

*By our Political correspondent **Nat Hunter***



First Minister Alex Salmond and his SNP-led Scottish Government have been accused by several prominent figures of being "biased" and "blatantly anti-English" in the way they promote Scotland abroad.

Critics have complained that the Holyrood administration and its agents, such as Locate in Scotland, are failing to fully explain the many grave risks associated with separation to potential inward investors, and that this is unfair to other regions of England who have difficulty competing with Scotland as a consequence of this deceit.

The complaints follow the news that Scotland has become the most favoured part of the UK for inward investment, outstripping even London and the South East. Several Scottish Labour MPs, in particular, have said they are suspicious that the SNP are "not playing with a straight bat" or that they are "throwing other English regions a googlie".

Ian Davidson MP, Chairman of the Scottish Affairs committee on letting me be the judge of whether you can have a bloody referendum or not, said:

"My committee and I have spent months collecting hunners and hunners of dead good reasons why Scotland is a pure dodgy place to invest in, but the SNP just ignore all our evidence when they chat up foreign companies. That deserves a doin' - an thon Locate in Scotland boys ur cruisin' for a bruisin' an aw."

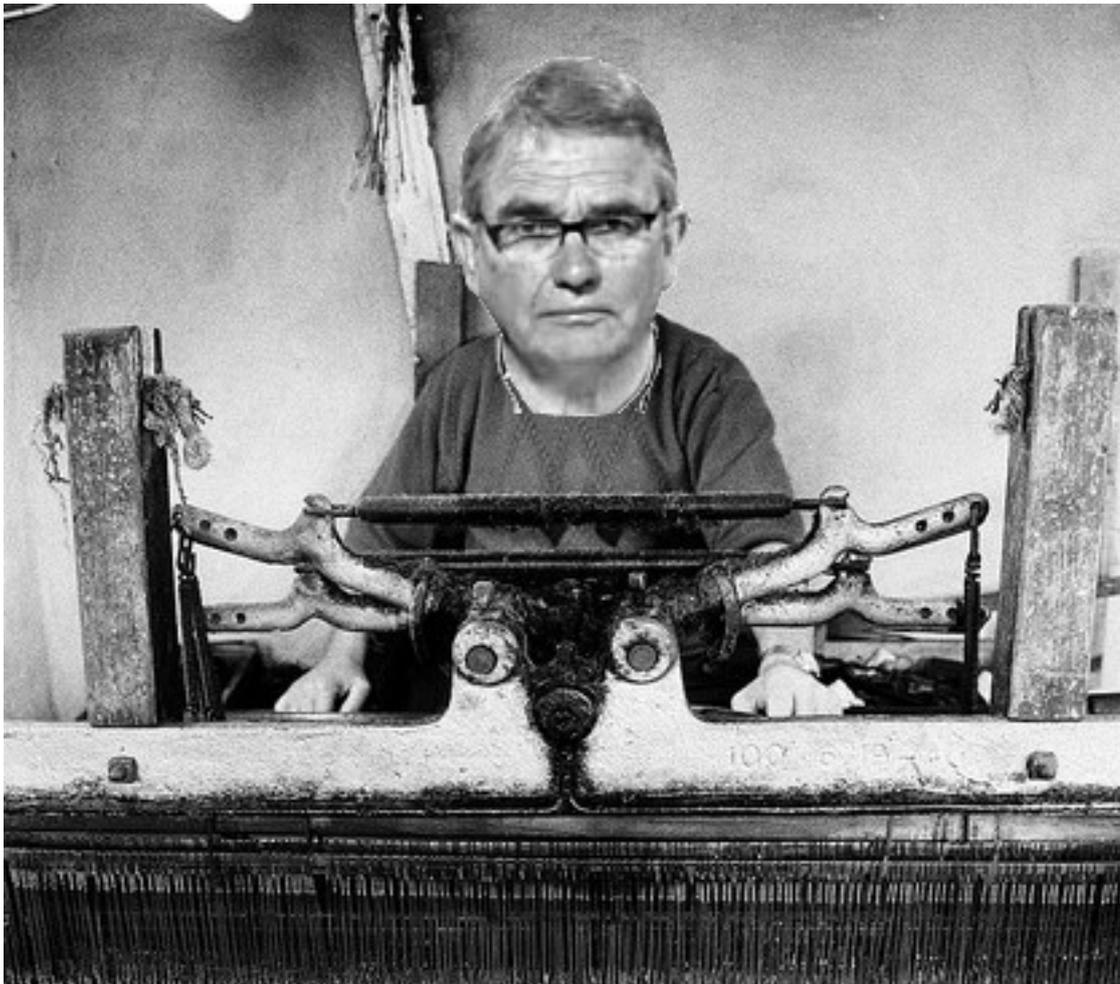
SNP Finance Secretary John Swinney responded: "It's our job as the Scottish Government to represent the country and the people of Scotland. I am not going to apologise for our success in promoting Scotland abroad, because that is what we were elected to do. And that Ian Davidson can away and bile his heid."

However, Councillor George Formby, the Lord Mayor of the city of Sheffield, wrote in his local parish newsletter, "All these new jobs keep going up to Scotland - they don't seem to be interested in cooming to Yorksheer. The gooverment needs to do summit about this now or we'll all be left behind by those #@?£%\$ Jockstraps".

And Farquar Castle-Urquart, Deputy Director of the Scottish wing of the Confederation for British Industry said in a speech to delegates at the 2012 UK Inward Investment conference in Mayfair:

"Alex Salmond and the SNP government simply don't understand economics. As Boris said recently, 'a pound spent in London does much more good for Scotland than a pound spent in Glasgow'. And Boris was right. It's the job of CBI (Scotland) to make sure that's what happens. The clue is in the name."

Last week, former Scottish Minister for Tweed, Brian Wilson, was given a new role by the Scottish Secretary Michael Moore, that of UK Business Ambassador for Scotland. The ex Labour MP has been tasked with promoting Scottish business at home and abroad.



Mr Wilson told BBC Scotlandshire: "When I speak to potential inward investors, I don't lie to them. I give them all the relevant information and let them make up their own minds.

"I start off by explaining (in great detail) all the dangers of separation and I highlight the uncertainty caused by the long delay before the referendum.

"Only then, do I ask them if they would like to set up in Scotlandshire or if they, upon sober reflection, might prefer to grace England instead. And then, of course, I offer them tea with her Majesty the Queen.

"Any other approach would be grossly unfair to the other counties in the UK who may not have the advantages of Scotlandshire's natural resources and talented, well-educated workforce.

"It's this ability we have as part of the UK, to place resources like jobs where they will have the greatest impact, that makes Britain Great. That's the reason why we're Better Together. Alex Salmond and his like simply don't understand this, which is why they keep selfishly trying to grab everything for themselves.

"The SNP should be concentrating on providing free university places for English students, and pushing up the price of Buckfast, and leave the business of promoting Scottish industry to those of us who have years of experience and training in how it ought to be done".

Head of the Scottish LibDems wee Wullie Rennie said, "I'm so,so sorry too, but it wasn't my fault. A big boy broke all my pledges and ran away - singing he was sorry too".

He added, "But, hey, what can you do, eh? That's politicians for you."

Scottish Labour leader Johann Lamont was unavailable for comment.

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