

EVIDENCE

TAKEN BY

HER MAJESTY's COMMISSIONERS OF INQUIRY

INTO THE CONDITIONS OF

THE CROFTERS AND COTTARS

IN THE

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS OF SCOTLAND

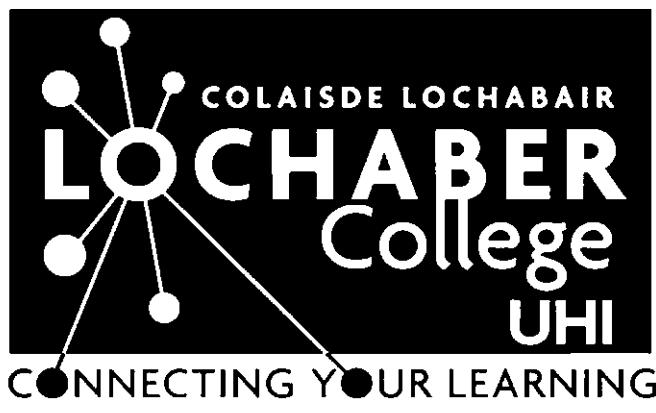
VOL IV.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY COMMAND OF HER MAJESTY



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2007



' with a view to obtain the Government grant. But, notwithstanding this, the chairman of the board moved that the public school in the district should be taught in one of these—the one further west—which was accordingly done, in the face of a protesting minority of the School Board, the earnest petitions and remonstrances of the parents and rate-payers of the district, and the recommendations of the Board of Education. Instead of this, there should have been erected a new school in a central part of the district, as was strongly recommended by the Board of Education, which would be accessible to all the children of the district. The building in which the school was now taught had to be repaired year after year, but, as regularly it was found wanting by Her Majesty's inspector. The repeated directions of the Board of Education to build a house halfway between the two old schools were persistently ignored. At last, when the old house in the west was utterly condemned by the local architect, the board, led by its chairman, setting all remonstrances at defiance, transferred the school to the other old building to the east of the district. This placed the school beyond the reach of the children in the west of the Strath. The house was repaired by the board, but did not satisfy the inspector. The singular thing is, that the board used public money in this, and in the other house west, to improve private property. As the school was now so far away, the children did not come to it. To punish them for not coming all the distance the board wished them, it was moved (11th February 1880) by the chairman, and as a matter of course carried, that the parents of said children should be prosecuted. This was done, and the issues of it were that the people thus treated were wounded to the core with indignation at the conduct of the board for the insult which was added to the injury done to their children, and the board had to pay £42 in the form of law expenses. As the only dissentient from this decision of the board to prosecute these people, I submitted my reasons for so doing, when the chairman, without consulting any member of the board, threw the paper which contained my reasons of dissent aside. I remonstrated with him for this, and stated that I would report his (the chairman's) oppressive and tyrannical conduct in the School Board to his noble master the Duke of Sutherland, whereupon he called me by an unworthy epithet, and lifted his stick evidently threatening physical violence—which attitude, coupled with the well-known fact that he can use his hand with effect when it serves his purpose, I confess I shook all over, as I never did before any man before. The irrecoverable loss thus sustained by the children of the district in question irritated the people so much that their indignation at the factor's policy in the board, was to a considerable extent the cause of the riot on the occasion of the case of forcible eviction in said district last year. The perpetual quarrels in the board, the loss sustained by the children, the unfair way of spending the money of the ratepayers, all led the leaders of the people in the Established and Free Church congregations to take this matter in hand, and deemed it prudent, in the interests of all, that the factor should be left out at last triennial election. The new board thus elected at once proceeded to arrange for a new school being built for the district in a central and suitable locality. After a protracted and unseemly struggle with the authorities, a site at last has just been obtained for the school. If this had been done ten years ago, it would have saved much money to the ratepayers, considerable ill-feeling in the whole place, and, above all, irrevocable loss to the children. I respectfully submit that—other things being equal—seeing the Duke of Sutherland hath such interest at stake in education over his extensive estate, I would, as a matter of fair play, have his representative in every School Board in the county.

SUTHERLAND.
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COLSPRE.
—
Rev. Alex. Mackay.

SUTHER
LAND.

GOLSPIE.

Rev. Alex.
Mackay.

' Yes, other things being equal, but, I am sorry to say, that they are not so, but most unequal. While his Grace chooses to have men representing him who cannot act in a gentlemanly manner, who cannot treat those with whom they have to deal but as inferiors, I say to all who have respect for themselves, and regard for the prosperity of their children, let them not allow a factor to rule in a school board. Two great evils beset this management of this vast estate—one is the absence of the proprietor and his commissioner for ten months of the year, and the other is to leave the whole estate in the charge of men who are out of all sympathy with the people they have to govern. These men, owing to their knowledge of the work, and the ignorance of the superior authorities of it by reason of their absence from the county, are practically irresponsible.'

39516. I have allowed this paper to be read to an end, because I thought something might come which bore upon the interests more directly with which we are concerned, but it seems to me that, generally speaking, it is rather a question for the Board of Education and for the School Board of this place than for our consideration. However, I will endeavour to bring it into connection with our inquiry in this way, How is the SchoolBoard composed?—It is now composed of parties in the parish. They are all in the parish except one gentleman. He was elected purposely to assist us to get a site in a suitable district—to get this new building to which I have referred erected.

39517. From what class are the members taken?—They are tenants—fters.

39518. Is the crofting class represented on the board?—Yes, they are all crofters except myself and another gentleman from the adjoining parish. There are two clergymen on the board and three crofters, making five in all.

39519. And then the gentleman from outside—who is he?—A clergyman.

39520. What communion does he belong to?—The Free Church.

39521. Then there are two Free Church clergymen and three crofters?—Yes.

39522. Therefore the School Board has a popular representative character?—Quite so.

39523. Well, it remains with the School Board to take what measures they like for the welfare of the people now?—Yes.

39524. Then what is the object of your reading this long remonstrance and complaint to us?—In order that the exposure thus made may be a check upon such a system, whether amongst us again or in any other parish, because we find an exposure of these things is the very best check to put upon them.

39525. In the meantime, you see a way out of all your difficulties?—I am hoping to see a way out.

39526. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—I presume you have also brought forward this statement here because the crofting interests have suffered in the past?—They have.

39527. Materially?—Materially.

39528. According to your own knowledge?—Yes.

39529. And you think in that way you had a right properly to bring it before the Commission now sitting?—I think, as you are sitting for the other grievances, this being such a serious grievance for so long and not a solitary instance, it was desirable you should know this.

39530. And one, unfortunately, that may have a lasting ill effect?—It will have a lasting effect, because the children lost their education, and they cannot get it again.

ANGUS MATHESON POLSON, Merchant, Golspie (32)—examined.

SUTHERLAND.
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GOLSPIE.

Angus
Matheson
Polson.

39531. *The Chairman.*—You have been chosen as the delegate of the fishermen particularly from Golspie?—Golspie, and Embo as well.

39532. Will you have the goodness to read your memorial on behalf of fishermen?—*Statement by the Fishermen of Embo, parish of Dornoch.*—‘The village of Embo (*alias* Fisherton) contains from 70 to 100 families, and numbered at last census about 700 souls. This statement or memorial is intended to acquaint the Royal Commission with the circumstances of the people of this village, and to pray that the Royal Commission may consider their case, and suggest the use of such measures as may improve their circumstances. The fishermen of Embo, in so far as their external lot is concerned, have little more than the following grievances to complain of:—1. *They have no land.*—The crofters in other parts of the parish complain of too little land, or of the poverty of their land, but the people of Embo village have no land whatever, good or bad. They pay high rents for the stances on which their houses stand, the erection and maintenance of which devolve upon themselves; and yet they have no land allowed in which to plant potatoes or any other kinds of crops to help them to maintain their families. What is desired is allocations of not less than two acres of land for each household. This amount of land can easily be reclaimed from the common on the north and east sides of the village, and the memorialists are willing to reclaim the land themselves. 2. *They have no harbour or place of refuge for their boats.*—Did the fishermen of Embo have a good harbour and the facilities for prosecuting their own profession, which a harbour would afford, they might feel the want of land less. But, in consequence of their being without a harbour, they are unable to prosecute their own profession in any weather but the finest; and while at sea they are in imminent danger of losing life and property from want of a convenient place of retreat to flee to in the event of a change of weather. They are further exposed to disadvantage from the trawling system and the occasional visits of large tug steamers, whereby the fish is destroyed in large quantities. In regard to the two disadvantages named, the fishermen of Embo feel assured that there is no fishing community, either on the north-east or west coasts of Scotland, so badly off as they are. When the herring fishing fails, owing to the local inconveniences for fishing, their efforts to make up for the loss by the home fishing are very precarious; and should they fail both in the herring fishing, and in the home fishing, their entire want of land leaves them in circumstances of the greatest poverty. For these and other reasons which might be mentioned, and which may be mentioned in the event of the Royal Commission according to them a hearing, the fishermen of Embo bespeak the kind consideration of the Commissioners; and in the event of the Commission suggesting any means whereby their circumstances may be improved, the memorialists will ever cherish a sense of their obligations to the members of the Royal Commission and to Her Majesty’s Government for appointing them. At a meeting of fishermen residing at Embo, held at Dornoch, the following parties were appointed as delegates to give evidence before the Royal Commission at Golspie, or at any convenient centre in the neighbourhood at which they may be invited to meet the Commissioners:—William Ross, Donald M’Kay, Donald Cumming, Kenneth Fraser, Peter Fraser, Hugh Grant—all fishermen and inhabitants of Embo. In addition to the advantage of an allotment of land financially, the delegates are strongly of opinion that

SUTHER-
LAND.

GOLSPIE.

Angus
Matheson
Polson.

“ it would be a great service morally to the inhabitants to have a small portion of land to engage their attention during those periods of the year when their occupation cannot be prosecuted. The fishermen are also prepared to pay to his Grace the Duke of Sutherland (for fairly good land) at the rate of £1 per acre, and it may be mentioned that they now pay in the locality at the rate of £7 per acre, and provide the manure required, &c. As to harbour accommodation, they admit that it is hardly practicable to have one at Embo. But at Golspie there is every facility afforded, and the one now started there ought to be constructed to suit the requirements of the fishermen of Embo as well as Golspie. They fish upon the ground off Golspie, and can get out and in there even now (without a harbour), when it is quite impossible to do the same at Embo or other harbours along the coast. As an example of one of the many hardships endured by us, we beg to state the following narrative:—Upon the 19th September last, owing to the bad state of the fishing at home (and in our opinion mainly owing to trawling), nine of our boats were obliged to go to Loch Hourn, to endeavour to make at all hazards, by every means possible, a living for our many dependants. But yet, after all our efforts, we were actually starved out and obliged to come home. We reached here (Embo) upon the 5th October, and during our absence the nine boats only fished three baskets (or one basket less than a cran). It is needless to say what state we found our dependants in on our return—many of them in poverty and want. The delegates formed part of the different crews, and it may be of interest to state that Kenneth Fraser has got a wife and seven of a family to support, William Ross has got a wife and nine of a family to support, Donald Mackay has got a wife and eight of a family to support, Donald Cumming has got a wife and eight of a family to support, and Peter Fraser has got a wife and five of a family to support. Now, seeing that it is truly impossible for us to make anything like a fair living out of the sea alone, we do hope that aid may be granted us, and that land may be had to suit our wants, and all we ask for is two acres for each family and we will gladly pay for the same at the rate of £1 per acre, in fairness to ourselves as well as to his Grace the Duke of Sutherland (that is, of course, for fair land). At the present time, we may state that we pay the tenants in the locality at the rate of £7 per acre for potato land, and have also to procure the manure required (along with our wives and families) long distances in creels upon our backs, very hard work indeed. So far as regards Embo, and now with regard to Golspie. The principal grievance there is the want of mussel bait, and they consider it a very hard grievance. Many years ago they had the use of the bait at Little Ferry at 5s. per head. Afterwards the price rose to 7s. 6d., again to 10s., and again to 20s. per man. Thereafter 1s. 6d. per basket was charged, again 2s., and yet again 2s. 6d., the present price. One basket of mussels is hardly sufficient to bait the lines of one man, and very often the return for the 2s. 6d. is only 6d. per man. With regard to the scandalous mode of life to which the women and children of the village are subjected, it does not require me to say much to convince your Lordship that matters ought to be and must be bettered. The bait which I refer to the fisherwomen require to carry in creels or baskets (weighing when full about two cwt. each) a distance of nearly four miles (or out and in about eight miles). They “ redd ” the lines and also bait them. They dig in the sand with spades—very arduous work even for men—for certain kinds of bait, and in the coldest days of winter they are obliged to wade much over knee deep (and that barefooted) into the chilly brine, with hard frost and snow on the ground. They assist in launching and hauling up the boats, often long distances. They carry

'the men into and out of the several boats. They require to assist in carrying the fish from the boats to the curing yard, and often travel long distances to sell the same; and besides all this, they require to attend to their household duties.'

39533. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—When was the village of Embo founded? Has it been there from time immemorial?—Yes.

39534. Have they ever had any land?—No.

39535. They have lived entirely by fishing?—Yes.

39536. Is the fishing entirely white fish?—All kinds.

39537. Do they go to the herring fishing also?—Yes.

39538. What kind of boats have you?—*John Grant*, fisherman, Embo (50). Small boats about eighteen feet keel. We cannot go far out, because there is not a harbour where we can haul them up or down.

39539. You don't complain in your paper of the harbour?—No, but if we could get a piece of land for our family, so that we could dry our nets, I pay £7 or £8 an acre for land.

39540. Have you not so much as a kailyard?—No.

39541. Had you never such a thing?—Yes; our grandfathers had land.

39542. When was it taken from them?—It was taken many years ago.

39543. Was it given to some farmers?—It was given for big farms.

There is a farmer who has 2000 acres of land.

39544. Have any of you a cow?—No.

39545. Where do you get milk?—We have to buy it and pay for it.

39546. Where have you to go for it?—Four miles, three miles, and two miles—perhaps as far as the first farm that will give it.

39547. Is the complaint about the bait confined to Golspie, or does it extend to Embo? Do you complain about the mussels?—We complain the very same.

39548. Only you have not so far to go for them?—The very same. We have to go to Little Ferry and Dornoch, and sometimes six or seven miles.

39549. Is there no other bait that can be used?—We can use cockles, but there is a great deal of labour with them. I have to be barefooted on the ground in the snow and rain, and then carry the basket four miles on my back.

39550. Is it not possible for you to get any other bait?—No, we could not buy them as they are so dear—2s. 6d. a basket; that is horrid—it is past bearing altogether. If I paid that 2s. 6d. it would not pay me, because perhaps I would not get a shilling's worth of fish.

39551. *The Chairman.*—Who gathers the bait, and who sells it?—The Duke of Sutherland has a man there.

39552. It is gathered and sold by a man who gathers the bait on the shore?—Yes.

39553. Do the mussels belong to the Duke?—He claims them when they are on the edge of his ground.

39554. Does he let the right of gathering the mussels to a man? Does the man who gathers the mussels and sells them to you pay a rent to the Duke?—No, but the Duke pays him so much a year to do so.

39555. To gather the mussels and then to sell them to you?—Yes.

39556. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—I thought you gathered the mussels yourselves?—The man gathers them, but they would grow better the way they are, but they are making out to claim them.

39557. *The Chairman.*—Do you say the Duke employs a man to gather the mussels?—Yes, six or seven.

39558. And these men sell the mussels to you?—Yes.

39559. Who gets the price you pay; does it go to the Duke?—It goes to the Duke.

39560. And you say the price has been very much raised of late years;

SUTHER-

LAND.

GOLSPIE.

Angus

Matheson

Polson.

SUTHER-
LAND.
—
GOLSPIE.

Angus
Matheson
Polson.

but perhaps the Duke has to pay higher wages to the people to gather them?—I cannot say about that, but they don't want anybody to go near them at all.

39561. Then the bait is gathered by the Duke's agents. About the land, if the Duke pleased to give the land, is there any land near the village which he could take away from a farm and let to you?—Yes, plenty.

39562. Did you say you were sometimes paying £7 or £8 for the land?—Yes, if not more. I pay 2d. a yard for a piece six yards broad, and that comes to about £7, 10s.

39563. You pay that to the farmer?—Yes.

39564. But you would be willing to pay £1 to the Duke?—Yes, besides our own labour.

39565. What do you think could be done for the improvement of the fishermen here?—*Mr Polson.* The best thing that could be done would be in the way of granting a proper harbour suitable for the two villages, and at the same time to allow them an allotment of land.

39566. Is there something being done towards a harbour?—There is something on a very small scale.

39567. Is it done at the Duke's expense?—No; it is done altogether through some gentlemen who are interested in the fishermen of both places.

39568. You mean some gentlemen are combined to improve the harbour?—Yes.

39569. Will they have to pay any rent to the Duke?—I have not the slightest doubt we are willing to pay for the harbour.

39570. If you had a harbour, would it be possible to introduce a better kind of boat?—Yes. The boats are now perfect shells, and very dangerous indeed.

39571. Are none of the large decked boats in use at all?—No, they cannot come in. At Embo the boats require to be drawn down 300 yards till they reach the water.

39572. You spoke about the hardships the women endure; do the women endure greater hardships than is common among the women of the fishing classes in general?—Ever so much, because they have harbours in other places, and here they have not.

39573. Why do they carry their husbands ashore on their backs?—I can hardly answer the question, but it is really a sad state of matters.

39574. Could not the men get out of the boats and walk ashore?—I cannot answer that. The men are often very tired, and in going out again they require to get out to the boats dry.

39575. Have they not got waterproof clothes?—Not many of them.

WILLIAM INNES, Crofter, Gruids (58)—examined.

William
Innes.

39576. *The Chairman.*—The point I want to ask you about is this. In a statement that was presented it was said that in your township a portion of the common pasture had been taken away twenty-six years ago, and had been added to a farm?—Yes.

39577. The factor, Mr Fraser, came and stated absolutely that none of the common pasture was ever taken away from the crofters in your township at all during the time of Sir James Matheson's proprietorship?—Yes, it was taken away from them twenty-six years ago.

39578. A portion of the common pasture?—Yes, miles of it.

39579. To whom was it given?—*Mr Sellar,* and Mr Fraser, the factor.

39580. And it had always been used before by the crofters?—Yes, since my grandfather's time.

39581. Had they paid rent for it along with the crofts?—Yes.

JOHN MILLER, Crofter, Gruids (74)—examined.

SUTHER-
LAND.

GOLSPIE

John Miller.

39582. *The Chairman.*—How long have you been in the occupation of a croft at Gruids?—I have been there since I was born.

39583. Since you have been there has any of the common pasture of the township been taken away?—Yes, a long time ago.

39584. Is it since the family of Matheson got the estate, or was it before they got the estate?—It was after Sir James' time that the hill was last taken from us.

39585. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—How many years ago?—Upwards of twenty years ago.

39586. Was there a good piece taken away?—Yes, two or three miles of hill.

39587. Who got it?—Mr Sellar, who was a sheep farmer there.

39588. Have they got it back?—No.

The following statements were also handed in:—

' *The Grievances of William Campbell, tenant-farmer, Edin, Rogart.*
 ' —1. Having no road coming to the place, only the liberty of crossing
 ' the river at a ford, which is not passable, but very seldom during the
 ' winter and spring quarters of the year. An application had been pre-
 ' sented to the Duke for a track of road to the place, the answer given
 ' by the factor was, if I would pay interest for the making a road it would
 ' be granted. 2. In consequence of this disadvantage, the farm offices are
 ' in perfect ruin for the want of a road to drive the materials for their
 ' building. Another hardship endured is paying £6 of interest for the
 ' money not expended for the farm offices during the currency of the
 ' lease. 3. Increasing the rent. When occupied by my father the rent
 ' was £9. When he died the place was measured, and the rent raised to
 ' £20 a year. The half of the arable land now is reclaiming ground, for
 ' which no compensation was paid.'

' *John Matheson*, delegate for Greenhill, Dalchalm, and East Brora,
 ' parish of Clyne. The principal grievance of the districts is the small-
 ' ness of the crofts, and the general desire is for more arable land. The
 ' crofts run from about two to six acres, and the pasture is very poor sandy
 ' links, overstocked with rabbits. The soil of the whole district is very
 ' poor and sandy, and in dry seasons will scarcely yield the amount of
 ' seed sown. Part of the land is fenced by the crofters themselves. The
 ' proprietor grants the timber required for improving the houses of the
 ' crofters, the rest must be provided by themselves without any prospect of
 ' compensation for their outlay. There is also a general complaint about
 ' the rise of rent when a relative of the former tenant succeeds to a croft.
 ' The rents are being raised from 10s. to £2, and from 15s. to nearly £4
 ' on the death of parents or predecessors. Although the lots have been
 ' curtailed by the passing through of the railway line, no compensation
 ' has been given to the crofters for this. Although the rents are raised so
 ' high, many of the crofters are obliged to thrashing whins for several
 ' months in the winter and spring to keep their cattle alive. There is
 ' about 150 acres of poor arable land in this district, and about fifty
 ' families and about 196 of a population. The average stock of the dis-
 ' trict is one cow and follower and one horse; and part of the district get
 ' pasture for one cow each during the summer and autumn in a park held
 ' by the proprietor for 15s. each. The grazing is not good as a rule. The
 ' crofters are not afraid of being evicted, but they like to get some kind.

SUTHERLAND.
GOLSPIE.

' of reasonable security for their holdings, more pasture, and, if possible, more arable land at a fair rent; they also wish that ground officers and other officials would not interfere with them in the exercise of their rights as voters. My own rent was raised from £2, 11s. 6d. to £4, and the two best parts of my lot given to other crofters without any given reason.'

Rev. John Matheson.—'Having been minister of the Free Church at Lairg for the last thirty-eight years, I have had opportunities of obtaining some knowledge of the system of estate management in Sutherland, and of the condition of the people during that period. In the parish of Lairg, with which I have more particularly to do, there are two landed properties—one of them belonging to Lady Matheson of Achany, the other to his Grace the Duke of Sutherland. With regard to Lady Matheson, it is proper to observe that it is only a short time since she came to have the property of Achany in her own hands, and this, of course, is to be taken into account in connection with anything that may be said concerning its present management. From what I know of her Ladyship, I have reason to believe that she would be ready to remove any well-grounded causes of complaint on the part of her tenants on such being rightly represented to her. With respect to the Duke of Sutherland, it is due to his Grace that his kindness to the people of the parish of Lairg should be acknowledged. His improvements in the reclamation of land in the district of Shinness, on such a large scale, were of great benefit to them in giving them employment in their immediate neighbourhood for years. His Grace, moreover, showed his interest in their true well-being by erecting an elegant iron church for the workmen, and for those who were to be permanent residents in that locality, and more recently by giving his own luncheon house to accommodate the missionary of the district. The people, I have no doubt, would all desire that these obligations should be gratefully acknowledged. The Duke's estate in Sutherlandshire being so extensive, it is, of course, a matter of importance that it should be under a sound system of management. I beg to submit to the Commission my opinion as to some things in which I think the system of management is capable of improvement. 1. The want of middle-class farms appears to be a great defect in the division of land in Sutherlandshire. In general there are only two classes of farms, those that are very large and those that are small. A gradation of farms is very desirable for various reasons. It would tend to promote more kindly intercourse between different classes of the community, and a larger number of young men might be expected to obtain a university education. The number of persons belonging to this county who study for the learned professions is comparatively small. 2. Those having small farms being tenants at will, or having their holdings only from year to year, have no great encouragement to improve either their land or their dwellings. Their having a lease, or some equivalent security, as well as the prospect of compensation for improvements that may be made with the concurrence of the proprietor, is much to be desired. 3. The time of a family's bereavement, in the removal of the head of the household by death, being made the occasion of increasing the rent, is unseasonable. Those left behind are then in general in less favourable circumstances than before. 4. When a tenant's rent is about to be increased his lot of land might be valued by competent persons on whose impartiality reliance could be placed.—JOHN MACPHERSON.'

BONAR BRIDGE, SUTHERLAND, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1883. SUTHER
LAND.

(See Appendix A, LXVII.)

Present :—

BONAR
BRIDGE.

Lord NAPIER AND ETTRICK, K.T., *Chairman.*
 Sir KENNETH S. MACKENZIE, Bart.
 DONALD CAMERON, Esq. of Lochiel, M.P.
 C. FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Esq., M.P.
 Sheriff NICOLSON, LL.D.

JOSEPH PEACOCK—re-examined.

39589. *The Chairman.*—I believe you have got a statement on a particular point connected with what occurred yesterday which you wish to make?—Yes, I have a short statement to make with reference to the paper read at Golspie yesterday afternoon by the Rev. A. Mackay about the Rogart School Board. I desire, with your Lordship's permission, and in justice to the former members of that board, to submit some facts and dates that, I believe, do not appear in that paper. I have no intention to refer to the larger part of it, so personal to myself, farther than to express my regret that Mr Mackay did not submit those remarks to some minister or gentleman of acknowledged position in the Free Church. Had he done so, I venture to think he would have been advised to withhold it. At the time of the election of the first School Board in 1872, the Free Church of Rogart was vacant, and, in the hope that the vacancy might be filled in time, the election was purposely delayed as long as possible, and was fixed for the 25th June 1873. There was no contest, and the members elected consisted of the Free Church minister, Rev. C. Macdonald; the Free Church minister of Lairg; Mr Sangster, a large tenant farmer; Mr Macpherson, a merchant and crofter, also an office-bearer in the Free Church; and myself, as representing the Duke, who is almost the sole proprietor in the parish. This board, it will be admitted, fairly represented all parties concerned, and I was unanimously appointed chairman. The board devoted much time and attention to the work of introducing the Education Act into the parish, and their recommendations received the approval of the Education Department. During the period of that board's three years' tenure of office the Rev. A. Mackay was inducted to the vacancy in the Free Church. Mr Macpherson retired from the board, and Mr Mackay, the new minister, was elected in his place. In 1876, the second board was elected without a contest, and consisted of the same members, with one exception; Mr George Barclay, another large farmer, was elected in place of Mr Sangster. In 1879 the third board was elected also without a contest, and consisted of the same persons, with myself as chairman. During that board's tenure of office some considerable discussion took place in reference to the school accommodation in the west side of the parish; and towards the end of the three years Mr Macpherson retired from the board, and Mr D. Menzies, another large farmer, was elected in his place. Without going into unnecessary detail, I believe I am justified, as chairman of the board during those nine years, in stating that their resolutions were the outcome of a sincere desire on the part of all concerned to do the best for the parish, and that these resolutions were approved of by the Education Department. In 1882 a new School Board was elected, consisting of the Rev. A. Mackay, Free Church, Rogart; Rev. J. Macpherson, Free Church, Lairg; Messrs J. Mackay, J. Munro, and A. Brown, crofters:—thus leaving the Duke

Joseph
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LAND.—and the large farmers entirely unrepresented—not in accordance with the principles of the Act. As to the actings of this board I have no desire to say a word. It is to be hoped that, in any future legislation, care will be taken to secure that the interests of proprietors in so important a matter as education shall be more carefully provided for.

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JOHN CRAWFORD, Factor on the Sutherland Estates, Tongue District
(71)—examined.

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Crawford. 39590. *The Chairman.*—We understand you have a statement to read to the Commission?—Yes.—‘I have been factor for the Duke of Sutherland in the Tongue district since Whitsunday 1859. The district extends from the march of Caithness on the east to Loch Eriboll on the west, and from the sea on the north to Benarmin on the south. The population of the district under my care is, by last census, 3900 souls. Rental shown by the valuation roll of the county is £17,959. For the convenience of the Commissioners, and in the interests of the inquiry, I propose to deal categorically with the statements of witnesses at Bettyhill on 24th and 25th July last, so far as they relate to the property under my factorship. The Rev. James Cumming, witness, made statements as to what he was pleased to call oppression and misrule on the part of the factor, and illustrated these facts by references to—1. *Fines.* I herewith submit copy of estate regulations in force before the Reay property was purchased by the Duke of Sutherland (Appendix No. 1 and No. 1A). These have been continued with considerably less stringency until now. Being sixty miles from a law court, if order is to be maintained amongst a crofter population, the landlord must establish suitable rules to enforce it other than by formal process of law. Small fines of 2s. 6d. or 5s. are inflicted for repeated transgressions by cutting feal or turf on green ground, improper peat cutting, subdivision of the lots, and for taking in permanent lodgers. 2. *Harsh Treatment on the part of Officials,* of which the following are instances:—(1) As to Thomas Morrison and Angus Rankin in a case of removal (Appendix No. 2). Rankin was tenant of a lot of land at 1s. per annum of rent. He was an old man living alone. About 1865 he applied for and obtained permission to take in Thomas Morrison as a lodger, whose wife was to keep house and attend to Rankin. This arrangement continued until 1878, when Rankin’s condition, from Morrison’s neglect, was found to be lamentable, and the old man was placed under the charge of the inspector of poor, who had him attended to until his death. By estate rule it is inconsistent for a man to be both a tenant and a pauper. Rankin and his lodger were therefore asked to grant a voluntary renunciation of the place that a new tenant might be selected. By advice they declined—mentioning Mr Cumming as their adviser—and formal steps were taken to obtain possession. On the term day the key of the house was asked and refused. Ejectment was about to be enforced when Morrison, for the first time, intimated his wish to take the lot. I stopped proceedings, and told Morrison the terms on which I was prepared to recommend him as tenant, viz., on his paying the expense of legal proceedings, amounting to £4. That the old rent of 1s. would be the rent for crop or downlay 1878, and that the new valuation of Messrs M’Donald & M’Kenzie of £3, 7s. would be his future rent for crop 1879, and thereafter during the Duke’s pleasure. He agreed to these terms at once, and has continued in possession, paying from and

after 1879 the rent of £3, 7s. as mentioned. (2) The case of George M'Kay (More), Talmine. This man also occupied a lot for over forty years at 1s. per annum of rent. He applied for permission to take in a relative as joint-tenant and successor. Consent to this arrangement was given on the condition that the new valuation of the croft, £3, 1s. 6d. per annum, should be paid from and after the term of Whitsunday 1878, when the joint-tenancy began. He and his relative had free option to accept or reject this proposal. They voluntarily accepted the joint-tenancy on the terms mentioned, and paid the rent accordingly until 1882. In consequence of one of George's sons being drowned in Talmine Bay, and another who went abroad not being heard of for some years, by which the old man was left without help other than by his late son's widow, the Duke of Sutherland has reconsidered this case, and has reduced the rent to a nominal sum of 10s. per annum, on condition no other party is admitted to an interest in the lot other than his son's widow. (3) Case of Hugh Munro, Talmine. This man occupied for a similar period at 4s. 10d. per annum, and having made a similar request for the admission of a friend, he got a similar reply. He and his friend William Munro agreed to pay the new valuation, £2, 18s., as from Whitsunday 1877; and they have since regularly paid it without complaint. In each of these three cases above mentioned, according to the practice of the estate, no change in the rent would have been made so long as there was no change in the tenancy, and so long as the sitting tenant chose to continue in possession by himself. 3. *Improvement of Houses and Lots*, which Mr Cumming confines to the last few months, and were instigated, as he alleges, by the appointment of the Royal Commission.—I have to state that in 1862 I applied for and obtained a grant of £150 for purchasing lime and timber by way of assisting the crofters in building division walls between their families and their cattle. The only condition required of the tenant in order to share in this grant was that he should supply the necessary labour; and in cases where slates were used for new roofing of cottages, they were supplied by the landlord at cost price, and the tenant was allowed three or more years, according to his circumstances, for their repayment. These grants, and the conditions on which they could be shared in, are well known since 1862 to the tenantry in this district. This allowance of £150 was annually continued by the Duke, but for ten years the grants of lime and timber were only very partially taken advantage of by the tenants. In 1873 the allowance was slightly exceeded, but for the next five years the full amount was not applied for by the tenants. From 1879 to 1882 inclusive, very considerable progress was made in improving existing dwelling-houses and in erecting new ones of a superior character, and, by way of encouraging this movement, the Duke, with his usual consideration for the comfort of his people, more than doubled the annual allowance. For dwelling-houses of the better class the crofters were allowed from 30 to 50 bolls of lime, timber for roofing, flooring for parlour, closet, and attics, partition and door standards, and glass for windows; slate at cost price on three or more years' credit. State showing annual allowance and grants applied for from 1862 to 1882 is herewith submitted (see Appendix No. 3). 4. *Improvements of Lots*.—Improvements, as a rule, are very imperfectly executed by the crofters, especially drainage. I prefer that improvements be done by the landlord, because they are better done. A crofter rarely possesses sufficient capital, or the practical experience requisite, for carrying on such works with expedition or benefit to himself. When the landlord improves, the tenant, as a rule in this district,

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' executes the work either by contract or on day's pay, and he has a special interest in having it well and cheaply done. While maintaining his family by his daily earnings, he at the same time secures the foundation for future profit as well as comfort. 5. Mr Cumming refers to the persecution of people on the estate for poaching. I do not remember more than four, or at most five cases, during the whole twenty-four years of my factory here. Two of these were of trivial character, and were dismissed with an admonition. Two were of more serious character—one being combined with a charge of theft—and these more serious cases were prosecuted by the procurator-fiscal, and resulted in conviction and sentence. One of these cases was referred to by William M'Kenzie, delegate from Strathhalladale. Mr Cumming complains that I am eyes and ears, hands and feet, to the Duke of Sutherland. I have to thank him for this no doubt unintentional compliment, for I always consider it my duty so to act for his Grace in his absence. The next witness examined was William M'Kenzie, Trantlemore, Strathhalladale. This witness did not by any means represent the majority of the crofters in the Strath, nor even a respectable minority of them. He gave a very inaccurate report of the hill grazings in connection with the Strath lots. The grazing is fairly good, some of it very superior, and on an average quite equal to the general grazing on that side of the country. The average extent is estimated at about ninety acres per croft. The people of this Strath are considered on the whole about as comfortable and independent as any in the county. There are, no doubt, poor people amongst them, as there always will be in every community, but this does not arise from any peculiarity in the management. Adam Gunn, delegate from Strathy, complains of smallness of lots and high rents. The Strathy-point and Totegun lots average $7\frac{3}{4}$ acres arable and pasture, besides hill grazings. There are thirty tenants, occupying a cumulative rent of £73, 5s, 3d.—average per tenant, £2, 8s. 10d. New valuation of this township is £97, 10s, 6d. Last year the Duke made a township road of two miles in length for this place at a cost of £184, by which the crofters will be much benefited; and this year his Grace has made another road to the township of Brawl, over a mile in length, at a cost of £160, which will also be of great service to the tenants of that place, while at the same time it has—in connection with other works of reclamation of land going on in the district—provided labour during a season of local pressure. These reclamation works consist of draining and trenching waste land for the crofters, to some without interest during first five years, and to others at $2\frac{1}{2}$ and 3 per cent. on outlay, according to the quality of the land and expense of reclamation. The following are the present rents charged in the townships said to be represented by this witness, and the new valuations by Messrs M'Donald & Mackenzie, from which the Commissioners can draw their own conclusion, viz:—

' Strathy, .	Present rent,	£98	4	8	New valuation,	£134	11	6
' Balligall,	"	23	9	5	"	38	15	0
' Brawl, .	"	19	4	10	"	26	10	0
' Altiphuerst,	"	6	18	6	"	16	11	6
' Laidnagullin,	"	18	12	6	"	29	6	6

' Other townships are on a similar scale. John M'Kay, Melvich, delegate for Melvich and Portsherray district. This person's evidence is grossly inaccurate and misleading. I will refer to his own case first. He obtained his present lot in 1873. See letter of 4th August 1873, and minute of agreement of 8th August and acceptance of same date. John M'Kay by these missives got twenty acres of arable land, with hil'

' pasture in addition, for the annual rent of £10 sterling (valued at £14, 3s. 6d.). He was bound to erect a dwelling-house and offices, with right to the usual building privileges. He had also by these missives the option to improve and take in nine acres adjoining his lot, at a nominal rent of 2s. 6d. per acre. He has been in possession for ten years since his entry in 1873. During this period he built office houses but not a dwelling-house, and he lives in what is properly the barn. During the same period he has not improved any part of the land put at his disposal; while, on the contrary, I have more than once spoken to him on the subject of improvement, and offered to improve for him on the terms that he should pay a small interest on the outlay. These offers on my part he always declined, stating that he already had as much land on hand as he had means to manage. The land by the river side to which he refers is not suitable for tillage, inasmuch as it is subject to being from time to time flooded. It is singular, and worthy of observation, that if the crofts in Melvich district are so poor and high rented as this witness describes them, how the valuators could have considered them of so much more value than the tenants presently pay for them. The following example may suffice:—The township of Melvich presently pays £95, 6s. 1d. The new valuation amounts to £175, 2s. 3d. Portsherray presently pays £112, 14s. 4d., while the new valuation amounts to £155, 2s. 6d. Hector Munro, delegate from Scullomie. His statements are quite inaccurate. The township contains 57 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres of fairly good land. The cumulative rent of the township in 1859, including hill grazing, was £61, 7s. 7d. In 1882 it was £57, 15s. 4d., including hill grazing. The new valuation is £60, 15s. In 1878 a waterspout did some damage to the banks of a small burn he refers to. The Duke spent a small sum in executing repairs, and an offer was made by me last year to cut a new channel, so as to direct the stream another way, on condition the two tenants interested would pay interest on the expense. The amount would probably not have exceeded 3s. each. This offer was refused. The Rev. John Ross M'Neill, delegate, Strath Tongue. Mr M'Neill came recently to the parish of Tongue, and an entire stranger to it. He has hardly had time to know much of the people, and his knowledge of the working arrangements between landlord and tenant must be very slender indeed. Finally, it is not too much to say that his evidence is obviously founded on mere hearsay, which has not been by any means carefully sifted. It is not true that the Coldbacky rents have been doubled, or even to any extent increased. On the whole, they have been reduced, at my solicitation, within the last twenty years. The current rent of Coldbacky is £40, 18s. 2d. The new valuation is £44, 11s. The township of Rhitongue is presently rented at £29, 15s. 11d. The new valuation is £35, 8s. The township of Braetongue is rented at £57, 14s. 10d. The new valuation is £95, 9s. 10d. In every instance the new valuation is higher than the actual rents charged. This witness refers to a new activity he has observed in the building of houses within the last six months. There has been nothing special in this way to my knowledge. The improvement of dwelling-houses has been going on since 1862, but with more activity within the last five years, as my separate statement of expenditure will show. (See No. 3 Appendix.) Peter M'Kay, builder, Strath Tongue, delegate, complains of losing employment, of high rents, and oppression by the factor. On my appointment in 1859 I gave all the old contractors the first chance of work, and afterwards retained the services of those whom I found most reliable. I wished to impress on the contractors that their real interest, as well as the Duke's, lay in the

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' honest discharge of their duty. That people who did inferior work, and charged exorbitant rates, would not be employed by me as contractors. ' Mr M'Kay's croft consists of over thirteen acres arable and over five acres pasture. Rent £5, 5s. 4d., as stated by him. He, however, omitted to mention in his evidence that he has a relative living on the lot with him, whose stock of sheep is probably equal to his own. I am not aware of ever having interfered between this man and the Duke. I have no knowledge of the Duke's desire to remit his rent for the remainder of his life. The new valuation of this lot is £12. The other townships referred to by this witness are Blandy, rented at £16, 6s. 10d., and valued at £20, 5s.; Strathlongue, present rental, £23, 19s. 10d., new valuation, £31, 0s. 8d. Angus M'Kay, Cattlefield, crofter's son, delegate for three townships of Farr. His complaint is as to the smallness of lots, high rents, and acts of oppression on part of officials. The present rental of the townships said to be represented by this delegate are all under the new valuation. The land is of fair quality. I deny *in toto* the alleged cases of hardship mentioned by this witness. 1. As to the erection of a store on the late Angus Gordon's croft.—It became necessary for the convenience of landing lime, timber, &c. in the Naver River, for both large and small tenantry improvements going on, to erect a storehouse on the beach. This was done in a creek just above high-water mark, and opposite the late Angus Gordon's lot. A cart track was made, sloping down a steep bank, mostly outside the arable land, for access to this storehouse, and to which the tenant consented. The track admits of the crofters carting sea-ware from the river in place of carrying it in creels on women's backs as formerly. The actual quantity of arable land taken up by road is not more than eighteen square yards. The Duke has no interest in the storehouse beyond the convenience it affords to the improving tenants of the district for storing lime, timber, &c., allowed by the landlord for their new houses when unable to cart these materials direct from the ship. 2. Cases of oppression and unjust treatment to two old women.—Previous to 1862, John M'Kay, a crofter in Airdneiskich, deserted his lot, leaving two old sisters upon it. One was in delicate health. They were quite unable to do anything with land, and voluntarily agreed to remove after the crop of 1862 was reaped. I gave them a house elsewhere. They were afterwards placed on the roll of paupers, and supported by the parish. From whatever source this young man may have got his information—for the event he refers to so pathetically took place about the time he was born—there is not one word of truth in it. There was no written renunciation ever asked or obtained from these old women, neither was there the slightest act of compulsion exercised, far less deception, as he alleges. The transfer from one place to the other was strictly voluntary, and beneficial to the parties concerned. The land thus vacated, with other land thereafter voluntarily given up, was partly divided amongst the tenants of the township, and a new arrangement of marches made, which has very much added to the harmony of the place for the last twenty years. Rev. Donald M'Kenzie, Free Church minister, Farr, delegate, complained of oppression by officials, and undue interference at School Board and Parochial Board elections. I emphatically deny every statement this witness makes relative to oppression or undue influence at School or Parochial Board elections. I never interfere with people going to the Duke about their matters. It is well known that I rather encourage this course. The Duke is as easy of access to the poorest tenant on his estate as he is to me. His Grace entertains a parental regard for the well-being of all his people, and would not

' tolerate any antagonistic feeling or action on the part of his officials. As
 ' regards His Grace's enterprise for the benefit of his estate, I have only
 ' to point out the fact that there has been spent in my district alone within
 ' the last thirty years the sum of £148,826 in permanent improvements.
 ' (See Appendix No. 6.) This sum has been disbursed to the extent of
 ' about two-thirds in the form of wages amongst the resident population
 ' during the last twenty-one years. I have never solicited, directly or
 ' indirectly, a single vote at a School Board election, but I have notwithstanding
 ' always been placed at the head of the poll by the free-will of
 ' the electors. (Appendix No. 7.) The memo. I beg to submit to the
 ' Commissioners will show the amount of work I have undertaken for the
 ' board. My services have been gratuitously from first to last, and, except
 ' by Mr M'Kenzie, have been gratefully acknowledged. Hew Morrison,
 ' schoolmaster, Brechin, delegate for Torredale district. Mr Morrison's
 ' statistics are rather at fault. There are, as he states, eighty tenants in
 ' the district referred to, occupying 316 acres of arable land (in place of
 ' 246 acres as stated) at a cumulative rent of £264, 14s. 6d., equal to
 ' 16s. 9d. per acre (not £1, 2s.), but with hill grazing only 8½d. per acre
 ' over all. New valuation of the township embraced £304, 13s., being
 ' £40 per annum more than the rent exacted. Ewen Robertson, delegate
 ' for Tongue and Invernaver, refers to cases of oppression. *Inchverry*
case.—In 1862 George M'Intosh went abroad and left his sister on the
 ' lot without help, and unable to manage the land—upwards of 10 acres
 ' in extent. The lot was divided—the sister retaining 3½ acres, without
 ' grazing, at £2 per annum of rent (new valuation £4, 13s.). The remainder
 ' was let to John Munro at £6 per annum (new valuation £6, 14s.).
 ' This arrangement was willingly accepted, and the rent has been regularly
 ' paid to this day. *Braetongue case.*—Widow George M'Kenzie had two
 ' sons and a son-in-law living with her. They went to Canada last year.
 ' Neither of them ever applied to me for the lot. The widow came to me
 ' about the middle of February last, and asked me to take the lot off her
 ' hand as she could not manage it. I did so, and same day re-let the
 ' place to a neighbour, reserving a parlour and two bedrooms for the
 ' widow's use. *Invernaver case.*—Some time ago the tenant of Invernaver
 ' applied for a section of Achnabourin farm adjoining their township.
 ' This could not have been granted without sacrificing the farm-house and
 ' offices pertaining to the farm, as they were situated on the section of
 ' ground asked for. An additional injury would have arisen from cutting
 ' off a portion of upland grazing ground, of which there is already too
 ' little for the benefit of the stock. If these tenants had asked the whole
 ' farm, and agreed to manage it as a joint-stock concern, I believe the
 ' Duke of Sutherland would have favourably considered such an applica-
 ' tion, providing they could have given satisfactory evidence of their
 ' ability to stock the farm and pay a reasonable rent for it. This probably
 ' would have been too heavy an undertaking for them; besides there is
 ' reason to believe that their idea of managing a club farm was very far from
 ' being matured. In an appendix to the foregoing statement (Appendix
 ' No. 8) will be found the various documents alluded to in it, and others
 ' relating to general statistics of estate matters bearing on the question at
 ' issue, which will, I trust, afford the Commissioners the material for
 ' forming an accurate opinion as to this district management. The Com-
 ' missioners will find from these documents that the present Duke of
 ' Sutherland has expended between 1864 and 1882 in the permanent
 ' improvement of the estate in this district about £133,000, and that the
 ' increased rental is only about £1757 per annum, or equal to about 1½ per
 ' cent. The chief benefit of this large outlay has accrued to the loca-

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' tradesmen and labouring population as already stated. From my personal observation and knowledge I can confidently affirm that the condition of the crofters has greatly improved and is improving. They are better clad and better housed; and I am certain they are in all respects in a better condition than they were thirty years ago. I may add, in conclusion, that since the inquiry at Bettyhill, I have received many verbal and written communications from crofters, denying that the delegates who appeared there correctly expressed the true views of the population, and I am satisfied from my own experience, gained from personal communication with the tenants during these many years, that they are, as a body, as happy and contented as any in Scotland. Finally, I have to express my sincere thanks to Lord Napier and the other Commissioners for granting me the privilege of making this statement, after reading the publication of the evidence, as my infirmity of deafness prevented me from hearing the statements tendered by the delegates at the meeting of the Commission, and of giving rebutting evidence on the spot, as I should otherwise have done.

