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The Scottish Play



One wonders what the old Scottish folk heroes would have made of the quality of all this domestic talk of referendums on Scottish independence.

In a matter of months, it will be the tenth anniversary of the most recent trips to the referendum polls for the Scots, and the debate has not really simmered down.

It has been as dire a year for Westminster as it's been for the ruling Scottish National Party in Edinburgh, whose First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, underwent a police raid of her home along with her husband.

It was slightly mortifying to see it emblazoned all over TV, and it was bamboozling that she hadn't bowed out after failing to **reach the 55% threshold** on her long-cherished support from the people.

But you don't have to resign if your clansmen forgive you for failing to share a dream via a once-off vote and being on TV as the media reported her release from prison. Her husband fared worse - as the head of Party Finances, you really shouldn't be charged for stealing funds. But he has not yet been tried - other than in the Court of Public Opinion.

She has **resigned** now - well, she had to, really. But politicians don't have to resign if they lose a referendum. It's a little bit like paraphrasing Einstein's much-quoted comment - they just have another one on the same subject until they eventually get the answer they want.

Scotland has no such political heft advantage, which, I suspect, is one of the major reasons for the hot-headed independence Nationalist lobby to campaign so strongly for "Indy 2".

It's classic for Scottish people to blame the English for every malheur that affects them

Humza Yousaf is right when he **wrote in the LSE** this week that there is currently political and economic "carnage" in the UK and that this is due to a "Westminster consensus" that

Scotland is not being granted the promised financial compensation for being on the losing side.

It's classic for Scottish people to blame the English for every malheur that affects them.

So, schisms are all over the place. It's part of politics. It's a complex question: do you want to remain with Westminster or leave the Union?

But I have a suspicion that people wouldn't vote to leave if there were a Referenda arrangement which asked do you want an independent Scotland in Europe?

The possibility of this happening is micro-minimal and they have no chance of being accepted by the EU. During the referendum campaign, the only countries in the world that supported the idea were Palestine (bagpipes lovers, though probably not at the moment, and North Korea - Kim - has a liking for whiskey and wanted to cut a deal).

Political shenanigans

Humza knows that people's woes are primarily about security for themselves and their children and guaranteed employment. In other words, money.

He is doubtless aware, given that his party has been in power since 2011 and enjoyed a hefty amount of sleaze and scandal and that he, Rishi, is an unknown quantity as far as the Scottish electorate is concerned.

I don't think flying a kite for the idea of somehow turning around Brexit will do him much good. The SNP needs to regroup and look at finessing its strategy; now that the Labour Party has finally become re-electable.

Otherwise, he and his nationalist cohorts, risk being compared to a lot of "exhausted volcanos" (Benjamin Disraeli of William Gladstone's long-serving Victorian government). As for the Scottish people, basically, we need to cheer up.

As the famous French Enlightenment satirist Voltaire, said, “We look to Scotland for all our ideas of civilisation”.

I predict there will be Scottish independence but not in my lifetime - it's crazy to have this odd set-up between two such different countries.