How much would it cost bill payers in Scotland if we paid for the upgrade in Scotland, and just English people paid for the upgrades in England rather than sharing the costs?
- What proportion of the tax raised in Scotland each year comes from North Sea oil?
- If Scotland got the oil revenue direct instead of money being distributed via Westminster, how much more or less would we have got over the last thirty years, and how much more or less will we be projected to get in the future?
- How much of the oil revenue is in Scottish waters?
- If Scotland got the oil tax revenue, would we also get the oil tax liabilities for shutting down oil fields etc and how much would they be in Scotland?
- How much does the health and safety inspection cost to run for oil rigs?
- How much oil is left in the North Sea and how much will it cost to extract?
- How much has the oil price fluctuated since the discovery of North Sea oil?
- How many of the companies working in the North Sea have their registered head offices in England?

What proportion of the projected future oil revenues are in Shetland Islands waters, as opposed to the rest of Scotland?

Will I need to take an E111 medical insurance with me if I travel to see my aunt in Liverpool?

Will there be customs and border posts between Scotland and England?

What will happen to my civil service pension?

Will Scotland become a member of the European Union?

Will my relatives in England have to bring their passports when they come to Scotland?

What will happen to Scotland's nuclear power stations and who will pay for the decommissioning?

Who will be responsible for the removal of the nuclear power submarine shells at Rosyth?

Will Scotland be able to retain the aircraft landing slots at airports like Heathrow?

How many shipbuilding jobs will be lost if we are excluded from naval contracts?

How will Scotland protect its marine assets?

How many embassies would Scotland have abroad, where and at what cost?

Are there plans to share embassies and consulates with any other countries?

Would Scotland lose share of resources about to be confirmed in the South Atlantic?

Does the SNP plan to have a second chamber in the Scottish Parliament?

How does the SNP intend to establish scrutiny of the Executive branch of government?

Do guarantees exist to ensure that the EU would accept Scotland as a member? How would this work?

Should the people of Wales, Northern Ireland and England have a vote on a "devo-max" option? After all, who would decide which parts of the former UK would pay for "reserved matters"?

What would happen to extradition?

Would there be a "rest of the UK embassy in Scotland"?

Would those who have been awarded Honours through the existing system have to hand them back?

The SNP wants to retain the Monarchy. Will it contribute to the UK Civil List?

If the independence referendum showed that Dumfries and Galloway and The Borders vote against separation, would the SNP accept that the border with the UK should be moved north?

As UK citizens, Scots accepted Trident in Scotland. Would the SNP bear the cost of removal? Why should the UK government bear this cost, following a decision made in good faith by those representing all the citizens of the UK?

Against which countries would the SNP imagine a Scottish Navy could defend the country?

What if a separate UK/England left the EU? Implications for trade, travel etc.

Would a separate Scotland ask to enter the Schengen Agreement?

Would this mean passport control at the border with the rest of the UK? (remember that a Common Travel Area was established between the UK and Eire after separation—given the serious problem of illegal immigration at English ports, it is a bit far-fetched to believe that the UK would not want to perform a check at the border with Scotland.)

If Schengen is not introduced, how many checkpoints would there be at the border with the UK? What would be the cost of this?

What would be the cost of "Scottish Borders Agency" patrolling coastline/ports/airports?

Would passports be checked on trains, buses and walking routes?

How much time would this put on a journey?

What would be the impact on business? Simply move business south of border to speed up business?

Will there be a national lottery

Would there be a separate Scottish Post Office?

Will there be a Scottish Censorship Board? Will this apply beyond films into the internet?

Does the SNP believe that the BBC would continue to broadcast in Scotland? If so, do they believe this will be free? (!) Would Scots in a separate country pay a fee to the BBC which covers the UK?

What will be the cost of the licence fee for television in Scotland?

Would the SNP introduce equal rights for same-sex marriage?

Would the Monarch of the UK continue to own residences in Scotland? What contribution, if any, would the Scottish government make towards security when the Monarch is in Scotland?

Will the school curriculum include “English”?

Would Pensions be paid at RPI or CPI in Scotland?

What arrangements would there be for child benefit?

CSA—would the SNP establish a separate Scottish CSA? What would happen to existing cases where partners live either side of the border between Scotland and the rest of the UK?

What is so difficult about setting up a separate Scottish currency?

If so confident about the benefits of separation, why need to “tag-on” to another country’s currency?

Why would England, Wales and N Ireland allow Scotland to use sterling?

Would there be a separate mint in Scotland? Crown, Dollar, Groat, Bawbee, Turner, Bodle, Hardhead, Penny or Mark?

What if the UK cut off access to fresh supplies of physical currency?

How much would a separate Scotland have to pay the Bank of England annually to use sterling?

Is it likely that the Bank of England would be willing to become “Scotland’s lender of last resort”?

Would the SNP establish a separate Scottish Stock Exchange?

What assurances has the SNP received that financial services would happy using a Scottish currency?

