

# fact not fiction

The Independence Convention is an umbrella organisation for the political parties who support independence, people from Unionist parties who disagree on this one issue, and people who dislike party politics but support Scotland and independence. Over the summer of 2009 the Convention toured summer shows throughout Scotland talking to around 5000 people about the Referendum and about Independence itself. Many expressed an interest but felt they lacked facts on which to make up their minds. The questions everywhere were much the same. The most common are listed below in the rough order of the number of times they occurred with the facts we have gathered to answer them. Most of the latter were already public - though not publicised. If you are interested in our conclusions about these facts go to our web site: [www.scottishindependenceconvention.org](http://www.scottishindependenceconvention.org)

**Could Scotland manage her economy successfully?** The Government's most recent published figures from 2005-8 show Scotland in £2.3 billion surplus whilst the UK was in deficit.

**Wouldn't taxation have to go sky-high to make up for the loss of income from much larger number of English taxpayers?**

No. An independent Scotland could make use of all our resources of which taxation is only one.

- It need only provide for its own population of around 5,000,000. Our resources of oil and its associated technologies, gas, water, food, electricity are enough for the needs of our population leaving a surplus to sell. Oil alone according to the UK Treasury is expected to bring in almost £50 billion in tax over the next 5 years - 90% of which would belong to Scotland.
- Scotland would decide its own priorities. For example we could spend our income on turning research on renewables into manufactured goods and jobs; on health or education instead of spending money on Trident, illegal wars in Iraq or intervening in Afghanistan. .
- Talk from the UK Government about extending Scotland's financial powers is inaccurate. They propose (the Calman proposals) an alternative way of raising tax not an extension - the sums raised will be knocked off the overall sum from Britain. Calman specifically rejected Scotland keeping oil revenue

**How could Scotland raise money for large infrastructure investment?**

- Even with limited resources the Scottish Government has established a Scottish Futures Trust for public service investment.
- Independence would allow us to invest part of the Oil Revenues for future generations as does Norway whose fund currently sits at around £274 billion pounds from a £95 million start in 1996.
- Nearer home Shetland fought for and won a Charitable Fund set up in 1976 currently holding £214m . It has transformed Shetland's infrastructure and produces a Budget Surplus each year. It is based on 1p a barrel landed in Shetland.
- Oil produced in Scottish waters has produced over £ 269 billion for the British Government to date - but no saving for the future.

**You base everything on the income from oil. What are you going to do now it's almost run out?**

The oil is **not** running out. Between 25 and 30 billion barrels remain with a wholesale value of £1 trillion - and new fields are still being discovered.

Best indicators are continuing investment by international companies for example General Electric Gas and Oil is spending £3m.for new facilities at Montrose; Total oil company is spending £220m for a new pipeline west of Shetland.

### **Could we have supported the Banks in the financial crisis as the British Government did?**

- Facts first. The Government's March 2010 Report covering bank bail-outs for all UK banks (not just Scotland) puts the final cost to the Treasury at £6 billion. The same Report put Oil revenues at almost £50 billion over the next five years so like other EU countries, given generally prudent management, we could have weathered the storm.
- There are however more aspects to consider for the future. An independent Scottish Government would be able to decide whether to allow financial services and City interests to dominate our national economy to the detriment of manufacturing. They would be able to decide for themselves whether there should be much stricter controls on financial institutions. They will have an Oil Windfall Fund to help cushion the blow.

### **We might have had a chance before the crisis but can we possibly clear our share of the debts?**

British debt is not unfortunately just a question of the current crisis. Between 1980 and 2008 Britain borrowed £625 billion (Scottish share £56.5 billion). In those years Scotland was in surplus 50% more often than the U.K. Keeping the tax raised in Scotland, and spending at the same level, our debt would have been £30 billion less.

But that's the past, and each and every one of us will have to make up their minds on this and on whether, if we stay in the UK, we will find they have learned their lesson and will manage the economy more responsibly in future.

### **What's going to happen to my Public Service Pension?**

It would continue to be paid as now. (Supplementary Acts which followed the Irish Treaty of 1922 might offer reassuring precedents).

### **Defence - How could we manage? What will happen to service personnel?**

The only Party which has published the principles on which a purely Scottish policy would be based is the SNP who propose:

- The creation of an integrated Scottish Defence Service consisting of a professional force supported by reserve, initially equipped by the Scottish share of the UK defence resources and equipment.
- Its priority would be to safeguard Scottish land, sea and air space with international connections through the UN, EU and Partnership for Peace.
- Armed Services will be well paid and equipped, and trained suitably for these purposes.
- In recognition of the pivotal role they played in motivating their soldiers, the historic Scottish Regiments will be re-established within the Defence Service.
- No nuclear weapons, nor nuclear base commitments such as NATO, on Scottish soil.
- By applying these principles to present British Defence policy and actions, the differences for both spending money and using our servicemen and women can be worked out.