

SNP hypocrisy over budget 'con' claims

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SNP claims that £2 billion worth of new investment for Scotland announced in yesterday's budget is a "con" have been ridiculed in Holyrood.

Finance secretary Derek Mackay dismissed yesterday's substantial cash injection on the basis part of it was in the form of financial transactions, a position now backed by Nicola Sturgeon.

However, at First Minister's Questions today, it was revealed that the SNP used hundreds of millions of pounds of the same transactions in its own budget in the last year.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson even pointed out that the £50 million announced so far of the SNP's trumpeted Scottish Growth Scheme depends entirely on financial transaction funding.

In the Scottish Government's 2017/18 budget, the SNP used financial transactions to invest £259.5 million in communities, social security and equalities; £59 million in the economy, jobs and fair work; and £11.8 million in education and skills.

The nationalists also used financial transactions to provide interest-free loans for low carbon vehicles.

Ruth pointed out today that when the UK Government used the method it was a "con", yet when the Scottish Government utilised it, it was "a half billion pound vote of confidence in Scottish business, Scottish workers and the Scottish economy".

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"The usual complaint from the SNP is that it's not getting enough money.

"Now that money has arrived, the nationalists claim it's just the wrong kind of money.

"This is cash that could be spent funding housing or addressing fuel poverty, two massive issues in Scotland, yet Nicola Sturgeon doesn't want to know.

"She should spend a little less time complaining about where the money is coming from and bit more thinking of the positive ways it could be used.

"This £2 billion is a substantial investment. Money is available now for the Scottish Government to direct ahead of its own budget.

"Instead of complaining about this cash, the SNP should get on with making sure it's used properly."