

Sunday 23 August

Cable calls MP's Pension Scheme 'Scandalous'

Vince Cable today described the 28% contribution to the Westminster MP's Pension scheme by taxpayers 'particularly scandalous' and in need of reform. In answer to a question asked in a debate at the Edinburgh International Book Festival this afternoon, Cable described the issue of public sector pensions as a good acid test in restoring faith in the British political system and politicians following recent scandals and called for fundamental reform with civil servants and quangocrats making larger contributions to their own pension schemes.

In a lively debate entitled Rebuilding Trust: Britain in the Aftermath of the Crash, politicians Vince Cable and Roy Hattersley, historian Michael Fry and Scottish editor of The Times, Magnus Linklater discussed the economy, the lack of public trust in British politicians and the recent release of the Lockerbie bomber, Abdelbaset al-Megrahi.

All the speakers agreed that the lack of trust in politicians was a longstanding issue and had merely been exacerbated by the recent revelations in the Daily Telegraph, which confirmed public suspicions. Roy Hattersley said that "Politicians are at best impotent and at worst self-seeking and the public assume, with some justification that politicians are more influenced by public opinion polls than their own beliefs" and called for a return to ideological politics and confrontational democracy. Cable went on to say that he was appalled that banks were going back to business as usual and it appeared that no lessons had been learnt from the recent collapses, particularly of the Scottish banks.

On the Lockerbie bomber, Vince Cable and Roy Hattersley agreed that the conspiracy theories circulating over the release of al-Megrahi were unfounded, Cable saying that he was baffled by this – it was like a plot of a bad novel and he didn't believe a word of it. He went on to say "that MacAskill's decision was either naïve and he didn't think through the consequences, or foolish and he did think through the consequences but ignored them. It was a bad decision but his decision to make." Hattersley added "The conspiracy seems to stem from Peter Mandelson going to an expensive party – if we had a crisis every time Mandelson went to an expensive party, we would be in a state of complete collapse." However, he disagreed with Cable and supported MacAskill's decision to come down on the side of compassion.

Rebuilding Trust: Britain in the Aftermath of the Crash was sponsored by The Times and chaired by Magnus Linklater, Editor of The Times in Scotland.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT FRANCES SUTTON, PRESS MANAGER:

frances@edbookfest.co.uk / Tel: 0131 718 5654 / Mob: 07841 579481 / Fax: 0131 226 5335



in association with

THE  **TIMES**
THE SUNDAY TIMES
SCOTLAND

Press Release

15 - 31 August 2009, Charlotte Square Gardens, Edinburgh.

www.edbookfest.co.uk

-ends-

For further information please contact:
Frances Sutton Press Manager
frances@edbookfest.co.uk or 0131 718 5654

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT FRANCES SUTTON, PRESS MANAGER:

frances@edbookfest.co.uk / Tel: 0131 718 5654 / Mob: 07841 579481 / Fax: 0131 226 5335