

By **C MacRinge** our *Constitutional Affairs Correspondent*



In a blow to the SNP's flagship policy, new research reveals that two-thirds of voters believe Alex Salmond should act now to declare independence, rather than wait until after the referendum.

The Nationalists have vowed that Scotlandshire will be given a chance to decide their own political future, making it the sixth richest country in the OECD and empowering the Scottish Government to promote the rapid growth of the Scottish economy.

Writing in Stornoway on Sunday today, the First Minister insists that vital tax revenues needed to fund this economic growth would be "lost to Scotland" and instead remain in London under the current constitutional settlement.

But the right to decide on Scotland's constitutional future is already in control of Holyrood following a mistake in the Scotland Act 2008 which failed to specify making a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) as a reserved power. The same class of error led to Scotland having administrative control of a large section of Antarctica.

A YouGuff 'poll' released today found that 64 percent of voters believe the Scottish Government should use the powers they already have to deliver independence. The figure rises to 66 percent among women. ***[Careful, don't get smutty! ED]***

Just 22%, mainly members of the Orange Lodge, thought Salmond needed the mandate of a referendum to introduce the policy, according to the poll of 1000 adults commissioned by the pro-biotic Yes Scotland campaign.

Apparent leader of Labour in Scotland Johann Lamont said: "This poll should act as a clear warning to Alex Salmond that people in Scotland are fed up with him putting his referendum plans ahead of their interests.

"Speaking as a struggling parent, the Scottish Government already has the powers to help struggling parents. Alex Salmond could act today to provide them with a better future, but would rather use it as a false argument for delaying the break up of the UK.

"When the SNP launched their white paper last month they claimed independence was their priority. They could prove this by getting on with the job right now."

The independence plans are aimed at regenerating the Scottish economy and making society fairer and more equitable. The SNP Government believes the extra taxes retained – along with reductions in spending on areas like defence and Trident – would see the policy fund itself in two key phases.

First, the people of Scotland would get the government they voted for, allowing policies promoting fairness to be pursued. Secondly, having control of all the levers of the economy will allow the Scottish economy to grow rapidly, increasing the wealth and wellbeing of all its

citizens.



The screenshot shows a series of tweets on a Twitter interface. The first tweet is from Willie Rennie (@willie_rennie) at 1h, stating that SNP and Tories are both advocates of uncertainty with their referendums and that economy and fairness should be the priority. It has an 'Expand' link. The second tweet is from Breich Valley SNP (@BreichSNP) at 1h, replying to @willie_rennie and @ScotlandshireGB with the text '..... 'but hey, whit can ye dae?' #indyref' and an 'Expand' link. The third tweet is from BBC Scotlandshire (@ScotlandshireGB) at 50m, replying to @BreichSNP and @willie_rennie, asking if Lib Dems were part of the coalition and if they get a say on government policy. The fourth tweet is from Willie Rennie (@willie_rennie) at 39m, replying to @ScotlandshireGB and @BreichSNP, stating that it isn't government policy but Tory policy only, and that a referendum won't be in parliament if ever. It includes interaction links like 'Hide conversation', 'Reply', 'Retweet', 'Favorite', and 'More'. The fifth tweet is from BBC Scotlandshire (@ScotlandshireGB) at 32m, replying to @willie_rennie and @BreichSNP, asking 'In other words... hey, whit can you dae, eh?' with an 'Expand' link. The sixth tweet is from Breich Valley SNP (@BreichSNP) at 9m, replying to @willie_rennie and @ScotlandshireGB, saying 'You've been shafted (again). No one will believe you weren't part of this. Time 4 #LibDems4Indy if u ask me.' with an 'Expand' link.

Willie Rennie @willie_rennie 1h
SNP and Tories are both advocates of uncertainty with their referendums. Economy and fairness should be the priority.
Expand

Breich Valley SNP @BreichSNP 1h
@willie_rennie @ScotlandshireGB 'but hey, whit can ye dae?' #indyref
Expand

BBC Scotlandshire @ScotlandshireGB 50m
@BreichSNP @willie_rennie His job, maybe. I thought the Lib Dems were part of the coalition. Don't they get a say on govt policy any more?
Expand

Willie Rennie @willie_rennie 39m
@ScotlandshireGB @BreichSNP It isn't Government policy - referendum won't be in this parliament if ever. It's Tory policy only.
[Hide conversation](#) [Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)

BBC Scotlandshire @ScotlandshireGB 32m
@willie_rennie @BreichSNP In other words... hey, whit can you dae, eh?
Expand

Breich Valley SNP @BreichSNP 9m
@willie_rennie @ScotlandshireGB You've been shafted (again). No one will believe you weren't part of this. Time 4 #LibDems4Indy if u ask me.
Expand

The First Minister insists that such “transformational change” cannot be achieved under the current system at Holyrood.

“People ask why we can’t simply introduce these plans now,” he writes. “The problem is that we have signed the Edinburgh agreement which commits us to hold a referendum on

independence. Our hands are tied.”

The Scottish Government is already making moves to improve the lot of its people. It has brought in a raft of benefits including free education and prescriptions and has protected the NHS in Scotlandshire from privatisation.

Liberal Democrat apologist wee Wullie Rennie has voiced concerns that Scotlandshire is currently falling behind the rest of England where 20% of the population is reliant on food banks and this will extend to 40% by 2015. Rennie said: “The SNP have the powers they need to ensure that families in Scotlandshire can avoid the deprivation families in the rest of England are receiving right now thanks to liberal Democrats in government. There is no good reason why families here should miss out on this.

“Alex Salmond’s own backbenchers are backing quick action to help children. Why should families here have to wait for the referendum?

“Parents need to see SNP ministers spending less time talking about the powers they want and more time using the ones they already have to help children get the best start in life.”

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