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PM says no to English-only votes

PM Gordon Brown has ruled out "English votes for English laws" under his wide-ranging constitutional plans.



Scottish MPs in Westminster can vote on England-only issues

Banning Scottish MPs from voting on England-only issues would "create two classes of MPs," he said.

Such a change would mean some MPs would be entitled to vote on all issues, others only on some, said Mr Brown.

Tory leader David Cameron said two classes already existed - as Mr Brown could not vote on health or education in his own Scottish constituency.

Scotland has had its own Parliament, with powers over education, health, the environment, home affairs and to alter income tax, since 1999.

This has led to criticism of the system that allows Scotland's Westminster MPs to vote on English affairs.

“ We have two classes of MP already ”

David Cameron
Conservative leader

In Mr Brown's first Commons address as prime minister, he said: "While we will listen to all proposals to improve our constitution in the light of devolution, we do not accept the proposal for English votes for English laws which would create two classes of MPs - some entitled to vote on all issues, some invited to vote only on some.

"We will do nothing to put at risk the Union."

The Conservatives have long argued for a ban on Scottish MPs voting on England-only issues.

Mr Cameron, addressing Mr Brown, said: "Neither you nor I has the right to vote on hospitals, schools or housing in your constituency (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath) or in other parts of Scotland.

"Yet you are able to vote on hospitals, on schools and housing in my constituency (Witney).

"We have two classes of MP already.

"The only effective way to solve this problem is to give MPs in English constituencies the decisive say on issues that only affect England."

Liberal Democrat leader Sir Menzies Campbell told the Commons that "once devolution is properly established in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales" voting by the MPs

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from the nations was "an issue which simply cannot be dismissed."

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