39591. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—I can only put a very few questions to you, as I don't think it fair to the people here that you should be examined at great length. You stated in your paper to-day that the Duke of Sutherland has a parental regard for his tenants?—Yes; it has always been my experience.

39592. That, I suppose, includes the crofters?—Yes, all of them—crofters and cottars, and all under his care.

39593. They are all treated alike?—As far as I know.

39594. Are there any arrears or any considerable arrears of rent in your district due by the crofters at this moment?—There is, perhaps, about £400.

39595. Has there not been a considerable reduction of rent made to large tenants, whereas there has been no reduction made to the small tenants?—There has been a considerable reduction made to large tenants, and instead of making a reduction to the small tenants the Duke has expended £515 this year in providing seed corn and potatoes for them. He has also given me £500 to lay out in works of trenching and improving their lots, and one thing and another, that will all be expended this year, besides other works that have gone on during the year in the district.

39596. And you think that is a fair equivalent to the small crofters for the abatement that has been given to the large farmers?—I think it is, considering the rents at which the lots are let.

39597. For how many years will the abatement to the large tenants run?—Some of them from three to five years.

39598. Then may we take it for granted that for the next three or five years equal benefits will be given to the crofters?—I have no idea as to that.

39599. Allow me to put another question to you. Have the large tenants on the estate of Sutherland, with one or two exceptions, not the right of shooting upon their farms and otherwise?—Some of them have; they pay a fair rent for it, just as a sporting gentleman would do.

39600. Are you able now to state that there is a very considerable profit made by the large tenants in dealing with these shootings—in sub-letting them?—That may be in some instances, but though one or two of them are getting more rent they are giving an equivalent in the shape of gardens and keepers, and grazing for cows, and things of that kind, which are not taken into account by the public.

39601. Do any of the shootings that are let to the big farmers include

any of the hill ground of the small tenants?—That is so in Strath Halladale. Mr Patterson has the shooting over the ground and over the small tenants. Their ground is lying, in fact, in the centre of his, and his ground is between them and the shore again.

39602. When the large tenant lets his shootings does he not very frequently—I may say as a matter of course—reserve certain sporting rights to himself and exercise those sporting rights?—Sometimes he does, but to a very small extent.

39603. Is it not possible, therefore, that the large shooting tenant may be sporting upon the grazings of his crofter brother tenant?—No, except Bighouse, I don't know of any case in my district.

39604. Is it not consistent with your knowledge that the rents given by the sub-tenants are a great deal more than the rents paid to the Duke?—I have already mentioned that in some instances that is so. But that arises very much from this, that if the tenant takes the shooting along with the grazing, shootings rise and fall, as you know, and are increasing rather than decreasing. There is more demand for them, and consequently the tenant very naturally takes advantage of a rise, just as the proprietor would do.

39605. Would you give the right of shooting to the small crofters over the hill grazings that belong to their possessors?—I don't think it would be a good thing for them.

39606. Can you say now unqualifiedly that the small tenants and the big tenants are precisely on the same footing?—I don't quite take in what you mean.

39607. I go back to your original observation, and that is that everybody on the estate of Sutherland was under the parental administration of the Duke, and all were upon an equality?—I go further, and say that the Duke has more regard for the small tenantry than he has for the large. The latter are able to help themselves, and it is his duty to help the smaller class; and it is my duty as a factor to carry out his wishes, and to the best of my ability I do it.

39608. No doubt; no one questions it. Will you explain why you prevent the small tenant or tenants who may have some portion of hill grazings turning a penny, as we may call it, by letting that to a sub-tenant, and thereby enabling them the more readily to pay their rent?—I don't think that could be properly done, because all and sundry have an interest in the outrun, and whatever might be got for it would require to be subdivided according to their several interests. I don't think it would work, and I don't think as much would be got for it as would be worth the undertaking.

39609. Can you give us an idea how much of the area of the county of Sutherland and hill grounds do belong to the crofters, because we have been told a very large proportion of the county is under crofters?—Yes, somewhere about 50,000 acres in the Tongue district.

39610. Surely those 50,000 acres are worth a good deal in the matter of sporting?—It would be so if they were all lying together, but when the grazings are lying in strips here and there they are very much more disturbed than the large grazings, and consequently there is not the same amount of game on them. I don't believe any body would take them alone.

39611. Leaving that point, I wish to put a question to you with regard to your observations about the Parochial Board, in which you very severely comment upon the Free Church minister of Farr?—Yes, and I think with very good reason.

39612. You stated your services were given for many years voluntarily and gratuitously?—From first to last.

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39613. Was it not a fact that a sum was voted to you which was found to be illegal?—It was voted to me, but I did not accept it.

39614. Why?—Because I simply wished my services to be gratuitous, and did not wish to introduce a bone of contention among the people. They were all very favourable to that with the exception of one man. I did not wish to have anything whatever to do with it, and I shook my hands clean of it altogether.

39615. Recollect we are not supposing you yourself had anything whatever to do with this. I simply wish to bring out that the other members of the board, or a majority of the board, did propose to vote a certain sum to you which it was afterwards found was illegal?—But apart from that altogether, whether it was legal or illegal, it was the same to me; I declined it.

39616. Were you also clerk to that board as well as chairman?—I was from the beginning.

39617. Are you still so?—I am.

39618. Did you ever hear of any other parish in Scotland where these two offices are conjoined?—I don't know, but we had no other alternative but to do it, or employ a clerk from some other part and pay him for it, which was adding to the rate of the parish, already heavy enough.

39619. And it was really for the sake of economy and convenience?—Entirely.

39620. You don't, I suppose, say it would be a proper thing to be done ordinarily in boards?—I would be very glad to get quit of it, and had it not been from a sense of duty and a wish to do what would be a benefit to the people as well as to the Duke, I should have had nothing to do with it.

39621. You stated in your paper that there were very few prosecutions for game offences in your time?—Very few, indeed.

39622. You stated that one or two were of a trifling character and others were of more importance, and because they were of more importance they were taken up by the procurator-fiscal?—Yes.

39623. Is the procurator-fiscal not the private agent of the Duke of Sutherland?—Not that I am aware of.

39624. Who was the agent?—The Duke's agent was Mr Gray, latterly Mr Traquair, and now Mr Tait.

39625. Does Mr Fraser, Dornoch, not do anything for the Duke?—He has done nothing as law agent to my knowledge.

39626. At the end of your paper you have made some reflections upon the delegates who appeared at Bettyhill?—No; I made no reflections. I have simply stated that I had written and verbal communications to the effect that they did not represent the true interest and feeling of the population.

39627. May I ask how those documents came to you?—They came by post.

39628. Signed by the parties?—Yes.

39629. Credible people?—Yes.

39630. Do you think it a right thing for you to go and put that into your paper?—I don't see why not.

39631. Without stating who the persons are who took it upon themselves to question what the delegates who were duly elected at public meetings said to the Commission?—I give no names. I don't make any reflections myself about them. It is a matter of no moment to me whether they were rightly or wrongly appointed.

39632. But do you think it is right in you to make reference in this important paper which you have lodged, to the testimony given by delegates duly appointed at public meetings, when you don't mention the

names of those who question what the delegates said?—I don't see anything wrong in it for my part.

39633. You allow a man or men privately and secretly, to attack what the delegates said in public?—I am quite willing to lay the letters I have received before the Commission.

SUTHERLAND.

BONAR
BRIDGE

John
Crawford.

HUGH MACKINTOSH, Crofter, Little Torboll, and late Sergeant in the 79th Highlanders (77)—examined.

39634. *The Chairman.*—Did you get your croft after the expiration of your military service or did it belong to your family before?—It belonged to my father. My father was an old soldier. Hugh Mackintosh.

39635. Then you have been two generations of soldiers and crofters?—Yes.

39636. Have you a statement to make?—Yes. *'Grievance of the Torboll Tenants.'*—Previous to the year 1826 Torboll contained only four tenants, but on the expulsion of the people from the neighbouring lands to make room for a sheep farm, the four lots were subdivided into seven. On a complaint being made to Lady Stafford of the smallness of the crofts, she granted them the use of the grass growing on a piece of land reclaimed from the sea, called "The Ebb," to winter a cow and a horse for each tenant. This continued until the year 1881. After they had got the hay seasoned, and carried part of it on their backs for half a mile through the wood, possession was taken of it by the Duke's forester. On a complaint being made by Sergeant Mackintosh to the factor, he promised to lay the matter before the Duke, and to let them know his decision in a few days; but no word was received until late in October. The day after the Duke left for London the innkeeper at Dornoch, to whom the hay was said to be sold by the forester, sent carts and took it away. The people then had to sell part of their beasts at a loss, having lost the chance of the market owing to its being so late in the season, not having received word sooner. We complain of the smallness of our holdings, not being large enough to maintain us six months in the year, insecurity of tenure, no protection against rack-renting, and no compensation for improvements in case of removal.'

39637. Is this additional piece of land, called The Ebb, still in possession of the crofters?—No.

39638. I don't quite understand what has become of this piece of land. Is it now taken away entirely from the township?—It is taken away from the tenants, and they will not get leave to cut grass.

39639. They are not allowed to cut grass upon it?—No.

39640. But they are allowed to pasture it?—No, they are not allowed. It is fenced in. It belongs to the Duke, and is fenced in; but they got liberty for forty or fifty years to take grass to help them.

39641. And they have no longer that liberty now?—No, not for two years back.

39642. Was the hay that they cut, and which they are not now allowed to have, all cut upon this ground called The Ebb?—Yes, by the crofters.

39643. Had they been directed not to cut it before they cut it?—No, they were not warned.

39644. You say they complain of the smallness of their holdings;

SUTHER-
LAND.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

Hugh
Mackintosh.

what is the size of the holdings? How many small tenants are there at the present moment in Torboll?—Seven.

39645. What is the size of their holdings—how many acres?—From three to four, so far as I understand.

39646. Have they got an out run of common pasture?—Yes, there is a good bit of pasture.

39647. What stock do they usually keep—those who have three or four acres?—They keep, perhaps, two or three cows; and I keep one myself—no horse.

39648. Do they never keep horses?—Yes, some of them have horses, but they provide for the horses by gathering whins for them, and one thing and another.

39649. But the lot does not keep the horse?—No.

39650. And if they keep two cows, how many sheep do they keep on the common pasture?—No sheep at all.

39651. Then their whole stock, you may say, is two cows. They have no followers?—Yes, they may have a young beast or the like of that, but they cannot keep them long.

39652. Do they keep them two years or one year?—One year or so.

39653. What is the general rent?—I myself pay £2, 10s.

39654. Is £2, 10s. the general rule?—No, there are some of them who don't pay so much.

39655. Do some pay more?—Yes, one or two pay more.

39656. Would £2, 10s. be the valuation rent?—The valuation rent was £3 for each croft, I understand.

39657. Do the people fish?—No, they don't fish any.

39658. Have they had a good deal of work given them?—There is no work going now.

39659. Was there work before?—Not that I know of, except working about farms and the like of that.

39660. How do the people generally live then; do they go away to other parts of Scotland for work?—The young men do so, and some of the young women, and they help their parents too. That is the general style they have; and if it were not for that I believe we would have the old people all on the poor roll.

39661. You say there is no compensation for improvements in case of removal; have you any cases of removal? Do you know of any cases?—No, I don't know anything about that.

39662. You don't know anybody that has been removed?—Not in my neighbourhood where I reside. There have been none removed out of it within these thirty-six years to my knowledge.

39663. What about the houses? Have the houses been improved in your recollection?—Yes. I have improved my own house. It cost me £40. I got rope and sarking from the Duke to the value of about £7; but it cost me £40 to improve it myself, and if I left it next day I would not get any value for it.

39664. Were you born there?—I was born in the parish of Rogart.

39665. How long did your father have this same croft; had he the same croft that you have?—Yes, he had, but it was larger. It was subdivided. When I went to the army there were only four tenants.

39666. When did you go to the army?—In 1823.

39667. How many years were you away without seeing your country?—I was twenty-two years in the service, but I was home on furlough. I came home on furlough ten years after I enlisted.

39668. And when you came back to settle in your father's place, did you find the place and the people improved?—Well, there was not much

improvement?—There is no improvement since. Well, yes, in regard to different things, the people are getting tidier and cleaner than they were in old times. There is something in that.

39669. But since you came back has there been more improvement than there was before, or less?—Well, I don't think there is.

39670. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—What do you mean by rack-renting?—Well, we don't pay a rack-rent. We don't grumble about our rents. They are not very high. I have about two and a-half acres of arable land. I took in one and a half acres myself since I came to the place, and kept it for a few years, but then it gave me no return. It would hardly give me the value of the seed, and it was destroyed by black game and rabbits. I only keep about two and a half acres, or two and a quarter acres.

39671. I suppose this paper expresses the wish of the tenants around you?—Yes.

39672. They ask for protection from rack-renting; what do they mean? Are the others too high rented?—No, I don't think they are too high rented; but I don't know. But still they might raise it. That is what it means.

39673. They are afraid it might be raised?—Yes.

39674. *Mr Cameron.*—Why do they say that the 1st October was too late to sell their stisks?—The prices were not so good.

39675. It was not that the date itself was too late?—I had two cows myself, and I had to sell one of them; I would get the double of the price next year for it.

39676. The prices fell, but it was not that the date itself was too late?—Yes.

JOHN CAMPBELL, Crofter's Son, Balvraid Muir (52)—examined.

39677. *The Chairman.*—Have you got any written statement?—Yes.
Grievance of the Badinish and Balvraid Tenants.—These people are a part of those who were expelled from the neighbouring lands to make room for the large farms of Skelbo, Torboll, Cambusavie, and Trentam, and were huddled together on this black heath. Built houses there at their own expense, and cultivated patches of land which can never be made productive, owing to the natural sterility of the moor. They are wholly dependent on these poor holdings, and they are not sufficient to maintain them above a few months in the year. When a new name is entered on the rent roll the rent is raised, in some cases from 7s. to £5, 10s. They complain of the scarcity of pasture, the enclosed woods, which was at one time their pasture, being at their door, from which game comes and injures their crops, for which loss they get no compensation. The people earnestly desire that the lands of their forefathers should be restored to them, and earnestly appeal to the Commissioners for restitution of their rights. The tenants' grievances are insecurity of tenure, no protection against rack-renting, and no compensation for the improvements they make in reclaiming and draining land, and building houses, barns, and byres. They complain that on the money they may get for making improvements there is made a perpetual charge at a high rate of interest.

John
Campbell.

39678. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—How long have the tenants of Badinish and Balvraid been there?—I suppose the first of them came there about 1833.

39679. Evicted from these large arable farms?—Yes; but there is a

SUTHER-
LAND.
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BONAR
BRIDGE.
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Hugh
Mackintosh.

SUTHER-
LAND.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

John
Campbell.

delegate from Dornoch, an old man, Sandy Mackintosh, who can testify to this; and he has seen his father's and his grandfather's houses on fire. He has a personal grievance of his own.

39680. Do you know what rents they paid when they were first settled?—Nominal. A nominal rent; some of them 1s. Then their parents improved the land with the help of the children as they were getting up, and when the father died the rent was raised, and successively raised in cases of death within a few years after that. I will give you an instance of a woman—Isabel Mathieson—living in the neighbourhood. Her father paid a rent of 1s. He improved a few acres of land. He died, and the son was entered as tenant. He was rented at £3.

39681. Do you know how long it was afterwards?—No, I don't; and about eight years after the son became tenant he died, and this woman was rented at £6 and a few shillings—at seventy years of age—and she cannot keep more than a cow, a horse, and a stirk.

39682. Was she a sister of the man?—A sister of the man who entered after his father. I think there were six or seven years between the deaths of the father and brother.

39683. Can you give us the history of your own mother's croft?—My mother's croft is supposed to have suffered more through evictions than any other in Sutherland. Mr Mackenzie describes the evictions on page 115 of his *Clearances*; and last year I suffered fourteen days' imprisonment for an expression of dissent against the incoming tenant.

39684. Was it your father who was evicted?—My father; and I was ten years of age at the time.

39685. But you said the evictions took place fifty years ago?—This was at a later date.

39686. Where was your father when he was evicted?—My father was not evicted from these lands, because these lands were in the parish of Rogart.

39687. He was evicted from Rogart?—Yes, forty-two years ago; but I don't complain of that.

39688. Was the land to which he came bare moorland?—No; my father didn't come here.

39689. Is your mother not here now?—No, she is not in the parish of Rogart.

39690. You have no interest in this district?—No; I am merely a delegate. I reside in the place six or seven months in the year.

39691. Have you any further statement you wish to make about these evictions, and about the uncertainty of tenure?—Yes. Whenever a new name enters, the rent is raised—sometimes from 7s. to £6—after all their own and their forefathers' labour. On this barren heath there is no pasture of any kind; and there is a long bleak ridge, with a northern exposure, about one mile in length and half a mile in breadth, and they have no pasture on it, and most of them have to toil cutting whins for their beasts.

39692. They are allowed to cut whins in the neighbourhood?—Yes, but that was all taken from them this last spring. The visitors have got it.

39693. For what purpose?—That is best known to themselves. Perhaps it is for improving the woods, but that supply is cut off from them.

39694. There are no hill lands in the neighbourhood of these farms now, are there?—Yes, the pasture lands on the farm of Cambusavie are in the neighbourhood.

39695. In whose possession is that?—Mr Urquhart's.

39696. Is it a large farm?—There are two shepherds and a two-horse arable farm.

39697. Is there any pasture attached to these lands of Skelbo and Torboll?—Yes, it is a large sheep farm.

39698. But a large arable farm too?—No; two pair of horses. Skelbo, I think, keeps five pair of horses.

39699. Was it from the lands now arable that the crofters were evicted?—Yes.

39700. And these lands were cleared off and made into large farms?—Yes; and the people were driven away to these barren heaths, where none but men in despairing circumstances would attempt it.

39701. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—What was this that happened last year?—It was an eviction in the parish of Rogart at the instance of the Duke. The keeper was averse to the incoming tenant, who was the son of a southern shepherd who took an active part in the burning. His name was Robert Orr, and I used the expression that he would never come there. I was tried before the sheriff.

39702. It was for using threatening expressions?—Yes; of course, there was a lot of people gathered.

39703. Was there anything of a riot?—No; we were convicted of a breach of the peace.

39704. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You mentioned one or two cases where the rents had been very much raised on the deaths of the tenants; are you aware from your knowledge of the country that the Duke of Sutherland employed two men to value the small crofts?—I am, but what kind of a valuation was it?

39705. Both the valuers are strangers to the country, they do not belong to Sutherland?—Yes.

39706. Are you aware that they asked the crofters themselves, or made any inquiries as to who made the improvements on the lands that were valued, or how long the crofters had the benefit of their own reclamations?—To my knowledge they never made any inquiries, and they never travelled the ground. I was up at Rogart, on my mother's land, and I could see they were almost a quarter of a mile away when they took out the rent roll, looked at the place, and walked away. I got the same version ever since from every other person. They may have travelled the ground in some instances, but I never heard of it.

39707. Then you are prepared to say that the people themselves were not spoken to or asked to give any information as to what they had done, or how long they had been in possession?—None, so far as I made inquiries about it, and to my own knowledge that is the way they stood looking at my mother's croft. They came on the opposite side, not far off—about a quarter of a mile—and they took out the rent-roll and walked away, the ground officers telling them, I suppose, the croft, and the name of the tenant. I believe the Duke never intended that. I believe he meant the valuation to be in a just and fair way, and if that had been done, very few complaints would have been heard by the Commission.

39708. Would your opinion of a true valuation be this, that the parties sent to value would make inquiry who made the improvements in the first place, and how long since, and then would fix the rent?—Undoubtedly, that they would walk over the ground to see what kind of soil it was, and I think they should consult some local expert as to what return the land was giving for the labour bestowed upon it. I would call that a just valuation.

39709. *Mr Cameron.*—Don't you think that would, perhaps, be more for the proprietor than for a paid professional valuator to do, taking into consideration how long the tenant had been there, with the view of fixing the rent? Would it not be more the business of the proprietor to give that

SUTHERLAND.

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BONAR
BRIDGE.

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John
Campbell.

SUTHER-
LAND.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

John
Campbell.

consideration towards the tenants to see how long they had been there, than for paid professional valuators to go into these questions?—Well, I don't know, but perhaps these men had been instructed to do so. I am of opinion the Duke meant a just valuation, and all inquiries to be made about the land.

39710. How many tenants are in Balvraid?—Ten in Balvraid and fourteen in Badinish.

39711. Then you are a delegate from these ten?—Yes.

39712. Do you know why they appointed you delegate rather than one of themselves?—I have been so long among them that they look upon me as one of themselves.

39713. *The Chairman.*—What season was it when the valuators came round; were the crops on the ground?—Yes. I am not prepared to say the exact time, but I think it was about August, or maybe sooner, or some weeks later. I know it was, back or forward, about that time.

39714. Do you think that the valuators were ordered just to value the ground as they saw it without any reference to who made it so, or do you think they were told to take into consideration the work that had been bestowed upon it by the tenants?—Well, I could not say, but I would think, in my opinion, that they were told to make a fair and just valuation. That was my opinion.

39715. You gave a case in which there had been two rises of rent; tell me the particulars again?—Neil Leslie married a niece of the former tenant.

39716. What was the former tenant's rent?—7s.

39717. Was Neil Leslie's rent put up?—When the tenant died—his wife's uncle—he was rented at £5, 10s.

39718. Who died next?—He is still in possession.

39719. What rent is he now paying?—£5, 10s.

39720. But that is not the case I mean?—With regard to Isabel Mathieson, at first her father paid a nominal rent of 1s. When the father died, the son was entered as tenant, and he was rented at £3. Then the son died six or seven years after the father, and Isabel succeeded.

39721. How much was she rented at?—About £6, 10s.

39722. What was the estimate of the value of the holding?—I cannot say.

39723. Did she get it above or below the valuation?—I cannot say.

39724. How many acres has she got?—Eight or nine acres of the sort of soil.

39725. Is there any hill pasture attached?—None at all, and the soil there is not worth even 1s. 6d. an acre.

39726. You mean, now it is improved, it is not worth more than 1s. 6d.?—I asked a man who was a judge of pasture some weeks ago, in case the tenants were ejected from their holdings, what rent he would give for it for a sheep pasture. He said he would not have it for nothing, for in two years it would turn to heather again.

39727. Is Isabel Mathieson married?—No, she lives with her sister. She is about seventy years of age.

39728. How do the two women work the croft?—The best way they can, I suppose. They get help from the neighbours. They cannot keep it long. It is just a struggle for existence.

ANGUS Ross, Crofter, Meikle Altas, Rosehall (68)—examined.

SUTHER-
LAND.

BONAR
BRIDGE

Angus Ross.

39729. *The Chairman.*—You are a delegate from the whole property of Rosehall?—Yes.

39730. Have you a written statement?—No, but there is another delegate here that has got one. [Statement handed in.] ‘Rosehall—Statement read at a public meeting of the Crofters and Feuars held on the 2nd October 1883, approved of by them as a proper statement to be laid before the Royal Commissioners at Bonar on 9th October 1883. Although previous to the year 1870, some evictions had taken place on the estate of Rosehall, yet these had not been very generally resorted to, and under the rule of Sir James Matheson, the crofters were fairly, and in some cases, generously treated,—the principal drawback to their contentment and happiness being the absence of any security as to the tenure of their holdings. Many of them felt keenly on this point, and made application for leases, but they were always put off with the assurance that there was no fear of their ever being removed. Resting on the faith of this promise, they applied themselves diligently to their work. They improved their lands, built dwelling-houses, steadings, &c., and otherwise conducted matters as if they had a life interest in the welfare of the estate. Well, things went on smoothly enough till 1870. In that year Sir James sold the estate to Mr G. G. Mackay, and a state of consternation at once ensued. Every crofter on the estate at once received a sheriff warrant to quit his holding in forty days. After the first shock was over, the crofters began to gather courage again. Time for reflection and inquiry led them to believe that they might be allowed to stay on in their places on something like the old terms, and no one ever dreamt of the blow which was to descend upon them coming in the shape which it ultimately assumed. A month was allowed to glide quietly away, and then, within about ten days from the expiry of the forty days of warning that had been given, the terms on which they might retain their holdings were made known to them. The publication of these created a storm of indignation, and no one seemed to have any thought of submitting to them. All the hill pasture, consisting of about 1200 acres, together with low-lying pasture amounting to about 250 acres, were to be taken from them. Their crofts shorn of these pasturings were to become feus, at an annual feu-duty more than double what their former rents had been. Added to this were a number of clauses all favouring the proprietor's interest, in such a way as to make the feuar toil and labour, with the result that at some future time the proprietor should reap the fruits, and the feuar get nothing. As already stated, no one at first thought of submitting to Mr Mackay's terms, but as the fatal day approached, and no provision had been made for it, men's hearts began to fail them, and gradually one after another succumbed to the threatening storm till nearly all agreed to give the new scheme a trial. A few, however, rather than risk what little capital they had in a speculation they regarded as hopeless, yielded up their places, after having spent a lifetime upon them, without getting a single halfpenny of compensation for what they had done. When they suggested to Mr Mackay that they had built houses, &c., they were answered roughly that he could not help that—he bought these along with the property. Having got things put somewhat in order, it was found that the township of Altas alone, which under the old system had yielded an annual rental of about £200, was to yield under the new order of things about £700 per annum, a sum which might look

SUTHERLAND.—‘ very respectable in the books, but which it has been found impossible to get in,—no matter by what means attempted. However, having got things to present a fair aspect on paper at least, the next move on the board was now made. The estate was put into the market, and sold at an enormous profit. Mr Mackay seems to have acted according to his instincts, and treated the matter from a commercial point of view. The crofters were mere accidents in the concern, and counted like any other ordinary stock of sheep and cattle. They were as it were bought for a certain price, and sold again to the first buyer who would give a big enough profit. Our present proprietor (Mr Tennant) would, we believe, be a generous landlord if he had the means to be generous with. But in the transactions with which we are dealing he seems to have been plucked as mercilessly as the crofters were; and having retired, apparently disgusted and disappointed, we are now left in the hands of trustees, who seem to take no interest in our welfare, and whose chief duties seem to be to take as much out of us as they can, and to keep a careful record of any balance that may stand against us, to be used as circumstances may direct. Although there are other points we would like to touch upon, yet, being unwilling to occupy too much time, we will refrain from entering upon them, and conclude by drawing your attention specially to the following points:—(1) When wishing to dispose of our feus, or when a son succeeds his father, in fact at every change of name in the charter, a double feu-duty is charged for that year, so that a man is fined a year's rent for dying or giving over his feu to another. We think this ought to be abolished. (2) If a feuair runs two years rent in arrears the proprietor may seize his feu without giving him any compensation for his outlay. As we pay a year in advance, we thus lose all right to our holdings by being one year's rent in arrears. We think a longer term ought to be allowed us, and that in any case, when the proprietor ejects us, we ought to get compensation for unexhausted improvements. (3) The high feu-duty (we are paying 6s. an acre for hill pasture alone), together with the poor yield of our land, makes the struggle for existence so great as to be almost unendurable, and we think a revaluation of our holdings ought to be made, and fair rents fixed. Praying that the result of your painstaking labours may tend to bring help to those who so much need it, and offering our most loyal and heartfelt thanks to our gracious Sovereign for affording us this opportunity of making our difficulties known, we remain, your obedient servants, signed on behalf of the feuairs and tenants on the estate of Rosehall, JAMES L SKERRET, secretary.’

39730*. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—To whom is Mr Skerret secretary?—He was appointed secretary at the meeting.

39731. It is not mentioned that you were appointed a delegate?—Not in that paper.

39732. Were all the crofters at the meeting feuairs?—Yes.

39733. Then how much land have you now left to yourself?—Close on six acres of arable land, and I am not quite sure what amount of pasture there is.

39734. What is your rent?—£17, 10s. I am not a feuair. I refused to take a feu. Mr Mackay and I were pretty chief at the time.

39735. Have you any hill pasture, or is it all arable?—There is a good deal of it that is heathery ground, but it is low ground for all that; and there is a bit of meadow down at the waterside, about ten acres of meadow ground. The rest is all under juniper bushes—a great deal of it.

39736. What stock have you?—I keep three Highland cows and five

little beasties in the summer time, but I have no keep for the little beasts in the winter time. In Sir James's time I was only paying £3, 4s., and I was keeping two cows and perhaps a few little ones and a few sheep, and a horse besides ; so that I have four times the rent, and only one cow and four or five little beasts in the summer time over what I had then.

SUTHER-LAND.
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BONAR BRIDGE
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Angus Ross,

39737. How many other crofters are there ?—Not a great many. Most of them are feuars.

39738. Had they any new buildings to erect ?—Yes ; mostly every one in the place. I have built houses myself, and got nothing ; and I have trenched about two-thirds of what I have of land, and got nothing for it. There is another man, a neighbour of mine, who got a statement from the manager that Sir James had, showing what he was doing. He measured what I did, but I did not get a written statement of it.

39739. The present proprietor does not reside on the property ?—No.

39740. Where does he live ?—In London. It is in the hands of the trustees now.

39741. And I suppose it is likely to be sold again now ?—Where will they get a man to buy it ? It is not easy to get a man to buy it.

39742. For how much was it sold to Mr Mackay ?—I understand the Glen Cassley estate was sold at about the same price for which he bought the whole—about £50,000.

39743. But the Rosehall land you don't know about ?—About £50,000 ; that was what he gave for the two.

39744. After how long ?—Three years, I believe.

39745. But I suppose he made great improvements on the estate ?—Well, he made a little of roads and cut wood that was on it. He made more mischief than improvement.

39746. Did he not plant trees ?—He planted a great deal on the Ross-shire side. He did not plant any on this side that is worth speaking of.

39747. How many acres of land have most of these feuars ?—The lots are of different sizes. Some of them will have over twenty acres.

39748. Of arable land ?—No ; fourteen in general of arable land.

39749. What feu-duty will they pay ?—Some who are in the valley pay 5s. for what they have, but what the old township had they are paying 6s. for. About a dozen acres will not keep a single sheep—nothing growing on it at all.

JOHN SUTHERLAND, Feuar and Tenant, Rosehall (52) examined.

39750. *The Chairman.*—In what year was the property sold by the Matheson family to Mr Mackay ?—In 1870.

John Sutherland.

39751. To whom was it sold by Mr Mackay ?—To Mr Robert Tennant of Leeds.

39752. Was it not sold first to a company ?—No ; but Mr George Grant Mackay had Messrs Rule and Stewart as his partners when he bought the estate first, and he paid them off, and kept the estate for himself.

39753. Then Mr Mackay bought the estate in partnership with other persons ?—Yes, in 1870.

39754. But then he bought in for himself separately ?—Yes.

39755. And he has sold another portion of it ?—Yes. He has sold Glen Cassley, but he sold that before he got Rosehall as his own portion.

39756. But the two properties were first of all sold by the Mathesons

SUTHER- altogether?—There are three properties—Glen Cassley, Glen Rossal, and
LAND. Rosehall. They were sold altogether in 1870.

BONAR 39757. How much was the price of the three?—£50,000.

BRIDGE. 39758. Then Mr Mackay became proprietor of one of these?—Yes.

John 39759. And he sold that one to Mr Tennant; how much did he get
Sutherland. for the one?—I am not certain of the amount, I believe it was close on £50,000; but for the whole estate they got £100,000.

39760. They bought the three properties for £50,000, and got £100,000 for them?—Yes.

39761. Were they supposed to have laid out much money on improvements?—Very little. There were temporary roads made, and some of the hill pasture that was to be feued was ploughed by oxen so as to encourage feuars to feu the ground.

39762. Since Mr Tennant bought Rosehall, what has he done with the property?—There were a few that were unable to keep their feus, and the land fell back into Mr Tennant's hands, and he gave them leases.

39763. Will you describe what Mr Mackay and his partners did with the property first of all?—First of all, after buying the property, they sold all the wood that was on the estate. There were four steam saw-mills put up to cut down the wood, and the whole of the wood on the estate almost was cut down. Then Glen Cassley was sold to Mr Gordon M'Leod from Skye, and Glen Rossal was sold to Mr Stewart, who had been a partner in the purchase of the property, and afterwards Mr Mackay became the proprietor of the Rosehall estate. After the whole was feued the hill pasture was taken off the tenants.

39764. How did they set about feuing? Describe the process by which they divided these feus. First of all, in whose hands was the ground which was laid off in feus; was it in the hands of the small tenants?—There were about 1200 acres of hill ground in the hands of the crofters. This 1200 acres was advertised in the papers to be feued, and people from a distance that did not know the land came forward and feued the ground at an average of about 5s. an acre. These feuars took possession of the ground, and some of them have been making improvements upon it. Some of them have wasted their means upon these grounds, and after wasting their own means they applied to loan companies to lend money on the securities of their holdings.

39765. In the meantime, what became of the small tenants?—There were a few acres of the pasture that was held formerly attached to their arable ground and given out as feus. This pasture they were charged 6s. an acre for, and they were charged £1 an acre for their arable ground.

39766. But the arable land, now in the posession of the small tenants, was not offered to be feued?—Most of them got the option of taking it themselves first, and if they did not take it then it was offered to any man who would take it.

39767. Arable as well as pasture?—Yes, the whole of their holdings.

39768. Did many of the small tenants take feus?—At first they all refused, but Mr Mackay told them he would carry out his wish, and if they did not take it he would give ground and houses to other people. Therefore, about ten days before Whitsunday 1870, most of them came to give it a trial. There were about thirty crofters on the township of Altas at the time the estate was sold, and of these there were twelve who did not accept of the terms. There were six of these who did not get the chance of taking them. These were women, and the old men who could not do any good to the land, and these men did not get the chance of taking it on any terms. They were deprived of the whole of their labour and their dwelling-houses, and without a halfpenny of compensation. There were

other six also that would not take it, and they left without getting any compensation for what they had done.

SUTHER-LAND.
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39769. What was the length of the feus?—Perpetual.

BONAR
BRIDGE.
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39770. How were the ground rents of the feuars compared with the rent on the arable ground paid by the small tenants before?—After taking about 1200 acres of hill ground off them, and about 200 or 300 acres of lowland pasture off them, for what was left to them they were charged double what their former rent was with this pasturage.

John
Sutherland.

39771. Had they to pay down a sum of money for the feu besides?—No, they paid an annual feu-duty.

39772. There was no fine?—No.

39773. £1 per acre for the arable land?—Yes.

39774. And the former rent was 10s.?—Yes, and 6s. for the waste ground, which no sheep farmer in the county would think worth 6d. an acre.

39775. So they got positive property in the land for a feu-duty of £1 per acre and 6s. for pasture. Was the pasture at 6s. an acre susceptible of improvement? Was it generally land that could be trenched and taken in, or was it quite hopeless ground?—Some of it was hopeless, but there were other parts that would improve, and could be made arable with great expense, after about £20 an acre was put out on them.

39776. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—All the matters you referred to created a good deal of talk and excitement at the time?—A great deal.

39777. There was a considerable demand, prices were high, and a considerable demand for land and farms?—Yes, by strangers who came to see it, but none of those parties who knew the land ever offered for it.

39778. I suppose, though you and others are making a complaint against the amount of feu-duty that was put upon you, you are not against the principle of feuing lots?—No, the principle is good; but it is overdone by the feu-duties being, in some cases, three times what the value of the land is.

39779. I think, in a paper which was read by the previous delegate, he states that a full year's rent would be paid upon a death. Surely that is a mistake? Was it not a double feu?—The double of the feu-duty, that is a year's rent.

39780. With regard to the six aged women and others, what became of those who didn't get the opportunity of offering for land?—Some of them were put on the parochial roll and supported by the parish.

39781. Was no allowance made of any kind?—No.

39782. And no contribution made by the proprietor?—No.

39783. And no houses supplied for them?—Nothing of the kind. Along with the thirty crofters there were 100 cottars and paupers upon the estate, and they were ejected, and their holdings were given to others along with the crofters.

39784. Then how many heads of families were deprived of their houses by these operations?—I stated there were six who did not get an opportunity, and six who got the opportunity and did not accept of it.

39785. I am referring now to the cottars you are speaking of?—Probably there might be about eight cottars; I am not certain of the number.

39786. And no provision was made for them?—No provision whatever.

39787. And what became of them?—The parties who feued the ground allowed some of them to remain in their holdings.

39788. What is the position of such of the feuars as have still been enabled to carry on; are they complaining very much?—The condition

SUTHER- is this, with regard to some of the feuars, that when their means were done they applied to loan companies for money to carry on, and money has been advanced to them by loan companies upon the faith of their holdings, and the result was that they were not able to pay according to the terms of agreement, and they were sequestered, and vacancies occurred in Rosshall, with liabilities amounting to over £10,000 in the last seven years. In some cases the trustees were not able to realise what would make a halfpenny of a dividend after the expenses and preferable claims were paid. In other cases it was only a few pounds; so it is not only the feuars who have suffered, but a great many of the public as well.

39789. Other people have suffered from the insolvencies?—Yes, even our good Caledonian Bank has lost £2000 or £3000.

39790. Are any people complaining from the estate of Culrain, on the opposite side, the same as you are at Rosehall?—I am not very well acquainted with them, but they have been complaining.

39791. Have you been well acquainted with this district for many years?—I have lived in Rosehall for the last twenty-four years.

39792. Do you carry on any other business?—I sometimes carry on shoemaking.

39793. And you have means of knowing the real state of the people?—Yes, I know everything about them for the last twenty-four years by what I saw, and for more than twenty years before that from old men.

39794. Do you think, upon the whole, it would have been better for the crofters and small tenants had this experiment never been tried, and that the property should have remained in the Mathesons' possession?—I am certain of that.

39795. Will you still say that when I tell you that yesterday we had —also from the property of the Matheson's—very great complaints from the Gruids, though matters remain apparently as they were forty years ago?—And so we do, because our holdings were sold by Sir James to Mr Mackay, and the improvements made he says he bought for a sum of money, and they were all summonsed at the instance of Sir James.

39796. Supposing the amount of feu-duty were in any way modified or reduced, would the place be prosperous?—Yes, I believe it would.

39797. Can you say from your own observation that additional land has been taken in, or that old land that was formerly taken in has been meliorated or improved by the feuars since they became feuars?—There has been both.

39798. In fact, they have done their best to make the best of it?—Yes, and gone past what was ordinarily done. There is one instance I can give of how the feus were over-feued. There is one place of 120 acres that was feued in 1870 at £30. Between 1870 and 1875 there were three feuars upon that place in succession one after another. Their loss was about £400 between them. In 1875 the feu came into the hands of Mr Tennant, and, after an outlay of £230, he was not able to let it at anything up till Whitsunday 1877. In 1877 there was a man who took a fifteen years' lease of it at an annual rent of £25.

39799. You give that as an illustration of over-renting?—Yes. Then in the March following he made a moonlight flitting, and left Mr Tennant without paying a halfpenny of rent, and the place was in Mr Tennant's hands up till 1880. In 1880 he let it to another man for £12. That man kept it till Whitsunday 1881, and left without paying a halfpenny of the £12. In 1881 a neighbouring crofter gave an offer of £10, providing there would be a certain portion of it fenced, which would cost, I suppose about £50. This offer was accepted, and there has been £10 paid for it since Whitsunday 1881. Mr Tennant bought the feus upon

SUTHERLAND.
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BONAR
BRIDGE.
John
Sutherland.

twenty-two years' purchase, so this feu cost him at first £660, and he has laid out £280 along with that, and all the estate took in from 1875 up till now has been £20; only they have the shooting.

39800. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie*.—Do you say those three first feuars nad expended a large sum of money upon it?—The first man expended somewhere about £90, and he left it after paying a year's feu-duty, and putting down a crop without getting anything for it, only Mr G. G. Mackay gave him a valuation for the crop. Then it was feued to a man from Orkney. He came forward and built houses upon it and a water-power threshing-mill. He got disgusted, and the feus were not supposed to be so bad as they were, and he tried to get it sold, and he got a man from Aberdeen to come forward and give £310 for it. He was there for about two years, and he saw he was 'done,' and tried to sell it. He went to Mr Tennant and told him what he had done, and Mr Tennant gave him £200 for it, and he thought he would get it let at a high rent, but he never got anything for it till late in 1881. Mr Tennant then laid out about £30 in improving the houses and doing other improvements.

39801. I thought you said Mr Tennant gave £600?—Yes, for purchasing the property from Mr Mackay. He gave twenty-two years' purchase.

39802. How many of these feus are there?—About thirty-three.

39803. What is the average extent of them?—There is one feu that is, I suppose, over 1000 acres, feued by Professor Geddes, Aberdeen.

39804. What is the smallest?—About fourteen acres.

39805. They run from fourteen to 1000 acres?—Yes.

39806. What will most of them be?—Well, as to the old crofters who took feus, their average will be from twelve to seventeen acres.

39807. There have been other vacancies besides the one you mentioned?—Yes, several cases.

39808. Have their feus been sold?—They have been tried to be sold, but a halfpenny could not be got for them. There was a gentleman from Glasgow who expended £1000 on his feu. He was paying £65 of feu-duty, and he expended £1000, and he became bankrupt before he died, and the trustees were unable to get a halfpenny for it.

39809. Have these feus been sold in any circumstances whatever?—Yes, they have.

39810. At a profit?—No, I don't think they were sold for a profit, after the outlay.

39811. But some of them have been saleable; they have not been all so bad?—No, some of them have been sold.

39812. *The Chairman*.—With regard to the small feuars who were formerly crofters—that class who have kept their former arable land as feus—have they done pretty well, or been ruined too?—Well, they are trying to clear their way pretty well; some of them got help from Australia and friends elsewhere.

39813. In the case of the small tenants who remained as feuars, about what area of arable land do they generally hold—five or six acres?—Their average will be about seven. There are some as low as five and six, and some as high as nine and ten.

39814. Do you think they have made greater improvements on the land which they hold as feus at a higher rent than they would have done if they had continued to hold the land as crofters?—No, they have not; they made more improvements when they were tenants at will, than they have done since they became feuars.

