

## **Fair representation for all Britons – UKIP's answer to the West Lothian Question**

The UK Independence Party has today (21.3.06) launched its plans for fair representation for all Britons by calling for the creation of an English Parliament.

Party Chairman, David Campbell-Bannerman said: "The current system of national parliaments for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland has created a serious imbalance which is regularly exploited by the Government as it rams through English legislation using the votes of Welsh and Scottish MPs, whose constituents would not be affected by the outcome.

The UKIP solution, revealed by Mr Campbell-Bannerman is to scrap the existing Welsh and Northern Ireland Assemblies and the Scottish Parliament, and re-constitute them without the expensive buildings, using Scottish, Welsh and Irish Westminster MPs. English MPs would form the English Parliament. All MPs would sit for 3 weeks at Westminster, followed by one week's plenary on devolved issues within the devolved parliaments/assemblies.

Mr Campbell-Bannerman continued: "UKIP is a UK wide party, and is proud of it. The time has come, however, to treat the English fairly by creating an English Parliament and putting England on a par with Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

"The Government's tinkering with the constitutional settlement of the United Kingdom has created a serious democratic imbalance which requires urgent attention. The solution is not a series of small regional governments housed in shoddily built yet hugely expensive new offices, but a cheaper, more democratic use of existing institutions and elected representatives."

### **The UKIP answer to the West Lothian Question**

1. UKIP is the true party of the UK. We believe that each part of the UK should be treated fairly and equally, in terms of policy and representation, and that the present structure has failed to solve the 'West Lothian Question'.
2. National parliaments/assemblies should be retained - should that be the continued wish of the people of those individual nations - but regional government and regional chambers, particularly the English regional chambers, be dismantled. However, all measures passed under devolved powers by devolved bodies that would act to disadvantage one part of the UK over another (such as free tuition fees/dental fees/free nursing care) will be made subject to referral to UK Westminster Government for final approval. Devolved powers would be altered accordingly.
3. UKIP is the true party of localism and local democracy – we will give the people the power of national referendums and give local bodies local independence and control of schools, hospitals and planning.
4. UKIP will fight for the distinctive British means of government – a strengthened House of Commons, a reformed and elected House of Lords, the well proven and historic system of county councils, metropolitan, town, district and parish councils.
5. UKIP will act to remove unnecessary and costly tiers of government and not just talk about it as other parties do.

## National policies:

### 1. Scotland

- UKIP will scrap all MSPs and have Scottish Westminster MPs sit in the Scottish Parliament, returning all savings made in a council tax refund. UKIP will also scrap all MEPs on leaving the EU.
- Scottish Westminster MPs would sit 3 weeks in Westminster, with some Scottish Parliamentary committee meetings; followed by 1 week's plenary in the Scottish Parliament.
- UKIP would restore UK Westminster control over high level, common matters across all departments, with small UK-wide departments for education, health, home affairs, transport etc. Delegated powers to national bodies would be trimmed accordingly
- UKIP will give consideration to demolishing the ugly and unpopular Scottish Parliament building, and sell the site for housing. The Scottish Parliament will be moved to more appropriate refurbished, historic buildings.
- UKIP will restore the Scottish regiments, and disband the EU- driven Euro regional army structure. UKIP will use savings from leaving the EU to spend on strengthening defence.
- UKIP will argue for Scottish ships to be built in Scottish yards [ NB loss of contract to Poland nearly closed Ferguson's Yard ].

### 2. Wales

- UKIP will abolish the Welsh Assembly and scrap all Welsh Assembly members. Welsh Westminster MPs will sit in a new Welsh National Council, sitting alternate months in North and South Wales, and returning all savings made in a council tax refund. UKIP will also scrap all MEPs on leaving the EU.
- Welsh Westminster MPs will sit 3 weeks in Westminster, with some Welsh National Council committee meetings, followed by one week's plenary in the Welsh National Council.
- UKIP would restore UK Westminster control over high level, common matters across all departments, with small UK-wide departments for education, health, home affairs, transport etc. Delegated powers to national bodies would be trimmed accordingly.
- UKIP will close the present ( leaky ) new Welsh Assembly building with more appropriate and less costly temporary facilities in North and South Wales.
- UKIP will restore the Welsh regiments, and disband the EU-driven Euro regional army structure. UKIP will use savings from leaving the EU to spend on strengthening defence.

### 3. England

- UKIP will solve the 'West Lothian Question' by creating an English Parliament, but not through a new and wasteful new building, but by reserving days at Westminster for English-only debates and issues – called 'English days'.
- Existing English Westminster MPs would sit in the English Parliament
- UKIP would restore UK Westminster control over high level, common matters across all departments, with small UK-wide departments for education, health, home affairs, transport etc. Delegated powers to national bodies would be trimmed accordingly
- UKIP would recognise de facto 'English-only ministries' ( such as Department of Education bringing forward an English only Education Bill ) by creating an English Executive. There would be an English First Minister, but he or she would be a UK Westminster MP.
- English Westminster MPs will sit 3 weeks in Westminster performing their UK-wide duties and English Parliament committee meetings; followed by 1 week's plenary in the English Parliament.

- UKIP will disband all English regional chambers and replace Regional Development Agencies. English county councils, district councils and parish councils will all be saved and strengthened.

#### **4. Northern Ireland**

- UKIP respects the unique circumstances applying in Northern Ireland, and supports the Good Friday Agreement. We will retain and support the Northern Ireland Assembly in its current form, and encourage its recommencement.
- In the long term, as circumstances allow, UKIP will seek to treat Northern Ireland in the same manner as all UK home nations, by replacing Northern Ireland Assembly members with Westminster MPs, returning all savings made in a council tax refund. UKIP will also scrap all MEPs on leaving the EU.
- UKIP will restore UK and Irish regiments, and disband the EU-driven Euro regional army structure. UKIP will use savings from leaving the EU to spend on strengthening defence.

### **Local Policies:**

#### **5. Local elections**

- UKIP will disband all English regional chambers and replace Regional Development Agencies with strategic groups formed of county or unitary authorities. We will save and strengthen English county councils, unitary, metropolitan, district and parish councils, to bring government closer to the people.
- UKIP will cut the unnecessary Government Offices of the Regions
- UKIP will act to remove unnecessary and costly tiers of government, and not just talk about it ( as the Tories do – who are often in control of regional bodies they could do away with )
- UKIP opposes EU-driven regional government in all its forms: amalgamation of historic police forces, regiments and council planning powers
- UKIP is the true party of localism and local democracy – we will give local bodies local independence and control of schools, hospitals and planning – where local people's needs are constantly being overridden by EU and UK bureaucrats
- UKIP will use savings from leaving the EU to cut council tax – our aim is to replace council tax with a local sales tax, illegal under EU laws.

ENDS