Assuming different nations—VAT, cost of booze, fags, fuel (excise duties)?

In which part of the SNP manifesto is there a reference to anything other than a question about independence/separation?

What would a separate Scotland’s share of UK National Debt be—and how would we pay for it?

Who would bear the cost of any HS rail link to Scotland from Manchester or Leeds?

Will my retirement pension continue to be updated at the level of the Retail Price Index or Consumer Price index?

To whom will I pay my TV licence and will it guarantee all BBC programmes produced out with Scotland?

Who will guarantee that doctors and dentists are properly qualified if Scotland is separate from the rest of the UK?

If I go abroad who will help me if I lost my passport or all my money?

My son wants to join the Royal Navy, will he be guaranteed his job will continue if Scotland is separate?

I want to work abroad for a few years, can you guarantee I will be able to return home without any problems if Scotland becomes separate?

What will you do to protect my savings in the HSBC if Scotland becomes independent?

Will my premium Bonds still be valid if Scotland becomes independent?

Where will I get my driving licence renewed if Scotland becomes a separate state?

Will I still register ownership of my car at the DVLA if Scotland becomes independent?

Because of course the policy of no tuition fees is one of the good things about Scotland and as such is frequently quoted as an exemplar of how things could and would be different with independence/separation. So it would be funny if the ‘no tuition fees in Scotland’ position turned out to be possible only under devolution, and perhaps not so much in any other dispensation. True?

What would happen to TV coverage—would we still get BBC programmes? Would cross-border radio signals be blocked?

Would Berwick Upon Tweed be given the option of voting to join an independent Scotland?

Would there be an issue with child custody cases if the father/mother took the child across the border, as there would now if a parent took the child to a different country?

What would charging/invoicing arrangements be for those who live one side of the border being treated in hospitals on the other side?

Would marine borders be different to present in terms of establishing entitlement to North Sea Oil & Gas/ fisheries.

Renewables industry. What would happen to the existing UK-wide Renewables Obligation and feed-in tariff subsidy mechanisms and the proposed contract for difference feed-in tariff scheme when and if Scotland breaks with the rest of the UK. With a disproportionate number of renewables projects to the north of the border and a disproportionate number of energy consumers to the south, the continuation of this mechanism post-independence would effectively result in English consumers subsidising Scottish projects—why would a Westminster Government accept this?

Who would regulate banks that UK Government has bought into?

What would happen to control over the fishing and environmental issues of the River Tweed (and other rivers) in places where it forms the border?

Could Scotland cut off water supply to England where it controls the river basins?

What would happen to membership of NATO? Would it be the decision of the government negotiating independence or the first government in the newly-independent Scotland?

How would it affect the HS2 extension/other rail link-ups?

If both countries have different immigration policies won't there have to be strict border controls with those from the ethnic minorities suffering most?

What will happen to the BBC. Will BBC Scotland be separated to become the Scottish broadcasting company. Will it be financed by a separate Scottish licence fee? Will that be enough to finance both a Scottish broadcaster and a Gaelic broadcaster both radio and tv?

How will those watching TV in Scotland pay to watch those programmes produced by the now English broadcasters? Will people in Scotland be able to watch EastEnders, Coronation Street, or Strictly Come Dancing? (personally that is the only argument I have heard in favour of independence!)

Who will regulate the broadcasters as OFCOM will no longer operate in Scotland.

How long will it be before another independence referendum can be held if this one is lost?

Would Orkney and Shetland be allowed a separate referendum on separating from the UK (they joined the UK after Scotland and joined as part of the UK—they were never part of a separate Scotland)?

Citizenship. Who would be entitled to citizenship of an independent Scotland? Would English/Welsh/N Irish born residents of Scotland be entitled to keep their UK (or whatever the successor state was called) passports?

Electricity distribution. Selling electricity between England and Scotland—are there international agreements to cover this? Could English generators complain about Scottish subsidies to renewables? If there is a temporary loss of supply in Scotland for any reason, do we have rights to demand that England sends us electricity generated there?

I work for the NHS, what will happen to my pension in a separate Scotland?

I have a disabled child—what will happen to the amount of money I get to support her?

How much will a separate Scotland contribute to international countries in foreign aid?

How many embassies will a separate Scotland open around the world and will I be able to access them when I am abroad?

Will I use the pound or the euro?

Will my job in the defence industry be secure?

Will I have to pay to watch EastEnders and / or Coronation Street?

Will I need a work visa to take up a job in Liverpool?

What controls will be in place to manage eastern immigration?

Will I need a passport to visit my friends in Newcastle?

Will you reopen my local post office?

Will my public sector pension go up or down?

Will my energy bills go up or down

What structure will be in place to guarantee my life savings I currently keep in a cash ISA?

What will my income tax allowance be?

Who will guarantee my deposit in a Scottish bank?

What will my income tax allowance be?

Will we have the means to bail out our banks if another financial crisis happens?

Who will control the basic interest rate that determines the rate of my mortgage?

Will we still have the Queen?

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