

Referendum Debate

Published on *Holyrood's Referendum Debate* (<http://referendum.holyrood.com>)

[Home](#) > What to expect when one is expecting

What to expect when one is expecting

Written by Liam Kirkaldy on 8 September 2014



Gordon Brown must be raging.

It was his big moment. After years of standing – some would say lurking – in the shadows, resisting calls to enter the referendum debate he was set to make a major intervention.

His problem is that Kate Middleton got there first, announcing this morning that she is pregnant with her second child.

Paranoia soon kicked in on Twitter.

Was it the work of MI5? The question on everyone's lips: did Kate Middleton get knocked up deliberately, in an attempt to knock the recent polling – showing 51 per cent support for independence – off the front page?

Or did the Queen, apparently concerned at growing Yes support, put her up to it?

Brown will not be thanking Will.

And the news could still have an impact on the debate.

There will not be a wave of pro-UK feeling across Scotland in reaction to the news, but it could at least dilute the message dominating the 24 hour news loop for the past couple days: Scotland might very well vote to become independent.

It is not exactly the love bomb many were expecting and it will not help Brown get his message out.

He has admittedly tried to get his message out before. In fact he seems to have entered the debate for the first time more times than anyone else. It is yet again Brown-hog Day.

But tonight Brown will call for a timetable on further devolution in the event of a No, aiming to have cross party talks on September 19 leading up to draft legislation in place for January 2015.

The plans do not actually contain anything different from those Labour announced in March, it is just that Brown – a back bench opposition MP – has suggested a timetable which the coalition could adopt, if it wanted to.

It is the policy equivalent of warming up cold soup and leaving a note to suggest what time someone should eat it. In fact given he is not in power, he can't even ensure we will get the soup.

And it is debatable whether that will be enough to sway voters who have bought into the idea that a No would see Scotland punished.

Certainly Ruth Davidson has been guilty of sending out mixed messages over the future of devolution - first claiming there would be a 'line in the sand' over more powers, before seemingly choosing to take her promises, stamp on them and build a sandcastle – with her party publishing proposals for new powers in June.

But to be fair to Brown, he would have been criticised either way – to come out with anything more substantial would look like panic in response to high polling for Yes. It would have raised questions about why he did not suggest it earlier.

But it is no game-changer. In fact some will be wondering whether it would have been better if the announcement would have got more traction if it had been left to Kate Middleton.

[Government and politics](#) [1]

Liam Kirkaldy

Source URL: <http://referendum.holyrood.com/blog/what-expect-when-one-expecting>

Links

[1] <http://referendum.holyrood.com/categories/government-and-politics>