**St Andrew’s Day Bank Holiday (Scotland) Bill**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bill Number:</th>
<th>SP Bill 41</th>
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<td>Introduced on:</td>
<td>19 May 2005</td>
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<td>Introduced by:</td>
<td>Dennis Canavan (Member’s Bill)</td>
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<td>Passed:</td>
<td>29 November 2006</td>
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<td>Royal Assent:</td>
<td>15 January 2007</td>
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2007 asp 2

**Passage of the Bill**

The *St Andrew’s Day Bank Holiday (Scotland) Bill* [SP Bill 41] was introduced in the Parliament by Dennis Canavan MSP on 19 May 2005. Stage 1 commenced on 8 September with the Enterprise and Culture Committee designated as the lead committee. The first of two Stage 1 debates was held on 6 October 2005, after which the Bill was referred back to the Committee for further consideration of the general principles. The Committee took further evidence and recommended a second time that the Parliament agree to the general principles of the Bill. A second Stage 1 parliamentary debate was held on 28 September 2006. Following approval of the general principles the Bill was passed without amendment following the Stage 3 parliamentary debate on 29 November 2006. The Bill received Royal Assent on 15 January 2007.

**Purpose and objectives of the Bill**

The Bill aims to facilitate the creation of a “national day” on St Andrew’s Day (or the following Monday if St Andrew’s Day falls at a weekend) in order to celebrate Scotland and its people in terms of culture, diversity, history, tradition, contemporary society, arts, sport, enterprise and international standing. An underlying aim of the Bill is to bring Scotland closer into line with Northern Ireland and other European countries that enjoy more public holidays.

**Provisions of the Bill**

The Bill amends the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971 which identifies designated days on which banking transactions can be suspended without penalty. Although these provisions do not actually require banks or any other organisations to close on these days, the intention of the Bill is that inclusion of St Andrews Day in the 1971 Act will help ensure the day becomes widely recognised as one of national celebration.

**Parliamentary consideration**
Dennis Canavan launched a consultation on the proposal in July 2004. A summary of the consultation responses indicated that 75% of the 142 responses were supportive, with another 10% partially or conditionally supportive. Nine per cent were unsure or made no comment whilst 6% disagreed fully with the proposals. Responses from individuals tended to be supportive, whilst the business community was more divided.

Two Member’s debates were held on the subject of St Andrew’s Day in 2004. One followed a motion from Donald Gorrie MSP, debated on 17 March 2004, another on a motion lodged by Dennis Canavan, debated on 1 December 2004.

The Bill was introduced in the Parliament on 19 May 2005. The lead committee (Enterprise and Culture) began its Stage 1 consideration on 8 September 2005. Representatives of Scottish retailers, visitor attractions and trade unions were supportive whilst the Confederation of British Industry, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Committee of Scottish Clearing Bankers expressed opposition or reservations. A key issue for the business community was whether the holiday would be seen as a replacement or as an additional holiday.

The Committee recommended support of the general principles of the Bill. The Committee also stated its view that whether the Bill was passed or not, the Scottish Executive should bring forward a comprehensive set of proposals to enhance the celebration of St Andrew’s Day both domestically and internationally.

The Executive however was not persuaded of the case for the proposed legislation to achieve the aims of celebrating St Andrew’s Day. The Bill did not fall at Stage 1 however but was referred back to the Enterprise and Culture Committee for further consideration of the general principles and to consider options for improving the way in which St Andrew’s day is celebrated. The Committee took further evidence which included commissioning research into the economic, social and cultural costs and benefits of a St Andrew’s Day holiday. In the second Stage 1 debate on 28 September 2006 the Executive supported the Bill. A joint statement by the First Minister and the Member in charge indicated that the intention was to encourage employers and employees to substitute an existing holiday in favour of a national St Andrew’s Day holiday.

Stage 2 of the Bill took place on 7 November 2006, though there were no amendments. The Stage 3 debate took place on 29 November 2006. The motion to pass the Bill was agreed to without division.