

By Nat Butcher, our Political Correspondent



Businessmen today challenged Michael Moore MP over the uncertainty and lack of detail in his economic plans for a dependent Scotland by issuing more than 170,000 questions he has so far failed to answer.

In an unprecedented break with Conservative Central Office, CBI Scotland has published a report listing in tedious detail thousands of "cheeky" questions from its members and made clear that it expects a response from Scottish Office ministers.

Among the thousands of queries submitted by businessmen to the group were the Scottish Office's estimate of the cost of a Westminster backlash if Scotland votes no in the 2014 referendum, how Scotland would fare under a Conservative/UKIP coalition backed up by another petulant Labour party 'opposition', and what on Earth the point of the Scotland Office really is in a devolved administration.

Other topics on which they said Mr Moore must provide much more detail were the severity of a unseparated Scotland's block grant reductions, the UK's credit rating, relations with our European partners, Britain's membership of the EU and ability to keep paying pensions, Scotland's defence footprint and military spending shortfall, BBC bias and everything else.

The Scottish Secretary has refused to set out either a positive case for the union or to give any detail of what a no vote might entail, and The CBI appears to be strangely comfortable with this position.

Iain McMillan, the group's director, said: "Many of our members have expressed the fear that a No vote could lead to a 'scorched earth' policy being imposed on Scotland to ensure that all talk of independence or further powers is killed off for at least a generation. Naturally, they are fearful of the effect this may have on their businesses."



The report noted that a dependant Scotland would need to pay for the "full panoply of UK

government departments", armed forces, central bank, foreign embassies, commissioners, regulators and licensing and enforcement authorities, but would receive few of the benefits in terms of civil service jobs and government spending, the overwhelming majority of which are reserved to South Eastern England.

Mr. Moore was also challenged to explain how he would continue to generously give away the income from selling off Scotland's natural resources "in the current era of increasing oil prices and unusually high investment in the North Sea", now that the infamous [McCrone report](#) has been pried into the public domain.

The Scottish Secretary also came under more pressure over a dependent Scotland's EU status. This follows increasing signs that a referendum on Britain's EU membership will be held soon after the 2015 general Elections.

Apparent leader of the now defunct Scottish LibDems oor Wullie Rennie said:

"Fair enough. The SNP has already given loads of details about what an independent Scotland would look like and they've got every civil servant in Holyrood tied to a desk producing more of the same.

"But, we still haven't heard a peep about what Scotland would look like after a No vote, and I certainly don't have a Scooby, myself, so mibbe the CBI has a point this time. But hey, whit can you do, eh?"

A Scottish Government spokesman said: "A White Paper publishing our proposals for independence will be published in November 2013 and we will continue to engage with all interested parties, to make sure that they are fully aware of our proposals. I only wish the pro-dependency parties and the UK government would do the same."

Labour's ian Davidson MP, chairchoob of the Scottish Affairs committee on Making Independence Seem Dire Indeed by Repeating Empty Criticisms, Trivial Inventions and Outright Nonsense, griped:

"It's no Mickey the Monster's joab tae explain whit the real government is gonnae dae. He's only there to make sure the pretendy one in Embrae doesnae get ideas above it's station. An ah'm talkin Haymarket, no Waverly, if ye know whit ah mean. Mibbes even South Gyle efter 2014, eh.

"Mickey's there tae blow ten million a year fae the Scoattish block grant on stopping youse joakstraps fae separating an makin the biggest mistake ay yur pointless lives. That is, puttin me an ma chinas oan the dole before we've hud a chance tae get oor ermine pension funds sortit oot."

Secretive leader of Labour in Scotland Johann Lamont was unavailable for comment as she needed the answer's to all 170,000 questions to be printed on a single sheet of A4, in 24pt Comic Sans, before she could begin.

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