

By Nat Butcher, our Political Correspondent



The Labour party in Scotlandshire has become utterly useless and a spent political force, not merely through incompetence, but also through loyalty to the London party, argues an influential think tank in a report released today.

The Centre for Regional Analysis and Policy, which is part of Glasgow University, produced its report, "Why everything in Scotlandshire is pure keich, except for the Labour party", based on information supplied by various Westminster Government departments.

The main thrust of the CRAP report is that Scotlandshire is an awful wee place which could never hope to survive on its own. They cite as evidence the possibility that Oil prices may go down, particularly once cars can run on water, and that whisky, electricity and fine foodstuffs may all go out of fashion in the future.

The primary conclusion of the CRAP report is that Scotland must hope that the referendum campaign is not just lost, but that the debate will not have upset the rest of the United Kingdom

too much, so that they will forgive us and continue to govern us in our best interests in the future. Even if, being like children, we don't always understand or appreciate this at the time.

However, one particularly interesting chapter of the CRAP report deals with the demise of the Scottish Labour party, giving a unique perspective on the reasons behind its spectacular decline. The authors, both of whom are former advisors to several past leaders of Scottish Labour, argue that the apparent incompetence of Scottish labour politicians, while genuine, is actually tactical in nature.

Report co-author John McLaren told BBC Scotlandshire: "There are three main imperatives behind the dismal performance of Scottish Labour. None of these should come as a surprise to anyone who follows politics in Scotlandshire.



"The first tactic is that many of the distinctive policies which have been delivered by the Scottish parliament, including universal provisions such as free education and prescriptions, are of the type which were once key parts of Labour policy.

"Now that New Labour has abandoned these policies, and is telling voters in England that they are 'unaffordable', it is embarrassing to have the Scottish government providing them with

apparent ease and from a fixed and reducing block grant at that.

"So the order has gone out to Johann Lamont to attack everything which Scotland does better than England, in order to support Labour's bid to win the 2015 general election by persuading swing voters in southern England to vote for the red Tories, rather than the blue ones.

"This is known as the 'too poor deception'.

"The second tactic employed is to imply that Scotland can only survive or prosper as a region on the UK, as our institutions would be too insignificant if we became independent, and that we would be over reliant on volatile commodity prices.

The implication is that having control of our vast resources would be terrible for us as there could be good years as well as bad. Both Alistair Darling and Gordon Brown have 'predicted' that an independent Scotland would eventually need to come back under UK rule, but under 'collonial' terms and conditions.

"This is termed the 'too wee fallacy'.

"The third tactic is possibly the most significant. By making Scottish political debate as ridiculous as possible, the Labour party can debase the parliament and the political process to the point where voters will not only lose interest, but will lose trust in the very institutions which would inherit power after independence.

"Put simply, the worse the Labour party behaves in opposition, the more afraid Scots will become of a future independent parliament which could be run by Labour. In a sense they are taking one for the team by committing political suicide in this way."

This is called the 'too stupid subterfuge'.



Professor Jo Armstrong, the other author of the report, said: "We discovered some other interesting little nuggets of information while conducting our CRAP research.

"For example, A decision was taken in 2011, following the unparalleled defeat of Labour in the Scottish parliamentary elections, for Scottish Labour to abandon all policy development and simply concentrate on opposition to anything proposed by the SNP, even when it was in line with traditional Labour principles. This became known as the 'Bain principle' in honour of Willie 'two-nose' Bain MP.

"This was modified in early 2012, to include a greater concentration on ad-hominem attacks on the most successful politicians in the SNP government. This was described by political opponents as 'playing the man, not the ball'.

"This has become the default mode for Scottish Labour spin doctors, such as Johann Lamont's speechwriter, Paul Sinclair. It was considered the only approach possible in the absence of either policy alternatives or a positive case for the union."

