

POLITICS

Salmond confirms he will fight for Westminster seat

By Andy McSmith

Alex Salmond has announced he is planning a return to Westminster politics, where he is likely to act as a power broker if – as the polls indicate – next year's general election results in a hung Parliament.

The former First Minister told cheering supporters that he is a "candidate for the nomination" in rural seat of Gordon, near Aberdeen, which overlaps with the East Aberdeenshire constituency that he currently represents in the Scottish Parliament.

The SNP has been enjoying a surge of support despite losing September's referendum on Scottish independence, and may hold the balance of power in the next Parliament, with the Lib Dems possibly being reduced to fourth-party status.

{i} Alex Salmond would have to overturn the 6,748 majority that Gordon's current MP, Lib Dem Malcolm Bruce, who is standing down, had in 2010.

Mr Salmond made it clear that he intends to use his bargaining power to try to force the next government to go much further in granting self-rule for Scotland than the recommendations of the Smith Commission, set up after the referendum.

The commission's recommended solution, he said, "is not fiscal autonomy, it is not devo-max, it is not home rule, it is certainly not near federalism. What it is, is something which leaves 70 per cent of

taxation under control of Westminster, and more than 80 per cent of social policy".

Mr Salmond ruled out any deal with the Conservatives, but made it clear that the SNP would be open to a deal with a minority Labour administration.

He later BBC Radio 4's *The World This Weekend* programme that it was "unlikely" that he or anyone else from the SNP would sit in a Labour Cabinet "but I'm not ruling it out".

SCOTLAND

Sturgeon 'after Crown Estate money'

By Laura Robertson

Profits generated by the Crown Estate in Scotland could be kept in their entirety by the Scottish government under plans being considered by Nicola Sturgeon, rather than going to the UK Treasury, with a proportion being given to the Queen.

The Crown Estate currently makes around £240m a year, with the royal family receiving

15 per cent in "sovereign grant". According to the *Mail on Sunday* Ms Sturgeon, Scotland's First Minister, plans to keep all the profits within the jurisdiction of Holyrood.

The Scottish government said, however, that it would "continue to contribute a full and fair share to the sovereign grant, which is pegged to, but not actually drawn from, a proportion of Crown Estate profits".



Game's afoot at awards

Sherlock stars Benedict Cumberbatch (left, with his fiancée, Sophie Hunter) and Andrew Scott were both championed at the Moët British Independent Film Awards (Bifas) yesterday evening.

Cumberbatch was presented with the Variety Award. He missed out on the Best Actor accolade for his turn as mathematician Alan Turing in *The Imitation Game* to Harry Potter star Brendan Gleeson for his performance as a troubled Catholic priest in *Calvary*.

Scott (Moriarty in *Sherlock*) was awarded the Best Supporting Actor gong for his role in *Pride*, the story of striking Welsh miners in the 1980s. The film won the most awards of the night. AFP/GETTY

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