



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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South of Scotland Region



August 27th

Dear Editor,

Monday night's debate between Alex Salmond and Alistair Darling exposed the bluff of the No campaign on currency. Alistair Darling admitted that "of course we could use the pound", removing his campaign's key argument. Meanwhile, the Labour Party are distributing a leaflet in which Johann Lamont states "No one knows [what currency an Independent Scotland will use] but it won't be the pound!"

Now that the No campaign's scaremongering on currency has finally been put to bed, the debate needs to move on to who best runs Scotland, and how we can improve social justice.

As the First Minister rightly pointed out on Monday; because of Tory cuts supported by Labour, 100,000 more Scottish children will be pushed into poverty by 2020, while disabled people will lose £1,120 a year.

These are not Scottish Government figures, they come from Independent and respected charities working on the frontline to fight the already appalling levels of poverty in 21st century Scotland.

Westminster has had its chance to right the injustices in our society, and things are only getting worse. Alistair Darling would rather spend his air time justifying spending £100bn on Trident and persuading us that our considerable oil wealth is a burden rather than a bonus than talk about Child poverty.

Around £300 billion of oil tax revenue has gone straight to the London Exchequer since oil was discovered. Scotland didn't receive a penny. If Scotland votes Yes all the tax money from oil will stay in Scotland and be used for the good of the people who live here instead of subsidising Westminster.

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We can use that money to create jobs and grow the economy. There is absolutely nothing in the proposals put forward by the No campaign parties for further devolution that will mean more jobs, higher wages or a more competitive economy. This complete lack of vision was exposed on Monday when - challenged by the First Minister to name three key job-creating powers that would be guaranteed with a No vote - Alistair Darling couldn't name any.

Independence also means we can protect our NHS and public services from the cuts and privatisation Alistair Darling's Labour colleagues in Westminster and Wales are warning of. Regardless of the fact that health is devolved to the Scottish Parliament, our public spending budget is still set by Westminster – so UK cuts mean cuts in Scotland too - a fact Alastair Darling was reluctant to admit on Monday evening. It is perhaps understandable that Mr. Darling is not keen to speak about the down side of NHS privatisation given it emerged this week that he and over 200 other MPs and peers have received payments from companies involved in Private healthcare south of the border!

It's little wonder that 71% of people watching on Monday evening said Alex Salmond won the debate, and every part of the country polled thought that Alex Salmond had the better arguments.

I am confident that as these arguments for Independence are heard by more and more people across Scotland over the final three weeks, Yes will win out over the bluff, bluster and fear mongering of the No campaign.

Yours Sincerely

Joan McAlpine MSP