

## SNP: Higher whiskey taxes bad for Scotland

by UPI

LONDON - The Scottish Nationalist leader in the British Parliament said Thursday that the chancellor of the exchequer's new budget is a blow to malt whiskey distillers. Angus Robertson accused Chancellor Alistair Darling of backing off a plan to tax wine and beer equally with hard liquor, The Scotsman reported. Robertson represents a district in Moray with half of Scotland's malt whiskey distillers. "Alistair Darling has undone any benefit the whiskey industry had from the previous duty freeze, and this is a bitter blow for an industry on which so many jobs and rural communities are dependent," Robertson said. According to the SNP, Darling's proposal to increase the tax on hard liquor by 59 pence (\$1.20) a bottle is the biggest tax hike since 1975. Darling responded that malt whiskey has had the benefit of a decade of frozen taxes. He said that Scotland needs the assistance to poor families and the elderly that will be funded by higher taxes on liquor, cigarettes and new cars.

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