



Stewart Maxwell MSP

Scottish National Party

Representing you in the West of Scotland

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Labour MPs Launch Attack on Scottish Whisky Industry

Recently in a speech to the Scottish Parliament, Stewart Maxwell MSP passionately argued against the imposition of tax stamps by the London Labour government on bottles of whisky.

Mr Maxwell said, “Labour MPs such as Dumbarton MP John McFall, chairman of the all-party Scotch Whisky Industry Group in the House of Commons, say one thing in their constituencies, then do the opposite when down in London.

“Dumbarton is an area that depends on the whisky industry for up to 1000 high-quality jobs and is vital that the local MP fights for that industry and not against it. McFall claims, when in Dumbarton, to be campaigning against the imposition of tax stamps on bottles of whisky, but he fails to mention that he voted in favour of imposing tax stamps on the industry not just once, but twice in the

House of Commons. On two occasions the SNP put forward amendments to have Gordon Brown’s tax stamps proposal thrown out and on both occasions John McFall voted in favour of tax stamps. His hypocritical actions leave him with no credibility.

“With those votes, he voted in favour of increasing the costs of the whisky industry and he voted in favour of putting the jobs of his constituents at risk. Across Scotland there are some 3,500 jobs in bottling plants and bonded warehouses, with many of these jobs being in areas of high unemployment such as the West of Scotland.

“Once again we see Labour MPs voting against Scotland’s interest in London and no matter what they say in their constituencies and in the local papers, the truth is that when it comes to the crunch they will never stand up for Scotland.

The truth is that if the Scottish Parliament controlled taxation then I believe that it would never have attacked such a vital industry. It is a perfect example of why Scotland needs fiscal freedom sooner rather than later.

“Whisky is not just a rural issue. It is one of Scotland’s biggest industries contributing £2 billion in tax. It is not just Speyside or islands such as Islay that will be effected by this new tax on the whisky industry, Dumbarton, Dalmuir and Renfrewshire will also be hard hit.

“In areas such as Dunbartonshire people work in the bottling plants and bonded warehouses that are sustained by the whisky industry. The introduction of tax stamps will cost the industry tens of millions of pounds every year for a measure that has already been proved to be completely ineffective in tackling fraud.”

Massive Public Support for Maxwell’s Passive Smoking Bill

The consultation by the Parliament on the Prohibition of Smoking in Regulated Areas (Scotland) Bill has resulted in the Health Committee being swamped by 300 submissions. Of these, the vast majority are firmly in favour of the Bill.

In response Mr Maxwell said, “I am delighted by the overwhelming support that there has been for my Bill and I would like to thank all those organisations and individuals who took the time and made the effort to make a submission to the Health Committee.

“It is unusual for there to be so many submissions to the Parliament about a Bill and the level of interest and level of support shows that it is time that the Parliament acted to protect people from the dangers of passive smoking.

“The debate engendered by my Bill has shown that the public want a full public places ban and during June the Parliament will be taking oral evidence on the Bill and I am sure that the evidence given will show why we need this legislation to be passed as soon as possible.”

Self-Extinguishing Cigarettes Save Lives

Following the introduction of legislation to make cigarettes in Canada fire-safe, Stewart Maxwell MSP has called for the Scottish Government to do the same thing here.

Launching his campaign Stewart said, “Both lives and property could be protected by this simple measure. Scotland has one of the worst fire death rates in Europe and we need to take urgent action to cut this terrible statistic. Fires started as a result of cigarettes which are not extinguished properly are responsible for a large number of

the fire deaths in Scotland. The introduction of self-extinguishing cigarettes to Scotland is one of the simplest measures that we could take to dramatically cut the number of fire fatalities in Scotland. I urge the Scottish Fire Brigades to back my campaign to make cigarettes less of a fire risk.

“Insurance companies should also be in favour of this step. In Scotland millions of pounds a year could be saved if we followed the lead set by Canada and made fire-safe cigarettes compulsory. The insurance

industry would save money, leading to lower insurance premiums for the ordinary householder. I urge the insurance companies to back my call for legislation to introduce these type of cigarettes.

“I am calling upon the Scottish Fire Brigades and the insurance companies to back my campaign to save lives and protect property by joining me in urging the Scottish Government to follow Canada’s lead and legislate for the introduction of fire-safe cigarettes”.

Local Hero Needed for Parliament Opening

Are you a local hero? If you are then maybe you are the person Stewart Maxwell is looking for to attend the opening of the new Scottish Parliament building when it is officially opened by the Queen.

Launching his search for a local hero Mr Maxwell said, “As MSP for the West of Scotland I have the privilege of being able to nominate someone worthy of representing the area at the opening ceremony for the new Parliament on October 9th. The person I am looking for

could be a volunteer or anyone who has performed worthy deeds within the local community. Do you know of such a person? If you do then why not send in their details, along with your own to my constituency office as soon as possible and preferably before the end of May.”

More than 1000 people will take part in a procession from the site of the old Scot’s Parliament down the Royal

Mile to the new building at Holyrood. They will then watch the opening ceremony on plasma screens in the Dynamic Earth building before taking part in a reception hosted by the

Presiding Officer George Reid MSP and then taking a tour of the new Parliament building.

“We need a local hero from the West of Scotland to take part in this historic day”

Maxwell Tackles Scottish Government on Lack of Support for Loch Lomond Rescue Boat

Stewart Maxwell MSP took on the Scottish Government twice recently about their lack of support for the Loch Lomond Rescue Boat.

As part of the Justice 1 Committee examination of the Protection of Emergency Workers (Scotland) Bill Mr Maxwell cross-questioned the civil servants responsible for the Bill.

Stewart said, “I was astonished to discover that the Bill gives enhanced protection for the crews of RNLI boats, but not for volunteer crews of other emergency boats such as the Loch Lomond Rescue Boat. The answers I received proved to me that the government had not even thought about such boats or their crews. I will be lodging an amendment to their Bill to ensure

that non-RNLI rescue boat crews are also covered by the enhanced protection.

“I also raised the matter directly with the Deputy Minister for Justice in the Chamber and was unimpressed with his excuses for failing to make either a financial or a legal commitment to assisting the Loch Lomond Rescue Boat.”