

The last time I was in Scotland was just before the European Elections, when true to form, Alex Salmond was very rude about UKIP. He said we didn't have a voice in Scotland and that I should have stayed south of the border.

Without dwelling on the strength of his anti-English sentiments, many of which were amplified by the particular crowd of supporters of his that I met in Edinburgh the day when I found myself, for the first time ever, actually locked in a pub, I would now say this to Mr Salmond. I know you don't like UKIP, I know you are very scared of our views. I know you don't want the Scottish people in this referendum to realise the great truth but, we are now a voice in Scottish politics, we did win a seat in the European Parliament elections and we are now planning and organising our candidates for the General Election campaign next year.

In less than a week's time, Scotland will hold a referendum on independence. Of course everyone agrees that it's about independence. Alex Salmond agrees it's about independence. The Prime Minister and the Better Together people all agree that it's about independence. But the truth is, it is not! What the Scots are actually being asked to vote on, is separation from England, and to sign a new treaty to be full members of a European Union. It is very simple; whether you think the EU is a good thing or a bad thing, the one thing that is absolutely certain is you cannot be an independent country and a member of the European Union. That much I would have thought is obvious given that the European Union's courts are superior to that of its member states. Given that the European Union's laws have primacy of law and when you consider that the United Kingdom as whole with 63 million people is finding it virtually impossible to get anything more than cosmetic concessions from the European Union you realise that independence in Europe is a complete non starter.

I absolutely hold no brief for Gerry Adams or the Sinn Fein Party, but at least his voice of Irish nationalism is consistent and clear. He doesn't want Northern Ireland to be part of the United Kingdom, but neither does he want the island of Ireland to be members of the European Union. That is

consistent nationalism and what Alex Salmond is offering isn't nationalism on a Scottish level, it is supra-nationalism on an EU level. True Scottish nationalists face a real dilemma.

Salmond's job of course has been made much easier because the 'no' side have made a total mess of the entire campaign. From the beginning I was astonished that the Prime Minister allowed for the separatists to be given the 'yes' side of the referendum question. Far better from his point of view, you would have thought, would have been to have asked the question "should Scotland remain part of the United Kingdom?" And to keep the positive on his side. But no, on this he blundered. But more fundamentally he blundered by not offering the Scottish people, the devo max option. I have absolutely no doubt that if that had been on the ballot paper it would have secured a large majority of the votes. However, arrogant as Edward II was at Bannockburn, Cameron has walked straight into this long planned ambush. Now of course, he and the others in Better Together are offering the devo max option. They're not giving people directly the chance to vote for it and the Labour Party led by Ed Milliband has totally failed to connect, despite the fact that electorally they have the most to lose.

But Westminster making a mess of the devolution is nothing new. As long ago as the 1880s when a home rule bill for Ireland was presented before the House of Commons, Westminster clubbed together to say no. And indeed, in the last seventeen years, there's been a reluctance on behalf of Westminster to recognise the sincerity of the devolution project in all corners of the United Kingdom.

I am more than relaxed about devolution and I think the entire United Kingdom does need a new constitutional settlement. But in a sense this debate is putting the cart before the horse. Unless the United Kingdom itself is an independent, self governing, democratic nation, and if we are all in our varying shapes and forms to be provinces of a new European state, then I have to question why we are having these debates at all.

I can quite understand a large number of Scottish voters viewing the career political class in Westminster with a degree of contempt. Please do not for one moment think of this as an entirely Scottish phenomenon. In fact I can assure you that huge numbers of us in England now think exactly the same. They are out of touch and have made a mess of what sovereign powers remain in the UK.

But we do have an opportunity in the General Election next year to get rid of them and to replace them with somebody else. If Scotland in the future is not part of the UK but is in the EU it will have no chance of changing any of the commissioners. Indeed Scotland will be a very small and pretty irrelevant part of the European Union.

Since the financial crisis in 2008 blew up and the Lisbon Treaty was passed into law, the EU has become utterly dominated by the big countries. In fact what Germany says, goes. In the face of that it is almost laughable to think that Alex Salmond would be able to win back for Scotland her 200 mile exclusive fishing zone. It simply won't happen. And what Scottish voters absolutely have not been told is that the Treaty Scotland will sign, in line with all other new entrants, will mean a commitment to Schengen and a commitment to joining the Eurozone. Of course there'll be some that say, "well Nigel's an Englishman and they're against the EU and the Scots are all for the EU", but actually recent polling evidence shows a significant closing of that gap.

My words today are really pitched at Labour voters whose loathing of Cameron and the Westminster set has become so strong that they've moved to the 'yes' side.

You must ask yourselves some simple questions. Do you want to be part of Schengen with uncontrolled immigration and the compression of wages for ordinary people? Would you be happy for Scotland to be a tiny satellite of the emerging new European state? And do you want to join the Euro? If the answer to any of these is NO then don't be taken in by the 'pig in a poke' that Mr Salmond is selling you. You are being offered

an entirely false prospectus. This vote is about secession from England and whilst I know you're bored with endless claim and counter claim on economic predictions there is one thing of which I am sure; the issue of currencies was the reason that I left business and got into politics. I saw a Scottish opinion poll the other day showing that a majority of Scots thought that Westminster and the banks were bluffing when they said that Scotland could not remain in an economic and monetary union with the rest of the UK. Believe me, this is no bluff. Why should the English tax payer give surety to Scottish banks and institutions and the Bank of England act as the safety net lender of the last resort for companies whose taxes would be paid in Scotland? It would be a politically impossible sell. And as Salmond has no plans for his own central bank or his own currency I guess he would have to sign up to the Euro as quickly as he possibly can. So if you want the failing Euro, vote YES.

I do think that our union has been a hugely successful one and that Scotland's contribution towards our success is entirely disproportionate with its size and I do feel we would all be diminished without it.

When the three Westminster political leaders came to Scotland they gave the impression that it was their union that you should stay a part of. They are wrong. It is your union too and you will have a better, freer future as a devolved part of it.