39815. They are not able to do it now? There are some of the people

SUTHER-
LAND.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

John
Sutherland.

who still remained as crofters?—No, there are none here allowed to remain as crofters. They became crofters afterwards by giving up their feus to Mr Tennant, but every one who would not be a feuar was turned out.

39816. But the previous witness said his rent had been raised from £3, 10s. to £7, 10s.?—Yes, but I understand that he got some more low-lying pasture added to it.

39817. He said he had more stock?—Yes, but the hill pasture was taken off him. His land was feu'd by another man,—he was only the sub-tenant of this feuar. He lost his holding from Mr Mackay, and he was a sub-tenant.

ADAM MACKAY, Crofter, Bardarroch, Strathkyle (60)—examined.

Adam Mackay. 39818. *The Chairman.*—What is the name of your proprietor?—Mr G. G. Mackay.

39819. *Mr Cameron.*—How many crofters are on this property of Strathkyle?—Seventeen.

39820. Are you a delegate from them?—Yes.

39821. What are their average rents?—From £30 down to £10.

39822. What is your own rent?—£30.

39823. What amount of land do you hold?—About eight acres of arable land and twenty-three of meadow.

39824. Any common pasture amongst the tenants?—No.

39825. Each tenant is, so to speak, self-contained. He grazes his own beasts on his own land, summer and winter?—Yes. The hill pasture was all taken from them as soon as the old lease expired.

39826. Now, how do those of the tenants who pay £10 work their land; do they work it on a five-shift rotation?—Well, they do something like that.

39827. Do they leave one field out two years in permanent pasture?—Yes, they require to do that for their cows, when there is no hill pasture.

39828. Is each croft fenced off from its neighbour?—Yes, not by a wire fence, but by a stone fence.

39829. Don't you consider a stone dyke superior to wire?—Yes, if it is put up right.

39830. I suppose you mean the stones are apt to tumble down?—Yes.

39831. But it is not a very serious matter for a tenant to put up the stones when they tumble down?—They put up the stones they take off their fields as a protection between man and man.

39832. These are not built dykes?—No. There are some put up by the proprietor, and some that the crofters themselves put up.

39833. And which are put up in the best way?—The proprietor's.

39834. Are those put up by the crofters not sufficient to keep their neighbours' cattle from trespassing on their arable ground?—No.

39835. Are there any stones on the ground for the crofters to make the fence sufficient if they chose to expend a little money on it?—No, they have not time to do it. The land is so dear that they cannot get them to do that.

39836. Do the crofters consider themselves too highly rented?—Yes, mostly double what they ought to be.

39837. Is your holding now an average specimen of the crofters' as to

rent, looking to the size? Is yours a fair example of the rest?—They are just about the same thing.

39838. You say you have eight acres arable ground?—Eight and a half.

39839. And twenty-three of meadow pasture?—Yes.

39840. What do you consider the meadow pasture to be worth an acre?—It is charged at 10s. an acre by the proprietor.

39841. Do you consider that too much?—Yes.

39842. What do you do with the meadow pasture? Do you pasture it all, or take crops of hay alternately?—We take crops of hay, and we take crops of corn sometimes, but the Kyle of Sutherland comes over it and destroys the corn.

39843. It is more suitable for pasture or hay?—Yes.

39844. Do you take hay off it the whole of the year, or do you take hay off it alternate years?—We take hay off it yearly.

39845. And what number of stones or tons do you get to the acre? Have you ever made any calculation?—About fifty or sixty stones of natural hay.

39846. And after that you get the pasture for the cattle during the winter?—It is no use for the cattle, because very often the water goes over it in winter, and spoils it.

39847. So all you get is the hay off it?—Most of it; and it grazes cattle in summer.

39848. After the hay is taken away?—No, there is hardly any grass growing on it after the hay is taken off.

39849. Do you graze your cattle upon it before your hay is taken off?—No.

39850. Then you get the hay off, and for the rest of the summer you graze your cattle upon it?—Yes.

39851. So you get fifty or sixty stones of hay per acre off it, and you get the after-grass for the cattle until the floods come and render it unfit for that purpose?—Yes.

39852. Do you consider 10s an acre too high for land that can be treated in that way?—Yes.

39853. What would you put it at?—At 5s.

39854. Then is the eight and a half acres of arable good land?—Yes.

39855. What is it calculated at per acre?—More than £1.

39856. Do you consider that too high?—Well, it is too high by a long way,—the rest of the acres are so bad with the flood.

39857. But the arable acres are not covered by the floods?—No.

39858. Then do you consider £1 per acre for the eight and a half acres is still too high without reference to the other?—I think that £1 would do if the rest were good.

39859. In point of fact, you would not complain of the eight and a half acres if the meadow were reduced?—If the meadow were not flooded, I would not complain of it at all.

39860. Would it pay to erect any protection against the floods?—No.

39861. Is that the principal complaint of the tenants you represent?—The principal complaint is that their hill pasture was taken from them, and instead of taking down their rents, their rents were put up higher. It was all planted.

39862. What year was that in?—About 1873.

39863. Who bought the property then?—Mr G. G. Mackay bought it from the late laird of Novar in 1870. The tenants had a lease up to 1873.

39864. And when their leases expired?—He deprived them of their pasture, and planted it.

SUTHER.
LAND.

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BONAR
BRIDGE.

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Adam
Mackay.

- SUTHERLAND. 39865. Was any valuation of the land made—the lands that remained with the tenants at that time?—I think there was.
- BONAR BRIDGE. 39866. What was the result of it?—That they had to pay a higher rent.
- Adam Mackay. 39867. What was your croft rented at before?—£20, with the hill pasture.
39868. And in 1873 it was raised to £30?—Yes.
39869. And the others in proportion?—Yes.
39870. Did Mr Mackay value it himself?—He valued it himself.
39871. Had he any meetings with his tenants to satisfy them that he was putting a fair increase upon them, or did he just give notice that it was to be raised?—He told them at once that it was to be raised.
39872. Did he not take them into his confidence, or explain how it was too low before, and why it was to be raised?—Well, I didn't hear. I have come to the estate since then.
39873. Did your predecessor pay £30?—Yes.
39874. Then you must have been satisfied yourself that the place was worth £30, or you would not have taken it?—But when Mr G. G. Mackay bought the estate he sold part of it to Mr Hadwen. I was a tenant there, and Mr Hadwen deprived the tenants of the hill, and I was evicted, and I was two years without a place at all.
39875. Was this place close to the place you have now?—Yes.
39876. You must have known all about it?—Well, I didn't know. It was put into lots, and I thought the place was better than it is.
39877. But still you would know more than if you had been a complete stranger?—Yes, but I thought it was better than being in the poor-house.
39878. Any how you took it with your eyes open. Don't you think the other tenants had, perhaps, more reason to complain than you had?—They are as bad.
39879. They had no choice given them at all?—No choice at all.
39880. Have you any other remarks to make about the estate or the management of it?—No.
39881. *The Chairman.*—Is it not usual on these larger crofts from £10 to £30, to have fences between the crofts or between the fields?—The proprietor put some stone dykes between some of the lots, but not between the whole of them.
39882. If the proprietor would put up substantial fences between the different lots, or between the different fields, would the tenants co-operate with him and take part of the labour or expense, or do they not consider fences as of any importance?—For these stone dykes they had to gather the stones themselves. The proprietor would only be at the expense of building them.
39883. Would the tenants be willing to take the trouble of gathering the stones if the proprietor would build them?—Yes, they would.
39884. And they would consider that was an advantage to the croft?—Yes.
39885. You said it would be of no use, and that you could not fence your meadow land against inundation; where does the water come from?—From the river.
39886. Is there no dyke along the river side at all?—No.
39887. No turf dyke?—No.
39888. Do they never in this country build river fences to prevent the river overflowing?—In a little part, but it was of no use. The water broke through.
39889. Perhaps it was not strong enough?—Oh! yes.

39890. Would it not be possible to make a proper dyke?—I don't think so; it would not pay.

SUTHER
LAND.

39891. Does not the proprietor help in this country to make river dykes?—I am not sure.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

39892. Does this meadow lie pretty well above the common level of the water, or is it quite low down?—Quite low down.

Adam
Mackay.

39893. Have you a lease now?—Yes.

39894. How many years?—Nineteen years.

39895. How many years have you still to run?—Fifteen.

39896. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Are there any feuars on Culrain estate?—There is one.

39897. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Is there anybody else from the estate with you to-day?—Yes, George Ross and David Rose.

39898. You mentioned you were evicted from Mr Hadwen's estate; is it you who has a great grievance against Mr Hadwen?—The only thing is that he evicted me away from the place where I was born.

39899. What is the name of the place?—Rielonie.

39900. Is there a man commonly called the Bard?—Yes; he is here.

39901. You are not the Bard?—No, his name is Alexander Ross, Achnahannet.

ALEXANDER ROSS, Achnahannet (63)—examined.

39902. *The Chairman.*—What is your occupation?—I have no occupation except labouring when I can get work.

Alexander
Ross.

39903. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Where were you born?—In Rielonie of Culrain—the place from which I was last evicted.

39904. What was the name of the property of which that was part, of old?—It was the property of Novar. The portion on which I lived was bought by Mr Hadwen.

39905. I understand you have some complaint as to the way you have been used; what have you to say on that subject?—That I was removed a year from Whitsunday last.

39906. Were you owing any arrears of rent?—I was £2 in arrears; they knocked down the house, and we were two nights obliged to live on the hillside. I then got a house from a tenant of Mr Mackay at Achnahannet.

39907. What rent had you been paying at Rielonie?—£8.

39908. What stock did you keep?—Two cows and a heifer, and a mare and a foal.

39909. What has became of the place from which you were removed; who has it?—It was divided, I believe, among my neighbours.

39910. Did you give any offence to the proprietor that, in your opinion, would justify your removal?—Nothing, except that I was not present at the time of the paying of the rent, and was a little behind with it afterwards.

39911. Had you sufficient stock to pay your full rent, and if you got a little time would you have been prepared to pay up your arrears?—As soon as I was able I paid the rent, all except £2, and I would have paid that too, if they had only given me time.

39912. Did you personally go to the proprietor and remonstrate against being removed from the place where you were born?—He was ill at the time, and I could not get to see him; and I was sending petitions to him, but I got no encouragement in reply.

39913. Has this step that has been taken against you reduced you now

SUTHERLAND. to poverty, or next door to it?—That is undoubtedly so, as there is not so much work to be had.

BONAR BRIDGE. 39914. Are you able, at your time of life, to turn your hand to anything else except labour?—I am not fit for anything but the kind of work I used to be working at.

Alexander Ross. 39915. Have you always maintained a respectable character in the locality?—Oh, yes; there is nothing they can say against me.

39916. Have you been in the habit of writing Gaelic verses and poetry?—I have often done so.

39917. Are you quite sure you never wrote anything of a satirical kind that would irritate your proprietor to take the step he did against you?—I never wrote a satire against anybody, but I may have said some sharp things when I told the people the truth that people didn't like.

39918. When this gentleman became the proprietor of the estate of Rielonie, did you not, on the contrary, write some lines in his favour as a proprietor who had just come in?—He was a while there before I did so.

39919. But you did so?—I did.

39920. How do you support yourself at present?—I live as best I can by such work as I can get.

39921. Have you anybody depending upon you?—I have a wife.

39922. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—If the proprietor was ill at the time you were removed, was that done by his orders or by the factor's?—I understand by the factor's. It is my impression that the factor was the cause of it.

39923. Were you usually punctual in paying the rent?—Yes, I did so, until the year before last, when I was a little behind with the rent.

39924. *The Chairman.*—Where were you educated?—In the parish school.

39925. Was there Gaelic taught in the parish school?—No.

39926. How did you learn to write verses?—I learnt to read the Gaelic myself, and never took a lesson in Gaelic in school.

39927. Is it customary for the Gaelic-speaking people in this country to compose verses? Do many of them do it?—Some of them.

39928. Have you printed any of your verses?—No.

JAMES ROSS, CROFTER, BREACKWELL (42)—EXAMINED.

James Ross. 39929. *The Chairman.*—Have you a paper to read to the Commission?—Yes. ‘My father took a croft of three or four acres of arable land at Sleatery in 1833, with hill pasture attached, at a rent of £17. He built a new house and farm steading on it. In 1838 the best part of the hill ground was taken off and put to the factor's sheep farm, and the rent reduced to £12. After the marches were thus altered it was allowed to be the dearest croft on Skibo estate. My father was yearly adding a little to the croft, and paying his rent up to the time of his death in 1858. My mother, and children after him, continued to do the same until she died in 1863. Then my brother and my sister along with me continued reclaiming land as we were able, and in 1876 the croft contained twelve acres arable, well limed, and in regular rotation. The valuator that valued the estate for Mr Sutherland Walker said it was the best cultivated croft in the district. In 1876 Mr Sutherland Walker, by his new marches, reduced the croft to seven acres, and cut off all the outlying pasture. For the croft as now reduced he wanted £6, 10s., binding me at the same time to improve five acres on a ten

SUTHER-
LAND.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

James Ross.

' years' lease. I could not agree to this, and was obliged to give up the place without compensation for buildings or land improvement. He has not settled with me for the valuation of manure, fallow land, and damaged crops. Having disagreed about Sleatary, he pressed me several times to take Breackwell, to which I had the same objections, and could never agree to take it on his conditions. But my brother Robert, in his anxiety to see his brother and his sister and myself in a home, agreed to take the place on the proprietor's representation of it, and promising to see us comfortable. In 1880, two acres of the turnip crop was destroyed by a burn overflowing its banks on account of the drains he made in the moor above; and in 1882 second year's grass and other pasture were damaged by another burn overflowing on account of obstructions left in it by parties digging for sand by his authority. On being rendered an account of these damages for payment, he repudiated, and told me to take legal steps to recover it; that the land was his, and he could do with it what he pleased. The outgoing tenant of this place carried off the best part of the straw that grew on it, and used the best part of the fallow land for potatoes, but we at the end of the lease are not allowed to carry away the straw nor plant potatoes; and in this way we pay ten rents for nine crops. This was not understood by us when the lease was signed. The tenant of the adjoining croft at Sleatary, containing about nine acres arable at a rent of £13, 10s., is bound to improve nine acres, and to build a new dwelling-house and steadings.'

39930. *Mr Cameron.*—This statement is more that of a personal grievance than that of a body of crofters?—Yes.

39931. Are you referring to other people?—To some.

39932. Did they send you here to speak for them?—There are some who have grievances similar to this.

39933. But of course they cannot be quite alike?—Not quite alike.

39934. Is the matter of the burn overflowing common to the place?—No, it is personal to myself.

39935. Then, which of the grievances mentioned here affects your neighbours as well as yourself?—They complain of high rent and want of compensation for improved lands and dwellings, and they want fixity of tenure, and not having pasture.

39936. Have they ever had pasture?—Yes.

39937. When?—They were deprived of their pasture about thirty-eight years ago.

39938. Now, what have they done in the way of improvement for which they want compensation?—They have no satisfaction for all their labour. There are some crofters who improved their land to such an extent, and they are not allowed compensation even on their removal.

39939. In what way did they improve their crofts?—By cultivating it out of moor or bad ground.

39940. When did they begin these improvements; how long ago?—This was the system upon the estate, that the estate was over-rented since this man got it.

39941. When did they begin the improvements?—It was small lots the tenants were taking. They were taking the hill and improving the crofts themselves, making a kind of a home first.

39942. How long ago?—I cannot say.

39943. Was it thirty-eight years ago, or before that, or after?—Before it.

39944. Have their rents been raised since?—Yes, several times.

39945. As I understand you, they complain not so much of the want of compensation, as because their rents have been raised upon their own

SUTHERLAND. improvements?—Their rents are heavily raised upon their own improvements.

BONAR BRIDGE. 39946. Have any of them left the estate and asked for compensation for what they have done?—Yes, some of them left the estate.

James Ross. 39947. Did they ask for compensation?—They did not get any compensation.

39948. Did they ask for it?—I cannot say. Most likely they did.

39949. Can you give us any dates? You seem to be not very well acquainted with the dates; but to arrive at any fair conclusion, we must know how long ago these improvements were made, and how often the rents were raised upon the improvements. Have you got that information?—No, I have not got it; but there are some to come forward that can show it.

39950. *The Chairman.*—Which delegate is best acquainted with the dates of old times?—I think James Sutherland.

39951. What is the common rent for an acre of improved arable ground; how much does it come to?—I am paying 17s. 6d.

39952. Did you improve it yourself or got it improved?—I improved it where I was before I came to Breackwell.

39953. But when you came to Breackwell you received the ground already cultivated?—Yes.

39954. And you pay 17s. 6d.?—Yes.

39955. Is there any outrun?—There is no outrun except four or five acres, and it is charged 1s. per acre.

39956. Then it is 17s. 6d. for improved arable, and 1s. for unimproved pasture?—Yes.

39957. Is the common pasture capable of being turned into arable?—Yes, but at a great deal of expense.

39958.—How many acres of arable have you got in your present holding?—It is given to me under the name of twenty-three acres.

39959.—How many acres of unimproved hill pasture?—Four or five.

39960. What is your rent?—£20, 5s.

39961. What stock do you keep?—Two cows and two horses; I think that would be about the stock of the place.

39962. Is it the stock you actually do keep?—No, for at times I may have a little more, and at times I may be under it; but it is about what the place can keep.

39963. Can you produce enough food to support your family in meal and potatoes during the whole year?—Yes.

39964. Are you able to sell potatoes?—Ye

39965. Are you able to sell a stirk every year?—No; there are several years that there will not be a stirk. When a man has two cows, perhaps, they will go wrong at times.

39966. Have you got a lease?—Yes.

39967. If you have a lease, does it not provide for any compensation at the end of it?—No.

39968. Why did you not put that in?—That is my grievance.

39969. But when you made the lease, why did you not stipulate with the proprietor for compensation?—It was my brother took the lease.

39970. Why did not your brother make a provision to save you?—The proprietor would not grant it upon that condition.

39971. You complain of no pasture?—Yes.

39972. Is there any sheep farm or pasture farm on the march?—Yes, there is.

39973. Part of which might be given to you?—The whole of it is quite vacant, and it might be given to the whole of the tenants.

39974. Would they consider that a great advantage?—Yes, a great advantage.

SUTHERLAND.

39975. Would they be disposed to pay additional rent for it?—Of course they would.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

39976. Who is the proprietor now?—Mr Sutherland Walker.

39977. Have the tenants ever made any proposal to him to give them some of the pasture off the farm?—I cannot say about that.

James Ross.

39978. Is the farm held under a lease?—No, no lease, no stock; it is under game.

39979. What kind of game?—Grouse.

39980. Then it is a farm without any stock?—Without any stock.

39981. Are there any deer?—There are deer in the woods beside it.

39982. Is it held by the proprietor, or is it let?—It is held by the proprietor.

39983. How long has it been like it, without any stock at all?—About two or three years.

39984. What was before that?—It was a sheep farm, but it was first occupied by tenants. In the year 1838 it was under tenants, and then the factor got it, and turned it into a sheep farm. He was turning out the tenants day by day.

39985. Is there a fence between the crofters' arable and the forest?—In bits there is, but where it is the fence is put up at the tenant's own expense by paying so much yearly.

39986. What sort of fence is it?—A wire fence where it is.

39987. Which do the most harm, the birds or the deer?—Where I am I will not complain of either one or the other.

39988. Does any one complain?—Yes, some of the tenants are complaining of them.

39989. What do they complain of most?—Those that are on the hill complain of the grouse, but those that are in the down-lying district complain most of deer.

39990. When they complain does the proprietor give them any compensation?—Not any compensation. It is in the lease that there is to be no compensation for any thing of the sort.

39991. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—What was the name of the factor who turned out the small people day by day?—Forbes.

39992. Where is he now?—He is in the grave.

Rev. GUSTAVUS AIRD, Free Church Minister of Creich (70)—examined.

39993. *The Chairman.*—Of what part of the country are you a native? Rev Gustavus Aird.

—A native of Ross-shire.

39994. Have you been conversant with the class of small tenants from your earliest years?—Yes.

Aird.

39995. And you have devoted particular study and attention to their condition?—Well, I have known them from my earliest years and all along.

39996. In this part of Ross-shire?—In Easter Ross, about twenty miles from here.

39997. Does your knowledge extend to Sutherland also?—I have been through almost the whole of Sutherland. I have been in the Reay country and Assynt, but I have not resided there. My first charge was in Ross-shire, and I came here forty years ago.

39998. Will you kindly make a general statement with respect to your

SUTHER-
LAND.
—
BONAR
BRIDGE.
—
Rev.
GUSTAVUS
AIRD.

impressions as to the condition and prospects of the small tenants?—I would beg leave to read a short statement.—‘The estate of Skibo contains most of the crofters in this parish. Part of it, viz., Balblair, was sold about twenty years since to Mr Sidney Hadwen, the present proprietor. About eighteen years ago the whole estate was sold by Mr Dempster to Mr Chirnside, who soon thereafter disposed of it to the present proprietor, Mr Sutherland Walker. I. *Removals.*—About fifty years since several families were removed from Balchraggan, Reeneare, and Acharrie, and their lands now form the corn farms of Balblair, Flood, and Acharrie. I was told that a number of those then evicted emigrated to America. In the place of Coiloag seven families were removed, and the place turned into a miniature deer forest, not to the advantage of the crops or the people in the neighbourhood. About 1850 six families were removed from Little Creich, and their lands now constitute the farm of Little Creich. About 1876 three families were removed from Clachnasheenag and its surroundings, and their grazing is unlet. About 1876 seven families were removed from Moine-ghoir, and the lands are unoccupied since then. About 1876 and 1881 seven families were removed from Souardale, and these places now form the farm of Mcikle Souardale. Their dwellings and offices were of stone and clay, and suitable enough for the size of their places. They agreed to the rents proposed by the proprietor, but could not to the conditions imposed, viz., to rebuild new houses and offices, remove the old ones, trench, drain, and lime most poverty-stricken soil, and remove surplus stones to wherever the proprietor saw fit. All these changes would cost an enormous expense, and must be borne by themselves, which it was impossible for them to face, and which the tenant who succeeded never did, and never promised to do, although a new slated square of offices has been erected, and yet six of these tenants were evicted. All the removals above referred to comprehend thirty families. II. *Complaints.*—1. As to rents, the soil is naturally far from being fertile. When Mr Dempster (who still survives) held the property the people considered their places rack-rented. But since then, when it could be done, they were increased; as, for example, the only settlement which could be obtained by the following crofters about 1880, when their leases expired, was tenure from year to year, and 50 per cent. additional rent. The county valuation roll shows the former and the present rent—

	Former Rent.	Present Rent.
‘(1) Wm. Campbell, Barracks, . . .	£5 0 0	£7 10 0
‘(2) Angus Munro, . . .	5 10 0	7 15 0
‘(3) James M’Kay, Leithall, . . .	8 10 0	12 15 0
‘(4) Robert Calder, Migdale, . . .	5 0 0	7 10 0

‘During the past forty years I have been told by not a few of the tenants on the Skibo estate that generally those on it, paying a certain rent, could with difficulty keep but one cow, yet for the same rent on the Sutherland estate two or three cows could be kept. At Whitsunday last (1883) one of the largest and most fertile farms in Easter Ross was let for nineteen years at several shillings per acre less than was paid by the former occupant, whilst a large outlay is to be made during the currency of the lease by the proprietor for improvements. Thus, whilst a large reduction per acre has taken place on one of the finest farms in Ross-shire, 50 per cent. has been added in this parish on crofters who were considered to be rack-rented, for very inferior soil, which proves to

SUTHER-
LAND.

—
BONAR
BRIDGE.

—
Rev. Gustavus
Aird.

' demonstration the necessity for a measure to prevent such exorbitant
' exactions on poor men, and also to prevent the erection of a first-class
' manufactory for producing paupers. 2. As to meliorations for build-
' ings, there is—(1) The case of Alexander Grant, late of Souardale, now
' in Sydney, N.S. Wales, as may be seen from his letter dated 25th
' August 1880. When his father entered the place he paid meliorations
' for the houses, and held a paper signed by Mr Grant upon Dempster
' (the proprietor at that time) promising meliorations on removal. He
' was never paid meliorations by Mr G. Dempster, and he states in his
' letter that when application was made to the present proprietor he
' declined paying them, as the document promising them was not stamp
' paper (as if the ninth commandment were of no authority unless ex-
' tended on stamp paper). The meliorations amounted to £174, 10s.
' All this was done after the poor man was evicted by Mr Sutherland
' Walker, and he had with his family to emigrate to N.S. Wales, and
' was never a shilling in arrears. (2) The case of the late Donald
' Fraser, miller, Migdale, who died about 1876, left a widow and child.
' His grandfather, John Fraser, had one of the leases given by Mr G.
' Dempster of Dunnichen, about 1798, and, I understand, full meliora-
' tions were promised in the event of his heirs being removed. The
' buildings (exclusive of hundreds of yards of stone dykes), were valued
' at from £800 to 900; the widow was only allowed a fraction of this as
' she had not the means of bringing the case to the Court of Session.
' When Hugh Fraser succeeded his father John Fraser, about 1810, the
' factor measured the land, consisting of a number of small separate pen-
' dicles of about four acres, and valued it along with the mill at £7, 10s.
' At his death, about 1875, there must have been from eighteen to
' twenty acres arable, and the yearly rent of mill and land is now £60,
' and all this owing to the improvements effected by father and son, and
' yet the son's widow and orphan were evicted by Mr Sutherland Walker.
' III. *What is wanted.*—1. Fair rents. 2. Safety or security of tenure.
' There is much need of this, as, for example, if there is no measure
' passed ere long, in 1885 or 1886 the whole of Migdale and of Tulloch
' (about thirty families) may be evicted, and the lands turned into a deer
' forest. 3. Meliorations for permanent improvements on land and re-
' quisite buildings. 4. Hill pasture turned into club farms. The people
' formerly had the hill pasture; were deprived of it by the factor of that
' time who occupied it himself, and who, it is said, ruled the estate for
' years not with a sceptre of mercy. The tenants have ever since been
' without this grazing, but no abatement of rent was allowed on the arable
' land in consideration of this, but an increase was imposed at various times.
' On this point I may read a few pages from a paper by the late Mr
' George Dempster of Dunnichen, in the Old Statistical Account of 1793.
' The Rev. George Rainy, the minister of this parish, was asked by Sir
' John Sinclair to introduce that paper into the Statistical Account. I
' merely refer to it as stating what he laid down for the improvement of
' Highland estates (vol. viii. p. 375):—"Plan for improving the estates of
' Skibo and Puhrossie. These estates contain about 18,000 acres of land,
' extending from the point of Arducalk, on the north bank of Dornoch,
' westward to Port Leak, being an extent of twelve or fourteen miles.
' The bulk of the estate is hilly, but the hills are of no great height,
' seeming generally to rise about 500 to 700 feet above the level of
' the firth. There may be about 200 families living on these estates,
' with the exception of the mains or home farm of each place. The farms
' are of small extent in regard to arable ground. They produce some corn
' and potatoes, hardly sufficient to maintain the families of the tenants.

- SUTHERLAND. ‘ The tenants pay their rents by the sale of cattle, which are fed in their houses on straw through the winter, and pick up a miserable subsistence on the waste and common ground of the estate during the summer.’
- BONAR BRIDGE. ‘ The whole of the present rent is from £700 to £800 a year, of which more than a fourth part is paid by the two large farms belonging to the manor or mansion-house.’ It is stated that “ it is not the intention of the proprietors to exact for some time any increase of rents from these people, but, on the contrary, to encourage them by every possible means to improve their little spots of land, to erect for themselves more comfortable houses, and to build them of more durable materials.” The writer then describes certain efforts which were being made to introduce spinning and weaving into the district, and proceeds to say, “ that the people may have nothing to divert their attention from their own business, all the services performed by them and their cattle to their superiors are commuted into money, and thirlage by the mills of the baronies is also abolished. Measures are taking to give the people secure possession (for their own lives at least) of their houses, gardens, and arable lands, with full liberty to cultivate as much of the waste land as they please. Their cattle are suffered to pasture on the other waste lands, as long as they shall remain in a waste condition; but the proprietors reserve to themselves the power of enclosing and planting all such parts of the waste lands as are fit for no other purpose. Some plantations of this kind have been already made, and the trees seem to thrive very well on the lightest soils. The trees are principally the larch, the Scotch fir, and the birch, intermixed with beech and mountain ash. The rest of the waste land is open to every settler who shall incline to cultivate it. Twenty or thirty new settlers have already exhibited strong proofs of what Highlanders can do in the improvement of their own country, when secured in the enjoyment of the fruits of their labour. It may be worth while to mention the nature of this security. The first settlers may improve as much land as they find waste around them, for which they pay only 1s. a year during their lives. When they die, their heirs have the refusal of their father’s possession at an apprized value, to be fixed by arbitrators mutually chosen. This rent is invariable till the next generation, when the valuation is to be repeated; and so on every generation. A little iron for tools, wood for their houses, and seed potatoes and corn is furnished to them for the first two years. They are exempted from every species of personal service.”
- IV. *How matters may be rectified.*—On a pretty large scale this has been done in Ardross by Sir Alexander Matheson, and on a small scale on Airdens in this parish by D. Gilchrist, Esq. of Ospisdale. Leases for nineteen years were granted in 1859, renewed about 1880. Waste land was reclaimed; powder and dynamite were used, not to blow up the Houses of Parliament, but in promoting the useful and peaceful arts of agriculture by blasting boulders and oak roots. According to the valuation roll, the present rent is £28, 7s.; under the former lease it was about £22, 3s.—increase, £6, 4s. According to the Old Statistical Account the rent of Skibo, including Balblair, was from £700 to £800; according to the present valuation roll, it is about £4813, or six times more than it was in 1793.
- V. *Character of Tenants and Crofters.*—1. At one time this parish must have supplied the British army with a large body of recruits. When I came to it forty years ago there were residing in it twenty-four pensioners; they are all gone years since, but their places have not been supplied by others. 2. So far as known to me, the people pay their rents. 3. The people are very industrious; and so far as I remember, I do not know a lazy man in my

'congregation. There is no public work within reach of their homes, so
 'that they have to go in quest of it wherever it may be found. Nearly
 'forty years ago, I was informed by a man in this district of country,
 'who was in the habit of taking extensive contracts of work, and of
 'employing a number of tradesmen and labourers yearly, that the people
 'of this parish were noted for their industry. Ever since the erection of
 'Bonar Bridge in 1810, and the formation of the Parliamentary Road,
 'this was the first piece of work which they ever had an opportunity of
 'engaging in at their own homes, and they availed themselves of it,
 'felt the benefit, and ever since diligently pursue it wherever it can be
 'found—as, for example, when the railways were being constructed south
 'and north—then at the extensive improvements at Ardross for seven or
 'eight years, then at the improvements at Shiness by the Duke of Suther-
 'land, which benefited a good many of them. 4. Great numbers from
 'this parish have emigrated to the colonies since 1853; to my knowledge
 'upwards of 266 to Australia, and of 100 to America, besides a large
 'number to the large centres of population in the south; and many of
 'those who went to Australia were most dutiful to their parents whilst
 'they survived. 5. They are expert at farming operations, and adopt a
 'regular rotation of cropping, however small their allotments. Most of
 'them have limed the land, use artificial manure, and all these at their
 'own expense. 6. There is much waste land in the parish; some of it
 'might be reclaimed. So far as known to me, during the past forty years,
 'not one of the three proprietors on the Skibo estate has advanced a
 'shilling from their own pockets for the reclamation of an acre of muir
 'ground, and if example is more powerful than precept in this connection,
 'the people have not had the most edifying example set before them.
 '7. Is it mere policy for the rulers of this nation to allow such a class of
 'people to be treated as if they were serfs?

39999. *The Chairman.*—You have stated that, within the last forty years, within your personal recollection, about thirty families have been evicted?—Have been removed. I draw a distinction between removal and eviction. I call it eviction when they have to go off the estate and go elsewhere. Some of those removed may have been removed out of their places and found places upon the same estate. I make a difference between eviction and removal. There were thirty families removed out of their places. Some of them found localities elsewhere on this estate, while some were evicted and some went to the colonies.

40000. If a tenant is removed by the proprietor from his place, and is allowed to shift for himself in this country, do you call that removal or eviction?—I would call it removal, if he removed to some other locality belonging to the proprietor; but if he went to another estate, I would say that was an eviction, or if he went to the colonies.

40001. Now, there have been about thirty families evicted or removed within your personal recollection?—Yes, many more than that. I merely stated these from the places, but there is a paper that will come afterwards—by Mr Black—and he tells the number of removals upon the whole estate for a number of years.

40002. In the case of those removals generally—either removals or evictions—have the proprietors endeavoured to provide the families so shifted with holdings under their own control, or left them to find their own subsistence in the world?—With regard to a great number of those I have referred to, they had to provide for themselves elsewhere, and some of them are hither and thither in the colonies. Some may be still within the parish.

40003. You have stated there has been a considerable number of

SUTHER-
LAND.

—
BONAR
BRIDGE.

Rev. Gustavus
Aird.

SUTHER-
LAND
—
BONAR
BRIDGE.
—
Rev. Gustavus
Aird.

removals or evictions ; do you know of any case in which a large piece of ground or a portion of an estate has been devoted to the service of families so removed—cases in which new crofts and new townships have been erected ?—No. What made me refer to the thirty was this—of five different places three have been turned into pretty large corn farms and the others into grazings. It was only to these I referred.

40004. But you know no case of new townships or holdings being created ?—No.

40005. Do you know any case where common pasture lands, formerly belonging to townships and turned into sheep farms, have been restored to townships ?—No.

40006. You don't think, then, there is any change of policy up to the present time on the part of the proprietors ; their policy is not more favourable to the small tenantry than it was ?—I merely refer to the proprietors of the estate of Skibo. With respect to Mr Gilchrist, even at the last let, which was in 1880, all the tenants who had leases before had their leases renewed, except one man who differed with the proprietor as to the rent.

40007. Coming to the question of security of tenure, the proposals which you read from that book were rather these : that waste land should be given to the people for the life of the occupier at a nominal rental, and then that at the end of the occupation the improvements should be valued by arbiters appointed on both sides—by the proprietor and by the tenant ?—Yes.

40008. Do you think that this system of granting lands for a life, with increase at the end of the life, is preferable to granting land for a fixed period of years ; would you rather see the land given to a man and his widow for life, or would you rather see it given for nineteen or thirty years ?—Well, if there were a lease of nineteen or twenty-five or thirty years, a good deal would depend on the disposition of the proprietor. If he were a gentleman such as the excellent Mr George Dempster of Dunnichen, I daresay nineteen or twenty-five years' leases would be preferable in some respects ; but the evil is this, that the people have a feeling that they are insecure, as they have seen so many removals. That being the case, it paralyses their efforts in the way of trenching and reclaiming the land ; whereas, if they had a security, or a feeling that advantage would not be taken of it, that they would not be turned out, I verily believe that a great deal of land might be reclaimed.

40009. But I may ask your opinion on a subordinate point, and that is whether you prefer a formal security of a distinct lease for a term of years to the benevolent system which obtains on the Duke of Sutherland's estate, where they are left in possession for life ?—Well, if it were such as the Duke of Sutherland and many other proprietors, I should prefer a nineteen or twenty-five years' lease.

40010. Do you think a nineteen years' lease is sufficient to prompt the people to take up wild land and trench it and reclaim it, or do you think it would be preferable to give them a thirty years' lease ?—Perhaps, between nineteen and thirty. I did not consider that matter very well.

40011. Do you think the people would be inclined to accept leases ?—I think they would. If the people had security of tenure, and a kindly feeling shown towards them, I have not the least doubt that within a generation there would be an extraordinary improvement.

40012. Supposing, however, they got a lease or got their land for life, a term of years will at last expire when the land has to be revalued. Now, upon the Sutherland estate we understand the valuation is conducted by a valuator appointed by the Duke, who goes there and values

SUTHER-
LAND.
—
BONAR
BRIDGE.
—
Rev. Gustavus
Aird.

the land, and his Grace may then perhaps make some diminution from the amount at which it is valued ; but it is his valuation,—there is no joint arbitration. Is it your proposal that there should be an arbitration ; that there should be an arbitrator appointed by each party ?—Yes.

40013. With the power of appointing an oversman ?—Yes.

40014. Is that your distinct proposal ?—Well, I have not any very Rev. Gustavus
distinct idea with respect to that. If I were sure of its being the Duke Aird.
of Sutherland who was my proprietor, and that it was under his Grace's direction, I would have full confidence that he would do every justice in every way through the person appointed by himself ; but with respect to formulating the matter and so on, I am not very sure. I have not considered the matter, but, so far as I am concerned, I would be perfectly satisfied with the Duke.

40015. Let us go a step further. Supposing a revaluation is made at the end of nineteen or twenty-five years, I want to know your opinion as to whether the valuation ought to be made upon the land as it stands, without any consideration of the value of the labour put into it during the whole course of years by the tenant or not. Ought it to be taken just as if it were arable ground, and valued at its present value, and that value charged to the successor of the same family, or ought they to retain a portion at least of the value of the labour that they have put into it ?—Well, I didn't consider it from that point of view. I know as to the lease upon the estate of Airdens, in this parish, that in the first nineteen years' lease there was a clause, that if any single one of the tenants should be removed at the end of the nineteen years, he should have at the rate of £5 per acre for the proportion which he improved, and they all agreed to that ; and then at the end of the lease, I know that all the tenants who improved their land took a renewed lease, and as far as those were concerned that did the most, there was not much of a rise. It was only the other day I was looking at the valuation roll ; but there was that clause in the first lease. It was prepared by the late Mr Kenneth Murray of Geanies ; and I know that, at the expiry of the lease every individual removed was to receive at the rate of £5 per acre for what he improved.

40016. Did that include the value of the dwellings, or did that refer to the improvement of the land ?—The improved land. There was no reference to dwellings, as far as I recollect, in the leases. The people built the houses, and have improved very much with respect to that.

40017. You say there was a small deer forest constituted here ; what do you mean by a miniature deer forest ?—It is just this, that the quantity of ground is small, and there is very little wood around it. There is part of the Sutherland estate that comes into the estate of Skibo, with a burn between them, and the two might make something together, but it is very small on the estate of Skibo. It is just something like a miniature in comparison with a picture.

40018. Does this little deer forest march with the large deer forest ?—I cannot say it does. It is merely the estate of Creich, not very large, and there is a good deal of wood upon it.

40019. And divided by a fence ?—By a burn. There is a fence round his Grace's wood.

40020. Are these red deer ?—There are red deer and a number of roes. I think about twenty-five years ago there was a very severe winter and spring, and a good many came down from the Reay country ; and got into the wood and never left it again.

40021. Is it all wood ?—It is not all wood. There is a good deal of fir wood and a good deal of birch wood, and it is just at the

SUTHERLAND. extremity—the extreme point—that there were seven or eight tenants removed.

BONAR BRIDGE. 40022. Do the people generally complain of the ravages of game in this country? Is there any considerable complaint?—Well, there are some of them who do complain—those on the heights. It depends very

Rev. Gustavus AIRD. much upon this. If it is an early harvest, there is no complaint; but if it is late, as it is pretty late this year in the north end of the parish, they must be awake all night in order to watch. And then a good many of those near the woods complain very much now of the deer coming out and destroying the turnips—not eating them, but destroying them with their horns. One man was mentioning last week a place where he found a deer, and I was quite astonished. It was several miles from the wood, and they were becoming more bold than they used to be. I know there are several of the tenants that complain very much of the depredations they commit upon potatoes and turnips.

40023. When you speak of people sitting up at night to prevent the ravages of game, does that refer to the deer only, or do they stay up to scare the moorfowl?—I have heard of people having to stay up during the night for the deer; and that when the corn was cut they would require to go to frighten the moorfowl in the extreme north of the parish, but that just depends upon the season. If it is a pretty late harvest, there is a good deal of them; they must watch them.

40024. On the whole, notwithstanding the disadvantages of land tenure to which you have alluded, what is your impression about the material progress of the people? Do you think there is a sensible progress, or do you think there is a retrogression in the condition of the people?—Well, as far as the condition of the people is concerned, they had formerly the hill ground, and had sheep and cattle there. Their clothes may be of finer cloth to-day than they were then—they were all home-made then; but, as far as various other things are concerned, I suspect in former days they were better off and stronger men than they are now. I suspect that their physical strength is not what it was.

40025. Do you consider that the possession of hill pasture, or common pasture, by the crofting population, leads them to trust to the hill pasture and to neglect their arable ground, or do you think that the one kind benefits the other?—As to the hill pasture, I would prefer having what is called a club farm, and having a club farm there are certain regulations laid down for the carrying of it on that must be kept. There must be a regularly appointed shepherd, as in the case of Ardross, where the tenants got the hill ground, and they got stock; and I understand it has been of the greatest benefit to them. One is not to be ruler over the other. There are regulations laid down, and there is a regular shepherd, and an account kept of everything, and the whole profits are divided.

40026. But whether it is a club farm or whether it is a common pasture, do you think the possession of stock upon the wild ground leads the people to trust to the sale of the stock and neglect the cultivation of the arable, or do you think not?—If it is a club farm there are shepherds that have the charge of the sheep, and the people themselves must be at home to look after their agricultural operations, and I am perfectly clear it would not be detrimental to the agricultural work when it is in the form of a club farm.

40027. But when it is in the form of an ordinary common pasture, do you think the time of the people is taken up with rambling after their stock, and that they neglect cultivation?—Well, as far as I am aware, I am not acquainted with any case of that kind.

JAMES SUTHERLAND, Labourer, Clash-na-prountenach (63)—examined.

SUTHER-
LAND.

40028.—*The Chairman.*—Had you ever a croft in former times?—Yes.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

James
Sutherland.

40029. Have you a statement to read?—Yes.—‘*The Statement of James Sutherland, late of Clash-na-prountenach.* My ancestors lived and died at Abercross, in the parish of Golspie, until 1819, when my father was evicted, and his possession was set on fire by Peter Sellar, at the instance of Countess Elizabeth Sutherland. He came to this parish, and bought a different lease, granted to John Ross, sawyer, Revra, by Mr William Soper Dempster, proprietor of Skibo, of eight acres of land at Clash-na-prountenach, on the estate of Polrossie. My father built a possession, and entered thereon in 1819, where he continued cultivating, labouring, and improving in a proper and husband-like manner, until his death in 1849, when his widow, and I his heir, were evicted on 22d of February 1852. I was turned out, my wife, and child two months old, and my mother, under the heavens; the night pouring rain and sleet. All the neighbours were afraid of sheltering us one night, for fear of the factor James Forbes. Next day, I was granted a house and a lot of land by Mr Gilchrist, Ospisdale, at Spinnydale. I entered possession, and collected my things evicted at Clash-na-prountenach. I was driving my manure; but when the Forbeses found that out, their shepherd spread my middens on the land of Clash-na-prountenach. I had a peatstalk; I drove it half a mile out from the possession of Clash-na-prountenach. Next morning, before daylight, it was set on fire by the shepherd’s son. I went to Dornoch, and stated the same to the procurator-fiscal, Mr Fraser. His answer was, that it was burnt by order of the factor. He made no prosecution. I thought the fiscal would say it was right, although the factor would order me to be burned in my own heap of peats. A copy of the lease of John Ross, sawyer, “*Skibo Castle, 1814.*—I grant you a lease of eight acres of land at Clash-na-prountenach, north-east of Achueladcaldy, in the parish of Creich, on the estate of Polrossie, for nineteen years, and your lifetime—first nineteen years to begin at Whitsunday 1814—on condition of your paying me, or my legal successor, the sum of 1s. sterling per annum for the first three years, 2s. 6d. per acre per annum during the remainder of the nineteen years, and 5s. per acre per annum during your lifetime. But you are not allowed to sub-set the lands, nor any parts thereof, until the whole is sufficiently enclosed, and one-half cultivated, &c.—M. Soper Dempster.” “*Skibo Castle, 1819.*—I transfer and assign over to David Sutherland, from Abercross, in the parish of Golspie, all rights and titles of this lease of John Ross, sawyer, Revra, who hath relinquished his lease in favour of the said David Sutherland. He is now bound to perform all its rights and titles, and all arrears of rents that may be due by John Ross.” He outlived my father sixteen years. These are my father’s improvements at Clash-na-prountenach. During thirty years he lived there, reclaimed nine acres; 2600 yards of drains overlaid with stone; 1000 yards overlaid with sod; 600 open drains in the land; 460 burn channels; 800 yards sheep drains, to protect the land; applied to the land 100 bolls of lime; dwelling-house fifty-two feet long, twelve feet inside, built of stones and mortar; a barn, thirty-six feet; byre, thirty-six feet; sheep cot, thirty-six feet. All the timber was bought from Mr Dempster Forster, and I never received amelioration, valuation, or compensation. I was robbed of my father’s legacy and my own labour for thirty years. I opposed the eviction of

SUTHER-
LAND.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

James
Sutherland.

