

By **Fessup N Gloat**, our 'too well protected to care' correspondent



The most senior civil servant at the Treasury last night defended his decision publicly to oppose independence for Scotland. He said that in such an “extreme” case as last year’s referendum, in which “people are seeking to destroy the very fabric of the state” and to “impugn its immutable territorial integrity”, the normal rules of economics did not apply.

Speaking at the inaugural meeting of the Strand Group last night, in a lecture at the Treasury entitled “The Treasury and Preservation of the Union”, Sir Nicholas MacPherson explained that “the strong recurring conclusion” of his teams’ studies was that independence would be overwhelmingly in the interests of the Scottish people.

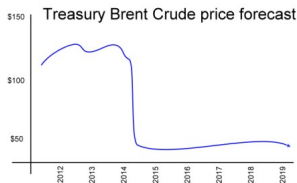
We also concluded however, since separation is not a zero sum game, that it would be against the interests of the remainder of the UK, and highly detrimental to the interests of the 1% for whom and by whom the UK government is run. For this reason, we decided to suspend economic theory as it is understood, and simply make up some scary figures instead.

Naturally, those predictions made cleavage from the mother nation state look a very unappealing prospect indeed. Mathematics is all very well, he said, but only in support of those policies with which we and the UK government of the day agree. It becomes a dangerous weapon in the hands of those who do not have our best interests at heart.

An independent Scotland would almost certainly be successful, he said, but there would be a price to be paid and, as a creature of those who would have to pay that price, he had a “duty” to point that out.

He cited the example of American independence which he claimed had been doomed from the

start. "The States had a pretty sweet deal in the 18th century, but they threw it all away. Imagine the kind of nation they might have been today if they had listened to the Treasury in 1776."



On oil, he noted that the current oil price of around \$50 a barrel would have meant that in the first year of independence, 2016-17, Scotland's deficit would have been 6½ per cent of GDP, whereas the deficit run by the rest of the UK would have been 2 per cent of GDP. Normal economics would preclude using this abnormally low price, less than half the level of 3 months earlier, a prediction of the price more than 2 years in the future. But the statement demonstrates the efficacy of suspending economic theory and practice.

Beside, said Sir Nicholas (or Auld Nick as he is known in Scotlandshire), "if you were to place all the world's economists end to end, they still wouldn't reach a conclusion, so who cares what predictions we publish. The OBR have never let woeful inaccuracy put them off.

The lecture launched the Last Stand Group, the public policy and contemporary history group of the Policy Institute at King's College, London, where Sir Nicholas is a visiting professor. His colleague Reeve Isionist, director of the Last Stand Group, was in the chair.

The lecture began with a short history of the Union, in which the Treasury was up to its neck from the start. England paid off a few 'Scottish' nobles giving ordinary Scots the opportunity to share in England's crippling sovereign debt. This was a huge benefit as Scotland had hitherto (and since) been incapable of creating a national debt of its own.

This ignominious history, he said, made the Treasury the ideal department to take the lead in the fight against Scottish separation.

Even though the referendum has been won, the Treasury has decided to continue its suspension of economic tradition where Scottish affairs are concerned. This was confirmed last

week by the Governor of the Bank of England when he said that low oil prices would lead to slower production and more oil being left in the ground to be exploited by a future independent Scottish state. A situation he described as a 'bad thing' for Scotland.

Meanwhile, Prof Jim Al-Khalili, Professor of Theoretical Physics and Chair in the Public Engagement in Science at the University of Surrey, pointed out that the laws of physics had also been suspended in relation to Scotland. The result was that things which were true in England were false in Scotland, and vice versa.

He cited the following three example in support of his theorem:

1. That oil is an enormous asset to the UK economy while simultaneously being Kryptonite to the Scottish one.

2. That Labour in Scotlandshire is a left-of-centre party seeking social justice, while in England, where all policy decisions are actually made, it is the next Tory party in waiting, seeking only its turn in power.

3. And that Jim Morphy MP is considered the new Messiah by the Scottish press, while he is recognised everywhere else as a slimy, self-serving, sectarian, war-mongering, nuke-loving, right-wing, neo-Labour, lying, red-Tory bastird with a passion for Footy, MPs expenses, CIA bungs and Irn-Bru omelettes.

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