

Mundell: Holyrood can flourish, but not under the SNP

3 May 2019



The Scottish Parliament can never fulfil its potential to improve the lives of Scots as long as the SNP is in government, David Mundell said today.

Ahead of Holyrood's 20th anniversary, the Secretary of State for Scotland said the nationalists – as well as previous Labour and Liberal Democrat administrations – have failed to maximise the benefits of devolution.

Addressing the Scottish Conservative conference in Aberdeen, he said only a Ruth Davidson-led Scottish Government can change the everyday lives of voters for the better.

He will say:

“Successive Scottish Governments have failed to realise the potential of the Scottish Parliament.

“First there was the uninspiring and managerial Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition.

“Now we have the SNP, which has been in government for the past 12 years.

“The aspirations of the Scottish Parliament have been left unfulfilled by an SNP government that is obsessed with independence.

“Nicola Sturgeon's answer to the challenges of today is to blame Westminster and demand more powers.

“The Scottish Parliament has great potential to deliver distinct Scottish solutions to the challenges that we face here in Scotland, while ensuring that we continue to share resources to tackle issues that the whole UK faces.

“That could be happening right now.

“Yet the Scottish Parliament is never going to achieve that potential under the SNP.

“It is never going to achieve that potential while politics in Scotland is stuck on an endless indyref loop.”

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2 May 2019



The Scottish Conservatives will use their upcoming conference in Aberdeen to “fire the starting gun” for the 2021 Holyrood elections, Ruth Davidson has said.

The event – which will have the slogan ‘Scotland Together’ – begins tomorrow, and also marks the return to work following maternity leave for the leader.

She said, in contrast to last weekend’s SNP summit, this event will talk about bringing Scotland back together after a decade of division, and discuss ways to improve devolved matters like health, education and the economy.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“I’m looking forward to getting back to work and using this conference to fire the starting gun on the run up to the 2021 Scottish elections.

“We believe we can beat the SNP at that election and this conference is our chance to set out how we want to improve Scotland, in government.

“Last week, the SNP spent their entire conference focusing on independence, more constitutional division and a chaotic plan to ditch the pound.

“By contrast, we want to use our conference to talk about how we can deliver for Scotland in the here and now.

“That means focusing on things that matter most – a stronger economy, better educational standards, and improved public services.

“Scotland has now had nearly 10 years of constitutional division.

“A second independence referendum would only mean that we would begin a second decade with the focus on what divides us as a country. It is time for Scotland to move forward, together.

“The party is delighted to bring conference to the north east this year. We are raring to go with plenty of fresh ideas on how to make Scotland a better country for all of us.”

[Sturgeon can't name a single business backing her currency plan](#)

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Nicola Sturgeon can't name a single company or business organisation which supports her plan to ditch the UK pound in an independent Scotland.

The First Minister was challenged today to list any respected organisation that backed the controversial proposals to dump the pound and adopt a new mystery Scottish currency.

This is despite telling MSPs at First Minister's Questions today that she looked forward to independence "happening very soon".

But she failed to do so, instead referring to the ongoing Brexit process.

And she also failed to explain why Richard Marsh, an adviser to her very own Growth Commission, held such a different opinion about currency in a separate Scotland.

He was reported as saying this week that, on the first day of independence, there would be an economic shock "similar to that seen during the 2008 financial crisis".

Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw said:

"Nicola Sturgeon cannot name a single business representative body or trade union that has given its support to her plan to scrap the pound.

"And there's obviously a reason for that.

"Even advisers to her own Growth Commission think the plan is a turkey.

"Nicola Sturgeon was right when she used to say keeping the UK pound is in the best interests of Scotland.

"It's a simple fact that the best way to keep Scotland successful, to protect our pensions, to boost jobs is to have nothing to do with the SNP's plans for a breakaway currency.

“We must instead keep our UK pound, and keep Scotland in the UK.”

[SNP not ready to deliver next wave of benefit powers](#)

2 May 2019



The SNP government is unprepared for the next wave of social security powers, an official report has found.

Audit Scotland said the nationalists were finding it “harder than expected” to come good on new welfare controls, and have even spent £7.3 million this year handing powers back to the UK Government.

Ministers are spending almost as much on temporary and contractor staff than they are on permanent workers, the report added.

And despite only being operational since September, Social Security Scotland’s performance “has been affected by a lack of staff continuity”.

In the ‘Social Security: Implementing the devolved powers’ report, auditors stated: “The Scottish Government found delivery on its initial commitments harder than expected,” adding that the current systems in place “will not be enough to support the delivery of the second wave” of powers.

They added: “The Scottish Government does not have a clear understanding of the key things needed to deliver all remaining benefits in the way it intends.”

The SNP has already been under fire for handing devolved powers back to Westminster, despite demanding that and more in the years running up to the Scotland Act.

Scottish Conservative shadow social security secretary Michelle Ballantyne said:

“The SNP has spent years complaining about the UK Government’s approach to benefits.

“But now the nationalists have the power, they’re finding out just how difficult it is to create a fair and sustainable welfare system.

“This report shows that 98 per cent of the annual expenditure on devolved benefits have yet to be delivered.

“They have spent a fortune just to get to this point, and the costs appear to be rising still.

“The report makes clear that the financial management by the SNP of this programme is weak, and there has been a failure to regularly estimate and report the long-term implementation costs.

“The SNP government is even paying the DWP to administer the very powers it shouted so loudly for in years past.

“We have a situation now where almost as much is being spent on agency and contractor staff than permanent workers, and that will only make delivery of these powers harder.

“Like everything else, the SNP jumped up and down in advance of getting these controls, yet is found to be completely incompetent when they arrive.

“If the nationalists can’t even sort out how to administer some benefits, how on earth do they propose to run an independent country?”

[Vulnerable children go missing 5 times a day in Scotland](#)

2 May 2019



Nearly 2000 children living in local authority care were reported missing to police in 2018, it has been revealed.

Freedom of Information figures have shown around five calls are made to officers every day after young people under the care of councils have vanished.

The data was obtained by the Scottish Conservatives, and shows there were 1935 cases recorded last year.

That includes 198 instances in Glasgow, 170 in Fife and 164 in Edinburgh.

MSP Maurice Golden said all authorities had to work more closely to ensure young people received care in a safe and secure environment with appropriate supervision.

Scottish Conservative MSP Maurice Golden said:

“These are very worrying statistics affecting an extremely vulnerable group of young people.

“People don’t run away from loving homes on this scale, so there’s clearly a problem.

“No-one’s pretending there’s an easy answer to this, and many of these cases may have been quickly and satisfactorily resolved.

“But we need to ask why these young people are going missing, and where are they running away too.

“It’s incumbent upon us all, from the Scottish Parliament to agencies on the ground, to work harder to ensure these figures can be reduced substantially in future years.”