

Fraser: Jobs boom would net SNP Government £800m

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The Scottish Government would gain a near £800m budget bonus if Scotland's jobs market delivered for all working people, finance spokesman Murdo Fraser will say in a key note speech this evening.

Delivering his response to last week's SNP budget in a Reform Scotland lecture, Mr Fraser will call on the Nationalist government to focus on economic growth – saying it will deliver extra cash to the SNP Government's coffers.

Figures compiled by the party show that if all part-time workers who want a full-time job could get one, tax revenues to the Scottish Government would increase by £337m.

Similarly, if inactive people who want a job also found one, the Scottish Government would stand to gain by £435m in extra income tax.

Mr Fraser will say that this combined £772m windfall provides an illustration of the kind of budget boost the SNP would gain if it only prioritised jobs over tax rises.

The Scottish Conservatives have already shown that simply by increasing the proportion of higher and additional rate taxpayers to the UK average, the SNP Government would stand to gain £600m in extra revenue.

Instead, as part of a deal with the Scottish Greens last week, the SNP decided to set the highest income tax rates in the UK for Scotland – and failed to set out a plan to deliver economic growth.

In his speech, hosted by Shepherd and Wedderburn , Mr Fraser will say:

“As the Fraser of Allander institute point out: ‘Scotland’s economic performance – or more accurately, Scotland’s relative performance – will have a greater bearing on the spending plans of Holyrood than ever before’”

“To see what the potential benefit could be, we did some basic modelling, trying to understand what the impact would be if Scotland’s economy motored up a gear.

“If Scotland matched the UK proportions of higher and additional rate

taxpayers, tax revenues would increase by around £600 million.

“If every person in Scotland currently on a part-time contract who wants to go full-time could do so – revenues would increase by about £337 million.

“And if everyone in Scotland who is currently economic inactive and wants to find a job – but can’t – if they found work, revenues would increase by £435 million.

“These figures give you a sense of potential if we grew faster, and reached UK-wide norms.

“And of course – it’s not just me saying it. Alex Salmond, remember, estimated that matching UK growth would be worth £4 billion.

“I wonder what Alex Salmond would make of Derek Mackay’s budget.

“And I miss that old SNP.

“We might have had our differences, but at least we agreed on this guiding principle of government: if you want more money for services, start with growth.

“Bairns not tax bombs, you could say.”