

The Shambles of English Votes for English Laws

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The idea of Scotland as a valued member of a Union based on consensus is in tatters. The idea of a parliament representing the whole of the United Kingdom is no longer credible. In a week in which Westminster democracy came under scrutiny as [press freedom was undermined with the creation of an inner lobby](#) – a new crisis developed.

Scottish MP's votes on a Bill regarding the funding of the NHS, that will have an effect on Scotland's block grant due to the Barnett Formula were last night evening prevented from voting. As [Martin Docherty-Hughes](#) puts it:

"Today Scottish & Welsh MPs have been excluded from voting on a Bill which has direct consequences on both our nations NHS: nevertheless we sought to express our rights & the voice of our constituents."

This is a significant moment.

As Daniel Glover, lecturer in British Politics at School of Politics and International Relations, Queen Mary University of London stated:

"I believe this is the first ever division in an [#EVEL](#) legislative grand committee – and hence the first time non-English MPs have been unable to participate in a Commons vote."

See Daniel Glover and Michael Kenny's analysis of some of the issues with English Votes for English Laws here: ['Answering the West Lothian Question? A Critical Assessment of 'English Votes for English Laws' in the UK Parliament'](#).

The incident was thought to be comical by the Conservatives and the Deputy Speaker could hardly contain her exasperation at these irritating elected MPs from Scotland participating at all. But it does leave EVEL looking like an unworkable shambles.

Dame Eleanor Laing as Madame Deputy Speaker confirmed in her reply to a point of order Martin Docherty-Hughes that the NHS Funding Bill does indeed have Barnett consequential so there can be no doubt that Scottish MPs were prevented from voting on a bill which affects Scotland.

Michael Gove branded the SNP's actions a "transparent stunt". The BBC's Political Correspondent Nick Eardley called it a "stooshie". You might have seen snippets of it, but it's worth watching the whole 'debate' unfold:

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