' Clash-na-prountenach, and produced my documents to Donald Stewart, lawyer, Tain, but I was not able to bring my action to the Superior Court at Edinburgh. I was ejected fifteen years before the expiry of the lease of Clash-na-prountenach.'

40030.—*Sheriff Nicolson.*—You appear here only to state your own case, and not for any other people?—No, I have the Spinnydale tenants' case to state too.

40031. There is nothing about them in this paper?—No; it is only my own statement.

40032. What have you to state for those other people?—I have another case—my second eviction from Spinnydale. In eleven years and three months I was turned out of this second possession I went to. Four or five years after the death of Mr Gilchrist, there came in a manager on the estate under trustees, and I was turned out. He married a sister of factor Forbes, and six months after that, I was turned out of the possession, and the lot was added to another tacksmen's.

40033. How long had you been there?—Eleven years and three months, and I paid twelve years' rent—£48. I was the loser of three-fourths of a year of being in possession, and the grazing of two and a half acres was taken from me, and the pasture that was on it; and on 23d August, this man that got my place, came with his cows to take possession of a bit of the foggage that I had, and he took the land. He had no right to come and take possession of my foggage, for by all rights it was mine. He came when I was threshing barley; but I took the law in my right hand and the flail in my left hand, and I went and gave him a good thrashing, himself and his cows, and he went home with his head bleeding, and he went and sent for a policeman, and I got fourteen days' imprisonment.

40034. How long ago was that?—In the year 1864. I have never had any land since then, and I never wanted land.

40035. Was there ever any complaint against you before that?—No.

40036. Had you before that given them any reason to complain against you?—No.

40037. Had you paid your rent regularly?—Yes.

40038. And you have got no land since then?—No; I did not want it under the system under which they are giving land now.

40039. Where are you living now?—At Spinnydale, and working sometimes in Ross-shire and sometimes in Sutherlandshire.

40040. You have no land now?—No, not an inch, only paying a rent of £1 for the house, and keeping the house in thatch myself.

40041. Then what complaint have the other Spinnydale people?—There are eighteen crofters and seventeen dwellers, that have no land at all. There are thirteen paupers in it, and these tenants are in four different classes. There are three of them that succeeded in getting the lands of their neighbours and their friends. One added five lots, and he is not so badly off; another succeeded in getting four lots added together in a contract of thirteen miles of a road, and he is not so badly off. Another succeeded better than the two, in adding eight or nine together, and he made better than the other two. He has seven cows, when seventeen dwellers have no grass or land that they can keep a goat on. There are other eight of them, and they have those leases for ten years. These have two years to expire, and they have hopes that when they go into the hands of Mr Walker, they will come out paupers or emigrants. There are no other hopes for them. Their hill pasture was taken from them; they would be grazing their cattle 400 yards above my father's

house. Clash is behind my father's house, and the cattle were going above his house 400 or 500 yards. My father was entitled and bound to keep it sufficiently enclosed. He would not be preventing the tenant's cattle and horses. Now, since my removal from Clash, they have no right to go over past their own lots, and there is a fence being put on the plantation, and that will keep it from cattle and horses. The fence is no higher than two and a half or three feet. It will keep out their horses and cattle, but it will not keep the deer and the roes out from their crofts. There are plenty deer and roes in the woods, and our potato crops are eaten by the deer and roes, and they will be howking them out of the ground now, besides taking the crops in the months of May and June.

40042. Has the additional land which has been given to these fortunate men been all taken from their neighbours?—Yes, this man who had nine got mine added to them. We would be very glad to get land on the right system.

40043. *The Chairman.*—What do you think the right system would be?—Just to get compensation and fixity of tenure, when we would not be afraid of eviction. The law of eviction is the law that ruinates this country. In nine years they will have 15,000 removed from the interior of Sutherland, and during the reign of Charles no more than 30,000 were removed out of the whole of Scotland by Prelacy and Popery.

MURDO MUNRO, Crofter, Goirileid, Ospisdale (73)—examined.

40044. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Whom do you represent here to-day?—I appear only for myself.

Murdo
Munro.

40045. What have you to say for yourself?—I have taken in all my own land, and my rent has been increased.

40046. What rent do you pay now?—£6.

40047. What was it before?—When I came first it was 1s.

40048. How long ago?—Forty years ago.

40049. What were the different rises put upon you from the 1s. till it came to the £6?—After I had been there two or three years it was made £1. A few years after that £2 more was added, and, lastly, £3 was added, making it £6.

40050. When you went to the place forty years ago, I suppose there was no land there reclaimed?—No; I took in all the land and built the house.

40051. Who is the proprietor?—Mr Gilchrist.

40052. Is it the same family that have raised your rent from the 1s. to the £6?—Yes.

40053. Who was the proprietor at the time you paid the 1s.?—Major Gilchrist.

40054. What extent of land have you reclaimed which you labour at present?—I believe six acres at least, but I cannot be sure.

40055. What extent of pasture land have you got?—I have no hill pasture.

40056. Did you put up all the buildings that are on your croft?—I built them all at my own expense.

40057. Are there any other people on the same estate complaining like you of their rents being raised in the same proportion or otherwise?—I don't know.

40058. Does the proprietor live in the country?—Yes, sometimes.

SUTHER-
LAND.
—
BONAR
BRIDGE.
—
James
Sutherland.

SUTHER.
LAND.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

Murdo
Munro.

40059. Did you go to the landlord and remonstrate against the rent that was put upon you?—Yes, I told him I was too highly rented.

40060. What answer did you get?—He put it by. He said I was not.

40061. What stock are you able to keep on that land you have got?—Two little cows.

40062. Any sheep?—No.

40063. Have you a horse?—Yes.

40064. Have you no outrun of any kind?—Yes, some pasture, but not good.

40065. Does it belong to yourself, or have you merely a share of it?—I have a share of the common hill pasture.

40066. *The Chairman.*—When your rent was raised a second time, was the name of your son or any member of the family put into the estate book?—No.

40067. There was no security that your son will succeed you in the place?—No.

40068. What would you think a fair rent?—I think it would be dear enough at £3; it is bad land.

A. S. BLACK, Commission Agent, Bonar Bridge (59)—examined.

A. S. Black.

40069. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement to read?—I may state I have a letter from Mr Hugh Campbell, teacher, Aberdeen Grammar School, enclosing a paper for the Commissioners, and asking me to read it for him if he should not appear, and intimating that, if the Commissioners desire to cross-examine him, he will appear at Inverness on the following Saturday. His paper is as follows:—‘I have been elected a ‘delegate for Creich, as I am the executor of the late Donald Fraser, ‘farmer and miller at Uigdale, whose ancestors had occupied the farm of ‘Milton for many generations, and who was evicted under exceptionally ‘painful circumstances in 1877. The landlords of Creich differ from those ‘of the west of Scotland, inasmuch as they do not and never did occupy the ‘position of chieftains of clans, nor do the crofters here represent clans- ‘men connected with the soil from immemorial antiquity. Tradition ‘has it that the lands of Skibo were church lands previously to the ‘Reformation; and that when the Bishop of Caithness was compelled to ‘flee from his diocese during the Reformation struggle, Gray, the con- ‘stable of Skibo, quietly secured for himself what he had previously ‘defended for the bishop, and from being constables, the Grays thus became ‘owners of Skibo. From the Grays this estate passed, about the ‘beginning of last century, into the hands of the Mackays, and about the ‘middle of last century, when Skibo was in the possession of Captain ‘Donald Mackay of Scourie, the ancestors of the late Donald Fraser ‘settled in Creich. Like many more of the Creich crofters, the Frasers ‘hailed from Easter Ross. In 1785, the late John Fraser, on his return ‘from the American war, where he had served, took by valuation the ‘mill and lands of Milton of Migdale, the croft attaching to the mill at ‘that time consisting of a few patches of arable land, and about fifty ‘acres of waste land. In the following year (1786), the estate of Skibo ‘was purchased by the late distinguished agriculturist, George Dempster ‘of Dunnichen, the patron of Janieson, and the founder of the British ‘Fisheries Society. It was the policy of “Honest George Dempster” to ‘encourage the tenants on his estate, and to improve the agriculture of ‘the district. The crofters were encouraged to build good houses and ‘fences. If they made good efforts to improve their holdings, a most

' satisfactory form of tenure was granted to them. The result of this was
' that a number of the Migdale tenants, led by John Fraser, Milton,
' succeeded in obtaining in 1798 a perpetual lease of their holdings. The
' original tack is in my possession. It granted perpetual tenure, with a
' readjustment of rent by valuation on the death of each successive tenant.
' Besides John Fraser, there were Robert Gordon, Alexander Leith,
' Robert Mackenzie, John Leith, George Campbell, Hugh Matheson, and
' Alexander Chisholm, tenants in the township of Uigdale, who got
' leases on the same terms:—"With power to them and each of them to
' improve as much waste land on their respective farms as they or either
' of them pleases, for which no additional rent shall be exacted from
' them during their lives, it being specially agreed on that when any of
' the tenants die, the tenant so dying is at liberty to leave his farm to
' any member of his family he pleases, by his will, provided he (the
' deceasing tenant) shall have enclosed his farm and built thereon a
' dwelling-house and offices of stone and lime, and covered the same with
' any other materials than divots, viz., with slate, or heather, or thatch;
' it being agreed that at the time of the tenant's decease two
' arbiters, mutually chosen by the new tenant and the landlord (or factor),
' shall value the farm to be entered on, and whatever rent they fix shall
' be the rent of the new tenant during his life, the new tenant to have
' the same liberty like his predecessors to enclose and cultivate the waste
' land, and on the same terms," &c. The proprietor reserved his rights
' to waste or common lands, which he might enclose for planting or for
' setting to other tenants, but until such lands were enclosed or settled
' on, they remained as common for the tenants both for grazing and fuel.
' The proprietor further bound himself to supply timber of the Skibo
' woods for building purposes, and for implements of husbandry, the
' tenant to pay the expense of cutting the timber. These liberal and
' enlightened terms were granted at Dunnichen in 1798. In 1802, the great
' George Dempster sold Skibo to his brother, John Hamilton Dempster,
' who entailed the estate, and died soon after. He was succeeded by his
' daughter, Harriet Dempster, who had married Mr William Soper, of the
' East India Company's Service. Mr Soper assumed the name of
' Dempster, and undertook the management of his wife's estate, but he
' adopted a different policy from George Dempster of Dunnichen. John
' Fraser, Milton, died in 1810, and was succeeded in terms of the tack
' by his son Hugh Fraser, the rent being readjusted by valuation. Hugh
' Fraser occupied the farm from 1810 until his death in 1876. During
' his occupancy the farm was greatly improved, large tracts of waste land
' were converted into arable, and new buildings and mills were erected.
' But the policy of the estate officials was now to reverse the liberal
' policy of George Dempster, and, if possible, recall the privileges that had
' been granted. In 1818, Mr Soper Dempster wrote a holograph letter
' to Hugh Fraser, offering meliorations for all buildings made during his
' lifetime, in the event of his being removed from the farm. Hugh
' Fraser was then lured into renouncing his perpetual tenure for a life
' tenure, and renouncing his claims on account of stone fences and trees,
' though a special promise had been given as early as 1804 that compensa-
' tion for these would be given. The bait took, though the dreadful
' consequences were not to follow until sixty years had elapsed. William
' Soper Dempster appears to have received promises and renunciations
' from the tenants in return for promises on his part, and while their
' tenants were bound by their engagements, the Dempster family declined
' to be bound by the engagements of William Soper Dempster, as he was
' not the owner of the estate. The result was that the splendid tack of

SUTHER-
LAND.BONAR
BRIDGE.

A. S. Black.

- SUTHERLAND.** ' 1798 became a dead letter, while Hugh Fraser and his son Donald Fraser went on improving the farm in the belief, natural in the circumstances, that they were in possession of perpetual tenure, subject to the conditions of the tack. When Hugh Fraser died in 1876, there were a substantial dwelling-house, offices, and mills, with the most improved machinery on the farm, built with the knowledge and consent of the landlord, the timber being supplied off the estate. The buildings were valued by a judicial valuator in 1878 at £899, 15s.; there had been twenty acres of waste land improved at say £300; about 3000 yards of dykes had been built at £220, and trees worth £80 had been planted by Hugh Fraser. Altogether the improvements were worth £1500, and these had been executed on the faith of absolute fixity of tenure according to the tack. When Hugh Fraser died in 1876, Mr Walker of Skibo, who had acquired the estate by purchase in 1872, declined to pay meliorations, and raised an action of removing against Donald Fraser, the heir at law. The letter of 1818 decided the fate of Fraser. Decree of removal was obtained to take effect on 15th October 1877. The shock was so great, and the idea of removing so unexpected, that Fraser's health gave way, and he died broken-hearted on the 14th October 1877, the day before he should have had to remove from the home of his fathers. The executors of Donald Fraser raised an action in the Court of Session for £1000 of meliorations and expenses, but fearing the uncertain consequences of so doubtful an issue, they accepted a compromise of £300 paid in full of all claims. Donald Fraser having occupied Milton for a year after his father's death, in the belief that he succeeded according to the original tack, had to defend an action for damages at the instance of Mr Walker. Damages were given which, with expenses, amounted to £118, 9s. 5d. The expenses of the litigation amounted to £178, 19s. 2d., so that the net result was that the widow and orphan obtained instead of the £1500, to which they were in equity entitled, the sum of £2, 11s. 5d. I may add, that the farm was let at an advance of £52, 10s. of rent. I may be allowed to state, that I consider Mr Walker was perfectly justified in all the steps he took, as far as the law was concerned. But I hold that it is monstrous that in our country there should exist a system of land laws whereby such a chain of events as those narrated above could be at all possible. I shall conclude by stating my views as to the remedies required at present for the existing state of things. To my mind what is required is to deal with crofters on the lines of George Dempster's tack of 1798:—
1. Tenure.—As to tenure, let there be continuity with periodical readjustment of rents. It was the belief in the continuity of his tenure that made Hugh Fraser increase the value of his holding 800 per cent. I believe his successor has very precarious tenure, and that as a consequence the farm wears a very different aspect. There is no inducement to him to improve.
2. Rents fixed by arbitration.—I should follow George Dempster also in the manner of fixing the rents. A cheap mode of settling land transactions is the interest of landlord and tenant alike. The expense of Donald Fraser's litigation was over £200 to lawyers alone. If the sheriff granted certificates as land valuators to men of skill and experience in each parish, and if their scale of fees were regulated as those of lawyers by the Court of Session, a cheap method of valuation might be instituted.
3. Size of holdings.—The holdings referred to in the tack of 1798, varied from thirty acres to fifty acres (enclosed), and excluding commony. That may be accepted as a good average even now. I ascribe the present discontent in the Highlands not so much to failure of crops, as to the fact that the standard of comfort among the people is rising. When I

' was a boy the only light used in many a crofter's house was faggots of bog fir; now they use candles and paraffin oil. In dress the change is even more striking. This change is surely not to be deplored, and it is necessary for the landlords and the country to recognise that the old state of matters cannot possibly be reverted to. The size of the holdings must be increased in order that the people may live. In this connection I may state, that I consider emigration, judiciously carried out, and accompanied with proper migration, ought to be for the advantage both of those that go and of those that remain. 4. *Hill pasture.*—Yet once more, the Dempster tack secured hill grazing and peat fuel to the tenants. This is absolutely necessary for the crofter if his position is to be tolerable. I can see little to excuse those landlords who have deprived their tenants of hill grazing and even of peat ground. The hill was certainly commonalty at no very remote date. If Her Majesty's Commissioners were to order a complete return of the titles to all the hill country and deer forests in Scotland, and if this return were set before the public, a valuable body of information would be placed in the hands of those who study the land question. It would very likely be seen that many who deprived crofters of hill pasture had themselves but a shadowy right to the "everlasting hills." 5. *Taxation.*—During the sixty-six years that Hugh Fraser occupied Milton, the average of his assessments for schoolmaster, stipend, and poor, may be set down at 3s. 6d. per annum. His successor has to pay local rates to the amount of about £6, i.e., an increase of 3500 per cent. The average increase in the Highlands, though not nearly so high as this, is yet most oppressively high. It is a peculiarity of local taxation, that it is heaviest in those districts that are least able to bear it. In many parishes in Sutherland the school rate is over 1s. 2d. per pound. I hold that the causes of the present distress are—(1) That the standard of comfort is raised owing to increased intercourse with the south. (2) The oppressiveness of local rates. (3) The agricultural depression or bad seasons. The remedy I propose is to tax deer forests and shooting rentals, and apply the tax to the relief of local rates. A tax of 10 per cent. on shooting rentals, and of 20 per cent. on deer forest rentals, would in the main fall to be paid by the lessee, who is usually a wealthy man coming to enjoy a luxury on account of which the community suffer. It is very improbable that such a tax would appreciably affect the rentals. The proprietor, as well as the crofter, would reap the benefit of the relief to the rates. In this connection I would also urge strict valuation of mansion houses and shootings, retained in the hands of the proprietor. That is Mr Campbell's paper, and I hand in a copy of the tack to which it refers.

40070. The paper you have read to us has particular reference to a lease to the tenant of a mill, and a subject of such considerable value as hardly to bring it within the limit of our inquiry into the condition of the crofters; but we see here that there are other questions respecting leases which have been lost, perhaps in a similar manner, called the Craggandhu lease and the Tulloch lease. Have any of these leases reference to parties in the condition of small tenants and crofters?—They are all small tenants—simply crofters. I refer to it in my own paper, if I am to be allowed to read it.

40071. Has that paper which you are about to read reference to a crofter's holding?—Entirely.

40072. Could you state the substance of these leases verbally without reading them?—I was going to state this, that as regards the Craggandhu lease there were twelve tenants; the Tulloch lease, nine tenants; the Migdale lease, eight tenants; making twenty-nine. There were thirty tenants who accepted those leases, and this lease is dated 1798.

SUTHERLAND.
—
BONAR
BRIDGE
—
A. S. Black.

SUTHERLAND. 40073. Are all those leases you refer to leases granted by the Dempster family at that period?—Yes.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

A. S. Black. 40074. With reference to small tenants?—Yes.
 40075. Have the heirs of those small tenants forfeited the advantages of those leases entirely?—I was going to explain that. Only one tenant now holds by the Tulloch lease, and three under a similar lease of 1797. All the others have either been wheedled or wriggled out of them. The way in the Tulloch lease appears to have been by adjusting marches between tenants, and, secondly, by fixing the rents. The marches no doubt required it, and then the factor straightened the marches, and by-and-by he fixed a new rent without employing a mutual valuer at all. This went on, and in effecting those changes the lease was first tacitly ignored, then repudiated, and by-and-by thrown overboard. The result has been that ninety-five tenants have been evicted from their possessions and stripped of the fruits of the labour of generations. They made the poor tenants believe that when the slightest change was made on the march they should have a fresh lease; or they flattered the poor tenants in this way—‘We need not be at the trouble of employing valuators. ‘Will you be satisfied with such a rent?’ That vitiated the lease; and to go to litigation is ruination to the tenants. That is the way they were wheedled out of those leases.

40076. Will you read us an individual case illustrating the general system?—Well, the great grievance is the high rents, rack rents. The present rental of five farms formed on the foundation of those clearances, viz., Balblair, cleared of fourteen tenants; Flood, of ten; Little Creich, of six; Achany, of eight; and Clash-na-prounthenach, of nine, amounts to £735; and if you add to this £223, 1s. 6d. for the rental of three more farms formed by Mr Sutherland Walker by further clearances, viz., Swordale of six tenants, Moinghaor of seven, and Clashnashinaig of three, you have £958, 15s. 6d.

40077. You are going on now to a different question, that is, the excessive rental upon the consolidated farms?—I wish to show the industry of the people who had those leases. From this deduct the twentieth part as the annual value of the land as waste, and you have £910, 16s. 9d. as the annual income derived from the accumulated industry of these tenants during fifty years or so. This sum capitalised at thirty years' purchase gives £27,325, 2s. 6d., or an average of £433, 14s. 7d. for each tenant, as an approximation to the amount of compensation justly due him, consistent with the provisions of this old lease, before he could be evicted. On the same principle, the following statement shows the accumulated industry of all the tenants on the estate, on account of the security held by them under these leases. The total rental of Skibo by the valuation roll of 1882–3 is as follows:—

Within the parish of Creich,	.	£2712 17 10
" " Dornoch,	.	1636 18 8
		————— £4349 16 6
From this deduct for fishings—		
shootings being unlet,	.	353 0 0
From this deduct for mussel scalps,	.	100 0 0
" mansion house,	.	150 0 0
" home farm,	.	160 0 0
" Skibo School,	.	11 0 0
		————— 774 0 0
		————— £3575 16 6

	Brought forward,	£3575	16	6	SUTHER-
Add rental of Balblair, as once forming part of Skibo estate,	. . £570	12	0		LAND.
Less rent of mansion house and shoot- ings,	210	0	0		BONAR BRIDGE.
		360	12	0	A. S. Black.
		£3936	8	6	
Then deduct the whole rental of the estate in 1783, as per Statistical Account referred to, . . .		750	0	0	
And you have the sum of,		£3186	8	6	

as representing the annual value of the accumulated industry of all the tenants, within a period of ninety years, or rather during the first fifty years of the century, for all the improvements that have been done since. This sum at thirty years' purchase will give £95,592, 15s. This has been brought about, if we are to believe what some say, by a lazy class of people who must have their dram at any price. However, it is a grand result, and in the face of it, what madness on the part of a proprietor to banish such vast producing forces from his estate, so long as there is the size of a croft left unimproved among his glens, and so many hands willing to do it, and that not for money, but simply if they get security for their industry. And what infatuation in a nation to allow it! There is plenty of land as good as that which has been reclaimed, patent to any one who opens his eyes to see it. The number of families evicted within the last fifty years or so was—by Mr Dempster, 95; by Mr Sutherland Walker, 35; by Mr Chirnside, 2; and by Mr Hadwen, 2—total, 134. The number of crofters on the Creich part of the estate at present is 125, in Dornoch part 12. Assuming that the evictions in the latter was in proportion equal to those in the other, then, as there are now 137 crofters, there would have been 147 evicted. Of the ninety-five families evicted by Mr Dempster, twelve went to America, six settled down in the neighbouring parishes, and five scattered over the country, all the rest squatted here and there, chiefly on the moors and fens on the estate. From this it may be roughly assumed that the crofters on the estate when Mr Dempster sold it, were the descendants of those evicted, for all the difference the few families that left the estate and those that may have been left undisturbed in their possessions would make. If this be so, then the right of those tenants or their interest in the land, in common justice, amounts to the sum of £95,592, 15s. already stated. This may well raise the question as to which is the owner—the man who pays from 10s. to 60s. per acre to buy the land, or the man who lays out from £15 to £30 to improve it. There should be no doubt at all events as to who should be the senior partner. It is said by some that the crofters of the present day, that is the descendants of the evicted crofters, are better off than the crofters of the olden time. If that be so, then it has been for their good that they have been stript of the fruits of the industry of generations. To this it should be a sufficient reply to say, that the holders of this doctrine should have no objection to undergo the same process. As a proof of their assertion, they refer to the condition of the crofters of Sutherland, meaning by that the results of what is known by the 'Sutherland Clearances.' These supply no proof. It is well known that the house of Sutherland ever since, down to the present Duke, has put forth splendid efforts to efface the evil consequences of what

SUTHER-
LAND.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

A. S. Black.

happened at the beginning of the century. But the great grievance of the day is that evictions are being carried on continuously in the face of the country's verdict against them, and in contrast to what the Duke has been doing; and the crying grievance of the tenants on Skibo estate is that they are being evicted for the second time, and from the second homes they have made for themselves among the moors and fens, and that by means of rack-rents three times screwed on—1st, by Mr Dempster a little before he sold the estate, again by Mr Chirnside before he sold it, and, for the third time, by Mr Sutherland Walker soon after he bought it. The truth of this will appear from the following comparisons and statements:—There is only one township of crofters on the Duke's ground in this parish. It contains thirteen tenants, and between them they have seventeen ponies, thirty-nine cows or their equivalents with their followers, and 200 sheep, for a rent of £60; whereas the same number of tenants in Migdale district, as recently rented by Mr Sutherland Walker, have only fifteen ponies, twenty-seven cows or their equivalents with their followers, for a rent of £139, 5s., and no sheep at all. The rents of four of these were raised the other year—one from £5 to £7, 10s., with one pony and one cow; a second from £5 to £7, 15s., with one pony and one cow; a third from £5 to £7, 10s. with one pony and one cow; and the fourth from £8 to £12, 10s. with two cows or their equivalents with their followers. One of these tenants offered the proprietor to buy the seed, labour the land, tend the crops, harvest it, and then hand over the whole produce to him as rent, on condition that he would be allowed to remain in the house, which he built at his own expense. This offer was honestly made, but it was not accepted. The rise and progress of the rental of this district is as follows:—

Present Number of Tenants.	Number of Cows or their equivalents and followers.	Number of Ponies.	Old Rent about 1853.	As raised by Mr Dempster about 1863.	As raised by Mr Chirnside about 1866.	As now raised by Mr Sutherland Walker.
Holding under Mr Chirnside's leases not yet expired	8	22	10 £ 46 0 0	65 0 0	95 15 0	95 15 0
Holding under Mr Sutherland Walker's leases, and as rented by him	22	38	22 77 13 0	84 14 0	107 4 0	189 11 0
Totals,	30	60	32 123 13 0	149 14 0	202 19 0	285 6 0

That is a fair specimen of what has been done over the whole estate. If, after all, the crofters are somehow or other better off now than they were long ago, then how much more would this be the case, if they had been left undisturbed in their possessions? But they are not better off. Modern inventions and discoveries, no doubt, brought us all alike many comforts, and made us all better off. In that sense the crofters are better off. In that sense they are better off than ever Job was at his best. In that sense our paupers are better off, but they are paupers still. But have the crofters kept pace with the other industries of the county; are they still on the same platform in the social scale with the artizan or ordinary tradesman? Is there not a deep and a wide gulf between them and the second class farmers, let alone the big farmers, that is most undesirable? Had they been left to enjoy the fruit of their industry, why should they not to-day be

like the tenants of Strathrusdale on Ardross estate, who are no longer crofters but farmers; or, like the descendants of the old crofters of Strathspey, who have developed their crofts into farms and themselves into farmers, and now largely supply the Highlands and Islands with Gaelic-speaking ministers for the Established Church of Scotland? But the crofter of to-day must toil on all the year round, except a short time in winter, at the rate of twelve hours a day, in order to make both ends meet. But it may not be correct to say that Mr Sutherland Walker ever evicted one tenant from the estate, for he offered them all leases, and regretted very much that they did not accept of them. Here is a specimen of the conditions of set—A crofter is offered a lease of ten years for his croft of ten acres at a rent of £14, being £2, 15s. of an increase on the old rent; but in addition he had to pay £203, 15s. within the first five years as a premium. This premium consisted of the following items:—

1. To improve $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres = one-fourth the size of the croft—trenching, draining, and clearing—would, at £20 per acre, if done according to estate regulations, cost	£50 0 0
2. To build a new house and farm offices, the old house being quite good and now bringing in rent to the proprietor,	100 0 0
3. To remove or bury the stones of the old march dyke, 150 yards at 1s. 6d.,	11 5 0
4. To build 200 yards of new stone dyke, at 1s. 6d. .	15 0 0
5. To forego his right to the yard-manure of the last year of the lease = to the straw of four acres, .	10 0 0
6. To forego his right to the straw of five acres as outgoing tenant,	12 10 0
7. To forego his right to $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of second year's grass,	5 0 0
	<hr/>
	£203 15 0

That was the way the tenants of Swordale were evicted. But it may be argued that a proprietor has a right to do with his land what he pleases—to go to the open market and get the best rent he can for it, the same as for a house or a horse. No doubt the law has been so administered as to give him that right, but, for all that, it is outrageously unjust, so far as the crofters are concerned. It is an easy matter for an outsider, with the fruit of his labour in his pocket, to outbid the old tenant, the fruit of whose labour and that of his father it may be is still in the soil. Mr Sutherland Walker did get the rent he wanted for Swordale from a hotel-keeper in the village, but he did not get his other conditions. The tenants would give the same rent. The leases, the ten-years' leases of Mr Sutherland Walker, and those granted by Mr Chirnside, on the townships of Slearderdh, Migdale, Badbea, and Tulloch, containing fifty-two tenants—will be out in Whitsunday 1885 and 1886, and in all likelihood the tenants will be treated as those of Swordale have been, unless the result of this inquiry will prevent it. But in case the statement regarding the Swordale tenants be considered as exaggerated, I beg to produce two leases to show that that is not so. They refer to two crofts which happened at the time to be held by one family, and they still are so. The family consisted of the father and daughter and the daughter's husband. The young crofter married the old crofter's

SUTHER-
LAND,
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BONAR
BRIDGE,
—
A. S. Black

SUTHER- daughter, and this union having taken place the union of crofts followed.
LAND. The old crofter took in every bit of his croft himself, and built a substantial house on it, which is there still as a memorial of the old man's industry, who died a year or two ago. I also produce a claim for compensation by one of the Swordale tenants amounting to £174, 10s,

BONAR
BRIDGE.
A. S. Black. which the proprietor repudiates. The estimate that some people form as to what a Highlander is and what he is entitled to is very ungenerous, to say the least of it. Here are some suggestions which the Highlanders of this district wish to make as their estimate of what their requirements are, and what they should be considered justly entitled to, and which are at the same time fair and just to the proprietor, and moreover simple and practicable in their nature:—1. The crofts as now held to be the basis to start from, with improvable waste land added where practicable, until the area within the marches of the croft reaches from fifteen to fifty acres or more—the big farms to be left with their old or natural boundaries, with due regard to the amenities of the locality. 2. The rents to be fixed by valuators mutually chosen as soon as possible, and afterwards at the end of every twenty-five or thirty years. The tenant to receive a certificate showing the extent of his improvements and the amount of compensation due thereon at the end of each period. Litigation in every case that may arise between the proprietor and tenant to be excluded. 3. The crofter to be entitled to will his interest in the croft or to dispose of its privileges to any member of his family or any other person he pleases, and, in the event of his dying intestate, his heir-at-law to succeed him. 4. The proprietor to have the right of feuing any croft or part of a croft, without consent of the crofter, for building purposes or for erecting manufacturing establishments, on due compensation being made for buildings and other improvements made by the crofter. 5. Provision to be made for settling additional tenants on the improvable waste land where there may be room, and for this purpose that kind of land should be lined off as soon as possible into lots. Provision also should be made for adjusting and straightening marches between crofts when and where necessary, compensation in such cases to be fixed by arbitration. 6. Club farms on the principle of joint stock companies, where practicable, should be formed of the unimprovable waste land, or other waste land, so long as it remains unappropriated as crofts. These, if possible, should not be less than what might be sufficient to keep 400 or 500 sheep. The tenants to be entitled to plant belts for shelter, and the same to count as improvements. All the grazing-farms on the estate of Skibo are at present vacant, and conveniently situated, and very suitable for such farms. 7. The proprietor to have the right of enclosing for planting any part or the whole of the unimprovable land, on due reduction of rent being made, if occupied as a club farm. But after twenty-five or thirty years from the date of enclosing it, such plantations to be thrown open for pasture in connection with the crofts as before. Grown-up woods in the neighbourhood of tenants should never be reserved for deer forests, except in the immediate vicinity of the mansion house, and then they should be so effectually enclosed as to preclude every possibility for the deer to molest the tenants' crops. Besides the great waste of good grass, they are a continual source of annoyance to the well-disposed, and tempt the unscrupulous to be more unscrupulous still. 8. The tenant's capital. This is at hand, and will be forthcoming regularly by instalments from year to year. Bad years may, for a time, render it unprofitable, but never exhaust it. Once seven years of famine tried it hard, but eventually it triumphed. But the deposit-money is wanted to set the machinery in motion—that is, the borrowing powers necessary for the system. The capital is the bone and sinew of the crofter. Every

SUTHER-
LAND.BONAR
BRIDGE.

A. S. Black

ploughman or labourer to-day is worth from £40 to £50 a year, that is equal to a capital of £800 or £1000. Then a crofter from forty-five to sixty years, with two sons from eighteen to thirty years, represent an income of £120 to £150 a year, to be expended on the croft. But these require, while they are working, the means of subsistence, and therefore it is proposed that loans should be made to such as may require them, to the extent of the cost of improving the first twelve acres, but in no case to exceed £15 the acre for trenching, draining, and clearing, and £3, 10s. extra per acre for liming,—the loan, with interest, to be repayable in thirty or fifty years, or sooner, at the option of the crofter, as he may be able. But who is to lend the money? Some of the proprietors may not be able to do it. But might not some of the working-man's savings be diverted to this purpose—would it not be a fitting thing that the funds of the working-man's bank should be applied for promoting the welfare of his class—might not the National Security Savings Bank be adapted for this by being made lenders as well as receivers, under the supervision and direction of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt? Why should not small tenants be assisted, in their measure, on the same principle, and with the same security, as the proprietors have been? These are the suggestions thecrofters of this district desire to offer as a basis for settling the crofters' question among them; and they consider them fair and reasonable, and such as should satisfy all parties everywhere. Surely such a settlement as this is not too much for the Highlander to expect from his country, after all the oppression and injustice he has so nobly borne for generations past. Give him this—it is all in the lines of the old lease previously referred to. Give him fair play and no favour, and leave him alone, and you will thus make him at once his own employer and his own banker. You will (1) help him to improve as much land as will produce as much food as will support the family; you will (2) supply him with convenient work all the year round for many years to come, the fruit of which will be invested in a bank safer than the Bank of England and its dividends much larger; and you will (3) form a splendid nursery of the noblest peasantry in the world for our colonies—well trained in every respect, morally and physically. By no system can waste land be improved more cheaply nor more profitably than by the crofter system. What thecrofters have done on the Skibo estate is sufficient proof of that. There is evidence enough in this district to show what Highlanders will do when they have protection for their industry; and there is also evidence to show what some of them may do without such protection. There is a crofter within 600 yards of this (Bonar Bridge) who built a fairly comfortable house, and improved four or five acres of moorland about it, the cost of which to-day would exceed £200. If he had that sum in the savings bank he would consider himself a rich man; but he has it not there; he has it in the landlord's bank, and for that privilege he must pay a rent-tax for it of £4, 5s. There is another within the same distance, who, with his three grown-up sons, after earning their day's wages, may be seen on a summer evening, working up to ten o'clock, adding to their croft. And another within sight of this, whose father was evicted twice, and he himself evicted twice afterwards, yet, nothing daunted, settled down about sixteen years ago on a bit moorland, and took in six acres of it, and reared a family of eleven—five daughters and six sons. Two of the sons learned trades, and one of them holds an appointment in a bank in England. That is something like the stuff the Highlanders are made of. It is an easy matter to say that they are lazy, and to say every other bad thing about them, if they are in your way and you want to get quit of them. These are the arguments used against the Red Indians of America. The Highlander is not lazy, but he refuses to be a serf—he refuses to be

SUTHER-
LAND.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

—
A. S. Black.

treated as a Red Indian, but insists on being a man, and as good a man at least as his oppressor. No man has a right to traduce his character in that sense until he sees to it that justice is done to him. Give him what he now wants, and he will come to the front at home as he does abroad, in spite of all difficulties; and if he does not, then why not? The reason cannot be in himself; it must be somewhere else. I have been coming in daily contact with his class for the last forty years, and I venture to say that a more industrious and sober class of people there is not on the face of the earth, notwithstanding all that friends and foes have said and written against them. I have now shortly to refer to the other proprietors in the district prescribed for me.—1. Reference has already been made to the efforts put forth by the Duke of Sutherland for improving the condition of matters on his estate. These have not always been directed for the permanent benefit of the crofters. This is specially true so far as the vast expenses and extensive reclamations in Lairg are concerned. But his Grace has raised the hopes of the small tenants very much by announcing his intention of breaking down some of the large sheep runs into small farms, and they hope that a fair trial will be given to that system, and in order to that they would suggest that experiments should also be made in this neighbourhood, near the railway and market towns; and they think Achindrich and Strathcarnock suitable fields for the purpose. They are confident that the results will be satisfactory as regards the welfare of the tenants, and increase of rents in due time for the proprietor. 2. Ospisdale, with forty crofters; one ordinary farm and the home farm. The proprietor, Mr Gilchrist, is known to be kind and considerate towards his tenants. Some evictions took place on the Spinningdale portion of the estate and one in Ansdale, and some voluntary removals from Ospisdale Moor, on account of the rents being considered too high. But these rents were fixed, and the evictions took place under the factor that was appointed during the proprietor's minority. Two evictions happened under his father; they were cases where the tenants took upon themselves to differ from the laird, and that is always a serious crime. On Ardeens and Ansdale, which are by far the most important townships on the estate, the tenants are hopefully improving their holdings, under their second lease of nineteen years. Three crofts, however, in these parts, have been mentioned as being too highly rented; and unquestionably they are so. They are too high up, like eyries in the rock. The tenants of two of these improved every bit of their crofts. These cases must have happened more without the knowledge than with the intention of the proprietor; and if the tenants would state their grievances fairly before him, they would no doubt be redressed. 3. Balblair, with twenty-two crofters and two farms. The proprietor, Mr Hadwen's, treatment of his tenants is considered kind, but not considerate. He refuses them leases, and expressly discouraged them from making any improvements; but the rents are easy. About two years ago he became an invalid, and committed the management of his estates to one of his tenants, who acted as the factor. Since then five grievances have been recorded against this management—(1) A tenant was forcibly evicted from an estate recently acquired on the other side of the Kyle, where he and his father before him lived for the previous seventy years. (2) Another from Maikle, on the estate of Balblair, for using the well water that supplied the family since 1806. This family was very helpful to the poorer tenants on the estate in supplying them with meal, seed oats, and potatoes, in time of need, and never pressed them for payment. (3) A case of litigation against a poor woman for a ton or two of straw, which must have cost as much money as would buy all the straw that grows on the estate twice over. (4) The roads

leading to their peat moss through the woods were shut up and the public excluded, after having the use of them from time immemorial. (5) Undue influence was brought to bear on the tenants at the last election of the School Board. The gamekeeper was sent round twice, in the name of the proprietor, to tell them to vote for the factor; and a lawyer from Tain was employed to lead them to the poll, and to see that they did their duty.

SUTHER-
LAND.
—BONAR
BRIDGE.
—

A. S. Black.

40078. By whom was this paper drawn up, especially that part which has the information as to leases?—All the information was collected at a series of meetings of the tenants. They supplied me with the information, and I made it up.

40079. Can you supply me with a copy of the old Dempster lease?—I produce a copy.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, Crofter, Ardcromie, Balnagown Estate (69)—
examined.

40080. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement?—Yes.—‘I appear as a delegate for the district of Kincardine, on the estate of Balnagown. I have resided in this parish for the period of sixty-eight years. The principal complaints are—1st, We had been deprived of the use of a large extent of hill pasture which was attached to our crofts, and on which each family had between twenty and thirty sheep. Now we possess none, the pasture being added to a neighbouring farm. 2nd, Our crofts are too small, though there is abundance of moorland in the locality fit for reclamation; but in the absence of a lease we have no encouragement to do so, as our rents would be raised on the termination of the lease of the nearest farm. 3rd, There would be no compensation for any labour or money expended thereon. 4th, That our rents are excessively high. The only means we can suggest to ameliorate our condition are—to have the hill pasture restored to us; assistance from the proprietor in the way of timber, lime, &c., for repairing our dwellings should they become decayed; protection against removal; holdings valued by competent judges in fixing the rent; sheep runs to be broken down, reclaimed and cultivated, where suitable; and that no crofts be added to farms as is contemplated in this parish.’

Alexander
Campbell.

40081. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—For how many crofters do you appear here to-day?—Between twenty and twenty-two.

40082. Are they all near each other?—Yes.

40083. Who wrote this paper; was it one of themselves?—A lad belonging to the place.

40084. Who has got this large extent of hill pasture which belonged to them?—Mr Anderson, Kincardine.

40085. Was he there before, or has he only come to the place lately?—We were there all before him.

40086. Has he got a large place besides what was taken from them?—Yes, a very large place; a lot of farms.

40087. And he was not satisfied with the lot of farms; he wanted this piece from them?—That is certain enough.

40088. What has become of the sheep they had?—We sold them to him.

40089. You were compelled to do so?—Yes.

40090. Had they heard it was to be taken from them some time before?—We understood, when Dr Gordon died, who had the farm before, that there was this addition to be made.

40091. Did they not go to Mr Forsyth, the factor, to remonstrate

SUTHER-
LAND.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

Alexander
Campbell.

against it?—Yes, we spoke to him at the time of the settlement, but it was he himself who made the arrangement. He said that we were to have no sheep, unless the farmer of Kincardine allowed us to have them.

40092. Has it been a great loss to them, the taking away of this ground and their sheep?—Yes, it was the greatest possible loss to us.

40093. Why should the Balnagown estate officials be so hard upon their own old tenants in favour of a new man?—I cannot answer that.

40094. They would not expect that would be done upon them?—We would not have thought or believed it.

40095. Has not the general administration of the Balnagown estate been a very mild and humane one?—It used to be so always.

40096. And has not the present factor been there for a long time?—Not very long. I remember a good many factors in my own time.

40097. Do you recollect Mr Williamson?—Yes, and others before him.

40098. How did they like Mr Williamson?—I don't know; I was not on the estate at that time.

40099. Your second grievance is, ‘Our crofts are too small, though there is abundance of land in the locality fit for reclamation.’ If it were found necessary to add their old hill pasture to Mr Anderson's farm, is there any other hill land he might give them?—I don't know that there is any.

40100. Can you tell us what was the extent of the land taken from them?—I cannot be precise; it was of large extent.

40101. How many sheep would be on it?—I think it would keep about 200 sheep.

40102. What reduction did they get of the rent?—No reduction. I was paying £4, 13s. before, and I pay £4, 5s. now.

40103. Were these few shillings taken off at the time the hill ground was taken from them?—Yes. I don't know if it was so with the rest, but it was so with me.

40104. Whereabout is this hill you refer to; is it far from here?—Just above the station at Ardgay.

40105. Was it necessary for them to take wintering for their stock, or between their own low grounds and the hill were they able to keep their sheep all the year round?—Yes.

40106. What is it now that those poor people want; do they want their rents reduced, or to get the land as it was before?—To get the land as we had it before, and also the right to take in new grounds.

40107. You complain in this paper that they have no leases; had they ever a lease?—Not when I came.

40108. Supposing they got a lease, or some security in their tenure, are they disposed and anxious to improve the area of the cultivable land?—We would be. I have reclaimed as much land myself as, if I got paid for it, would pay for the ground.

40109. You say there are twenty-two families in this position; how many souls will there be among them? Will there be 100 at any rate?—There are some large families and others small.

40110. When did this happen?—About ten years ago.

40111. Was it in the time of Mr Forsyth?—Yes.

40112. Has there been a new lease granted to this tenant since the land was taken from them?—Yes.

40113. And it is now running on?—Yes.

40114. Where does he live?—At Bonar Bridge.

40115. *The Chairman.*—There are other delegates from the Balnagown estate; are their complaints of the same nature as yours?—I am not aware there is a difference of complaint.

GEORGE ANDERSON, Farmer, Kincardine, Balnagown Estate (53)—examined.

SUTHERLAND.

BONAR
BRIDGE.

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George
Anderson.

