

By **Nat Butcher**, our Political Correspondent



**The Scotland office has today published a report which seeks to make the point that, over a 30 year period from 1980 to 2010, Scotland has raised some £41 billion less in revenues, including a full share of oil and gas, than was spent in Scotland itself and spent by the UK 'on Scotland's behalf'.**

The Secretary of State for Scotland Michael Moore said the figures show that even with 100% of the oil money, Scotland is too wee and too poor to survive by itself, and called on the SNP to say how they would be able to afford anything at all once the Barnett funding is taken away.

So, we spoke to Professor Kemp of Aberdeen University, Scotland's foremost authority on the economics of Oil and Gas, and asked him to take a look at the report and analyse its figures for us.

Professor Kemp said:

"The UK deficit over the same period was over £715 billion, which would leave Scotland with a population share of around £60 billion. What the Scotland office appear to be doing is giving Scotland a discount of more than £19 billion. That seems very generous indeed! Normally they just suck money out of the Scottish economy for no obvious benefit to anyone.

"However, the deficit figure for the year 2009/10 is very dodgy. It is quoted as a deficit of £13.4 billion, compared to less than £3 billion the year before. The GERS figures put the real number at under £9 billion, which would knock another £4 billion off Scotland's bill. This should make the negotiations interesting.

"It looks like the Scotland office is doing Scotland a huge favour, even if they're not doing their sums," he laughed, adding, "Are you looking at my pint, you slag?"

We showed the report and Professor Kemp's comments to SNP finance minister John Swinney MSP who told BBC Scotland:

"I am very glad to receive the news of the £23 bn rebate in Scotland's National debt. This represents over £4500 of extra debt per person in Scotland, just for the privilege of being in the union for the last 30 years. Not much of a bargain.

"And that's assuming we would have managed our economy as badly as Westminster if we had become independent after 1979, which was a real possibility as I remember. But an independent Scotland would have been very different indeed.

"For a start, we would have saved billions on defence. No Trident, no nukes, no illegal wars. We would have kept our industrial base alive and saved billions more on unemployment benefits. We would never have deregulated the banks, and would have saved an oil fund, allowing us to survive the crash like Norway.

"Plus, the figures show that half of Scotland's 'deficit' comes from the last 3 or 4 years, ever since the bank bailouts. Even if we'd had to do a Scottish bailout, it would have been less than 5% of the UK one, because nearly all the business was done in London. That's how it works.

And we'd have had our oil fund put away to cover the cost anyway.

"You have to love the Scotland office for pointing all this out to us. The truth is, had we been independent all that time, our deficit wouldn't even have paid my Brylcreem bill. Mind you, that's quite high."

We returned to Michael Moore and put it to him that his own figures show Scotland's deficit was much lower than the rest of the UK, even when so many of our resources were being squandered on motorways and tidal barrages in and around London.



He replied: "That means that Scotland would not only have a lower level of public debt than the UK, but lower repayments too."

"This is a clear example of a union benefit, as Scotland's borrowing costs would be too low

to interest the international bond market, making it impossible to get a Triple A rating. But the UK is in such enormous debt that banks are falling over themselves to lend us cash, We are clearly better together.

"Sorry, can you cut that bit out. We're not supposed to mention the triple A any more, for obvious reasons. You can't? Well, leave the damn thing in then. See if I care.

"I got my marching orders last week, you know. Autumn 2014, and I'm out on my ear. And they got Paddington Mundell to give me the message. How callous was that. That's why I've been putting out such shite press releases for the last few days. A little payback from me.

"But you listen to me, Mr bigshot Toryboy Cameron. I'll be back. I've been chased out of town before, you know, by angry villagers with torches and farm implements. A few Bullington boys don't scare me.

I'll get you, Cammo. Just you watch me. I'm going to screw up your No campaign so badly you'll be using it for spare body parts by next year.

We attempted to speak to chairhoob Ian Davidson, but he was so busy satirising himself in the Section 30 'debate' that we just left him to it.

Johann Lamont was, as usual, unavailable for comment as she was struggling to come up with a way of avoiding any mention of universal benefits at FMQ.

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