

Scots in Edmonton eye homeland

Independence referendum set

CATHERINE GRIWKOWSKY
Edmonton Sun

Scottish ex-pats in Edmonton recall past referendums, and say the choice is now in the hands of voters as the decision on independence looms.

Former Dundee, Scotland, resident Peter Dolan returned from a trip to Scotland with his family on Aug. 30 and has been keeping up with the news of the vote for independence, which is set for Thursday.

He thinks the country will vote to stay.

"The status quo for many people is not the best, but it's better than being outside," Dolan said.

When he was 19, Dolan voted yes in the 1979 referendum. But those who didn't vote were counted as a "no".

He moved to Canada 18 years ago, but had spent many holidays in the country visit-

ing his grandmother.

With a large number of voters undecided, Dolan called separation a romantic notion.

"They've always felt they had a raw deal, especially when there's a Conservative government in," he said.

Dolan said when Stephen Harper was overseas he said he was in favour of the union - a decision Dolan said is for the people who live there to make.

"If they do get independence, the English are going to be stuck with a Conservative government forever," Dolan said, referencing Scotland's tendency to vote in Labour governments.

He added Scottish people are in favour of social justice.

British Prime Minister David Cameron has asked voters to keep the union, warning grocery prices could soar, jobs could go south and the country's security could suffer.

There's no word on how

it might affect the price of Scotch.

Doug Townshend, owner of Bothy Whisky bar, said he voted yes when he lived in Scotland, but after more than 30 years in Canada, the country has changed.

He voted in favour of home rule, but back then there were fewer English people in Scotland. English relatives would come up to visit.

"It's not a personal thing, it just comes down to the government," he said.

Now, English buy up Scottish property, which has created some resentment for Scottish people living there.

Like Dolan, he expects "no" ballots to be cast on Thursday.

"At the same time, I'm speaking from 6,000 miles away," he said.

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PERRY MAH/QMI AGENCY

Scotsman Doug Townsend toasts to a good outcome for the Scottish independence vote in front of his Edmonton bar, The Bothy, on Saturday.



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Holly, an aerial artist from Sp...
Festival on 118 Avenue between...
up Sunday.