40116. *The Chairman.*—Have you a statement to make to us?—Yes. With your Lordship's permission, I would like to state a few facts regarding some of the delegates' statements. The delegate Alexander Campbell, Kincardine Hill, is rather a discontented being, as his neighbours inform me. He came from Culrain estate a few years ago to his present croft on Kincardine Hill, which he got from the late Dr Gordon, who held the lease of Kincardine arable and Badaroon sheep farm, with the tenant's croft combined. At the expiry of Dr Gordon's lease Balnagown took the crofters into their own hands. This delegate, Alexander Campbell, pays to Balnagown a rent of £4, 5s. yearly. He has three cows, a mare, and a foal, and I offered to pay him £3, which I bind myself to give him yearly, for the liberty of my hogs running over his croft from the 20th October to the 10th of March each year; so that his actual rent will be 25s. His nearest neighbour, Kenneth M'Nab, pays to Balnagown a yearly rent of £4, 14s. I agreed with him for his outrun as above at £3, so that his actual rent is 34s. yearly. The other crofters on Kincardine Hill get similar sums from me in proportion to the size of these crofts; so that the rents on the Kincardine crofters are nominal. I cannot see that any of the Balnagown crofters, out from all others, have any cause for complaining, unless the spirit which is ruling our friends on the other side of St George's Channel has entered into them,—that is, to have their land for nothing. Their late proprietor, Sir Charles Ross, as is well known, was most indulgent to all his crofters and cottars; and as for Lady Ross, her generosity to the crofters and cottars on the different parts of her estate is well known. She often visits them, and annually gives them clothing, meal, tea, sugar, &c. The small sheep farm of Badaroon I took from the late Dr Gordon in 1859, who, as he represented to the late Mr Gardener, factor then for Balnagown, could not keep the farm owing to the tenants' sheep eating up his pasture. Mr John Munro, farmer, Fearn, whose hill joined Badaroon and the Kincardine tenants' hill, was in the same predicament. Mr Gardener sanctioned the subletting of the farms to me. I did not hold the farms for any time when I found myself in the same position; and at the expiry of my sublet lease some twelve years ago, I complained to Mr Forsyth, the present factor, that I could not continue as tenant if he did not wire-fence the tenants off me. The tenants' or crofters' rent for years would not cover the expense of a wire fence, so he had in his option to put Sir Charles Ross to this expense, or part with me as a tenant. At a meeting which he held with the crofters they agreeably parted with their sheep, which I took from them at a mutually agreed on price; and they were granted the grazing of their cattle and horses only in common with me on the hill. But they are as often on my pasture as where they have liberty to go. The Kincardine, &c., farms, which I hold on the Balnagown estate, are much higher rented in proportion to the crofters' holdings. But I presume it will not better me should I give statements to the Commissioners to convince them of my farms being dear. Although it is out of their power to reduce my rents, I hope it will be in their power to get an Act passed this first session that will compensate farmers for improvements done on their holdings during the currency of their lease, when the said improvements are to benefit the estate. I may mention that I have no complaints to make against my proprietor or factor. I made as tight a bargain as I possibly could for all my holdings, and was satisfied at the time that I was entering on a safe investment; and if my holdings are now

SUTHER-
LAND.

BONAB
BRIDGE.

George
Anderson.

turning out contrary to what I expected, it is myself and the past bad seasons I have to blame, not the proprietor or factor. The statements I have made as to Kincardine Hill and Badaroon sheep farm apply to the Braeslangwell sheep farm which I hold on the Balnagown estate, which is a similar holding in every way. I pay over £1300 of rent on four different estates, viz., Balnagown, Ardross, Skibo, and Kindeace. From my experience, the factors on each of those estates are judicious men, —stamped with the same iron,—having the laird's interest at heart first, and the tenants' second. This ought to be reversed, and any wee advantages that might creep up should be given to the weaker side. Any remarks by me as to the proprietors are uncalled-for; they are all well-known gentlemen, and I am sorry to see and hear of complaints made by some delegates and tenants against them, and that by those who have no earthly cause of complaining. I did not intend to trouble the Honourable Commissioners with any statements; but, having heard of meetings being held in our parish, where facts were misrepresented, I prepared the foregoing facts, and trust you will pardon me for encroaching so much on your time.

40117. How long have you been in this country?—Since I was a boy, forty-eight years ago.

40118. Where did your father come from?—I cannot say, but originally he belonged to Ross-shire.

40119. Did your father hold farms before you?—No.

40120. You took the farms upon this estate of Balnagown yourself?—Yes.

40121. The only complaint we have heard mentioned in connection with your farm, or yourself particularly, was this, that a certain portion of the hill pasture belonging to a certain township had been taken away from the township and added to your holding, which was already sufficiently large; was the common pasture taken from the small tenants on your demand?—It was not taken from them; it was only as regards sheep.

40122. But was a change made?—I would not hold my sheep farm if they had sheep, for their sheep trespassed into my farm.

40123. Then the delegate who stated that the pasture had been taken away did not explain that the small tenants were allowed to keep cattle and horses?—Yes, they are; it is only taken from them as far as sheep are concerned.

40124. Well, when they gave up their sheep, were they able to keep more horses or more cattle, or did they only keep the same number?—They could keep more, and I believe they keep more.

40125. Is there any portion of that pasture which is not appropriated for the pasturing of cattle and horses, but which is appropriated for sheep?—It is for both. It is no good for sheep, and I have no sheep on it.

40126. I want to know your opinion. Is it just as useful to them to have more horses and cattle on the pasture, or would it be more useful to them to have some sheep?—Yes, if the sheep strayed upon my land. They would not remain upon their own land. If it was fenced off from me they might hold sheep, but I would not hold the sheep farm and allow them the liberty of trespassing into my ground.

40127. But the ground itself was adapted for sheep?—No, and I have no sheep on it.

40128. Even if there was a fence, still the ground would not be adapted for sheep?—It would not.

40129. But still they seem to have kept some, and therefore we may suppose the sheep were of some use to them. Well, you say you could not hold your farm unless it was wire fenced?—Yes.

40130. You told us you paid in proportion to the value of your respective holdings a higher rent than the small tenants?—I do.

40131. And, generally speaking, I presume that the proprietors get good rents for their sheep farms?—In general they do.

40132. Well, as the proprietors benefit by these large sheep farms and get good rents, do you think it would be an unreasonable thing for the proprietor to put up a wire fence between the large farm and the small tenants, so as to avoid all those quarrels and annoyances?—It would not be unreasonable; it would be just and fair.

40133. Do you think, supposing the proprietor had offered to put up a wire fence, and so make you both contented, that perhaps the small tenants would have helped to carry the materials and to put up the fence?—Possibly they might.

40134. Did you ever suggest to the factor that he might put the fence up?—I did.

40135. It is true you suggested it, but you say it was too expensive?—Yes.

40136. But supposing you had said it was not too expensive, and that it was a reasonable thing for the proprietor?—He could do it as he pleased himself. He would not do it on my suggestion, but I think it would be quite reasonable.

40137. Since you have been tenant of these sheep farms on the Balnagown estate, has any other advantage been taken away from crofters and small tenants and given to you at all? Has anything been done for your benefit to their prejudice?—Not for my benefit.

40138. No land has been taken from them and given to you?—No; I am in possession of a stretch of about two miles in length, and 400 yards broad, that I wire-fenced at my own expense; but Balnagown pays for it, I expect, at the expiry of my lease.

40139. So nothing was taken away from the crofters for your convenience?—The wire fence divided off between me and them, but sheep came at the back of this and strayed into my ground.

40140. When you put up the wire fence was any of their land given to you?—A part of the hill.

40141. Was their rent reduced?—I don't think it would require to be reduced. That is a question I cannot answer; the factor could answer it.

40142. Well, when a piece of pasture was taken from that side and put to your side, did you pay an increase of rent in consideration?—I did.

40143. But you do not know whether a corresponding decrease was made on their side?—I cannot answer the question.

40144. Do you generally live on good terms with the crofting population and small tenants?—Well, I think I do.

40145. Do you employ some of them upon your farm?—Often.

40146. You said you were instrumental in reducing their rents in this way, that your hoggs were fed in winter upon their land, and that you gave to one crofter £3, and to another as much?—Yes; some £6, some £5.

40147. And you rather represented that as a benefit which they derived from you. Now, what I want to understand is this, if they did not feed your sheep, could they put the same land to some other purpose?—No, unless they let it to some one else for sheep.

40148. They could not use it?—No. The cattle would not use it in winter. In summer it is different, but in winter they could not use it.

40149. Still, if they did not let it to you, they might let it to somebody else?—Yes, and that would reduce their rent so much; a man paying £4, 5s. and getting £3 from me, only pays £1, 5s.

SUTHER-
LAND.

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BONAR
BRIDGE.

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George
Anderson.

SUTHERLAND. 40150. How long do the hoggs remain on?—From 20th October till 10th March.

BONAR BRIDGE. 40151. But if you had not got the facility of feeding your hoggs on their ground, you could not keep them?—I could keep them somewhere else.

George Anderson. 40152. *Mr Cameron.*—You said, in answer to the Chairman, that the proprietor could get a good rent for a sheep farm; are you sure? Can a proprietor who has a sheep farm to let now get a good rent for it?—No.

40153. Then you mean that the price was better formerly?—Yes, ten or twelve years ago.

40154. But now you cannot get a good price?—No.

40155. *The Chairman.*—Suppose a good sheep farm was to be out of lease now, one of your own farms, what percentage of reduction would it probably suffer?—On a £150 rent, I would expect £50 down.

40156. Just 33 per cent.?—Just one-third.

40157. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—What rent are you paying to Balnagown for this land that was taken from the Kincardine tenants?—I pay for the whole hill and arable farm—a general rent for the whole farm.

40158. Are you paying anything at all for it?—Yes, of course.

40159. But you cannot say how much?—No; it is a general rent for the whole lot.

40160. Now, you have got several farms, you say. When you found you could not carry on this farm at a profit without getting the land of the small people, did it not occur to you that it would be better for you to give up the farm altogether?—That is a wrong question to put to me. You ask me why wouldn't I give up the farm unless I got the land. I did not want the land.

40161. What did you want?—I wanted this, that the sheep would not come in upon my pasture. There is no possibility of doing away with them without fencing, or the tenants being deprived of sheep.

40162. Is it the fact that you were dissatisfied with the old state of matters, and you went to the proprietor and talked about a wire fence?—Dr Gordon complained of it before me, and I threatened to discontinue it too.

40163. Has the fact not been this, that in place of putting up a wire fence, which would cost the proprietor something, you by your action have not put the proprietor to any expense, but are actually paying him a rent, and have deprived those people of their pasture?—They have their pasture. They have the liberty of the cattle and horses on it, but no sheep.

40164. Can you state now that they are able to make any use whatever in the way of putting extra stock upon that hill, when the hill has been taken from them?—Well, I don't know.

40165. You put it as a very great act of generosity or favour on your part, that you are paying them so much for wintering. Now, did not they formerly use their own low grounds for wintering their own stock?—Most of them did.

40166. And do you consider that the sum you are paying them for wintering is equal to the profit they were making off their own sheep?—It is more.

40167. How do you know that?—That is my opinion of it.

40168. But, on the other hand, you have heard the delegate to-day say they were very much dissatisfied and were impoverished in consequence?—How can a man be impoverished with three cows and a horse, and paying a rent of £1, 5s.?

The following statement was also handed in :—

' *Grievances of Strathcarron Tenantry*, on the Balnagown estate, in the parish of Kincardine.—The Strathcarron tenantry cordially desire to express at the outset that their personal relations with the late Sir Charles Ross, as well as with Lady Ross, have always been of the most amicable nature. The origin of some of their present grievances date far back—to a period when the fathers and grandfathers of some of the present occupiers of the Strath lands were evicted, or removed, lower down, in order to turn the Braelangwell ground into a sheep-farm. At that time only a very small portion of the land now cultivated in the Strath had been reclaimed; but the huddling together of so many families, caused by the removals from Braelangwell, necessitated their turning their attention to reclaiming every inch of ground that could bear reclamation. They were stimulated in their efforts by fair promises of being allowed to reap the benefits of whatever improvements they might effect; but none of them ever received any compensation for their labour or expenditure, and the only practical assistance ever given was a small quantity of lime allowed each crofter upon one single occasion. By-and-by, as the land was being gradually reclaimed and improved, rents began to be put up; and down to this day this has been pretty much the practice upon the Balnagown estate. A few years ago, when a petition had been presented to the proprietor praying for a reduction, after the rental of the Strath had been raised 40 per cent. at one bound, the answer given was that, by letting the Strath in large farms they could receive considerably more rent than they were exacting from the small crofters, and that, by allowing them to remain in their holdings, as then rented, they were acting very liberally, besides losing money. The truth of all this is very questionable; but one thing is certain, however, that neither large, nor even medium-sized, farms could be made in the Strath but for the stretches of heathery wastes reclaimed by the present occupiers and their forefathers. Then, again, the earliness of the place—the earliness of its crops—was held up as a reason why the rents had been so unduly raised. The soil in the Strath is in some parts light and sandy, and in other parts gravelly and stony. This accounts for its earliness, and no other special virtue. The season must be superfluously moist for most other places before the Strath need be expected to yield a fair crop. Another grievance is, that at the date the Strath rents were raised 40 per cent., the crofters were deprived of more than a third of their hill pasture, which was added to the Braelangwell sheep farm, the portion taken away being the best part of the ground. This took place in 1878. Although the arable land is held on a ten years' lease, there is only a yearly tenancy of the hill pasture, besides it being separately rented at so much per pound of the croft rents; whereas, until 1878, the croft rents covered the hill pasture as well. The crofters look upon these as their worst grievances. Another grievance is, that though wood grows plentifully within a few yards of the crofters' houses, they only get it for building purposes or erecting fences by way of improving their crofts upon equal terms with whoever wants it from anywhere else. Little or no labour is given on the Strathcarron portion of the Balnagown estate, and this, coupled with the smallness of the holdings, render the crofters' circumstances straitened enough.

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BONAB
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ROSS.

DINGWALL, ROSS-SHIRE, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10. 1883.

DINGWALL.*Present :-*

Lord NAPIER and ETTRICK, K.T., *Chairman.*
 Sir KENNETH S. MACKENZIE, Bart.
 DONALD CAMERON, Esq., of Lochiel, M.P.
 C. FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Esq., M.P.
 Sheriff NICOLSON, LL.D.

KENNETH MACKAY, Factor and Hotel-Keeper, Portnleck—examined.

Kenneth Mackay.

40169. *The Chairman.*—Do you wish to make a statement in consequence of something which occurred yesterday?—Yes. ‘Balblair Estate ‘Ross-shire.—*Statement of Kenneth Mackay*, as acting for Sidney Hadwen, ‘Esq. of Balblair, Reilonie, &c. (1) The statement of Alexander Ross ‘alias “Bard” is utterly unfounded. It became evident that he could ‘not cultivate his croft, for which he paid £8 per annum, and that he was ‘allowing the land to go to ruin. Upon seeing this, the proprietor ‘requested me to intimate to him that he would get three acres of land, ‘the grazing of a cow, timber to put his house into a better state of repair, ‘and also to be paid £12 for every acre that he would reclaim in the ‘immediate neighbourhood of his house; the object of this was to provide ‘constant employment for him at home. All this he was to get during ‘his lifetime rent free, and without any charge for interest on the money ‘to be paid to him for reclamation. But he refused this offer, and tried ‘to put the proprietor to defiance. Hence we had to resort to legal measures. (2) Adam Mackay has been crofter at Easter Reilonie, and occupied one half ‘of the township. When Mr Hadwen bought the estate this person ‘thought that he would keep the other tenants under subjection to him. ‘He went the length of preventing the other two tenants from carting ‘manure or anything else to their lands. He closed up the public road ‘against them, so that they could not cultivate their crofts, and altogether ‘the quarrel between these people, for which Mackay was alone responsible, ‘proved so very annoying that the proprietor was obliged to remove him ‘for the sake of peace. His land was given to the other two tenants. (3) ‘The statements made by Black, the delegate from Bonar, regarding ‘Margaret Matheson and Widow Alexander Murray are most inaccurate. ‘The proprietor did not wish to remove Margaret Matheson, but he found ‘it necessary to use legal measures to reinstate her brother, who had been ‘turned out of the house by her and her brother-in-law. The proprietor ‘was aware that Margaret’s brother had made most of the improvements ‘on the buildings and on the croft, and he considered it very wrong that ‘he should be rejected and another person admitted, especially in view ‘of the fact that this person had nothing whatever to do with the place, ‘and that the proprietor for sufficient reasons did not consider him a ‘desirable tenant. In these circumstances, Margaret was informed that ‘she would require to remove her brother-in-law and his family, and ‘restore the possession to her brother, and that he and she would be ‘allowed to remain joint tenants as formerly. This offer she declined, and ‘she was then removed and her brother put in. This was done by the

' proprietor as a simple act of justice to a man who he considered was very much wronged. With regard to Widow Alexander Murray, in the former proprietor's time (Mr Dempster of Skibo), the whole of the Maikle tenants were prohibited from having access to the plantations, and as shown by these leases had to keep the one half of the fences in repair. During suitable weather, in the harvest time, they got the privilege of carting their peats through the plantation, each party being responsible for the gate opposite their land. This privilege was abused by the tenants grazing cattle, horses, and sheep, as well as by taking other liberties in the plantation; the proprietor was therefore obliged to have the gates locked and the keys handed to the keeper, with instructions to allow each tenant at the proper season to cart home his peats, and upon certain days to give them firewood free. I may mention that the statement with regard to the water has no foundation in fact. There is no spring where alleged by Black, but a small streamlet has been dammed up into a hole or pond about forty yards inside the plantation fence. The same stream comes through the fence within thirty yards of the houses at Maikle. Moreover, there is an excellent spring within two hundred yards of Murray's house, which has been always known as one of the best springs in the district. It is sufficient to supply the village of Bonar. The Murrays have been most troublesome to the proprietor, and have been for the last fifteen years constantly quarrelling with their neighbours, who have frequently complained of them to the proprietor. (4) I deny the statement made by Black regarding the last School Board election. I was returned at the head of the poll, and received nearly double the number of votes recorded for most of the other members. At the former election I stood third, although my proprietor was a candidate, and returned. The number of votes on the Balblair estate could scarcely return one member.—KENNETH MACKAY.'

40170. With reference particularly to the eviction of Alexander Ross, called the 'Bard,' am I to understand from this statement that the bard was to be allowed to remain in the same house in which he was before?—Yes.

40171. Without paying any rent?—He was to get three acres and the grazing of a cow, and timber to put his house in tenantable repair, and to be paid £12 per acre for everything he improved, and all that to be free of interest during his lifetime.

40172. What was the reason that he declined an offer which seemed rather advantageous to him?—I cannot say.

40173. Was he carefully informed of those terms?—He was informed by both the proprietor and myself.

40174. Have you any other statement you wish to make with reference to the management of this property?—No.

40175. Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.—Are bards very common in that part of the country?—Not that I am aware of.

40176. Don't you think it would be worth while preserving the few that are?—We were very anxious to keep him on, but we could not arrange with him.

40177. Is there no possibility of making an arrangement yet with him?—I am not authorised at present to say.

40178. You saw him yesterday giving his evidence at Bonar Bridge?—Yes.

40179. He does not look like a man who is very difficult to deal with?—We always found him most difficult to deal with.

40180. But you are not authorised at present to make even the offer that had formerly been rejected?—No.

ROSS.

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DINGWALL

Kenneth
Mackay.

ROSS.

JOHN FORSYTH, Factor for Balnagown (61)—examined.

DINGWALL.John
Forsyth

40181. *The Chairman.*—You have got a statement you desire to make in connection to what occurred yesterday?—Yes, as to what was said by one of the Bonar delegates. ‘I do not know that there is great need for my addressing you on this occasion, and in doing so I simply desire to make clear to your Lordship and the other Commissioners some things which I do not think the delegate Alexander Campbell made plain to you at Bonar. Alexander Campbell has only been a rent-payer on the Balnagown estate since 1871 (see his offer for croft). Previous to this date he was a sub-tenant to the late Dr Gordon, who held the farm of Badvoon and Kincardine, and who brought him on to the Balnagown property. I understand about 1868, Dr Gordon had besides Alexander Campbell thirteen sub-tenants, not thirty or forty as stated by him. On the expiry of Dr Gordon’s lease, and at the time these farms were let to Mr Anderson, the then sub-tenants were continued in their holdings at the rent they now pay, £27, 5s. At the time I had not the smallest difficulty in arranging the rents with them. I had no complaints then of the rents being too high, and Alexander Campbell’s statement to your Lordship and other Commissioners was the first I ever heard, with one exception. One tenant complained that his rent was too much; this was about six months ago. Neither had I any difficulty at the time in satisfying these tenants that they were better without sheep; they consented to want them without any pressure on my part; and I am satisfied, after the experience I have had, that on that particular ground they are better without them still. If these tenants at any future time, are in a position to stock the whole of the hill, it might then be a question for reconsideration. If the crofters on the Balnagown property in Kincardine are too high rented, I assume the responsibility so far as it can be laid on my shoulders. I blame no one except that the crofters must take their share of it in their not having at the proper time complained of the rents they were asked to pay and willingly agreed to pay. Notwithstanding the present complaint, I have no hesitation in saying, that if these holdings were to let now, I could not only let them at the present but an increased rent.’

40182. There were two complaints brought before us prominently in connection with the farms occupied by Mr Anderson. One complaint was that the tenants had been prohibited from keeping sheep upon a piece of ground on which they had been formerly allowed to keep sheep, and that when they were deprived of this convenience there was no reduction made on their rent. It was also stated that they might have continued to keep the sheep there, if a fence had been put up between them and the farmer?—It would not have paid to put a fence up there, and the piece of ground they allude to is not suited for sheep.

40183. The farmer says that the sheep upon the crofters’ ground molested his farm by going across the marsh, and that it would have been impossible for him to have continued to occupy the farm if the sheep of the crofters had not been prevented coming over?—That was so.

40184. Well, when the sheep were put off and when the farmer was relieved of this claim, was his rent increased at all? Did he pay anything additional for this convenience?—I forget whether he paid any increase or not when he took the farms. I cannot answer that question, but I rented him at what I thought fair value for the farm, and I acted in the same way to the crofters.

ROSS.

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DINGWALL.—
John
Forsyth.

40185. But did he pay anything more to the proprietor in consequence of being relieved of the neighbourhood of the crofters' sheep?—I think it is likely he would.

40186. He paid you something more?—I think so.

40187. Was any portion of the increase paid by the farmer removed from the crofters?—No, their rents were the same, with the exception of a few shillings. I think a few shillings were taken off each of them, to the best of my recollection. I think the delegate stated yesterday that his rent was £4, 5s. and he formerly paid £4, 13s.

40188. How long would the fence have been if a fence had been put up between the two parties?—Over two miles.

40189. What is the expense of putting up a wire fence, supposing the proprietor to have his own wood, which I presume is the case with you? What would be the expense per mile of putting up a wire sheep fence?—I think it would have cost about 1s. per yard. A good bit of it would have required to be iron altogether, as it was on rocky hill ground.

40190. That would be altogether £170?—Yes.

40191. What is the rent of the farm?—The rent of the two farms is—Badvoon £105, Kincardine £111, 5s. 6d.

40192. Then the rent of the two farms concerned in this case was about £216?—Yes.

40193. Do you consider it would be a very extraordinary outlay on the part of the proprietor to fence a farm from its neighbours with a wire fence of this value—at an expense of £170?—I think under the circumstances it was an unnecessary outlay, because the ground the crofters had was unsuited for sheep.

40194. But they do not seem to have considered it was unsuited for sheep. At least they complain?—I had no difficulty in arranging with them, not the slightest, at the time. I can show you Campbell's offer for his place if you wish to see it.

40195. What was the increase which the farmer paid in consideration of being relieved for the molestation of the crofters' sheep?—I cannot answer that question.

40196. Was it anything considerable? Was it £20?—Very possibly it was. I could answer that afterwards, but I cannot do it now.*

40197. Does it seem to you quite equitable to take an increased rent from a farmer in consequence of an advantage granted to him at the expense of others, and not to give the others some appropriate compensation?—I don't think I took advantage of either the one or the other—either the tenant or the crofters. I acted between the two as fairly and justly as I could.

40198. And the crofters made no complaint at the time?—No.

40199. When deprived of the liberty of keeping sheep, do you think they were able to keep more cattle and horses?—No doubt of it, but the ground is not suited for sheep in summer. Sheep would not live on the ground they complain of.

40200. In the other case there was a fence put up between the farm occupied by Anderson and the adjacent tenants, but in putting up a piece of ground was withdrawn from them, and added to the tenant?—Allow me to explain that Dr Gordon held those farms and brought the sub-tenants on to the ground, and in making this arrangement with him I did the whole thing to the best of my ability. Mr Anderson put up a fence to keep them off a particular part of the ground, but at his own expense.

40201. He told us he put it up at his own expense, and he enclosed a piece of ground which formerly belonged to them?—No, these crofters never claimed any right to that bit of ground.

* See Appendix A, LXXXIII.

ROSS. 40202. I understood the farmer to tell us they did?—I did not hear him, and if he said so I am certain it was a mistake.

DINGWALL. 40203. Then in either case the crofters were not deprived of anything?—No, the crofters were entirely on the Kincardine ground, not on the Badvoon ground at all.

40204. As a general statement, can you say that during the period of your management there has been no consolidation of farms at the cost of the small tenants?—None whatever.

40205. No ground has been taken from small tenants, and added to large farms?—None whatever. There have been one or two cases of crofts being added to one another where a family had died out, and there was nobody to succeed, in order to make larger ones.

40206. How long ago is it since these transactions took place?—In 1871.

40207. Has any ground upon the estate in the time of your management been turned into a deer forest?—Yes.

40208. Was any portion of the ground turned into a deer forest taken from the small tenants?—None whatever. It was taken from the large sheep farm.

40209. Do the small tenants complain of the injury inflicted on them by the deer?—No, they do not. The deer are very far from them.

40210. Is the deer forest fenced?—No.

40211. Do you receive complaints from any quarter of ravages committed by the deer?—None, except from our own shepherds. The sheep farm is in the proprietor's hands, and one shepherd particularly complains of the deer meddling with his croft.

40212. What is the system pursued on the Balnagown estate with reference to reconsidering, and raising it may be, the rent of the small tenants?—Each case is considered individually by itself. It depends on how long the tenant has been in the place, and what he has done for the place.

40213. Is that done upon the death of the occupier or done from one stated period to another?—It is not done at any stated period. Each case is considered by itself.

40214. From time to time?—From time to time.

40215. Has it any connection with the death of the occupier?—No, I cannot say it has.

40216. Has the rental of the small holders been increased during your time?—A little, but not much. I cannot say what proportion; but not much.

40217. Has the rent of the large tenants been increased?—Yes, it has.

40218. Has there been a considerable remission of rental on the large tenants within the last few years?—None at all. I may mention, to give you an idea how we acted—and this has reference to Strath Carron—that the acreage of arable land in Strath Carron crofts in 1808 was 175 acres; in 1851, 229; increased 54; being an increase of fifty-four acres of arable land by twenty-nine tenants in forty-three years. The acreage in 1863 was 238 acres, being an increase of nine acres between 1851 and 1863, and a total increase in fifty-five years by twenty-nine tenants of sixty-three acres, equal to an average of two acres twenty-seven poles improved by each of the twenty-nine tenants in fifty-five years. Some of them improved more and some of them improved less.

40219. When you fix the rent of the arable ground on the small tenant is that done by a valuer, or by an expert, or by yourself?—I have done it. I have relet the whole of the Balnagown property without the slightest trouble, and with great pleasure to myself. There have not been half a

John
Forsyth.

ROSS.

DINGWALL.John
Forsyth.

dozen farms advertised for public competition since the estate came under my management.

40220. When ground is improved by the small tenants and brought under proper cultivation, what is the average rental of the arable ground?—The average rental of this Strath is about 20s. per acre.

40221. That has been land redeemed from the moor and brought into the condition of arable?—Yes, since 1808.

40222. It becomes worth £1 per acre?—Yes, in this situation. In some situations it would not be worth so much.

40223. In the recovery and improvement of land in that way, what is the system pursued by the proprietor? Does the proprietor contribute in any degree to the operation? Does he supply tiles?—Sometimes. There is no special rule. It is a matter of arrangement in each case. Sometimes tiles are supplied, and sometimes it is done by the tenants paying interest. I don't know what was the system in those old times, but I understood that the proprietor gave wood to help to build the houses in those days.

40224. What is the system now? Does the proprietor give wood?—Sometimes.

40225. And lime?—Not lime. That was given many years ago, and the tenants paid interest. I don't know they repaid the lime, but they paid interest, and it was added to the rent. But the proprietor does not give wood now except by special arrangement.

40226. There is no general regulation?—None.

40227. *Mr Cameron.*—This farmer, Mr Anderson, stated that the crofters made more profit out of the new arrangement, by which he gave them a certain sum for wintering his hoggs, than they did under the old arrangement, when they had sheep themselves. Do you confirm that statement?—Yes. My experience of that place since 1871 is that they are in a better position without sheep than with them.

40228. He stated that whereas their rent paid to the landlord amounted to between £3 and £4, they received from him for wintering about three-fourths of that back again; so they really sat for about 25s. apiece?—The delegate Campbell's rent is £4, 5s.; Mr Anderson gives him £3, leaving his rent at £1, 5s.

40229. And you think that by keeping sheep themselves they would not derive so much profit as they do now from this wintering arrangement?—I do not think they would.

40230. You corroborate Mr Anderson on that point?—I do.

40231. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Is there only one deer forest on the Balnagown estate?—Yes.

40232. When was it constituted?—In 1872. The ground was cleared of sheep in 1872. I should say there are two. It is let to two tenants.

40233. What is the acreage of the whole?—I think about 40,000 acres, but that is not all cleared of sheep. There are sheep upon a portion of both places.

40234. You stated, in answer to the Chairman, that these had been made out of sheep farms. Had the ground been ever in possession of small tenants?—I don't think so, because the ground before a sheep was put on to it was under deer, and in going over it I can see few or no traces of where crofters had been.

40235. Can you give us any idea of the extent of the ground in question between these small tenants in Kincardine and Mr Anderson that would require two miles of fencing? How many acres would there be?—Some 3000 or 4000 acres, roughly.

ROSS. 40236. Have you not heard over and over again that there is a great demand on the part of crofters for additional grazings?—Yes, I have.

DINGWALL. 40237. And you are still prepared to say that the loss of those 4000 acres is really no loss to them?—They never had it.

John Forsyth. 40238. Did they not possess it?—No, they never possessed it.

40239. Where did the 200 sheep pasture?—They wandered over the whole place without any authority on the part of the tenant to keep them.

40240. Then they were really not deprived of anything?—No, they are not deprived of the acreage of the hill, for pasture on the hill. They never had any right to it.

40241. You did not state that before?—I had not the opportunity.

40242. You say they never had any right to it?—They never had. They never paid any rent for it.

40243. Are there not cattle at this very moment upon it?—Yes, but only on a portion of it. These crofters have each his own house and his own bit of arable ground, and a piece of pasture ground in connection with it. That is their whole holding.

40244. And the other was merely a tolerance—this great quantity?—Yes, the other was merely a tolerance.

40245. Let us suppose it was merely a tolerance. Then Mr Anderson comes and complains of their sheep. Why did not you give them an opportunity to fence themselves off, if they wished to retain the land?—Because they did not ask to retain it. They departed from it without any trouble. Besides, I did not think they had capital to carry on these farms. They never said they had stock to carry on these farms. If they had said so the matter would have been considered.

40246. Would it be considered yet?—I have said so in my statement. ‘If these tenants at any future time are in a position to stock the whole of the hill, it must then be a question for reconsideration.’

40247. You gave us the increase of the new land taken in by the tenants since 1808; what was your object in making that statement?—I thought I was asked to explain about it. I understood some of the Strath Carron tenants were to be examined about it yesterday, and I wanted to show how the increase was made.

40248. Do you consider that increase was proportionate to what it might be in that long period?—I don't think it is out of the way.

40249. Then you did not make that statement in any way as showing the people had been indolent for the last fifty or sixty years?—No, I did not make it with that intention at all.

40250. Would you explain as briefly as you can why you say that, in your opinion, the people are better off without the sheep than having them?—Because the ground near to their own ground is unsuited for sheep. Sheep would not thrive on it in summer.

40251. But they themselves are very sorry they are not able to keep sheep?—Well, it is matter of opinion.

40252. Are you a sheep farmer yourself?—I manage a sheep farm.

40253. Is sheep farming not profitable?—It has been more profitable than it has been these last few years.

40254. I suppose all you mean is this, that in this particular case, from the situation and lie of the ground, it is not advantageous for these tenants to have sheep?—Entirely so.

40255. You do not say it is disadvantageous for small tenants to have sheep?—No, by no means; it was entirely with reference to this particular piece of ground.

40256. Were you at all aware that there was any dissatisfaction, since this transaction was carried through, among those twenty-five tenants?—

None whatever. I never had a complaint from one of them on the subject, except one tenant who complained about six months ago that his rent was too dear. His rent was £2, 10s. for a house and two acres of ground.

ROSS.

DINGWALL.John
Forsyth.

40257. Are you in the habit of seeing those people occasionally or some of them?—I see them every year. I have been in every house on the property and am personally acquainted with every tenant on the estate.

40258. And you have made yourself accessible to every one of them?—Quite accessible. They can come to me at any time, and are quite aware of that.

40259. And I presume the estate and you yourself have every wish to nourish and cherish those small people who have been long there, as much as you can?—It is not only my own wish, but it was my instruction from the late Sir Charles Ross, to take care of the small tenants, and not to press them or over-rent them.

40260. Are the people in the parish of Edderton very ill off for roads to their houses?—They are not well off.

40261. And yet they pay road money and assessments?—Yes.

40262. Have you done your best as trustee to put that right for them?—I have never done anything in the county, but at this time I am preparing to make a mile of road in the parish at the proprietor's expense, and I had a road from the public road to the station put in order, and down to the shore, at the proprietor's expense.

40263. But I am referring more particularly to roads for crofters?—Yes, but they are scarce and not plenty.

DONALD MACDONALD, Crofter, Inchvannie, Heights of Strathpeffer (44)
—examined.

40264. *The Chairman.*—Have you been elected a delegate by the people of Inchvannie?—Yes.

Donald
Macdonald.

40265. Have you a written statement to make?—Yes.—1. In the first place, I shall briefly state the general history of the Strathpeffer crofters for about the last eighty years; and then, in the second place, I shall state my own individual case. 2. The low parts of Strathpeffer were at one time occupied by crofters; but about eighty years ago these crofters were gradually turned off the low and fertile parts of the Strath to make room for large farms. The crofters received compensation neither for their labour on the land nor yet for their houses. Upon being removed from the low parts of the Strath, the crofters became sub-tenants on a patch of unreclaimed barren soil on the heights of Strathpeffer. At the same time they had the right to about 1000 or 1200 acres of common pasture land for which they paid no rent, and which belonged to the crofters on the heights from time immemorial, and they paid rent for an additional piece of hill grazing. The crofters then built houses on their new patches of uncultivated land. Not only did they receive no help in erecting their houses, but they had actually to go to other estates to purchase the timber they required. Neither did they receive any assistance whatever in reclaiming their barren allotments. All this time they had to pay rents to the large farmers on the low land, who were now in possession of the land and the houses which formerly belonged to the crofters themselves. 3. In about twenty years after the crofters were driven on to the barren heights, say about sixty years ago, the landlord himself took the crofts into his own management. Twenty years of the poor crofters' ceaseless toil had improved the land and increased the value

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

Donald
Macdonald.

' of it, barren as that land was ; and the result was that the marches were
 ' straightened and rents raised, and crofts were subdivided as the factor
 ' thought fit. 4. A little over forty years ago the crofters were deprived
 ' of the hill grazing which they rented. They were also deprived of their
 ' common pasture land without any reduction of rent, and this caused great
 ' distress and difficulties among them. The whole of this land was let to
 ' a sheep farmer. Since that took place, if the crofters on the heights of
 ' Strathpeffer were considered worth their living on the face of the earth,
 ' their crofts would not bear an additional shilling per acre of rent. 5.
 ' But, alas ! twenty-three years ago our rents were again very much raised ;
 ' in many cases they were fully doubled ; the increase being in most
 ' instances from 4s. to 8s. per acre more than the real value of the land.
 ' At that time we were all promised leases. When a copy of the lease was
 ' read to us we found that it contained several unfavourable clauses, but
 ' we were told, both in English and in Gaelic, that we were to have only
 ' one hour to consider and to decide whether we should accept the condi-
 ' tions of the lease, or leave our crofts at the next Whitsunday term. We
 ' decided to accept the conditions of the lease, unfavourable as they were.
 ' Five or six of the crofters that could sign their names received their
 ' leases at once ; all others were told to go to the estate law agent, Mr Smith,
 ' Dingwall, where they got their leases signed, and paid 10s. to him for
 ' doing so. Now, although every one paid his 10s. to Mr Smith, not one of
 ' them ever received their leases, although they made repeated application
 ' for them. I myself have applied for it five times. Whenever I applied to
 ' the factor, he referred me to his solicitor in Dingwall ; the solicitor again
 ' referred me to the factor, and so on.* 6. Three years ago our rents were
 ' again raised. We petitioned against this, so the increase has not yet been
 ' exacted, probably because the signs of the land agitation were then
 ' becoming very manifest among the crofters in various parts of the
 ' country. Still we pay taxes, such as poor rates and road money, on the
 ' increased rents of three years ago, and so we have reason to think that
 ' the increase has been entered against us in the factor's books, and that
 ' we are liable to have it claimed from us at any time in the form of what
 ' the factor calls fair rent. 7. Under such circumstances, then, I occupy a croft
 ' of a little more than 14½ acres at £1, 1s. 5d. per acre on which I keep
 ' two cows, two calves, and one horse. The reclaiming of that croft and the
 ' building of houses cost my father and myself £400. In addition to this,
 ' my brother sent us £40 from one of the colonies, for the purpose of still
 ' further improving the land, so that we might be able to live a little more
 ' comfortably. This money we spent on drains, subsoiling, lime, &c., which
 ' considerably improved our croft. From these improvements, however,
 ' we received no practical benefit, because the very next year after com-
 ' pleting them we were asked to pay an additional £6 of rent, or to quit
 ' the place at the next Whitsunday term ; that was twenty-three years ago,
 ' so that out of my brother's £40 and the labour of my own hands, the all-
 ' devouring landlord has already pocketed £138. 8. But we may perhaps
 ' be told that the increase in the price of cattle justifies the increase of
 ' rents. To this I would reply, that if we did not spend more on the rearing
 ' of our cattle by artificial foods than we did thirty years ago, there would
 ' scarcely be any change in their price. This plea has already been made
 ' use of by a certain factor to justify the increase of rents. But the mean-
 ' ing of such an excuse is that the factor thinks the landlord justified in
 ' pocketing the increase in the price of cattle, leaving the tenant to pay the
 ' increased cost of feeding. It may also be said, with regard to the increas-
 ' ing of rents, that since rackrenting has been carried to such an excess,
 ' every experiment has to be made to force crops out of the soil by means

* See Appendix A, LXXV.

of artificial manures, which are very expensive. Now the landlord grasps at the increase (if there is any) in the value of the crops, and leaves the tenant to pay for the increased cost of manuring. 9. Such, then, are a few of our grievances, and the crofters of Strathpeffer, with only three exceptions, unanimously maintain that such grievances demand speedy redress. They submit as their opinion, that there ought to be—(1) a revaluation of the land by competent valuators appointed by Government, and a fixing of rents according to that valuation; (2) Perpetuity of tenure; (3) Compensation for improvements. To these views we have not been moved by any outside influence, nor was it recently that we came to entertain them. Twenty years ago we all met together on the heights of Strathpeffer for the purpose of drawing up and submitting to the Duchess of Sutherland a petition stating our grievances and our wishes, but the then factor stood in our way like a flaming sword, so that until this year we have not ventured to give public expression to our grievances. So long, then, we have crouched under the iron heel of the oppressor without a groan. But our case is now before the Crofters' Commission, and we hope that something will speedily be done to remove the crofters' grievances. Under the present rents we cannot improve the land, and under the present land law we will not improve the land. For some of our land that exceeded £26 per acre the reclaiming of it, and the first white crop taken from that land was rented by the then factor at £1 per acre.'

40266. The heights of Strathpeffer have during the whole period you have alluded to belonged to the same family?—Yes.

40267. The Sutherland family?—Yes.

40268. Then you say that the first removal of the people was about eighty years ago?—It commenced before eighty years ago, but it was going on gradually.

40269. But about eighty years ago the number of people had been removed from the lower part to the higher part?—Yes.

40270. Were these the same people that held the crofts on the good land before? Were they the same people moved from the good land to the bad land?—Yes.

40271. They were not an increase of the old population? They were the same people taken from one place and put in another?—Yes.

40272. When they were put into the new ground what was the rent that was charged upon them?—I cannot exactly say, because there were no rent books between them. It was a receipt they got from the farmers.

40273. Do you understand it was a nominal rental; I mean were they allowed to sit rent free?—No, they were not allowed to sit rent free.

40274. There was some rental exacted?—Yes.

40275. You cannot tell me how much?—No.

40276. They sat under the large farmers?—Yes.

40277. Did they pay the large farmers rent in money or in labour?—They paid them in both.

40278. Then sixty years ago they were taken under the direct management of the estate?—Yes.

40279. What was the rental exacted at that time; about how much per acre?—Well, some of them were about 12s. per acre.

40280. When an increase of rental was taken, was it taken upon the death of the occupier, or was it taken from all from period to period?—It was increased in their lifetime.

40281. We are told that upon the estates of the Duke of Sutherland the system was that the increase was taken on the death of the occupier?—That was not the way.

40282. The increase was taken from time to time?—Yes.

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ROSS. 40283. Was it taken upon all at the same time, or was each case treated separately?—First it was taken separately, but since twenty-three years ago it was taken in general.

DRINGWALL. 40284. When was the last increase of rental?—Three years ago.

Donald Macdouald. 40285. What was the rental per acre before three years ago, and how much was it increased three years ago?—It was a slight increase three years ago, but the rent before that time was from 15s. to about 26s. per acre.

40286. You say that sixty years ago it was about 12s. per acre. Between sixty years ago and three years ago it had grown up to about 16s. the acre?—Yes, and some paid up to 26s.

40287. From 16s. to 26s.?—Yes.

40288. Then how much was it raised three years ago?—About 1s. 6d. per acre, I daresay.

40289. How was this increase three years ago effected? Was there a valuator sent round to revalue the land?—Not one.

40290. There was no valuator. It was simply done by the factor?—Simply done by the factor.

40291. What do you think is the average rental of arable ground now upon these heights of Strathpeffer?—It ranges between 12s. per acre and 26s. per acre, according to the way the crofts are situated.

40292. In the course of all this time from sixty years ago, when the crofts were taken into the direct management of the proprietor, what has the proprietor done to assist the tenants in the course of their improvements? What has he done first with reference to houses?—Nothing at all; but since about thirty years back they were supplied with rough timber from the wood.

40293. They have not been supplied with lime or slates or anything of that sort?—No.

40294. They have no assistance except the rough timber in improving their houses?—Nothing.

40295. Have they received any assistance towards fencing or draining?—Nothing of the sort.

40296. Have they received any assistance in making roads to the crofts from the public road?—There was a bit of a road built twenty-three years ago perhaps about two miles long. That was all that was done.

40297. Then you state that practically the whole work of improving the land has been done by the tenants?—I say so.

40298. Have they any security whatever for compensation?—Nothing of the kind.

40299. They have no leases whatever?—Not a day's lease.

40300. Have they ever asked for leases?—Some have, and were refused.

40301. Is there much land still unimproved and still in heather about the place?—Yes, some patches in heather.

40302. Is there any encouragement given to you in any form to increase the cultivation?—Nothing.

40303. You say that your remedies are revaluation and perpetuity of tenure and compensation. What do you mean by revaluation? Whom would you desire to see employed to make the valuation?—Suitable men that had thorough knowledge both of the land and of the climate.

40304. Would you be satisfied if the small tenants appointed a valuator and the proprietor appointed a valuator, with the power of choosing an oversman?—Well, I think the Government should appoint the valuators.

40305. But do you think that a man appointed by the Government to value would have as much knowledge of the climate and the soil on your particular crofts as a man appointed by yourselves and another man

appointed by the landlord?—Well, they might be appointed to value the land no further from where they live than, say, ten or twelve miles on each side of them. They would have knowledge of the land there.

40306. You think the Government should appoint local valuers, valuers belonging to the place or near the place?—Yes.

40307. What do you understand by perpetuity of tenure? Do you mean that they should have a long lease, and that the land should be revalued?—I want the land to be revalued first, and fix fair rents according to that valuation. I mean by perpetuity that as long as I paid that fair rent, I could not be turned out or evicted.

40308. Do you mean the land is always to be under the first valuation, or do you think it ought to be revalued at some subsequent time?—Well, it might be for so many years at the same valuation.

40309. How many years do you think?—Well, it might be nineteen years, or fifteen years, or so.

40310. And as to compensation, how do you think compensation ought to be settled?—Well, I know if I could claim my improvements at the time my rent was increased, I would sooner have my improvements and go away than go in for £6 more rent than the land was not worth.

40311. You would rather take the value of your improvements and go away to some other place?—Yes, if I could claim them.

40312. Where would you go to? Would you emigrate?—Perhaps I might emigrate.

40313. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—How long is it since you yourself signed this lease which you cannot get hold of?—I did not sign it. It was my mother that signed it. She could not sign it, but she paid for signing it twenty-three years ago.

40314. And those that could not sign it but had to go to a notary public had to pay the cost of that?—Yes.

40315. To whom did they pay the 10s.?—To Mr Smith, law agent in Dingwall.

40316. When they paid the money why did they not take the lease with them?—He told them that they would be supplied at the next collection of rents.

40317. You mentioned that three years ago your rents were raised, and the rise of rent was not exacted, but you are taxed upon it?—Yes.

40318. What is the rent you are actually paying?—I pay £14, 13s. 9d.

40319. You pay that for $14\frac{1}{2}$ acres?—Yes.

40320. Then, £1, 1s. 5d. per acre means the increased rent and not the present rent?—Yes.

40321. Which you have not yet begun to pay?—No.

40322. This increased rent was not fixed by valuation?—No, it was fixed by the factor.

40323. He valued it himself?—Yes.

40324. If you had perpetuity of tenure, when do you expect you should have compensation for improvements?—As long as the improvements were good.

40325. But when would you receive it? You make certain improvements, and you have perpetuity of tenure; when should you ask the landlord for compensation for improvements?—Before I leave my place.

40326. But if you have perpetuity of tenure you don't leave your place?—If I and the factor failed to agree the land court would be called upon, and if the land court said that the land was worth what the factor was wanting for the land, and if I knew that the land was not worth that, I would go, and then I would claim my compensation.

40327. In that case the factor would not necessarily accept the valua-

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DINGWALL.

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ROSS. tion of the land court. He might ask a higher rent and pay you compensation. Do you contemplate that the factor need not necessarily accept the valuation put on by the Government valuator? He might ask a higher rent, and pay you compensation for your improvements?—No, I don't mean that. If he would not put the rent higher, I would not expect compensation for my improvements as long as the land was left with me at a fair rent.

40328. But you ask three things in your paper—for a revaluation of the land, as you have explained it, by a Government valuator; and for perpetuity of tenure; and for compensation for improvements. Now, if you have perpetuity of tenure when do you expect to get compensation for improvements?—When my land is over-rented.

40329. But you also ask for a revaluation by a Government valuator?—Yes.

40330. You ask for all three?—Yes.

40331. Therefore, your land cannot be over-rented, and you cannot be removed, and when are you to get compensation?—I can be removed if I decline to pay a fair rent.

40332. Then if you decline to pay a fair rent the landlord is to be bound to compensate you?—Certainly.

40333. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You are paying upon an average about £1, 1s. per acre?—That is the rent fixed three years ago.

40334. Have you got any outrun?—No.

40335. Do you know what the tenants on the low parts of Strathpeffer are paying per acre?—Some of them are paying about 25s. per acre.

40336. That is the large farms down below?—Yes.

40337. Do you think those large farmers built their houses at their own cost as you did?—Not one of them.

40338. Or did they build their dykes and fences?—No, they did not.

40339. How many people do you represent to-day? Do you represent a particular township on the heights of Strathpeffer?—Just the whole of the heights of Strathpeffer.

40340. How many crofters may there be on the heights of Strathpeffer altogether?—I think the number is about forty-eight, but I am not exactly sure of the number.

40341. And they all concur except three. You say in your paper that three do not concur?—Yes, only three.

40342. Why do these not concur, do you know?—With regard to the three exceptions referred to in my statement, the first one of them is a man who got the last croft that was in the market in the year 1881. This croft consists of forty-one acres of the best soil on the Heights of Keppoch, and the rent is only 16s. 8d. per acre, and there is a slated dwelling house and square. This we call a fair rent. As compared with him, I myself have only fourteen and a half acres of poorer soil further up the brae, and I pay 4s. 9d. more per acre for it. The second exception is a man who has already got a fair reduction of the increased rent of 1860. And the third exception is a man who is now reaping the benefit of the gifts his mother used to present to the then factor twenty-four years ago. He is paying the rent his neighbours paid before 1860. It may thus be seen why he is not among those that complain, and he has even tried to prevent his neighbours from taking part in the present agitation.

40343. There was some land reclaimed some years ago. Do you represent the Knockfarrel crofters?—I am on the other side. I do not represent them.

40344. Is that paper which you have read to-day prepared by yourself?—Yes.

40345. It is your own composition?—Yes.

40346. Do you do any work except labouring your own land? Have you any other occupation?—Sometimes when I get carting to do or anything of that sort.

40347. Are the rents of the crofters in Strathpeffer pretty well paid?—Well, I suppose some of them are not.

40348. There are some arrears?—Yes, there are.

40349. With regard to this lease that you say you want, is it worth the while asking for it now?—No, the time has expired; but still when we paid the money they are ours, and we should have them.

40350. But the time has expired?—Yes.

40351. Are you complaining of game?—Greatly—some of us—the highest crofters.

40352. What kind of game?—Grouse and deer and mountain hares.

40353. Where do the deer come from?—From the neighbouring estates—Tulloch and Wyvis.

40354. Is this matter of the grouse serious in a late season?—Yes, it is sometimes not worth while cutting the corn.

40355. Do they disturb it at all?—Yes, and sometimes it cannot be cut at all from the way the grouse tramp it under them and take away the seed.

40356. Then they hurt the corn even before it is put into the stook?—They do.

40357. I am speaking of grouse just now?—Yes.

40358. Are you complaining of rabbits?—The highest crofters are.

40359. Are they allowed to destroy them, or do they destroy them?—Oh, they are not allowed to destroy them.

40360. Don't you know the law allows them to destroy rabbits?—Yes, but where we are we have not a lease, and we can be turned out any time we meddle with them.

40361. Are you prepared to state that that Act of Parliament which was passed in favour of tenants is a dead letter upon the estate of Castle Leod?—Yes, quite a dead letter to us crofters.

40362. That is to say, you fear that if you exercise the right you will be removed?—Certainly.

40363. *Mr Cameron.*—You stated you wished to have nineteen years' leases?—Yes. They wish to have perpetuity of tenure.

40364. But the tenants asked for nineteen years leases and very nearly got them. Did they not wish to have nineteen years leases twenty-three years ago?—Yes, that was promised.

40365. And at the time you wished to have nineteen years leases?—We did wish to have them, but we did not get them.

40366. And you stated, in answer to the Chairman, that you would like a revaluation of your lands every year by a Government official?—Yes.

40367. Now, the rise of rent took place forty years ago, did it not?—Twenty-three years ago.

40368. There was a rise of rent forty years ago and another sixty years ago?—It was more so sixty years ago than forty years ago. About forty years ago the hill pasture was all taken from us, and there was no rise then.

40369. But, confining ourselves to the rise of rent, there was a rise of rent sixty years ago?—Yes.

40370. The rent was raised again forty years ago?—I did not say that.

40371. When was the next rise?—Twenty-three years ago.

40372. Then there was no rise between sixty years ago and twenty-three years ago?—If there was not a rise of rent there was a reduction of land.

ROSS
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DINGWALL.
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Donald
Macdonald.

ROSS. 40373. Then putting it in the most disadvantageous way to the crofters, there was a rise sixty years ago and a diminution of their ground forty years ago, which was tantamount to a rise of rent?—Yes.

DINGWALL. 40374. Then there was another rise twenty-three years ago?—Yes.

Donald Macdonald. 40375. And another slight rise three years ago?—Yes.

40376. Well, the difference in the number of years between each of those periods is rather more than nineteen years?—About twenty years.

40377. If you had a nineteen years' lease, and if there was a revaluation every nineteen years, you would be rather in a worse position than you have been from sixty years ago till now. Your rent would be liable to be raised every nineteen years if you had a lease, whereas as the matter stands your rent has been raised at intervals of twenty years? Is it probable that the land is increasing in value every twenty years?—Our land is worse to-day than it was thirty years ago, and our crofts do not produce so much crop.

40378. I quite understand you think you are too highly rented, and very likely you are, but what I am talking of from the tenants' point of view is a nineteen years' lease—whether on the whole the tenants would not be as well if they had no leases, and if they were tenants at will, subject to these revaluations you have described. I suppose what you really complain of is that the rise has been too much—that the rent put upon the land has been too high?—Yes.

40379. And the remedy you want for that is, that instead of the rent being fixed arbitrarily by the landlord, you wish it to be put upon you by some independent and impartial official?—Yes.

JOHN ROSE,* Crofter, Heights of Keppoch, Strathpeffer (31)—examined.

John Rose. 40380. *The Chairman.*—Have you got a written statement to make to us?—Yes. ‘I will select my grandfather's case, and give it as an instance of the way in which the crofters on the Strathpeffer estate were treated. ‘About eighty years ago, he, in partnership with another man, held ‘upwards of seventy acres of land. A considerable part of this land was ‘under cultivation, but I cannot exactly say how much. He always kept ‘three or four horses, and from fifteen to eighteen head of cattle. About ‘that time the mania for big farms was spreading through the country, ‘the result having been that my grandfather was evicted from the fertile ‘land to make room for a big farmer. My grandfather then got twenty ‘acres of a wilderness further up the hill that had never been touched by ‘a plough, and was not considered worth making into a big farm. He had ‘to cut and season and drive home thirty loads of peats per annum for ‘the big farmer to whom he paid his rent, without any payment. Having ‘been deprived of his arable land, he had to sell his stock except one horse ‘and one cow. He was reduced to poverty, and but for some of his family ‘who were grown up he would die in destitution. My father having ‘admitted my uncle into partnership with him, they finished the reclaiming ‘of the twenty acres. Then, in 1859, or 1860 the whole of the heights ‘was surveyed and the rents were increased, although some did not get ‘more than one crop from their land after reclaiming it. My father and ‘uncle's rent was increased from £10, 10s. 7d. to £21, 5s. 3d., the factor ‘telling them that if they thought the rent too high they would have to ‘quit their holding at the following Whitsunday term. If they remained, ‘they were promised a lease, which they agreed to take rather than take ‘the road, as they were both advanced in years. They paid 10s. to Mr

* See Statement by Mr William Gunn, referring to the evidence of this and the previous witness, pp. 2642, 3248

Smith, writer, Dingwall, to sign their names to the lease but, when Mr Smith got the 10s. he kept the lease also.* Two additional small holdings have been added to the twenty acres, so that now we have about thirty-one acres, for which we pay £31, but £33 is entered against us in the valuation roll. The following figures will show how the rents were increased on this estate:—The rent of a croft in 1791 was 2s. 6d.; in 1799 it was 6s.; 1811, 18s.; 1836, £1, 1s.; 1838, £2, 13s. 1d.; 1856, £3, 5s. 1d.; 1860, £5, 11s. 5d.; 1879, £6. This increase of 1879 is entered in the valuation roll, but not yet exacted. This is another instance: in 1829 the rent was £2; 1830, £2, 5s.; 1837, £2, 10s.; 1860, £5, 10s.; 1879, £6, as entered in the valuation roll, but not yet exacted. The first shows eight increases during the past eighty-eight years; the second shows five increases during the past fifty years. The above are facts which I defy any man to contradict, as they are extracted from old rent books which can be produced in court if need be. The proprietor has never spent a penny on reclaiming these crofts, yet we see crofters now pay £1 to £1, 6s. per acre for land which was worth only 5d. when they got it first. Many of the crofters are at present rapidly sinking into difficulties, and a still greater number would go to the bad but for the assistance they get from their children who went abroad. Notwithstanding this no reduction of rent has been given them; on the contrary, their rents were to be increased. Some of the people had no bed-clothes but guano bags to cover themselves with. Notwithstanding their extreme poverty the factor, in his thirst for money, entered an increase of rent in the valuation roll against them. One widow, who is partially disabled with rheumatism, said to a man who distributed money among the most necessitous of the poor, that she would feel very thankful to any one who would give her a shilling, but her rent was to be increased the very same as the others. Our factor does not know whether our land is good or bad, whether it is worth what we pay for it or not. Any man to know what land is worth should at least walk over it, but Mr Gunn never troubled himself to come and see what the land was worth. He valued it sitting in the office. Perhaps he would let us know if he considers this a fair way of valuing land. The big farmers who have their land at their own offers got a substantial reduction of rent lately, although it is clear to any one that the crofters who occupy the higher and later soil have suffered comparatively much greater losses from bad weather and equal losses from the general agricultural depression. This is probably the outcome of the good feeling that exists between the Duchess of Sutherland and her tenants, of which we read so much in the newspapers. Many of the holdings are so small that they have to be cultivated every year. This successive over-cropping is fast reducing the fertility of the land, in spite of all that can be done to fertilise it with artificial manures, which are very expensive. We have no hill grazing except a small strip that was not worth the expense of fencing it when the rest of the hill was fenced. We cut divots on it. Beyond that it is of no use to us. Some of the higher crofts have an acre or two of pasture attached to them, to which these remarks do not apply. We pay 3d. per pound in relief of road assessments payable by the proprietor. In addition to this for the last three years we pay 2½d. or 3d. per pound to the county collector. This latter is no grievance, but it is a hard case that we have to relieve the proprietor. Many of us have no roads to our houses but through the fields. All that the Duchess has ever spent of money, in improvements, on the part of the estate which we occupy, was in making a road in 1860, which cost £300 and some odds. The gross rental of the land we have reclaimed on the

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

John Rose.

ROSS. 'heights amounts to over £500 per annum. But in the part of the estate 'occupied by big farmers large sums of money have been expended by 'the Duchess in improvements. Five months ago the factor said to one 'of my neighbours, whose name I am quite prepared to mention, that, 'taking into account the money laid out on improvements for the big 'farmers, the crofters paid the Duchess of Sutherland better than they did. 'We quite agree with Mr Gunn on this point, and any man acquainted 'with our history would certainly endorse every word of it. Many of the 'houses are not only unfit to live in, but are dangerous to live in. The people 'are willing enough to build new ones, but they cannot, having more than 'enough to do to make ends meet as they are. The houses of the poor have 'been almost entirely neglected. I have seen in the winter of 1879-80 'one house with a very large hole in the gable through which the snow 'came in freely. The snow lay several inches deep on the top of the bed 'in which an old woman of upwards of eighty years was lying. There was 'little difference between the outside and inside of the house as far as the 'cold was concerned. Perhaps Mr Gunn may not be bound by law to 'repair these houses, but at one time the Duchess of Sutherland gave her 'factor an annual allowance for repairing the poors' houses. From the 'neglected condition in which the houses are since the last few years we 'believe that she has discontinued it. She still continues to give them 'some coals, flannels, tea, and sugar yearly, for which they are very thank- 'ful. In April last I went to the estate office to ask the factor to erect a 'few hundred yards of wire fencing. Mr Fraser, the factor's clerk, told me 'that the law was to protect myself, and if I was not pleased as I was that I 'might leave the estate. Mr Gunn afterwards offered to erect the fence if 'I paid interest. I would gladly pay interest but I could not, as the croft 'did not pay its own expenses for the past twenty-three years. We would 'like Mr Gunn to explain the reason why one crofter got a steading erected 'on condition that he pays interest, while another was refused on that con- 'dition. On other estates the delegates got full assurance that nothing 'would be done to them for giving their evidence. On this estate the 'factor's clerk told the people that those who took no part in the agitation 'would be better off. This threat had the same effect on the people as if 'it was spoken by the factor himself. It is rumoured that we are influenced 'by a professional gentleman. This rumour is unfounded; and it was 'raised by some whose interest it is to depreciate our evidence. We would 'desire the following changes in our laws:—Perpetuity of tenure. Revalua- 'tion of land by a land tribunal appointed by Government, and rents 'according to that valuation. Security against increase of rent on our 'improvements. When an estate is for sale that the land tribunal have 'power to buy it with money borrowed at a low rate of interest, and that 'the land thus bought be divided and sold in lots to suitable purchasers; 'these purchasers to pay it by the system of deferred payment. That 'tenants have the power to borrow money from Government for permanent 'improvements, such as building of houses, &c. That every farm, whether 'arable or pastoral, have a resident farmer. We would refer the Com- 'missioners to article 6 of our late lease, which says that every tenant will 'be bound to give six days labour every year at repairing roads or other 'purposes required by the proprietor or factor. At the beginning of the 'lease we had to work every hour of the six days, but latterly we had only 'to keep the road leading from the main road to Strathpeffer station in 'repair, which we did in less than six days. I have worked at this road 'myself. For the security of tenure we had even during the currency of 'the lease we would refer the Commissioners to articles 15 and 16 of the 'lease, which says that if we kill a rabbit we would be removed from the

DINGWALL.
John Rose.

'estate next Whitsunday term by warrant from the sheriff.' I have here a copy of the lease given to us in 1860, to show the conditions on which we had the land.

40381. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—You have not got a renewal?—No, we have not asked for it, because the leases we got are not worth asking for.

40382. *The Chairman.*—You may omit the formal parts, but read the clauses you complain of?—By clause six, the proprietor reserves power to make or alter or shut up any road or roads, and to open outfall drains at an abatement of rent for the ground taken for roads, at the average rate of the rent per acre paid by the tenant, which shall be determined by arbiters. The tenant shall be bound to give six days' labour by himself or servant, or three days' labour by horse and cart for making roads; or, in lieu, he shall pay 2s. 6d. per man or 5s. for horse and cart, including driver. By clauses 15 and 16, if the tenant or any of his family be guilty of poaching, or killing game or rabbits or white or mountain hares, his lease by such act and deed shall *ipso facto* cease and determine, and become null. The proprietor reserves right to limit the number of dogs or prohibit the keeping of dogs altogether. The infraction of any of the before-mentioned articles shall render the lease void and null, and the tenant may be removed at the first term of Whitsunday thereafter.

40383. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—What number of families is there in the place you represent?—I don't represent any number of families. The whole of the crofters were met at one meeting, and the delegates were appointed to represent them all, and to deal with different points separately. Each tenant had different grievances to deal with separately.

40384. How many crofters are there at the Heights of Keppoch?—I cannot say for a certainty.

40385. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—You are above the railway?—Yes, a long way above the railway.

40386. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—You can hardly call yourself a crofter, for you are above the mark?—Yes; but there are two of us in partnership.

40387. You say the land does not pay the expense of cultivating it?—Every expense in connection with it, I mean.

40388. Then how do you make your living?—By my labour.

40389. What kind of labour?—Such labour as I can get working with a horse; and I am also working with Mr Tennant, Castle Leod, on the hill at the shooting.

40390. Has it been always so with you or until recently?—Always since I remember.

40391. Have you never made the land yield enough to support you?—It supports us as far as food is concerned, but it does not pay the expenses in connection with it.

40392. Is that the condition of your neighbours also?—Some of them.

40393. Are there any of them who make their living out of the crofts?—Yes, there are a few who make such living as it is. They eke out a miserable existence. With wretched economy and untiring perseverance they manage to live.

40394. What stock do you keep at present?—I keep at present one horse, two cows, two calves, and a heifer, for which I have to buy grass. The heifer is exceptional. What I always keep is one horse, two cows, and two calves.

40395. What kind of soil is it on your land?—It is chiefly a light soil.

40396. What crops do you raise?—Oats, turnips, and potatoes, and clover grass.

40397. Have you a rotation of crops?—Yes, a five-shift rotation.

40398. Do the rest of your neighbours practise that?—No, some of them

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

John Rose.

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

John Rose.

have a four years' rotation. Their holdings are too small to make it a five years' rotation.

40399. But do they all practise some rotation?—Yes, they generally do.

40400. Is there a large farm in your immediate neighbourhood?—Yes, the whole low ground is under large farms with one or two exceptions.

40401. Has there been any addition in recent times to any farm or land taken from crofters?—Yes; in one case, Kinetties, there has been an addition by a croft put to it, but since then it has been subdivided again and made into smaller holdings. When the former tenant died, that farm was subdivided, the factor getting a share of it, and another man getting a share of it, and it has been divided.

40402. Do you consider it a grievance that the rent has been raised from 2s. 6d. in 1791 to £6 in 1879?—Yes, without taking any money out of the proprietor's pocket. Had the reclamations been done at the proprietor's expense I would say he would be quite entitled to an increase, but being made at the crofters' expense I consider it a grievance. When an increase is to be made on any holding, I would have the proprietor to pay the expense of the improvements in connection with it, and then to get an increase.

40403. Has the cultivation of the land of your croft and those of your neighbours been of the best kind that could in the circumstances have been practised?—Yes, as far as I am aware. Perhaps it might be better. I know every one does his best.

40404. How is it you are entered for £33 on the valuation roll and only paying £31?—That has been the last increase of 1879, and we have petitioned the Duchess against that increase, and the increase is still entered in the valuation roll, but we have never paid it yet. We pay only £31, 0s. 4d. This increase, however, may be exacted at any time.

40405. You got no reduction of your rents last year?—No, not a penny.

40406. Did the big farmers?—They say themselves they did. Some of them told me they did, and I see no reason why if one should get it the whole should not.

40407. But you have no sheep?—None whatever. Some of the big farmers have no sheep either. They have no outrun.

40408. Did you suffer much last season by the stormy weather and the failure of the potato crop?—There was not a failure of the potato crop last year. Very good prices were given for potatoes last year, but the two years before that we would not get any one to take them almost for nothing.

40409. You say here that some of your neighbours are so poor that they have no bed-clothes but guano bags?—Yes, I am prepared to prove it, and to get my neighbours to prove it.

40410. People who are not on the poor roll?—Yes.

40411. I hope there are not many in that position?—No; there are more than one, but there are not many.

40412. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Is your neighbour who has nothing but guano bags a man?—Yes.

40413. Is his condition known to the factor?—I don't say he knows about the guano bags, but he knows he is in a poor position.

40414. What rent does he pay?—I cannot exactly say; it is between £5 and £6.

40415. Is the rent exacted?—Yes.

40416. And paid?—He is in very slight arrears.

40417. Have you got half of this farm?—Yes, it is between me and my uncle. I get a share of all that goes in it.

40418. And you pay half the rent?—Yes.

ROSS.

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DINGWALL.

John Rose.

40419. What would you consider a reasonable rent for that croft?—Taking into account that it has neither houses nor fences nor proper roads, I consider between 13s. and 14s. an acre rent enough for it; but if it had proper houses and fences, I consider it would be worth slightly more than that.

40420. How many acres are there?—About thirty-one acres.

40421. And you are paying £1 an acre?—Yes, and some part of the land has not more than three inches of soil above the rock; but it is not all like that.

40422. If you take 12s. an acre, that would be £12 less than you pay just now?—Yes.

40423. You consider that a reasonable rent?—Yes. If proper dwellings and fences were erected free of interest, I say it would certainly increase the letting value of the land, but if we have to pay interest for them it is the same as if we paid rent.

40424. Would you be in a comfortable position if your rent was reduced as you say? Would the extent of land be sufficient to give you a good living?—If I had the whole thirty acres, it would be a moderately comfortable living.

40425. But this thirty acre croft is one of the largest on the heights of Strathpeffer?—Yes, but there is one larger.

40426. Then you think the other crofts are too small for comfort?—Yes.

40427. Do you think thirty acres is about the smallest a man could live upon to support a family?—Yes, if he has no hill grazings.

40428. How many have you living in family?—I have none. I pay for a housekeeper.

40429. How much potatoes and meal do you consume in a house of that size?—I cannot answer that; I never took a note of it; but I can say how much I have sold.

40430. How much potatoes do you sell off the fifteen and a half acres, or what value of potatoes do you sell?—Last year I sold about two tons of potatoes at, I think, £4 a ton; but the two years before that I did not sell that, and I did not get above 24s. a ton for them.

40431. There was no price to be got, but you had two tons to spare the previous year?—Yes.

40432. And that is what you sell upon an average?—Yes.

40433. Are you able to sell any corn?—Yes, and meal.

40434. About how much?—I have sold between six and seven bolls of meal.

40435. How much meal will a quarter of corn make, such as you grow? Will you get one and a half bolls from the quarter?—No, I never got above between twelve and thirteen stones.

40436. Your corn does not weigh above 40 lb.?—No, sometimes it does not weigh the same.

40437. Is that owing to the poverty of the soil or the mode of cultivation?—The soil is light.

40438. Is it a bad place to ripen corn in?—No, it is in a very good place to ripen the corn, but it is high and it is late before it is ripened. We cannot sell oats so early as in the low ground. That is the reason it does not come to more maturity.

40439. What quantity of corn do you get to the acre?—About three and a half quarters and sometimes four. We consider four very good.

40440. *The Chairman.*—You consider the land is too highly rented?—Yes.

40441. Do you consider it is too highly rented in connection with the

ROSS.

fact that it has been improved by the families of existing tenants, or is it too highly rented for its present value to anybody?—It is too highly rented for its present value to anybody—I mean without houses or fences.

DINGWALL.

John Rose. 40442. But there are some houses and fences?—Yes, such as they are, but they are not comfortable. Many of them are not fit to live in.

40443. When a small farm of that sort falls out of lease—when the family disappears, and a new tenant is taken in—does the new tenant pay generally a higher rent than the family that has created the farm, or is it about the same?—There is a croft that became tenantless close to the one I occupy. The tenant died, and a new man got possession and gave an increase of rent for that croft; but since giving that increase he has told me several times that he is in a worse circumstance to-day than the day he took it, and he has said that if he knew where to go he would leave it. He himself did not come to see the place. He took it on Mr Gunn's word, and he regrets giving so much rent for it.

40444. When the old family went out were they paying about the same scale of rental—about £1 per acre?—Yes, as far as I know.

40445. And about what scale did he engage to pay when he came in?—I cannot exactly say. It is a croft of about sixteen or seventeen acres, and he gave between £3 and £4 of an increase, so far as I know.

40446. Then if a farm happens to fall vacant the proprietor up to the present time has been able to let it to a new tenant at an increase of rental?—Yes, to tenants that do not know what they are doing; but the last croft that has been let, to which the former delegate referred, was let to a man who understood the nature of the land, and he got his land at about 16s. per acre. That was a man who knew what he was doing.

40447. Then do you consider or not that the representatives of the old families who made the crofts are favoured in respect of rental at all, or do they just pay as much as new comers pay who never did anything?—I am not aware that any favour has been shown to them, except perhaps to some that were very old and done out. There are two old women in my neighbourhood, one of them upwards of eighty and the other seventy years old. They have a small croft which they have rent free during their life.

40448. When a new family comes in do they ever pay the arrears of the old family that go away, if there are any arrears?—No, I am not aware that has ever been done.

40449. Do they ever pay anything in the shape of compensation for good will or compensation for improvements to the old family who go away?—No.

40450. Nothing but the crop?—Nothing but the crop.

40451. What sort of houses have you got now; are they mostly stone and lime houses?—They are stone and turf houses, with straw thatch. There are two or three slated houses, but there is an increased desire to do away with the straw-thatched houses and to have slated houses erected.

40452. Have they all got chimneys?—Yes, and windows.

40453. But there is no rule upon the estate about supplying timber, slates, or lime to the tenants?—Yes, they got rough timber gratis.

40454. Nothing for lime, slates, or glass?—Not unless the rules have been altered. They did not formerly. They got slate on interest.

40455. The proprietor will always furnish slates on the payment of interest?—Yes.

40456. At what percentage?—I cannot exactly say; I think it will be 5½ or 6 per cent.

40457. You said the leases were expired, and that you have not got a renewal of them?—No.

40458. Have you heard what is to be done about the renewal of the leases?—No; we did not ask for a renewal of leases.

ROSS.
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40459. Was there any complaint among your people, such as we heard from the last witness, about some who could not write not having received the leases for which they paid?—Yes, my father paid for a lease, but he never got it.

DINGWALL.
John Rose.

40460. You say that Mr Smith got the 10s.; can you give me any explanation of the transaction?—No.

40461. The statement then is that 10s. was paid to the factor or his representative for a lease, and that the lease was never given, and the 10s. was never returned?—Yes

40462. When was that?—In 1860.

40463. Has that been brought under the consideration of the proprietor? Has any petition been sent to the proprietor?—No, not that I am aware.

40464. No representation has ever been made?—No.

40465. How can you explain that? It is not a large sum of money, but, if correctly stated, it is an injustice to the people that they should pay 10s. and get nothing in return. What is the reason that a statement has never been made to the proprietor? In fact, can you give any explanation of the business at all?—No, I cannot give any explanation why they did not ask for the leases. They were all uneducated people, and did not know what the leases were good for, or what was in them.

40466. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—As we are on this question of leases, perhaps I can bring the matter more clearly out. The 10s. was only taken, I presume, from the people who could not write?—Yes, exactly so—from the people who could not sign their names. Those who could sign got the lease for 1s. 6d.

40467. Are you aware that by the law at that period it was necessary for two notaries to sign for a person who could not write?—No.

40468. But you are aware that the 10s. was paid to notaries?—Yes, where the people themselves could not sign their names.

40469. Do you know whether Mr Smith is a notary himself?—Yes.

40470. Suppose you ascertain that Mr Smith is not a notary, I suppose you will not accuse him of taking the 10s. himself. He must have given it to other two lawyers?—I cannot go into that.

40471. But suppose you find out that Mr Smith was not a notary, will you not take it for granted that he merely handed the 10s. to the two gentlemen who acted as notaries?—That is quite possible.

40472. I wish to ask you about the person who is so poor that he sleeps in the way you have described. Is there anything in the habits of the person that has brought about that, or is it from poverty?—He is a temperate hard-working man. It is from poverty and sickness.

40473. I believe you know something about game?—Yes, but there is another delegate that will be able to give that better in details.

40474. What is his name?—Roderick Mackenzie, Heights of Fodderty.

40475. *Mr Cameron.*—You read parts of a lease to us, in which you complained of certain clauses?—Yes.

40476. The lease was dated 1860. One of the things you complained of was six days' labour on the roads which was exacted; but that lease was dated prior to the Roads and Bridges (Scotland) Act?—I do not know the year in which that Act was passed.

40477. But anyhow it was not passed in 1860?—I am not aware.

40478. Are you aware that the Roads and Bridges Act was passed under the late Government, and that was a long time after 1860?—I cannot answer that.

ROSS. 40479. Are these six days' labour exacted now?—No, they have not been exacted during the past five or six years, but the road has never been touched since we ceased to keep it in repair.

DINGWALL. 40480. Then you complained of the clauses relating to poaching. I suppose the Strathpeffer tenants are not poachers?—No, not any of them.

John Rose. 40481. I suppose none of the good tenants are?—I am not aware that they are.

40482. Do you consider it unreasonable that a habitual poacher on an estate should cease to be a tenant?—Yes, I think it unreasonable that he should be turned off the estate. I admit he ought to be punished, but not turned off the estate.

40483. Of course he would be punished whether you admit it or not, but do you think it unreasonable that a habitual poacher should cease to have connection as tenant with the estate on which he poaches?—I don't know if I do, but there is no reference to habitual poaching in the lease. If he was only once found killing rabbits or hares, he could be removed.

40484. Could you put it in any better form in the lease by which a habitual poacher would be described?—I mean by a habitual poacher a man who is always troublesome on the estate and always poaching.

40485. With regard to the only other point on which you objected to the lease—the clauses in relation to dogs—have there not been complaints in this neighbourhood of damage done to sheep and lambs by dogs?—Yes.

40486. Do you think that if no restriction is placed on the number of dogs kept by small tenants that evil might not be greatly increased?—Yes, by keeping too many dogs it might be.

40487. So you are not altogether for wiping out any clause restricting in some degree the number of dogs kept by tenants? You think there ought to be some restriction?—When a man keeps too many dogs, if these dogs are found to be doing any harm they certainly should be destroyed.

40488. There, again, they would be destroyed whether you wish it or not, but I was referring to your idea of what is reasonable in the clauses of a lease. Don't you think some restriction should be placed on the number of dogs kept by small tenants where the tenants are numerous?—No, I think they might be allowed to keep them, unless it was found they did any harm.

40489. You think there should be no restriction?—Yes, because some might keep dogs for making profit out of them, and I know some do it.

40490. What would you do in that case?—I would allow them to keep as many dogs as they liked, if they did not do any harm.

40491. *The Chairman.*—I would like to understand from you what you really think the feeling of the people would be about poaching or infractions of the game laws. There is an article in the lease which renders any person who is guilty of an infraction of the game laws liable to be sent off the estate; are you aware of any case in which a tenant has been dismissed from the estate on account of an infraction of the game laws?—Yes, I am aware of one that has been removed off the estate prior to 1860, but I am not aware that any one has been removed since this lease was given.

40492. Then no one has been removed in the last twenty years?—No, not that I am aware of for poaching.

40493. Do you remember whether any tenant has been convicted of an act of poaching?—Yes.

40494. What was done to him?—He was taken before the sheriff and fined.

40495. Did he receive any additional punishment, either in the way of removal from the land or increase of rent or anything of that sort?—I am not aware.

40496. If a man was a habitual poacher—that is, if he had been convicted twice of the offence of poaching before a court,—do you think the tenants would generally consider it a great hardship if such a tenant was removed?—If he was a habitual poacher, I don't suppose they would.

ROSS.

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DINGWALL.

40497. I define a habitual poacher as a man who has been convicted twice; would they consider it a hardship that he should be removed?—Yes, if only twice.

John Rose.

40498. You think he ought to be convicted more frequently?—Yes.

40499. Now, it is not only for an infraction of the game laws that they would be removed, according to the interpretation of the lease, but they would be liable to removal for killing rabbits; is it your impression, and the impression of the tenants still, that they would suffer prejudice and become liable to the anger of the proprietor and his representatives if they killed rabbits on the ground?—Yes.

40500. Have they ever asked for liberty to kill rabbits since the new Act was passed?—No, I am not aware that they have, because proprietors generally give liberty to their tenants without asking it since the passing of the Ground Game Act.

40501. You did not ask for leave under your old leases?—No.

40502. And since you have had no lease you have not asked whether you had liberty to kill rabbits?—No.

40503. But perhaps if you were to ask whether you could exercise your rights under the present law, they would tell you that you were at liberty to kill rabbits?—I cannot answer that.

40504. At any rate nobody has been removed from the land on account of infractions of the game law?—No.

JOHN FOWLER, Crofter, Braefindon (60)—examined.

40505. *The Chairman.*—Will you make your statement to us?—
Evidence by John Fowler, Braefindon, for crofters situated on the estate of Major M'Kenzie of Findon, Black Isle. The estate of Findon is situated in the eastern extremity of the parish of Urquhart. The lower portion of it, bordering on the Cromarty Firth, consists mainly of farms of a medium size; whilst the higher part, bordering on the summit of the Mulbuie, is studded over with small crofts, and may be called the crofter district. Those for whom I act as delegate are situated there in the districts of Greenleock, Braefindon, and Upper Badrain—a strip of land measuring from west to east about a mile and a half, and averaging about a mile in breadth. This strip contains at present about twenty-four small allotments, ranging from eight acres up to twenty acres each. Sixty years ago there would have been in this district barely forty acres of cultivated land, and I am requested specially to point out that the additional improvements, consisting of the cultivation of about 250 acres, has been effected altogether by the crofters themselves, and entirely at their own expenditure; and that with one or two exceptions it has been effected either by the present occupiers or by their forefathers. The general grievance I have to state is that the landlord makes no compensation for these improvements, whilst at the expiry of a lease they are rented upon them to an extent that would be exorbitant even supposing they had been effected at the proprietor's own cost. To illustrate this I shall state a case—my father's—which in the main agrees also with the others. About sixty years ago he received a piece of land eight acres in extent. It was then part of the heathery moor, with no house upon it, and no part of it cultivated.

John
Fowler.

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

John Fowler.

' He got it for the first five years free of rent, during which time he cultivated a portion of it, and built as much of a house as would do for present accommodation. Thereafter he got it for twenty-five years at the rate of 30s. a year, during which time he continued cultivating and improving, and at the expiry of which he received a lease of it for nineteen years at the rate of five guineas per annum. Before the end of this period he brought the whole under cultivation, and he is at present undergoing another lease of nineteen years at a rental of £8 per annum, being 20s. per acre. I may also state that he has also now got a further addition of seven acres, three of which had been then cultivated, and for which he pays an annual rental of £3; but in pointing out the injustice there is of receiving no compensation for improvements I shall confine myself to the first lot of eight acres. At the rate of £15 per acre, which is not in the least extravagant, the labour expended in reclaiming this lot equals the handsome sum of £130, and to require the individual whose rightful property the fruit of this labour is, to compete for it at the end of a lease against one who may not have the slightest interest at stake, is altogether unjust. But such, however, is the case as matters now stand; and my father, for instance, now pays rent for the above mentioned lot to the same extent any other person would. This grievance, moreover, is carried to an extreme when those who reclaim the land are made to part with the fruit of their labour without compensation, whenever the proprietor sees it proper to unite a number of small holdings in order to form a larger one. The evils which follow this way of doing are manifold. The proprietor may to some extent benefit by it, or he may not, but the industrious peasantry who are turned out are very often launched into poverty and misery. I can point to a district which, thirty years ago, was divided into twenty-four small allotments. These had been united to form one large holding, and the result has been that not many years after the greater number of those removed became the objects of parochial relief. I have to mention that crofters complain not a little of extra burdens put upon them by the proprietor, such as the granting each year of so many days of labour—for crofters as a rule three days; and also their having to supply each year at rent time a hen—or as it is now put, hen money. This is of minor importance relatively, but I am requested to state it, however, as a grievance. The 'three days' labour is meant for the repairing of roads, &c., but the roads notwithstanding are in such bad repair that the crofters can with difficulty take half a load at a time from their houses to the nearest county road. I have further to state that rents as at present are much too high, and that a considerable reduction will have to be made to allow the crofters to make a comfortable living. In short, I have to state that in general they want such a reform of the land laws as will entitle them to a full compensation for all improvements effected by them, and will fix the land at a price sufficiently reasonable to enable them to make a good living out of it.'

40506. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Did the proprietor of Findon ever do anything for the improvement of the lands or houses?—No.

40507. Are you entirely upon what was once the commony of Mulbuie?—Yes.

40508. Was any land taken in before the commony was divided?—I don't think there was—very little, if any.

40509. Before the commony was divided many of the crofters were lower down?—Yes.

40510. What estate was your father on before he went up?—On the same estate, but lower down.

40511. Who has got the land lower down that the people were upon of old?—The farmer, William Jack, Braefindon farm.

ROSS.

40512. Is it a large farm?—About 100 acres.

—
DINGWALL.

40513. You complain that your crofts are rather small; that is one of the grievances?—They do not say small. They cannot get them larger. It is planted all round nearly, and the land is nearly taken in, all that is left unplanted.

John
Fowler.

40514. Is the plantation come to that state that it is nearly ready for cutting?—Yes, they are cutting it.

40515. Is it land that would reclaim?—Some parts would, and some would not.

40516. Have you or the other tenants had any benefit of the grazing in the woods?—Not unless we paid for it.

40517. Then unless you got some extension by getting the place where the wood now stands, as it is cut down, there is nothing else on the estate for you?—Yes, I understand the proprietor is going to cut down a farm and make it into crofts again—one of the crofts that five or six crofters were turned out of. I understand the proprietor is going to make it into crofts again.

40518. What is the name of that farm that is proposed to be cut down?—Greenleanock.

40519. Is it his intention, do you suppose, to accommodate his present crofters and not to take in new ones?—I think it is to accommodate the present ones, and perhaps to take in some new ones. He spoke to my father about taking part of it.

40520. And I suppose you are willing to do so upon reasonable terms?—I don't know. We are sorry for the farmer going out of it. He is going out through not being able to carry on with it.

40521. You mean his present rent is too high?—Yes.

40522. You complain also that your present rents are too high?—Yes.

40523. When were they raised last?—About nine years ago.

40524. Was there a large increase made then?—Yes; my father was only paying £5, 5s. and it rose to £8.

40525. Without anything additional being given to him?—No, nothing whatever.

40526. Is that increase something analogous to what was done to all the other crofters?—Yes.

40527. Would you consider the rent it was nine years ago a fair rent now?—The rents then were rather too high to make a living off them.

40528. Do you do any other work except on the farm?—No, I just do the work for my father. He is an old man, and not able to do it.

40529. Are you able to make a living out of it?—No.

40530. Then how do you manage?—I happen to be fortunate enough to have a little money made in my younger days, which I am spending there now.

40531. And were it not for that external assistance, what would have been the case?—My father would have been like a good many of the rest—he would have been in the poorhouse or getting parochial relief.

40532. How many people may there be altogether on the Findon estate that you represent?—Twenty-five heads of families.

40533. All paying rent?—No; there are three families not paying rent, and two paupers.

40534. Are the people upon the adjoining estates complaining in the same way?—Yes.

40535. Are they represented here to-day?—Yes.

ROSS. 40536. Is their story much the same as yours?—Well, I think their story is perhaps better than mine—some of them at any rate.

DINGWALL
John
Fowler. 40537. Findon was once part of the property of Sir James Mackenzie of Scatwell?—Yes.

40538. What was the rent when your father first went into the place?—He got the first five years of it free, and at the end of that he was charged 30s. He got twenty-five years of it at 30s. a year for the whole.

40539. What state are your buildings in?—Pretty good.

40540. Are they all your own?—Yes.

40541. If you require any repairs on your buildings do you get wood?—We get it by buying it.

40542. Nothing given you gratuitously?—Nothing.

40543. Is that the general case upon the other estates?—Yes, the general run for the twenty-four crofters I have mentioned, and upon the whole estate I may say it is the same.

40544. Are the younger members of the families of people like yourself obliged to go abroad to earn their livelihood?—Yes, and some of them very young. I had to go when I was about nine years of age.

40545. Do such as go away in that way generally contribute something to the assistance of their parents?—Generally they do.

40546. Am I safe in saying that without that assistance they would be hardly able to pull through?—They would be hardly able to pull through.

40547. What you point to then is this, that there should be such a size of croft as to enable the occupant to make a living out of it without any other occupation?—Yes.

40548. There has been a great deal of reclamation in what is called the Black Isle district during these last sixty years, has there not?—Yes, a great deal.

40549. Gradually done?—Yes.

40550. Very much done, I presume, also by what may be called the crofter classes?—Yes.

40551. Was there much drainage done upon what may be called Mulbuie?—Yes, all of it done by the crofters themselves.

40552. But by drainage money from Government?—Not much, I think.

40553. What is the extent of the plantation done on Findon estate that you refer to?—I could not say; it will be over 200 acres, I think.

40554. Then supposing the wood has come to maturity and can be cut down, that would be a great relief to the people if they got a share of it?—Very little. It is bad land.

40555. Was that why it was planted?—I believe it was.

40556. Are you complaining of game in your part?—Not very much up where we are, but down at the shore they are complaining of rabbits, but it is such a poor place up at Mulbuie that rabbits will not live on it.

40557. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Were these improvements made by your father, under a lease in virtue of an agreement?—Yes.

40558. When he took the lease it was understood he was to make these improvements?—Yes.

40559. Did he expect when the thirty years were out—five years free and twenty-five years at 30s.—to have to pay something more?—He expected to have to pay a little more, but not so much as £3, 5s.

40560. On what principle do you think the rise should take place in a case of that kind at the end of the lease, where there is an agreement that certain improvements shall be effected? To what extent would it have been fair to make a rise, in your opinion?—About the double, I think—£3 would have been plenty.

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

John

Fowler

40561. Because he made the improvements himself?—Yes.

40562. But he made them under agreement. I suppose when he made the agreement, he thought it would pay him to have it for twenty-five years at the reduced rent?—Yes.

40563. Even if he had to leave it afterwards?—Yes, very likely he did.

40564. And you think it did not pay him?—No, it never did.

40565. If the improvement cost, as you said, £15 an acre, that is £120, and if he had it for twenty-five years for 30s. when it would have let to anybody else for £8, then the improvement must have paid him in that time?—No.

40566. Perhaps it is not worth £8?—No.

40567. But somebody else would give £8 if he gave it up now?—Very likely.

40568. And therefore the proprietor was sacrificing during that time rent to the value of £6, 10s. for twenty-five years?—Yes.

40569. And that would come to more than £120?—Yes.

40570. *The Chairman.*—You were asked how the increase of rent in your opinion ought to be made. You allow that your father took this ground first of all for no rent, and afterwards for a low rent for a certain term of years, and that he expected that at the end of the term there would have been some rise?—Yes.

40571. In your opinion, how do you think under those circumstances the rise ought to be arranged?—I think, if they had only doubled it, and put on £3 instead of £5, 5s.

40572. That is your personal opinion as to the amount it ought to have been raised to, but I don't ask you that. I ask you how the question should be settled,—what ought the proprietor to do to settle it?—I don't know.

40573. Do you think it would be a good thing that there should be a valuator appointed?—Yes, I certainly think so.

40574. How should the valuation be made?—If my father was to put a man there and the laird another—two practical men who know the nature of the ground.

40575. And suppose they disagreed?—Get a thirdsman in then.

40576. Who should name the thirdsman? Should they agree about the thirdsman, or should he be named by somebody else?—I think he should be named by the landlord.

40577. Then the landlord in that case would have two men?—Yes, but if he was a just man he would show no favour.

DONALD MACKENZIE, Crofter and Carpenter, Newton of Ferintosh,
Culloden Estate (53)—examined.

40578. *The Chairman.*—Will you read your statement to us?—I, Donald Mackenzie, crofter and carpenter, Newton of Ferintosh, aged fifty-three years, attended a crofters' meeting at Culbokie, on the 20th September. I was unanimously elected as delegate to give evidence before the Crofters' Royal Commission, for the district of Newton of Ferintosh, forming part of the estate of Duncan Forbes, Esq. of Culloden. This district consists of twenty holdings, whose rents are from £3, 10s. up to £50. The acreage under cultivation, pasture, and water cannot with accuracy be stated, as in some cases tenants don't know the extent, therefore on that point I shall not enter. Myself being one of the

Donald
Mackenzie.

ROSS.

DINGWALL.
Donald Mackenzie.

number, I humbly beg leave to be permitted to state part of my grievances, and by doing so my case will apply to the majority of cases in the district for which I am appointed. My forefathers so far back at least as that I am one of the fifth generation, first occupied small holdings in the low part of the estate, cultivating patches of land, from which in course of time they were removed step by step further up. When at last, my grandfather was near the top, where himself and others took possessions in a piece of land, they thought no proprietor could interfere with them, the place being a common open for all. The first man that took possession, whose children are still alive, can prove that their father has been for upwards of twenty years at least unmolested and rent free, no laird or factor to trouble them, until the year 1827, when in that year the whole community was taken possession of by the lairds. To prove that, I find, in the *Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland*, 4th series, vol. ix. page 118, year 1877, that the community consisting of 7044 acres has been divided in the following manner by Lord Ordinary Mackenzie, in the Court of Session, on 10th July 1827, Fortrose 687 Scots acres, Cromarty 577, Kilcoy 550, Flowerburn 523, Seatwell 446, Newhall 411, Ferintosh 370, Redcastle 358, Allangrange 245, Conanside 196, Drynie 158, Avoch 127;—the rest to small proprietors. The proprietors got these lands without any payment, and amongst the number (to their shame), the Established ministers had a share in the spoil; and I bear testimony that one of them at least has treated the occupant of that portion he got in a most cruel manner. Soon after this division, the occupants of this district were subjected to pay the nominal rent of a hen to Culloden. My holding at that time was occupied by a woman, her rent a hen. In 1829, she gave up the place to my father, upon condition of paying her £5 for the small hut she had, which he did. All the land under cultivation on his entry would only require one half bushel of oats to sow it. His rent was fixed at 2s. 6d. and a hen, but no lease; in that position he continued till 1855, when in that year Mr Morrison, land surveyor, Inverness, formed the lots as they now stand, reducing some, adding to others. Part of another lot was added to my father's, whose possessor had died, all the land under cultivation in both lots, being about four or five acres; whole extent of lot so formed was 19 acres 3 roods 25 poles, arable and pasture put together. In that year he entered into a lease of nineteen years, at the yearly rent of £3, 10s. By a clause in the leases, all the crofters were bound to improve at least one-tenth of their pasture yearly during the currency of their leases. My father, as well as all the other crofters in the district, began improvement in right earnest. In 1874 that lease was ended, and Mr Paterson, land surveyor, Inverness, measured and valued our crofts, with the view of our entering into new leases. In that year my father's lot was found to contain 16 acres 3 roods 38 poles under cultivation, 2 acres 3 roods 27 poles under pasture, including sites of houses, roads, and marches, where stones taken out of ground were placed. Every acre improved cost £20 per acre at least, before a crop could be got out of it; taking 16½ acres at that rate, the whole cost £330—building of houses, the length of which is 114 feet, cost £140; both put together amounts to £470; and to add to his loss (as well as to the loss of all the crofters in the district) they did not get the benefit of two crops, and in many instances of one crop of the improvement done towards the latter end of lease. And further, during the time he was improving the land, he had to purchase the most of the provisions necessary for himself and family, which consisted of five sons and a daughter, all of them helping him on with the improvements, with all their might and main, expecting

that by their doing so, their parents would be made comfortable in their old age, and reap the benefit of the fruits of their labour and expenditure. But, lo ! they experienced the contrary. As soon as Mr Paterson had finished his survey of valuing our crofts, his value for my father's croft was £7, as can be seen from the valuation roll for the county of Ross for that year, and all the other crofters' places in proportion to that. Our superiors it seems were not satisfied with his valuation, as three of their number made a flying survey over our crofts, viz., Duncan Forbes of Culloden, and his relative Captain now Major Warrant, Ryefield, and Mr Fraser, factor, now provost of Inverness. Their survey finished, we were called to Inverness to the factor's office, with the view of entering into new leases. Endurance of lease was to be fifteen years ; the copy of lease shown us contained so many clauses and conditions for us to fulfil as would even baffle Solomon himself—the whole sum and substance tying the poor crofter hand and feet, in the fetters of slavery and bondage, and opening every door of escape to the landlord. My father was told by the factor that Mr Paterson valued his croft at £17, but the factor did not show him the valuation book, only his own word. Against such an enormous rent my father strongly protested ; he found it was nothing short of insanity to accept of a lease at such a rent laid entirely on his own improvements. All the crofters in the districts have been similarly dealt with. As we could do nothing with the factor, my father and myself went purposely to see Culloden. When near the house, Mr Duncan Forbes now Culloden, met us. He told us that Culloden was at home, and that we would see him ; he also said he knew Culloden would give us all manner of justice. Upon our arrival, word was sent us from Culloden that we could not see him to-day ; ordered us a dram to go home—that he would soon see us all right (a promise still unperformed). We thought this a strange treatment from our proprietor, after travelling twelve miles to see him. Next step we were ordered to meet our factor at the Muir of Ord market, which we did. On meeting, my father asked him, was he in earnest in saying that £17 was meant as rent for his croft. He said he was, to which my father said, "God forbid !" to which he angrily said, "Poof man, keep God out," to which I said, "Well, Mr Fraser, it is my opinion that by keeping God out, the works of men shall not prosper." That finished the business that day. After that my uncle, who is my next neighbour, and myself went to see Major Warrant, to see if we would get any advice or satisfaction from him. He said he had nothing to do with the management of the estate ; but on coming to close quarters with him he took some papers out of his pocket, and asked what my rent was. I said £17. He said that was the factor's mistake ; that it was only £16. He also told me the acreage of my croft, and advised us to plough our lots, and if we were turned out, we would get payment for our work. On speaking to him for my uncle, who had no English, whose rent was raised from 5s. by degrees to £6, he said "Tell your uncle that myself will give £6, 10s. for his croft ;" and when my uncle went next to Inverness to see the factor his rent was £6, 10s. In my opinion, this case clearly shows who had the most blame in raising the rents, and we all believe it. Pleadings and arguments were used between factor and tenants, which lasted for upwards of a year and a half, but in vain. Then my father got notice from the factor, that it was Culloden's good pleasure to reduce his rent £2—that his rent would be £14; and if he did not come to terms within ten days he might look out for himself. All the district were put into the same position. Placed in such circumstances, we found we were at the mercy of our landlord, and as some of our number experienced the cruel and unmerciful sufferings of a former eviction we

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

Donald Mackenzie.

ROSS.

'dreaded a second. About the year 1845 there had been sixteen families evicted wholesale in this district, and their places given to three persons; two of these became bankrupts, and their effects taken possession of by the landlord, and the third had been summoned for his rent not long ago, and who is now struggling. I myself witnessed that eviction, and can name all the families. Some of them had scattered throughout the country, but the most of them died receiving the paltry pittance allowed by the Parochial Board. Only three of their number were favoured with places on the estate. I also remember other two places on the estate, evicted wholesale with about as many families in each as the one I alluded to. In such a position placed, we were forced to submit. My father signed the lease and I along with him. Our rent £14, assessments £1, 3s. 4d., we have to pay annually £15, 3s. 4d., for our own improvements in reclaiming waste barren moors, in building all the necessary houses without ever receiving any help or aid in any manner whatever from our proprietor. Sowing large and reaping little, land light and poor at its best. Some of our number their holdings are flooded with water, and when they complain a deaf ear is given. With many of us our houses must necessarily be rebuilt; and the question with many to solve is, how many of us are sunk in debt, incurred in the vast improvements done, which instead of being relieved from by earning the fruits of our life-long labours, we have been more sadly burdened by our being rack-rented to the backbone. Past experience teaches us that many of us have been bound slaves to our proprietors from the cradle to the grave, and all owing to our country's bad laws. The following remedies are wanted :—1. A fair rent fixed by impartial judges; 2. Fixity of tenure as long as the rents so fixed be paid; 3. Compensation for past and future improvements; 4. That large farms be broken down; 5. That deer forests be entirely abolished.

40579. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Did you write this paper?—Every word of it, without any help whatever.

40580. Was it submitted to all the other crofters, and do they concur in it?—Yes, quite so.

40581. *The Chairman.*—The complaints here are of the same nature as the complaints made to us by previous witnesses on other estates. We understand the nature of the complaints and for that reason we do not ask you any questions?—There is nothing there but what I witnessed myself, and it is just the plain truth.

**WILLIAM GUNN, Factor on the Cromartie Estate, Strathpeffer (44)—
examined.**

William
Gunn.

40582. *The Chairman.*—You desire to make some statement in connection with what has been said here to day?—I do. I desire to make a few general statements with reference to the crofter holdings in the Strathpeffer district, and afterwards to refer briefly to the leading points in the evidence given by the delegates from that quarter. On the Strathpeffer property of the Duchess of Sutherland and Countess of Cromartie there are eighty-three crofters, paying rents ranging from £2 to £30. Of these there are fifty-seven on the heights or southern slopes of the valley, nine in the township of Park, and seventeen in Gower or Knock-farell. Forty-nine tenants pay rents under £10, twenty-six pay £10 and up to £20, and six pay £20 and up to £30. There are six holdings ranging from £30 to £100, six from £100 to £200, three from £200 to £400, and

'only one above £400—total rental from crofts, £760. It will, I think
'be admitted that this regular gradation of holdings gives all classes a chance,
'and especially the industrious crofter. I believe I am correct in saying
'that the crofters on the Strathpeffer property hold now every inch of
'arable ground that they ever possessed. I may here mention that the
'only improvable ground of any extent was reclaimed by the proprietor
'between the years 1848 and 1850, viz., what are commonly known as the
'Knockfarell or Gower allotments, extending to close upon 150 acres,
'which were reclaimed at an expense to the proprietor of £2868, or as
'nearly as possible £20 an acre. The intention, I believe, was to provide
'suitable crofts for some cottars in the village of Achterneed; but it
'happened that a colony of crofters, who were removed from another estate
'to the number of eighteen families, applied for this new land, and the
'Duchess of Sutherland (then Marchioness of Stafford) yielded to their im-
portunities, and gave them possession, granting them leases and materials
'with which to build houses. It is due to these people to say that, with
'scarcely an exception, they have proved to be excellent tenants in every
'respect. They are industrious, and farm systematically and well, and of
'this we have the best evidence in the fact that they pay their rents
'regularly, and that within the last few years most of them have substan-
tially improved their houses, four of which have lately been slated. I
'have looked up the old records, and find that some fifty years ago, and
'prior to that, the grazing of the southern division of Wyvis were held by
'the tenants on the Heights of Strathpeffer. I have been unable to trace
'exactly what the arrangement was, but I believe the tenure was a yearly
'one, a few of the principal lotters being responsible for the rent, which I
'find in 1835 was only £25 a year. At that time the rent was returned
'in the name of Kenneth Maclellan, who, I find, gave up the holding in
'1839, leaving the rent in arrear. It has been stated that these people
'were deprived of this grazing, but my information is that the tenants
'could not agree among themselves about its management. It is well
'known that in these days they were unable to stock all this grazing, and
'that they were in the habit of taking in horses and cattle from the Black
'Isle and other places, and summering them on this pasture, in order to
'enable them to pay even the small rent then exacted. This grazing was
'subsequently let, in conjunction with Glenskaich proper, to a Mr James
'Scott, who held it until his death in 1862, when it fell into the hands of
'the proprietrix. The farm was so held until 1872, when it was left to
'Messrs Arras, Fodderby, at a rent of £275. Seeing that this grazing
'was in the proprietrix's own hands for a period of ten years, it does seem
'strange that no proposal was made by these tenants for re-acquiring it.
'If they are in earnest now in their wish to have it again, it seems to me
'that they ought in common fairness and courtesy to have made their
'wishes known in the usual way instead of bringing it forward here as a
'grievance. In 1860, seven years before I had anything to do with the
'management, nineteen years' leases were granted to almost all the tenants
'in the Heights of Strathpeffer. These leases expired in 1879. It was a
'stipulation of the lease that the tenant should give six days' labour by
'himself or substitute, or three days' labour with a horse and cart, each
'year for making or repairing roads or other useful works. It was, how-
'ever, found somewhat difficult at times to put this stipulation into
'practice. It was, therefore, deemed advisable on the expiry of the lease
'to enter into a different arrangement—the intention being to let the
'repair of the roads to a contractor, and to add a small sum to the rents
'in lieu of the stipulated labour. The yearly value of the labour was
'15s., but when revising the rents this sum was only imposed in the case

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

William
Gunn.

ROSS. ' of a few of the largest and best lots ; while in the case of some twenty tenants there was no rise of any kind asked, while in some instances there was a reduction made. The revised rents, however, have not as yet been levied ; whether they will be or not I am unable to say. These rents average under £1 per acre, which considering the situation, the quality of much of the land, proximity to a railway station and to good markets, cannot be regarded as other than reasonable. I may add that at Strathpeffer, now so largely frequented during the Spa season, there is almost an unlimited demand for dairy produce, poultry, and eggs, and while there are some who do take advantage of this ready market, there are many who do not. While there are some industrious, good tenants, we have, I am sorry to say, some quite the reverse. There is the case of Alexander Gray, mason and crofter. I mention this case in connection with the position this man took up as chairman of a meeting of a few of the tenants and some outsiders, called to discuss the tenants' so-called grievances. Alexander Gray became tenant at Martinmas 1862. He came from another estate, when his offer of £10 for a ten acre croft was accepted. He paid the first half year's rent, but not another penny until 1868, when he paid other £5, leaving five years' rent—£50, 15s.—in arrears. Upon representing this matter to the Duchess of Sutherland and her advisers, I was instructed to write off this sum of £50, upon Gray giving an assurance that he would pay up afterwards. How he has kept that promise may best be judged from the fact that at this moment he owes over three years rent. He is a mason to trade, and has a fair croft of ten acres arable and slated house for £10 a year. I ask is there another proprietor in Scotland who would have shown the same indulgence ? Some reference has been made to myself personally in the course of statements made by the delegates. In the first instance, I would refer to the statements of Donald Macdonald. He occupies a croft containing 15 acres 2 roods 7 poles of old arable, at a rent of £14, 13s. 7d. There was an increase of something more than a pound proposed to be put on. It is very fair land, with a southern exposure, accessible to good roads, and within a few hundred yards of a railway station. This delegate admitted that sixty years ago this land was worth 12s. per acre. I submit that a rise of 8s. per acre in sixty years is not unreasonable in the circumstances. This, and the other delegate, John Rose, in the statements they have made, have principally dwelt upon things which they say happened eighty years ago. These statements which they have now brought forward as grievances I have heard to-day for the first time, and I do think it would only have been fair and reasonable that if they really felt aggrieved they should in common fairness have acquainted us of this and asked for redress. They did nothing of the kind. They said a great deal in disparagement of the late factor, Mr Scott. I venture to say that Mr Scott was a just and honourable man, who held his responsible position for a period of very near half a century with the entire confidence of his constituents—the late Cromartie and his daughter, the present Duchess of Sutherland—and I venture to say that neither Cromartie nor the Duchess of Sutherland would keep in their service any factor who would do an unjust or unkind thing to any of their tenants. Slight reference has been made to myself in this matter, which induces me to ask you to allow me to read a short petition signed by these people in 1879 :—“Heights of Strathpeffer, 26th September 1879.—William Gunn, Esq., Strathpeffer. Sir,—We beg respectfully to approach, through you, the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland on the subject of the proposed increase on our rents, which you informed us was to begin at the last term. While we

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

William
Gunn.

' have found that in prosperous times, when crops and prices were good, it was sometimes a difficult matter to gather our rents, we think you will agree with us in thinking that the present year is anything but promising for bearing additional burdens. With a succession of bad harvests, and falling prices for stock and grain, and with no immediate prospects of matters mending; and when we hear that other landed proprietors are allowing deductions off their present rents, we trust that our own noble proprietrix will take the matter into consideration, and will, at least, postpone laying on the new rents at present. We beg to add that from your past courtesy and kindness to us, we have every confidence that you will only recommend what is fair and right in submitting the matter to their Graces, and hoping to have a favourable reply to our application." Here follow the names of thirty tenants. Now I beg respectfully to say that I think this at least is a certificate from those people that prior to the year 1879 I have treated them with courtesy and kindness. I would ask them if by anything I have done since 1879 I have lost their confidence. I am always accessible. I see them frequently. I am not aware of ever turning a man away without listening to his complaint, if he had one. I have always striven honestly and conscientiously, if there was a grievance, to do my best to redress it, or at any rate to represent it.'

40583. I did not understand there was any imputation made against you personally for want of kindness or accessibility?—Some of the statements made by the delegate Rose certainly implied that. I am very glad to hear that your Lordship thinks otherwise, because that was my impression.

40584. The point upon which I would rather consult you is the general question of the rise of rent upon improvements made by small tenants. The general statement made to us was this, that at a remote period certain parties were moved from a more fertile and favoured part of the estate and carried gradually up to the higher ground, where I think for a space of about twenty years they remained as sub-tenants at the will or at the orders of the large farmer; that about sixty years ago those tenants had been placed in direct relations with the landlord, and at that time their rents had been fixed in money at a sort of average of about 12s. an acre; that this rental had remained unaltered for a good number of years; that it had then been increased to 16s. an acre; that it had stood for a long time also at that rent, and that very recently an additional rise of 3s. an acre had been imposed, which, however, had not yet been exacted. We understood also, from the examination of particular witnesses, that the rental at the present moment upon arable ground among these small tenants was from 16s. to £1 per acre. Well, now, is that a pretty correct statement of the course by which the arable property held by small tenants has been formed?—It would seem to me that their statements have gone back for a period of eighty years. My connection with this property has only extended over fifteen or sixteen years. It is impossible for me to say what might have occurred sixty or eighty years ago. I believe that the statements made by them are open to question, but I am not prepared at this moment to state distinctly to what extent that is so. I believe that the then proprietor of the Cromartie estate, Mr John Hay Mackenzie, was not the man to have disturbed tenants and removed them on to a barren moor without taking the matter into consideration and dealing kindly by them.

40585. But without having a very accurate knowledge of what occurred sixty or eighty years ago, you must have a general impression from the traditions of the country as to whether these arable lands upon the higher part of the country have been formed by the labour of the people, or whether they have been formed by co-operation or by the expenditure of

ROSS. the landlord?—I am quite prepared to admit that it is extremely likely that these crofts have at some remote period been improved by the ancestors of the present tenantry.

DINGWALL. —
William Gunn. 40586. Are you able to inform me whether in the course of reclamation the small tenantry were under any regulations by which they were assisted in any particular points by the proprietor—whether the proprietor contributed in any specific manner to the erection of houses, the improvement of land, the creation of fences and roads, or in any other way?—I am not aware that anything but the course usual in such circumstances was adopted, and that was to charge a nominal rent, giving the improver time, and assisting him by giving him materials for his buildings.

40587. Can you state that materials were given for buildings? We have heard for instance that rough wood has been given. Can you state that any other description of assistance, with reference to lime or with reference to stone, or at the erection of the buildings, was given?—Of recent years assistance has been given in the shape of timber and slate, the slate to be repaid at interest, 4 per cent. being charged for the use of it.

40588. But, practically speaking, I suppose as you say, in conformity with what was the custom very generally in the country, these waste lands were reclaimed under a nominal rental by the people themselves?—Yes.

40589. Well, at the termination of the first lease, or, where there was no lease, at the termination of a life, or of a long period, an increase of rental is imposed. How have those increases of rental on this estate been imposed? Have they been imposed by an amicable or arbitrary arrangement between the tenant and proprietor, or by valuation, or at the discretion of the proprietor alone?—I am unable to answer exactly what the arrangement was when the leases to which I refer in my statement were entered into, whether there was a regular valuation by an experienced valuator or not,—but I was not aware there was any grievance felt as to the amount charged on that occasion till I heard it here to-day.

40590. I suppose I may assume that on this property—as I daresay in some others—the increased rental has in reality been imposed at the discretion of the proprietor and his agents?—Yes, but with the concurrence of the tenants.

40591. That is to say, if the tenant did not agree, he was at liberty to go away?—Quite so; but as a matter of fact they never had occasion to leave.

40592. I would like to have your opinion upon this system. We have heard a very general expression of opinion here and elsewhere, that it seems a hard thing that people should expend the labour of a lifetime in forming a real value upon property and then at the end of a period—it may be a long period—the value of the land should be estimated, and that they should be charged a rental just as if they had had no share in the improvement of the ground. What do you think yourself would be an equitable system? Do you think the system that has hitherto obtained is equitable, or do you think that at the expiration of an improving lease there should be some kind of valuation by disinterested parties as estimating the value of the improvements by the tenants?—Most decidedly. I think that is only fair and right with respect to any improvements made by the tenant, if he can show he has not derived the full value of them; but if he has during a long period of years held the land at a low or comparatively nominal rent, I hold that during that period he has been recouped for his outlays, and really there must be a limit to the period of time when a tenant can claim meliorations for his improvements.

40593. We shall all agree that there must be a limit of time, but the question is whether there must not also be a limit of degree. Are you

aware that in any cases improving leases of that kind in this country have been granted, with the provision that if the tenant leaves at the end of the lease he shall be reimbursed for improvement in the soil by a certain amount per acre?—I am not aware of any such.

40594. I think I have seen the draft of such leases in this county, and I think also such a lease was mentioned to us at Bonar Bridge. I think it is only quite proper, if a tenant can show, on entering on a lease or when he is leaving, that he has really left any value,—anything that has enhanced the value of the subject,—and that he has not derived the full advantage of his improvements, he ought to get the benefit in some shape or form.

40595. But might it not be very difficult at the end of a long lease at a low rental, having reference to ground originally waste,—might it not be very difficult for the tenant to show in how far he has been reimbursed, and in how far he has not been reimbursed for a long series of years? I mean, might there not be a sort of friendly view of the subject?—Quite so. That is quite the best view to take of it, and we have never had any difficulty hitherto that I have heard of till to-day.

40596. Have you ever in any case assessed and paid unexhausted improvements to a small tenant?—No, we have hardly ever had a change. Reference was made to one instance in which there was a change, and that is the case of a man named Sutherland. This man, I believe I am correct in saying, was grieve on one of the best holdings in the neighbourhood. He ought to be a competent judge of the subject. He saw it. He could judge for himself. He made an offer for it, which was accepted. That offer was £3 or £4 above the rent paid by the outgoing tenant.

40597. Had you several offers for that farm?—We had only one offer. I believe it was not advertised. Indeed I don't recollect of any instance in which we advertised crofter holdings. We rarely have a change.

40598. How do you deal with buildings? Has compensation in any case been given for unexhausted improvements in buildings?—I cannot recollect any case where such a thing was called for.

40599. In fact, there have been very few changes?—Very few changes. The rent is exacted for the land, not for the buildings, but I certainly say that if any application was made by a tenant who could show that he had really of recent years improved his buildings and left anything material in their value, that would be considered.

40600. Will you tell me, if I may be allowed to ask it, what motive was there for the recent projected increase of rental intended about three years ago? Were the times particularly favourable for imposing an increase of rental on that farm?—It was simply this. As you are aware, these holdings were held under lease, and at the expiry of the lease it is usual to have a rearrangement. In this case it was one of the stipulations of their lease that the people were to give so many days' service for the repairing and improving of a road which was made for their own accommodation at the expense of the proprietor.

40601. And the projected increase of rental three years ago was entirely for the purpose of commuting services?—To a very great extent it was. But in answer to the petition which was made, and in consideration of the fact that that particular season was a very bad one, this small increase, on an average not quite 15s. on each holding, was remitted.

40602. Was the projected increase wholly in the way of commutation for services, or was there some clear increase?—The whole holdings were revised, and, as I mentioned, in some cases there was no increase whatever. In these the labour charge was remitted entirely; and in other cases there may have been a slight increase, but more to equalise rents. In some instances there was a reduction from the original rent under the lease.

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40603. So virtually, in your opinion, there was no increase?—I don't consider there was.

40604. How has it been with farms of another character?—If they had happened to be out of lease three years ago, would there have been a diminution or an increase?—In the immediate neighbourhood, separated from the holding of one of the delegates who appeared here to-day, there is the farm of Keppoch. That was let at a considerable increase of rent; —in fact, the rent is very nearly £2 per acre for land just simply separated by a hedge from land held by tenants at 23s. or 24s. or less.

40605. Are you able to state, then, with reference to arable ground considered apart, that the rent of the arable ground in the larger farms is decidedly higher?—Yes; and it is right it should be higher. It has many circumstances in its favour. It is lower, it is richer soil; and during a long series of years it has been better farmed and manured. And then there is another consideration, that on the farm there are extensive buildings, and I am quite free to admit that the crofter who pays £1 or £1, 1s. per acre really puts as much into the proprietor's pocket as the larger tenant who pays the larger rent.

40606. Is there any waste ground now in course of being taken up by the tenants?—Not at this moment, but I may mention that there are patches of waste land attached to most of those crofts on the slopes of the Strath, extending in all to about one hundred and fifty acres. There has been no let or hindrance to these people. They could have reclaimed that land, but I believe they find it very useful as pasture outrun. That goes in with the arable area.

40607. *Mr Cameron.*—With regard to the difficulty of ascertaining how far a tenant has been reimbursed for his outlay, and what period should be fixed after which he should not be credited any more for outlay, would not, in your opinion, the most satisfactory way of meeting the difficulty be a free arrangement by way of a lease contracted between the parties, which should be fixed upon at the beginning of the tenancy, and which should come to an end in the natural course of events?—Clearly; I think that is quite a feasible and good arrangement.

40608. That would meet the difficulty as to the period after which the tenant's interest in his improvements should be considered to have been exhausted?—Yes. I have an explanation to give with regard to the leases, which I omitted before. A statement was made that certain of the tenants paid 10s. for a lease which they never obtained. Now, Mr Fraser Mackintosh hit upon the explanation. Those leases had to be signed before notaries, and the charge was made by those two notaries, with whom the estate had nothing whatever to do. I believe the originals of all these leases are in the estate office. What has become of the duplicates I am unable to say. I will say, however, for Mr Andrew Smith, the Duke's agent, that I feel sure he is not the man to take any man's money without giving him value for it, and I feel surprised that the 10s. should have been paid by those people without getting their leases. Why they have not got them I am unable to say.

40609. To return to the question I have just asked; supposing the subject to be dealt with by the tenant was a peculiarly difficult one, and one the outlay on which could not be fairly reimbursed to him in an ordinary period of nineteen years, might it not be competent for the landlord and tenant, instead of nineteen years, to enter into still longer leases, such as thirty years?—Quite so.

40610. So it would remain for the tenant, when he saw the subject on which he was to work, to say, 'I cannot enter on so short a lease as nineteen years; I shall require a longer period than that.' In any case might

it not be the subject of agreement between the two?—Yes, and I may remark that I think the statement was made by the delegates that they had asked renewals of their leases and had been refused. I am here to say that that is not the case. One of these delegates, Rose, did ask for a lease. He afterwards came and said he had a difficulty with his partner, who was an old man, in coming to an arrangement, and that for the present he would like the matter deferred. I have repeatedly told those tenants who had a great deal of land to reclaim that we were willing to enter into a new lease with them and give them as long a lease as was desired, provided that this land would be reclaimed.

40611. In regard to the general condition of the tenantry on the Strathpeffer estate, what is your experience of their general condition as compared with tenants in a similar position on neighbouring estates?—I may say I am pretty well acquainted with the neighbouring estates, and I am bound to say I have heard it repeatedly said by managers who have come here that they do not know any class of tenantry anywhere who have such an appearance of comfort as they have.

40612. Have you any difficulty as to arrears of rent? Have the tenants been at all backward in paying their rent?—Upon the whole, we have very little difficulty. There is considerable arrear just now, because we have no desire to be harsh in times which have lately been not good; but as a rule these arrears are standing in the names of some of the tenants who, as I said, are not so industrious as they might be.

40613. Have they given you any reason for their being in arrears from any special misfortunes that have happened to them?—I cannot recollect any case in which any such reason has been given.

40614. With reference to the smaller class of crofters on this estate, what opportunities have they for maintaining themselves and their families otherwise than by the proceeds of their croft? How is it in regard to labour?—I am very glad you have asked that question. Ever since I have had to do with the property, a very large sum has been expended upon estate improvements, and as a rule the people living on the property always have the first chance of that labour when they are disposed to do it. So that for the last dozen years very large sums have been expended, and a great deal of that money has gone into the pockets of the residents on the property.

40615. But is there much demand for labour outside the bounds of the property, in the surrounding district? Is there any scarcity of labour?—There is great scarcity of labour; indeed the large farmers complain of the great difficulty they have in getting labour at harvest and other busy times.

40616. Is there much building going on in the neighbourhood?—Yes, a very considerable extent of building in Strathpeffer; it is a growing place.

40617. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You hear of the case of a tenant on your estate who was paying £6 of rent and was living in a state of great misery in regard to his bedding; now your attention is drawn to that case, I suppose you will look into it?—Most decidedly. I was extremely surprised to hear that statement, and I should like to know who the party is. I am pretty well acquainted with every tenant on the property. We had a meeting of the Parochial Board the other day, and it seems extraordinary that such a case could occur without my knowledge, and it seems still more strange that the man who came to make the statement should not have acquainted me with it.

40618. But this person is not on the Parochial Board?—Then it is still more surprising.

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DINGWALL.

William
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DINGWALL.

William
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40619. *The Chairman.*—If the delegate is here he is at perfect liberty, as far as I am concerned and with due respect to the feelings of the crofter, to state the name? [No response.]—Well, I can only say I am very much inclined to disbelieve the statement.

40620. I don't wish you to say anything of that kind. You would have no difficulty in finding it out in a benevolent manner privately?—Quite so. I shall make inquiries.

40621. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—I just want to ask two or three questions about game on the estate. One of the delegates stated here that the Hares and Rabbits Act is a dead letter on the estate as far as the crofting population is concerned, and stated the reason why. Was his belief well founded, that if they protected themselves they were liable to be evicted at next term?—I think, on further inquiry by the Chairman, he elicited the information that no one was harshly dealt with in connection with the game, and I am prepared to confirm the statement that in no case within my knowledge has any tenant been visited in any unkindly way in connection with game.

40622. But the point I refer to is this, that the delegate states that, in point of fact, they did not protect themselves from game as they would under the Act of Parliament, because they were afraid they would be evicted. Can you give an assurance on the part of the proprietrix that if they do exercise such power as they have under the Act of Parliament it will not be to their prejudice?—Certainly; they are quite at liberty to exercise any powers they have under the Act of Parliament, without prejudice.

40623. That being so, I will refer to one or two cases which I am told have occurred in times past. On any occasion have you taken any steps against any of the tenants for scaring away the game that were committing depredations upon their corn?—I am not aware of any.

40624. Did you not upon one occasion, or more than one occasion, fine two men two guineas, as I am informed, for scaring deer from Ben Wyvis deer forest?—I have no recollection of the circumstance.

40625. Do you recollect fining a young man £1, 1s. who was found in possession of an old pistol for the purpose of scaring away game?—I have no recollection of the circumstance. It might have been. If the man was guilty of poaching, it is very likely his case may have been taken up.

40626. I understand the cases I am referring to were acts upon your own part in your factorial capacity, and not sitting in a regular court. You can surely recollect whether it is so or not?—I have no recollection of the circumstance you have referred to. It might have been done by the lessee of the shootings, but I have no recollection of doing it by authority of the proprietrix.

40627. Did they all come from one estate, those people the Duchess kindly took on?—Yes, I believe they did.

40628. What estate was it?—I would rather not mention names. It is a matter that is well known.*

ALEXANDER FRASER, Provost of Inverness, Factor for Culloden and Ferintosh (61)—examined.

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40629. *The Chairman.*—Have you a statement to make?—I have.

40630. Will you be so good as to read it?—In making a statement as to the Barony of Ferintosh, it would be right to keep in view the circum-

* See also evidence of Mr Gunn at Edinburgh, p. 3248.

stances under which the ancestors of the present proprietor inherited these lands. The population was much increased beyond what the produce of the soil would naturally maintain, on account of the advantages connected with the privilege granted to the family by Parliament, whereby Ferintosh became celebrated for distilling whisky,—this privilege being in compensation for money paid by the Culloden family, on behalf of the Government, and for the ravages committed on their estates during the revolution of 1689–90. The privilege having ceased, by being bought up by the Government at a small sum, the large population employed in carrying on the distilling work had to be maintained and provided for, while their occupation was gone. Ferintosh had thus on it for a long series of years a people greater in number than any other property of the same extent in the north, and the burdens larger. The settlers were not, however, removed, but were allowed to remain in their possessions,—evictions never being a part of the policy of the family of Culloden, and there are at present ninety crofter families on the barony. The lands consist of 6460 acres. Of this there are in

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' Large farms,	· · · · ·	acres 2331·807
' Pasture attached to them,	· · · · ·	500·385
		—————
' Giving	· · · · ·	acres 2832·192
' And in crofts or farms under £30 rent,	· · · · ·	acres 984·885
' Pasture attached to them,	· · · · ·	718·655
		—————
		1703·540
		—————
		4535·732
' Woods, moorland, and water,	· · · · ·	1925·
		—————
' Say acres,	· · · · ·	6460·

Proportions of Rental to Acreage.—Large farms, containing say 2332 acres arable and 500 acres pasture attached to them, are rented at £3404, giving an average per acre of £14. Crofts containing 985 acres arable and 718 acres pasture attached to them, rented at £841, giving an average of £910. Total arable (large and small farms) of estate, 3317 acres rented at £4245, gives an average per acre for arable land of 157; grass extent of large farms and crofts 4435 acres, rented at £4245, gives an average per acre of 18s. 8d. *Extent, &c., of Crofts.*—(1) Average extent of arable in each of 90 crofts (exclusive of four village lots) nearly 11 acres. (2) Average of gross, arable and pasture, for 90 crofts (four village lots excluded) 19 acres. (3) Number of crofts exceeding 25 acres in extent on the estate, 17. (4) Four village, house, and garden lots, average rather more than half an acre (2 roods 18 poles) in extent, and each croft has a dwelling and office houses attached. (5) Average rent of 90 crofts, £9, 5s. 7d. (6) Average rent of four village houses and lots £1, 9s. The poor rates in the parish of Urquhart (Ross) for the year 1882–83 were on landlord 1s. 3½d. per pound, on tenant 1s. 3½d. per pound. The school rates in the parish for the same year were on landlord 6½d. per pound, on tenant 6¼d. per pound. There has been no intimation made to the proprietor or factor of any intention on the part of the tenants or crofters to complain or to make any statement to the Royal Commission as to the Ferintosh estate; but at a meeting to elect delegates, held in the neighbourhood of Ferintosh, according to the newspapers, Kenneth MacRae, lot 11, appeared. His possession contains 57 acres 1 rood 24 poles, of which 27 acres 3 roods 33 poles are arable, the rest being improvable pasture, and of these he only improved 8 acres 1 rood 30 poles between 1855 and 1874,

ROSS. ‘and none since. His rent was £16 for nineteen years up to 1874, he having undertaken to improve most of the pasture—threec acres per year—on getting the croft at this rent; and in 1874, when valued, the rent was increased to £25. Last year he was £35 in arrear, which was struck off on a promise that he would pay regularly in future, but now he is in arrear again. He has eight of a family reared on the croft, and now grown up and self-supporting. John MacDonald, lot 106, is another speaker at the said meeting. He only entered in 1876. His possession adjoins the county road and about two miles from the railway station. He has 11 acres 3 roods, of which 6 acres 2 roods 22 poles are arable, and his rent is £5, 5s. He is in arrears one year's rent. He says the land is wet. Some years ago he was offered to have the croft drained for him, whereupon he said, “Give me the money contracted for the work, and I will make the drains myself.” This was at once agreed to, but the drains are not touched yet. It is not necessary to enlarge on this subject, but it may be remarked that Ferintosh is situated on the south side of the Cromarty Firth, is remarkably well suited for growing root and other crops, and from the nature of its subsoil heavy crops of potatoes are obtained. Railway communication is convenient, and the lands are intersected with good roads. The pasture also is easily brought into cultivation, but as pasture; it is much run on for sheep wintering on account of the healthy nature of the ground, and its freedom from snow. There is not a croft on the estate that would not bring a larger rent if offered to competition, but, as stated already, it has not been the policy of the Culloden family to set their lands in this way,—their desire being to retain all old tenants, even at a sacrifice. The outlays and improvements are considerable; and since 1873 there have been laid out on roads, fencing, drainage, and building, £3728, 5s. 9d., besides ordinary repairs. In addition, wood is given from the woods on the estate, and otherwise, for assisting in building, of which no note is taken; and there is work almost always being carried on on the estate, for which full wages are paid, tenants having a preference.’

40631. Will you state to me, without reference to the details in the paper, what is the average rental per acre of arable in the hands of the larger class of farmers not crofters?—I did not put it into this statement, but it will be about 18s.

40632. What is it on the crofters' lands?—It will be about 14s. 10d., I calculated.

40633. Now the area of arable ground in the hands of small tenants is 985 acres, I think you said?—985 acres.

40634. Is that land generally at a higher elevation and in a poorer position than the arable land attached to large farms?—I think it is at a higher elevation.

40635. And in that respect poorer and of less profitable quality?—I would say it is not of the same value.

40636. Do you think that with reference to the value the two classes of tenants are equally charged?—I would say so; that is my impression.

40637. That the difference between 14s. 10d. and 18s. 8d. fairly represents the difference in the quality of the soil and the position?—I would say so.

40638. How was this area of 985 acres arable formed?—It was formed, no doubt, by the settlers on the estate.

40639. By the labour of the crofters?—By the labour of the crofters.

40640. When they set to work to form this new area of arable ground, did they do so under leases?—Yes, and under agreements.

40641. Did these leases contain any distinct provision having reference

DINGWALL.
Alexander
Fraser.

to raising the rent at the end of the lease?—They did not, as far as I know; but the leases that have come under my knowledge and my supervision bear that the bargain was that they should improve the ground at the rate of three acres a year, or one-tenth part of the whole possession, every year.

40642. For how long were those leases given?—They were nineteen years' leases.

40643. And how many terms have expired on the estate?—The first lease that I know of was granted in 1855. There may have been agreements before that, but I am not able to state as to that.

40644. In any leases which were made or any agreements drawn up was there any specific arrangement made dealing with the rental of the croft at the expiry of the first lease?—I am not aware there was any agreement as to the rental, but there was a distinct agreement as to the land being improved.

40645. What do you suppose the understanding of the landlord and the tenant to have been? When a certain amount of land was to be improved in the course of nineteen years, what did they contemplate?—I have no doubt the understanding was that they would pay for the croft as it was valued at the end of the nineteen years.

40646. You think the understanding was that it should be revalued at the end of nineteen years, and we may presume an increased rental would be put upon it?—That is my understanding.

40647. Revalued by what agency?—By a separate agency. There is no reason to suppose there was a fixed idea as to the agency; but on the Culloden management it was a separate agency—a qualified expert, and the gentleman who was employed in the valuations last was one of the best judges that could be had in the north, Mr William Paterson, whose father was a farmer, and who was accustomed all his life to understand farming and the differences connected with various soils.

40648. And has the valuation been made, as it were, upon the improved land as it stood simply, has the valuation been made without any reference to the improvement being the work of the tenant?—I could not answer that question, because Mr Paterson very likely took it as he found it. There were no instructions to him, as far as I know, in regard to that.

40649. Did you ever hear of any form of improving lease in the county which contemplated, in case of the removal of the tenant, that he should receive a certain reimbursement per acre for labour expended during the nineteen years lease?—It was not the rule on the Culloden estate.

40650. Did you ever see or hear of such a lease given on any other property?—I have heard that said, but it is not within my own personal knowledge.

40651. You have heard it said that there were such leases?—Oh, yes.

40652. Can you name any property upon which they were supposed to be given?—I cannot.

40653. Did you ever hear there were such leases given?—Yes.

40654. Was that at a very remote period?—No, recent.

40655. Can you tell me what the sort of provision is?—The provision is that on a short lease, if there would be certain improvements made, they would be allowed for.

40656. Improvements in buildings or improvements in the labour of the ground?—In the cultivation of the ground—in improving the ground

40657. And when you speak of short leases, what would have been the duration of the lease?—Something less than nineteen years. Nineteen years is the regular course of a lease here.

ROSS.

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DINGWALL.

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Alexander
Fraser.

ROSS. 40658. You don't think there have ever been any leases in Ross-shire in which there was a reimbursement contemplated per acre at the end of nineteen years?—I am not aware of any.

DINGWALL. 40659. You never heard of it?—I never heard of any, and I have had large experience myself in farming.

40660. In the most recent leases granted upon the Culloden property is there any distinct provision for dealing with the question of tenant's improvements at the end of a nineteen year's lease?—None.

40661. What do you think of that yourself as a person versed in estate management and agriculture?—I think if a tenant would improve land it is a reasonable thing, unless he got his full complement of years. Land improvements are generally made on a thirty-two years' lease, but I would say that as a general rule he ought to be allowed something for his improvements.

40662. At the end of a nineteen years' lease?—Not on a nineteen years', but on a shorter lease.

40663. But I thought you said you thought thirty-two years was the proper duration?—There is one farm on the Culloden estate in Inverness-shire where a thirty-two years' lease was given, but it was almost all moorland, and it was supposed the farmer ought to have that long period in order to be remunerated.

40664. What kind of land was it that this poor class of tenants took in and improved on Ferintosh?—It was moorland.

40665. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—I would like to ask you a question or two. Has there not been a deal of money laid out by the estate of Culloden on the reclamation of larger farms in by-gone years?—A very large sum.

40666. Both in houses and lands?—Yes, a very large sum.

40667. Now, don't you think it might have been perhaps wiser if the proprietor had saved that money, and allowed the crofters to take in those lands, because you say yourself that the rent the crofter pays and the rent the big farmer pays is much about the same?—In proportion to the value of the land.

40668. Would it not have been better to have allowed the crofters to take in the land themselves, and thereby saved the proprietor all that expense?—Well, that is just a matter of opinion very much, because the lands of course are improvable, and they were sooner taken in by that means. These outlays were very much done when the money was lent by the Government, and advantage was taken of the money that could be obtained in that way to improve the lands without any delay.

40669. Do you think now that the class of crofters, the descendants of those that took them in, and who were paying upon an average the same rent as the new men who came in and who found the land ready to their hand, and nice houses built for them—do you think these two classes now are on the same footing?—The most of these lands were improved by the sitting tenants of the big farms now.

40670. By themselves?—By themselves, and they got the money from the Government through the landlord.

40671. How many big farms are there?—I cannot exactly say; I did not take a note of that.

40672. Are there half a dozen?—There are more than that.

40673. But you don't say that those large farms have generally been reclaimed by the tenants themselves?—Almost invariably, with the assistance of money from the Government under the Loan Commissioners.

40674. Then the proprietor himself did not directly make any reclamations, and, after they were reclaimed, set them to tenants?—I don't

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

Alexander
Fraser.

think it. Under the late management of the present proprietor, when the present proprietor was managing the estate of Ferintosh, there was a very large sum laid out for improvements.

40675. What were those improvements exactly?—Draining and buildings.

40676. Planting?—Not so much planting.

40677. You seem to have a large quantity of wood; when was that wood made?—I cannot say as to that.

40678. You stated in your paper that the crofts are, you think, moderately rented, and if they were in the market for open competition larger sums would be got?—I believe so.

40679. The family of Culloden have been a very considerable time in possession of Ferintosh?—Yes, for a very long period—since 1600 odd.

40680. Are evictions of very rare occurrence upon the estate?—Very rare. There is no such thing at all, and there are none of the farms advertised.

40681. But I suppose there have been some people moved?—There was one person moved from the centre of the wood.

40682. Is that the only case you are aware of in recent years?—I don't recollect of any others.

40683. How many years have you had the charge?—About ten or twelve years.

40684. You state in your paper that no complaints reached you or the proprietor of dissatisfaction on the part of the tenants; is that so?—Of any intention of meeting the Commissioners.

40685. But have you heard any complaints about the amount of the rents?—Yes, there are some people complaining.

40686. We are all complaining, I suppose—everybody has some complaint?—Yes.

40687. Have you found it necessary to make any abatement either to the large or small tenants?—We have made no abatement to any of the large tenants, and indeed I don't think it was asked; but to some of the small tenants Culloden sometimes makes an abatement.

40688. I am referring to what occurred two or three years ago when there was a general abatement?—Oh, yes; we gave an abatement certainly—10 per cent. on the first half year, and 5 per cent. on the next half year, equal to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the whole year, and that was given over the whole estate—to crofters and every one.

40689. They were equally treated in that respect?—Equally treated.

40690. I suppose you cannot personally give any explanation of the large increase that was put upon the croft of the man Mackenzie who was here to-day?—No, I don't understand it. I don't understand the statement at all; but there is no doubt the rent is as he says. The increase, I assume, is as he says, but the land was thought by Mr Paterson to be fully worth it, and even when he persisted in saying it was not worth it, or the rent was a little over what he ought to pay, he got a reduction. We accepted his own terms virtually.

40691. I suppose when Mr Paterson was employed to make this survey as a neutral man, he got no instructions, but it was left to his own discretion?—Entirely.

40692. *Mr Cameron.*—Is there any common hill pasture attached to these crofts in Ferintosh?—Each crofter is entirely self-contained, and each croft has a considerable amount of pasture attached to it.

40693. But to each individual croft, and not in common?—Not in common.

40694. When was the last rise of rent?—In 1874.

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

Alexander
Fraser.

40695. In regard to that custom of taking sheep for wintering to which you refer, when did that privilege become a valuable one?—It must have been many years ago. I have been connected with that system for more than thirty years now, and paid large sums for wintering, and it is fully more than that since wintering became valuable, and pasture in consequence.

40696. So that this rise was not in consequence of any increased demand for wintering sheep on the crofts and pasture ground of the Culloden estates and Ferintosh?—I don't think so.

40697. Do the crofters benefit from that system of taking in sheep to winter, or does it only affect the large farmers?—It benefits the crofters.

40698. The crofters get their share of it?—No doubt of it at all, because they let their lands all over, and there are certain sums given to each of them by the sheep farmer who takes the wintering.

40699. Do they let turnips too?—If they have them.

40700. Some of them have turnips?—Yes, and my experience of crofts of that kind is this—I have done it largely, though not so much in the Black Isle as elsewhere—I take their turnips, and come to a bargain with them; but when the sheep come, they must remove the turnips, because it would affect the sheep wintering very much if the sheep were to be hampered by having to be turned off those turnips constantly.

40701. Has the value of that sheep wintering been on the increase of late years, or has it remained much the same?—It is much the same.

40702. Is it the same as it was ten or fifteen years ago?—I should say so.

40703. They don't get more than they used to get?—I don't think it.

40704. About how much does an ordinary crofter—say a man who pays £10 a year of rent—expect to get for sheep wintering, leaving out turnips altogether, merely for the outrun of his hill pasture?—It will depend on the nature of his pasture. On a good pasture he will be entitled to more money.

40705. Can you tell me what value?—Well, in valuing pasture it runs from 2s. to 3s. 6d. an acre, and where there is a large outrun there is no doubt the tenant should make a considerable profit upon that.

40706. Do you mean 2s. to 3s. 6d. an acre on the permanent hill pasture, or do you include the young grass?—I include the run of the farm.

40707. Including young sown grass?—Yes.

ANGUS FORBES, Crofter, Highfield Park (49)—examined.

Angus Forbes. 40708. *The Chairman.*—Have you got a statement to make?—Yes.—
 ‘As one of the delegates appointed to appear before the Royal Commission at Dingwall, on the 10th October 1883, I desire to put in this statement of how my father and myself were used. Since entering the croft in the year 1834, when my father settled on the place, it consisted of nothing but heather and stones. He had to build a house, and all the help he got from the proprietor was some old wood that was used before. This showing an example how the system of crofting is carried out on Highfield estate, and in the hope of obtaining some or any relief as it may appear just. In the first place I would desire your attention to the following facts:—We had a lease for the first twenty-two years at 15s. a year, with two hens as custom stent. In 1857 the rent was raised to £4 a year, with three hens; in 1861, to £4, 10s. In 1872 I rebuilt the

' house, and no sooner was that done than the rent was raised in 1873 to £6, 10s. with no assistance with the new house excepting the couples, and no reduction to the present day. But since the present proprietor came into possession the three hens have not been collected. The croft contains five acres arable land and one pasture, for which I pay £6, 10s. of rent and 12s. 2d. of rates, and which amount rises to £7, 2s. 2d., which will not keep food to a family. I have to buy meal at the rate of £2 a year, and straw or hay for the cow in the spring of the year, at the amount of £3 a year. Now, do you wonder how could I pay all these amounts? Now my humble answer is this, that I work north and south at stone-breaking, and when the season's work is over, I come home with my hard earning, and work on the croft as long as it lasted, taking in pieces, but always found when I was one step on, I was as far back as ever, for the landlord raised the rent as already mentioned. So there was no remedy for me, for when I complained to the proprietor he would say he could get another tenant any time by taking the advantage of course of my improvements, and by my very improvements grinding me down, for the want of a lease, since the last twenty-six years. I usually sow eight bushels of oats to the acre, and very seldom reap double that quantity. I sell very few potatoes, as we use them ourselves. Another complaint I have to express is that during a dry summer, the water has to be all brought from Sir Kenneth's estate, about one mile away, which he kindly granted one place for cattle, another for the people, for which I would express my thanks. Now, what we want to remedy our circumstances, that is a lease at a fair rent, with compensation for all improvements effected by the tenant. With less we will not be satisfied. The cost of our improvements, as I estimate, is as follows:—We built a new dwelling house in 1834, £20; barn and byre, £14; I rebuilt a new house in 1872, £35; we improved five acres of land at £20 an acre, £100; with drainage £2 per acre, £10; lime, seven bolls per acre, at 3s. 6d., per boll, £6, 2s. 6d.; we payed for rent alone in twenty-two years, £16; in twenty-six years, £135; total £336, 2s. 6d. In addition, I also paid 116 fat hens.'

40709. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—Did you ever get a lease?—No, except a lease for the first twenty-two years.

40710. And at the end of that time did your father ask for a lease?—Yes, and I asked for it myself.

40711. Did you not get it?—No; he had one of us, but we had not one of him. He wrote it on stamped paper.

40712. Who did?—Highfield.

40713. What is the name of your laird?—Mr Gillanders.

40714. He wrote out a lease?—Yes, so that I would have the house and everything in proper repair and the land in good order, and to go out at any time without a summons. I had to leave it with him; so he had a hold on me, but I had not a hold on him.

40715. That is the only lease you got. Why did you not ask for a proper lease?—I would not get it.

40716. Have you asked for it since then?—Not under the present laird.

40717. It is a different laird now?—Yes.

40718. Why didn't you ask him?—It would be of no use. It was too high, and I would be quite careless whether I would get it at the rent whatever.

40719. You don't think it would be an advantage to you to get a lease with the rent at the present rate?—No.

40720. You have five acres of arable and one acre of pasture, and you

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

ROSS. pay £7, 2s. 2d. What do you think yourself the rent ought to be?—Just about the half.

DINGWALL. 40721. Do your neighbours pay less in proportion to their land?—
Angus Forbes. Just about half.

40722. What is the reason of that? Are they greater favourites with the laird?—Not my neighbours on the same estate, but Sir Kenneth's and Allangrange's.

40723. And so far as you know, what rent would you be paying on these estates for the same amount of land?—Just about 8s. or 9s. an acre. Some of them have eighteen acres upon Sir Kenneth's estate for £6. Upon Allangrange they have thirty-six acres for £12, and there is nothing but the road between them and me.

40724. What cattle are you able to keep?—One cow.

40725. No sheep?—No.

40726. No horses?—No.

40727. Do you raise potatoes enough to feed you?—Well, sometimes. Sometimes I have to buy them.

40728. Are you a married man with a family?—Yes.

40729. How long does your meal last that you raise on your own ground?—It will not last me long, because I had a very poor crop this year—about four months or five.

40730. Your ordinary occupation is breaking stones?—Yes.

40731. You have to go away from home to do that, have you?—Yes.

40732. Then what you want is not a lease but a reduction of your rent?—Yes.

40733. You don't want compensation for your improvements in any other shape?—Certainly, if I would get a short lease.

40734. You would like to have that?—Yes.

40735. In what shape? Would it be sufficient compensation to have the rent reduced, or would you like compensation in money for this £336 you have expended on the croft?—I was always paying it, and had to put it out.

40736. But you expect at any rate that you will never be put out of the place on which you have spent so much?—I don't know.

40737. You have ceased to pay the hens?—Yes.

40738. They have been compounded for in the shape of money?—Yes, I have to pay 2s. for each.

40739. I suppose that custom of paying hens has ceased all round?—Yes.

40740. *The Chairman.*—Is your case the same as the cases of other small tenants upon the same estate?—Yes.

40741. Are the small tenants on the same estate rented at about the same amount?—Yes, the same amount.

40742. And treated in the same manner?—Yes.

40743. Is there generally a refusal to grant leases on the property?—Yes.

40744. None of the small tenants get leases?—No.

40745. Do the larger tenants get leases?—There is no large tenant at all on that part of the property.

40746. Is it the custom to give leases to the small tenants on all the others properties around?—Yes.

40747. When your father took the place and got the first lease, was there any provision in the lease for compensation for improvements?—No.

40748. No provision at all?—No.

40749. Had it been the custom anywhere on any property, to your

knowledge, to make a provision for compensation to the tenants at the end of the first lease?—Yes; I am told Sir Kenneth was giving them £5 per acre.

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

40750. You have been told that upon the Conon estate there was in the original leases a provision for the repayment of £5 per acre for improvements?—Yes.

40751. Was that generally known in the country?—I don't know.

40752. Would that be considered a fair amount, taking the case of a nineteen years' lease, and the land improved by the tenant and his going away at the end of the nineteen years' lease? Would it be considered in the country generally a fair amount of compensation to pay him £5 for each acre improved?—No, because we have more work to do in some places than in others.

40753. In some places the £5 would be considered enough, and in some it would not?—Yes.

40754. But it would be better than nothing in all cases?—It would be better than paying for it instead of getting it.

40755. Why do you think the landlord granted the first lease and then would not grant the second? It was not the same proprietor?—It would not tempt any other to go into heather and stone; but now since we have improved it, it would be different for another tenant to come in, because there was a house built on the land, and he had nothing to do but come into the house and sit in it.

40756. In fact, the proprietor at first wanted to get the place made; is that what you mean?—Yes.

40757. And after it was made he could turn it to the best advantage?—Yes.

40758. Supposing they gave you a lease at a reasonable rent, what improvements would you make?—I would have encouragement to make improvements.

40759. What sort of improvement can you still make?—I have an acre of pasture out yet, and I would do my best to take it in, but now I am quite careless whether I get it at any rent. Perhaps if I got it in he would put another £1 or £2 upon it.

40760. Did you say your family had built two houses?—Yes, I built the second.

40761. Was the second an improvement on the first, or was it a new house?—On the same place.

40762. With the same stones?—Yes.

40763. Is it built with stone and lime?—I harled it on the outside with lime.

40764. Does the proprietor help you with wood?—No, except the couples; I had to get the rest of the wood.

40765. But you got the couples?—Yes.

40766. Does he charge you any price for them?—No.

40767. Is it sawn timber, or a tree out of the wood?—I had to pay for the sawing and carting them out of the wood to the saw-mill.

DONALD BAIN, Crofter, Newton of Kinkell (57)—examined.

40768. *The Chairman.*—Are you a delegate?—Yes.

Donald Bain.

40769. How were you elected?—By a meeting of the crofters.

40770. Was it a large meeting?—Yes, it was about one hundred crofters.

ROSS. 40771. All from the same estate?—No, but from the surrounding district.

DINGWALL. 40772. From different estates all round?—Yes—Culloden, Allan-Donald Bain, grange, and Highfield.

40773. Then read you statement?—‘I, Donald Bain, fifty-seven, crofter on the estate of Conon, paying £7 of rent, besides poor rates and other taxes, along with six days’ free labour as estate work. My croft consists of about fifteen acres according to survey, one-third of which is unfit for improving; it is more suitable for a game preserve for wild fowl, being in winter covered with one sheet of water. The other third part could be improved with great expense and labour, the which I am not able to manage. However, I tried and improved it, but it turned to no benefit but loss, owing to the situation of the place being so boggy and wet. The other third part is the only part that I can depend on for crop, a place thus situated on the outskirts of the property, on the heights of the Mulbuie, exposed to the elements. I think it unfair that the acreage of it should be compared in value to the acres of that of the low-lying districts; but such is the case, and not only but more so, for I am paying at the rate of 28s. the acre, with the exception of the pasture. I do not impute this grievance to my present proprietor, for it is a long-established grievance, I may say hereditary. My father and grandfather had to contend with it; I had it down from them. I am ready to give credit to my proprietor, the credit of being under the impression that we are not thus oppressed, as it is not his doings, but that of employés—factors and valuators. I have now the experience of upwards of forty years of being a rack-rented crofter, and I assure you, gentlemen, it is a mode of life not to be coveted. The first nineteen years of that period I was tenant at will, threatened to be removed every year. That was during the present proprietor’s minority; when he entered his majority, he granted leases, and appointed a factor, who acted as valuator. When he came round to value my lot, he told me that I was paying such and such of rent—I admit too much. I thought I should get it reduced, but instead he made an advance of 20 per cent. on the former rent, to force me to make improvement. Had that the desired effect on me? As I had to work before at day’s wages to make up the old rent, I had now to work more to make up this addition of rent. However, during the lease I improved between four or five acres; but instead of being to me a benefit, it turned out to be my loss, owing to the water destroying all the produce of it; I had to allow to lie waste under pasture. The landlord had of his goodness granted a new lease, and appointed valuators—neighbouring farmers themselves. When they came to value my lot, they found that I was paying enough already. They said they could not reduce it on any account, but made no advance, so they thought that I may rest satisfied under this grievance, so that my prospect for the future is not one of the brightest,—from my age and infirmity, ready to be cast as a burden on my fellow-sufferers, for that is the fate of us crofters under the present land system. Although thus burdened, I have yet one consolation left me, to be under the proprietorship of one of a race who proved themselves worthy of being remembered for good; for their names were never connected with anything despicable or mean, such as wholesale evictions on the lots—and I am proud to acknowledge that our present proprietor and his excellent partner in life are both noble examples in the north for whatever is good, ready to relieve the sick and the dying, so that Conon House is always open for relief to the poor and the needy, so that the reputation of the worthy baronet did not yet fall to the ground, but is kept up more than ever.’ I have also a paper here from another of the tenants.

40774. On whose property is this?—On the same property. One tenant (W. Forbes) says—‘My father before me had my croft, and paid a rent of £2 till the time of his death. I then got a nineteen years’ lease of the croft, about ten acres nominally arable, and about twenty-one very rough pasture, at a rent of £7 and six days’ free labour. During the currency of the lease I spent over £300 in improvements to houses and land, the proprietor giving me sawn home-grown timber for the houses. I then got a new lease, when my rent was raised to £12 and the usual free labour, though it is fair to add that the proprietor restricts it to £8 during my lifetime. I was then seventy-four years of age. My land is much spoiled with water, and I have not got over two returns of corn on the average out of the land that I improved, although I did it all manner of justice in draining and manuring. Taking the rest of the land at the old rent, the part improved was valued at 10s. per acre. Of course, incompetent valuers were to blame for this, and no complaint was lodged, because it was currently reported at the time that Sir Kenneth gave the land cheaper than the valuation.’ Another (Donald Stewart) says—‘My father was removed from the holding of the three generations in 1854. There was no claim against him. He improved it to a great extent, and the last improvement done there it was only one green crop he got out of it when he was turned out, and two years to run of his lease. He consulted with a man of business, but when the factor came to hear of it, he wrote him a thundering letter that he would not get another place on the Conon estate, and if crofters were to go to law with proprietors it was no wonder should they curse the whole race of crofters. He then gave up his holding, and was promised as good a place as could be got on the Conon estate, but a few days before the term he was shown to a miserable croft, with no houses fit for man or beast. He then lost the most of his means, and had to build house, barn, byre, &c., and made a lot of improvements in reclaiming black heather and bogs, with 1500 yards of drains, at great cost. He was also compelled to give six days’ free labour every year for roads and ditches, which caused his deafness and his death trouble.’

40775. You are representing crofters upon what estates?—Conon estate.

40776. But the meeting that elected you—what estates were they from?—The estates all round.

40777. Do you represent them as well?—No, there were delegates appointed from them too.

40778. But the statements you have read are the statements of your own case, and that of another man; what are the general complaints on the property?—Just rack-rented.

40779. Too much rent?—Too much rent.

40780. How many acres have you got?—About fifteen.

40781. How many are under cultivation?—Six.

40782. And what are the other nine?—Just pasture, and four or five of them quite useless for pasture.

40783. Have these nine acres of pasture ever been cultivated?—Never.

40784. Has none of the nine acres ever been cultivated?—Yes, I ploughed four or five acres of that.

40785. Have you let it go back?—I had to give it up.

40786. What is your rent?—£7, without taxes.

40787. What stock do you keep?—A cow and a horse. I can hardly keep that same. If I keep an extra beast, it must be at an extra expense.

40788. How do you earn your living?—Just by labouring wherever I can get labour at day’s wages.

ROSS.

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DINGWALL.

Donald Bain.

ROSS. 40789. What do you think is the general average rent per acre for arable about the property?—I am not sure: it is about the half of that. We are DINGWALL. the old established tenants on old land. The newly incoming tenants have Donald Bain. a better chance than we have, and we are left under the old footing.

40790. What is the average rental of the arable ground in the hands of the crofters?—About 10s. or 12s., I think; I am sure it is not much more.

40791. Is there any provision for compensation for improvements?—Nothing of the kind.

40792. But in the original leases which the tenants had at first when they took in the ground, was there any provision for compensation for improvements?—I believe there was.

40793. What was the nature of the provision? If the tenants went away, what were they to get?—They were granted £5 an acre.

40794. Did any of those original tenants go away, and did any of them get the compensation?—They all got the compensation.

40795. Was that compensation for the improvement of the ground, or was it for the buildings too?—Just for the improvement of the ground.

40796. Do you think that was a proper amount for the improvement of the ground?—It was considered a proper amount at the time.

40797. Do you know whether there is any similar provision to that in any other leases on any other property?—I don't know of any, as far as I know at present.

40798. Who was it that invented that provision?—Sir Francis, the present proprietor's father, because he had a large lot of the ground under plantation, and it was cut down, and he had to get a lot of new tenants to reclaim the ground, and that was granted as a remuneration for reclaiming it.

40799. *Mr Cameron.*—I don't quite understand whom you represent. At this meeting were there tenants from all the townships on the Conon estate? How many townships are there on the Conon estate?—Just one township.

40800. Just one township on the Conon estate?—No; the rest are well-to-do and well off, but this is separate from them.

40801. Then at this meeting there were only tenants from one township on the Conon estate?—Yes.

40802. What proportion do the tenants on that one township bear to the tenants on the rest of the Conon estate?—Well, there are not many—six or seven, I think, in the township I represent.

40803. How many tenants are on the whole of the Conon estate?—There are forty whatever.

40804. And only six or seven were at this meeting?—Yes.

40805. Were you here in the room when the last witness gave his evidence?—No.

40806. Because he was asked about the rents on the estate where he is a tenant—the estate of Highfield, and he represented the tenants on the Conon estate to be objects of considerable envy, and wished to be rented as they were?—That is just what we want—to be on the same footing with them.

40807. Are you not on the Conon estate?—Yes.

40808. You mean you are on a part of the Conon estate which is not rented in the same way?—Yes, and we want to be compared with the rest of it.

40809. Can you give any comparison of the relative rents of the part of the estate on which you are, and of the rest?—Well, I am paying 25s. an acre for the arable, and I think the rest of the estate is not paying above 12s. whatever, as far as I know.

40810. So you are paying double?—Just about double what the rest are paying. ROSS.

40811. And this other tenant to whom you refer is in the same position as yourself?—In the same position. DINGWALL.

40812. And the other six or seven who belong to the same portion of the estate, are they in the same position?—In the same position, most of them, but I daresay they are not altogether so badly off.

40813. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Did you represent your case to Sir Kenneth?—No.

40814. Why?—It was of very long standing, and it could not be so easily got altered. Some other parties did it, but got no encouragement. I did not do it personally myself.

40815. Are you very high up?—At the very top, on the heights of the Mulbuie.

40816. And you are paying the highest per acre?—Yes.

40817. Don't you think it would be wise to go to Sir Kenneth now?—Well, I don't know that. I know he is a lenient landlord, but in the case of reducing rents I cannot say much. He grants us every allowance for building houses, and gives us encouragement in every other respect.

40818. Supposing you were a landlord yourself, you would not like to reduce your rents?—Well, I don't know. I would like to have them reasonable. I would like fair play.

40819. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—Sir Kenneth does not employ a factor?—No. There was a factor during his minority. It is all the doing of his factor that we are here now.

40820. Then I think you should go to him now?—We should go to him as a body, but not individually.

KENNETH DAVIDSON, Crofter, Upper Knockbain, Kilcoy Estate
(42)—examined.

40821. *The Chairman.*—Read your statement?—*Statement by the Knockbain Crofters to Her Majesty's Royal Commission.*—About two hundred years ago our forefathers settled on the barren, heathery moor of Knockbain. The whole arable land in Knockbain, at that time, consisted of less than a dozen acres. The rental then was 7s. There are in Knockbain, now, over two hundred and fifty acres of arable land, and the rental is above £280. Although all this land has been reclaimed by us and our forefathers, we, nor they, have never received any compensation. The land which we presently occupy is so unfruitful, and is in such a wet condition through want of drains, that it does not produce half a crop. We were bound by the proprietor to drain the land, but this we are unable to do on account of the high rents which we pay. Some of us, in fact, would not be able to pay the rent, but for assistance received from our friends and relations. We are obliged to leave our crofts at certain seasons of the year, to work on the large farms, for the purpose of enabling us to pay the rent, and thus satisfy the rent-demanding propensities of the landlord. In one case the land is so poor that the crofter sows five bushels of corn per acre, while the return seldom exceeds four bushels. Another crofter, who pays £34 of rent, is compelled to purchase meal for himself and family. Most of us are compelled to purchase seed-corn annually. The ground, in fact, is so poor and wet that it will not repay the labour. Land, arable and pasture, has been taken from us and despoiled by the proprietor, for the loss of which we have neither Kenneth
Davidson.

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

Kenneth
Davidson.

' received any reduction of rent nor compensation. Three acres of arable land were taken from one widow, and only £1 of the rent reduced, while she is paying about £1 per acre. As many as fifteen acres of pasture were taken from one crofter, but the rent was not reduced. Some of the land which has been taken from us was reclaimed at considerable expense. We were compelled to reclaim half of an acre of land annually, without any compensation. About one hundred acres of arable land on the estate were planted. Houses and steadings have been erected by most of us at our own expense, with the exception of timber. In one case, even the timber was refused until the crofter had reclaimed an acre of land. The steadings on one croft are in such a dilapidated condition that the tenant is compelled to turn out his cattle when there is a storm. We receive no compensation for the expenditure of our labour and capital in the erection of said buildings. We have no fixity of tenure, and are liable to be turned out whenever the landlord feels disposed to do so. Whenever we improve the land the rent is raised. On one croft the original rent was 7s.; the present tenant is paying £8. Another crofter, who reclaimed seventeen acres of land, had the rent raised proportionately. The former tenant in one case paid £3, and had besides his croft a spirit license. The present tenant, a widow, pays for croft alone £6, or £2 per acre. Our crops are considerably damaged by game, but we are never paid for the loss we thereby sustain. The benefits of the Game Act have not been conferred upon us. We are bound to give six days' free labour of a man and horse to the proprietor. All the large farmers are, however, exempted from such an unjust imposition. The proprietor promised to repair roads, but this has never been performed. We were also promised to get tiles, but this was only partially fulfilled. About thirty-five years ago there were 44 crofters in Knockbain; the number now is 19. The population of the parish in 1851 was 3005; the population last census was only 1863. This reduction in the number has been caused by eviction. The farm which is now tenanted by the factor of the estate was at one time occupied by 21 crofters. They were, all of course, turned out to make room for a big farmer. This has been the principal cause of evictions throughout the country. Shameful and numerous cases of eviction occurred on different parts of the estate. Whenever the crofters have succeeded in reclaiming the land, they are evicted to make room for big farmers. We are, in short, made to reclaim the land for the proprietor free of charge. At one time our forefathers possessed the undisputed right to graze cattle on the Mulbuie common, which the landlords and clergymen have recently arrogated and divided among themselves. They have thus become the unjust owners of land which was once a common for the benefit of the crofters and other poor people in the Black Isle. We demand an equivalent to what has thus been stolen from us.' There is another statement here by another delegate.

40822. Is the other statement much to the same effect—the same kind of complaints?—Not altogether.

40823. Can you tell us verbally, without reading it through, what else there is?—There is the case of a crofter on the Rosehaugh estate, who has improved a great deal of land in his day, and has been turned out to make room for a large farmer, without any compensation for the improvements which he made.

40824. What was the name of the crofter?—Donald Jack, Afterflow. *Statement by Angus Jack, Folds of Afterflow.*—My great-grandfather became tenant of Wester Afterflow when it consisted of a few acres of arable land. Bit by bit he "took in" and improved some of the waste land, until the size of his holding was considerably increased. On his

ROSS.
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—Kenneth
Davidson.

' death my grandfather and father continued the work of reclamation, for which they never received any compensation. When my grandfather died my father became tenant of the place, when it consisted of about thirty acres. In the expectation that he would never be removed out of the place, he commenced the laborious undertaking of reclaiming all the waste land, which was covered with whins, broom, and stones. After a number of years he had the satisfaction of seeing the work completed. Altogether he reclaimed about forty acres, for which he never received any compensation. The rent was raised, however, proportionate to the increased value of the land. He, my father, was paying £72 of rent, when he along with his three neighbours were evicted at the expiry of the lease to make room for a big farmer. To narrate all the evictions which occurred on the Rosehaugh estate would fill a volume. So far as I can ascertain, my father is the only crofter on the estate just now. In his young days nine small farmers and three crofters lived, happy and contented, on Wester and Easter Afterflow, which are now tenanted by two individuals. All the crofters on the estate were evicted and large farms made of their holdings. The croft which my father occupies at the present time was rented to a former tenant at £4, 10s. My father is paying £20. The place is not worth more than one-third of this sum. The houses are in a very dilapidated condition. All the farmers on the estate received new houses and steadings. Our holding is not seen from any of the public roads. This is probably the reason why new houses have not been erected.'

40825. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—What estate have you been speaking about?—The estate I live upon is the estate of Kilcoy.

40826. What is the name of the proprietor?—Charles Mackenzie of Kilcoy.

40827. He is under judicial charge?—Yes.

40828. Who has charge of the estate?—Mr Auldjo Jamieson, Edinburgh.

40829. How long has he had charge of the estate?—I would say about twenty years or so, but I am not exactly sure of the date.

40830. Have a good number of the evictions you speak of and the adding to large farms taken place within twenty years?—Most of them, I believe.

40831. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—Do you remember these evictions yourself?—Yes, a great number.

40832. Were they in your neighbourhood?—Yes, a great many of them.

40833. What was the reason given for turning the people away?—To make room for the large farmer, I believe, was the principal reason.

40834. Was it not said they were not paying their rents?—No, I never heard that complaint made.

40835. Or that they were not cultivating the ground properly?—I never heard any complaint as to that.

40836. They were removed to make room for a large farm?—Yes, and add croft to croft.

40837. Was there more than one large farm to which these crofts were added?—Yes.

40838. And the addition was made to increase the crofts of people who had crofts before?—Yes, in a good many cases they were enlarged.

40839. But I suppose a good many crofters would be glad to have their crofts enlarged, if it were not done at the expense of their neighbours?—Well, no doubt they would like to have larger holdings.

40840. *The Chairman.*—Had these people leases, and were they turned

ROSS.

DINGWALL.

Kenneth
Davidson.

out at the expiry of the lease, or were they tenants at will?—Most of them had leases, but I understand that at the expiry of the lease the greatest number of evictions took place.

40841. What became of the people?—There were a good number of them who had to go on the Parochial Board, and the young people of the families had to emigrate, and to go out through the country wherever they could find employment, and now there is hardly a person to be found in the district who will do a day's labour, for the scarcity of the people. The large farmers complain they cannot get people to do the work of their farms.

JOHN M'GREGOR, Crofter, Loch Ussie, Brahan (60)—examined.

John
M'Gregor.

40842. *The Chairman.*—Will you read your statement?—‘We got our various bits of moorland at Loch Ussie on a lease of thirty-one years. We are to pay 2s. 6d. per acre for the first five years; the next five years 7s. 6d. per acre; for the next eleven years 10s. per acre; and for the remaining ten years 20s. per acre. We had also to build our dwelling houses and offices, getting from the landlord the wood for roofing and half slating. The landlord was also to make large ditches to carry away the water of our field drains, which were to be of a depth of three feet to three feet six. These ditches have been made, but their depth is such that they are useless. In some places they do not even carry away the surface water. We are now in possession for six years, and on an average we have taken in about one-third of our lots, and we find that the cost of taking in the land per acre is from £18 to £24, which would amount to £1 per acre for about twenty-two years, leaving out the expenses we were out in building. Part of the ground of our lots is under water, owing to the defects of the ditches made by the landlord. The landlord was also to erect fences sufficient to keep away the deer, which are very destructive to our crops; this has not been done. One of our number had last year about three-fourths of an acre of potatoes completely destroyed by deer. He never lifted a potato out of the plot so destroyed, and our crops are also much damaged by other game, and we are not allowed to protect ourselves from their ravages. We were also deprived of a considerable portion of hill pasture which we had the use of. It is now given to another farmer. We consider that we should have our lots at the amount we are now paying for the whole lease, and even then it would be hard on us to make a bare living out of them. We believe at the end of the lease, even on these terms, we would leave at the end of the lease poorer men than when we entered. To show that we are not making mis-statements, we are quite willing to give up our places to-day or to-morrow if we get compensation for the improvements we have already done.’

40843. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—How long is it since you entered upon this lot?—Six years.

40844. In what sort of employment were you before you entered upon it?—I was a mason.

40845. You were living in a village?—Yes, in Dingwall.

40846. And you took this lot thinking it would be a good bargain?—Yes.

40847. You took it voluntarily?—Yes.

40848. You gave up mason work?—Yes, because I was getting rather old.

40849. And you thought you could improve this land at a profit to yourself?—Yes, by the help of my family.

ROSS.

40850. How many acres have you improved in those six years?—I daresay there are about twenty-five turned over.

DINGWALL.

40851. You will have twenty-five in crop next year?—Hardly twenty-five; it takes three years before we can crop it.

John

40852. How many acres have you now of unimproved land?—Other thirty-five.

M'Gregor.

40853. You took sixty acres at 2s. 6d. for the first five years?—Yes.

40854. Will you have means to reclaim the other thirty-five acres?—I think we could improve it by our own work in time.

40855. And if you are able to carry on till the whole is cropped, do you think it will pay you?—Well, I don't believe it will. It cannot pay. It is very wet and boggy.

40856. Were these ditches made by the landlord of sufficient depth at the beginning?—No.

40857. Have they filled up since they were made?—Yes.

40858. Who is bound to keep them clean?—The tenant, when they will be at a certain depth.

40859. But they never were at that depth, in your opinion?—No.

40860. You mentioned you had some pasture along with the place at the beginning?—Yes.

40861. Was that included in your lease?—No, it was given to us after the lease was granted.

40862. To help you at the beginning?—Yes.

40863. And now it has been taken from you?—Yes.

40864. Has it been planted?—No, it is into another farm.

40865. And you only had it till it could be let, in fact till such time as a tenant could come to take it?—No, we got the promise of it for the lease time, till such time as Brahan would require to plant it; but it is now let to another farm instead of being planted, and then the place had to be feued round to keep out deer.

40866. Then if it had been planted, you could have had no complaint?—No, we had no complaint if it was planted; but we had a complaint when it was set to another farmer.

40867. What kind of deer are those that do you harm?—Fallow deer, most of them.

40868. What sort of fence is between you and the deer?—Very small fences, and the deer will come through in all cases.

40869. Does your lease specify that the land was to be fenced so as to keep deer out?—Yes.

40870. And why don't you claim that clause to be fulfilled?—The factor is far away from us, and we cannot be always at him, and they have no time to listen to such poor men as we are.

40871. And now you are willing to give up the place if you got paid for it?—Yes, if they are thinking they will make a better of it we don't want to keep it from them, for it is not going to benefit us very much.

40872. But if you got full payment for your labour it would benefit you?—Yes, it would if we could get compensation for our labour.

40873. But perhaps it would not benefit the proprietor if he was to pay you for what you spent on the place?—Well, it would pay the proprietor by time.

40874. Would it not have paid him better if he had planted the land at first? Would not the wood have been of more value to him than to improve that land, paying day's wages for the cost of improvement?—Well, I daresay it would be far better to have the wood in time.

ROSS.

40875. And if the landlord had not made the bargain he made with you, he probably would not have let it to a tenant at all?—He could not have got it let.

DINGWALL.
John
M'Gregor.

40876. He would not have been likely to improve it himself?—No.

40877. *Mr Cameron.*—Is there a local factor on the estate?—Yes.

40878. Have you ever had recourse to him about such matters?—Yes, once or twice.

40879. Have you ever asked him about the deer fence?—Yes, only he commenced to mock us instead of helping us.

40880. Was the deer fence damaged?—Yes.

40881. Was it broken?—Yes, it is broken in different places, and they jump over it.

40882. And I suppose that is where they come through?—Yes.

40883. And they jump over it also?—Yes.

40884. How high is it?—There is a dyke three feet six, and then wires three feet in height.

40885. Do they jump over it?—Yes, from the inside, but they cannot jump back, and that leaves it worse on us.

40886. What becomes of them if they don't jump back?—They get away by the holes that are broken in the fences.

40887. If the holes were mended, do you think the deer would have sufficient intelligence to know that if they got in they could not get out?—Oh! deed, they would try it again.

40888. Then they would be caught in a trap?—Oh, we cannot catch them, and we are not allowed to catch them.

40889. But if you could persuade the local factor that he ought to repair these holes in the fence, then the deer if they got in could not get out?—They could get away to another estate, and then back again at night.

40890. So, in point of fact, it would not do you much good if the holes were repaired unless the fence was made higher? To repair the fence would be of no use?—It is of no use unless the fence is made higher.

FINLAY MACKAY, Crofter, Drynie Park, Mulbuie (30)—examined.

Finlay
Mackay.

40891. *The Chairman.*—Read your statement?—‘I, Finlay Mackay, Drynie Park, Mulbuie, am appointed delegate for this district. The place was first colonised about the year 1834, when a general clearance in Strathconon under gross circumstances sent the people adrift, and a number of them, my late father among the rest, settled here. The people got the land in lots of from six to eighteen acres. The land was under wood previously, so that the roots along with an enormous quantity of stones made the land very difficult to reclaim. For the first seven years they had the land at 1s. 3d. per acre, for the next seven years at 2s. 6d., and for the next seven years at 5s. A nineteen years' lease was then given at 10s. an acre, and it expired in 1876. The rent was then raised to 15s., which was about the time our present proprietor came into possession. No lease was given, and the rise of rent was laid upon our own improvements. Most of the houses built at first have been rebuilt, and no help whatever was given by the proprietor till the present year, when some of the tenants got a few trees. The ground is very light and of the poorest kind, the return of oats not being over 2*½*. There is only one well on this part of the estate that will last the whole year, and it will do for only one croft when the season is dry. I have to cart water about a mile for cattle, as well as for household use, during six months

' of the year. Those having no horse have to carry it in pails a great distance. Our chief complaint is that our rents have been raised too much on our own improvements, and what we want is a fair rent, fixity of tenure, and compensation for our improvements.'

40892. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—You had this place for forty years under the first two leases?—Yes.

40893. And then you got a new lease?—No, we have not got a lease.

40894. But you are paying now 15s. an acre for the land at Drynie Park?—Yes.

40895. Is that the case with all the tenants at Drynie Park?—Yes, except a few.

40896. Is it all improved now?—All except three or four acres.

40897. Are you paying 15s. an acre for the arable only, or for the whole area?—Yes; those that had two acres improved got a reduction.

40898. Do you consider that 15s. an acre is too high a rent after fifty years' possession?—Yes, by one-third.

40899. What would the land be worth to any one going into it?—I cannot say for that; to cultivate the land as we do, it would be hardly worth cultivating.

40900. How many acres have you got?—Eighteen acres.

40901. What stock do you keep?—Three cows and a horse and two calves, but still on the average I spend on corn and straw £10 to £20.

40902. Are you able to make any wages?—Yes, I get work, but not regularly.

40903. Would it suit you to have a smaller croft?—Well, in one way I would be better off. I require the horse for the sake of the water; I may say that is all the use of it in summer.

40904. Have there been any new tenants coming into Drynie Park in your time?—No.

40905. No one has given up his lot?—There are a few gave that up.

40906. Do you know what rents the remaining tenants gave for these lots?—They were paying the same rate as the rest.

40907. They were willing to take it at the old rate. They did not need to take the extra land unless they chose to take it?—I cannot say. Some say they were compelled to take it.

40908. Have you asked the proprietor for a lease?—Yes, I asked for a lease. We spoke to Mr Cameron the factor.

40909. And he declined to give you a lease?—Yes, he said there was no occasion.

40910. You have no fear of being turned out?—Oh, well we may be careless of that, perhaps the sooner the better.

40911. But if you went to-morrow would not somebody be ready to take the place?—Yes.

40912. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—What estate were your father and the others turned out of?—Strathconon.

40913. Whose time was that in?—I cannot say. It was before the Balfours got into possession of it.

40914. How many were turned out of it?—There were twenty-one turned out of one township.

40915. Was that the township your father belonged to?—Yes, Glencanvie.

40916. *Mr Cameron.*—How many crofters are on this estate besides yourself?—Sixteen.

40917. Do you represent them here to day?—Yes.

40918. Are they all in the same condition as yourself?—Yes.

ROSS

DINGWALL

Finlay
Mackay.

ROSS. 40919. Have they the same cause of complaint?—Yes, I may say the whole have the same cause.

DINGWALL. 40920. Too high rents?—Too high rents.

Finlay Mackay. 40921. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—Is there any remedy for your grievance about water?—The present proprietor spent £20 on one well, but got no supply.

40922. Where can it be got from?—By going down to the rock.

40923. There is no loch or stream from which you could be supplied?—Well, it is a long distance off.

40924. Did you ever dig for a well?—Yes, myself and my neighbour dug a well thirty feet deep, and it keeps no water in summer.

[ADJOURNED.]

INVERNESS, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1883.

INVERNESS.

Present:—

Lord NAPIER and ETTRICK, K.T., *Chairman.*

Sir KENNETH S. MACKENZIE, Bart.

DONALD CAMERON, Esq., of Lochiel, M.P.

C. FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Esq., M.P.

Sheriff NICOLSON, LL.D.

Professor MACKINNON, M.A.

CHARLES MACKAY, Carpenter, and Member of the Town Council of Inverness (56)—examined.

Charles Mackay. 40925. *The Chairman.*—Do you appear here as a delegate or representative?—Yes, from the Highland Land Reform Association.

40926. Have you a statement to read on behalf of the association?—Yes.

40927. Will you be so good as to read it?—The object of our association is to endeavour by constitutional means to bring about a better system in the occupancy of, and for the improvement of the land, in order that the people may be enabled to live comfortably on the land by their own industry, as was the case in former times, and not be compelled to emigrate to foreign countries or crowd into towns where their chances of living are much more precarious than in the country, and thereby sap our country of its vitality and its greatest wealth. While we would not in the least interfere with voluntary emigration (such as was taking place at all times since our colonies were discovered or acquired), we are convinced that there is a great deal of land formerly tilled in our own country ready for the spade and the plough, and capable of maintaining a large rural population, and also benefiting urban populations, and if rest is beneficial to it, it has had it, some thirty or forty, some even eighty years' rest. We also know that there are large tracts of improvable land in many parts of the country, now comparatively valueless, that could be made productive and valuable to both landlord and tenant; if the latter got encouragement to improve and security for improvements, it would prevent our country from being impoverished by being drained of the best and ablest of the people, away to cultivate land in other countries, and of our money for the produce of that land to keep us in food, thereby enriching nations

' that may some day become our formidable enemies. We have no desire to cause annoyance or injury to our landed proprietors, but simply to impress on them the impolitic courses pursued on their estates during the greatest part of this century ; we do not wish to see their nice home farms divided into crofts, or the amenity of their mansions, with their beautiful avenues and ancient oaks, interfered with. We are as proud of these symbols of life, wealth, and civilisation as any of them can be, and we would wish to see them spend more of their time in these charming residences, for it is admitted on all sides that non-resident landlords as well as non-resident farmers are not real contributors to the general weal of the country. Our association comprise men of different religions and political creeds, and although now engaged in different trades or professions, almost all of us (like most of town populations) have been born and brought up in the country, which enabled us to have seen and now see the baneful effect of the system of adding farm to farm, and clearing out whole communities for the purpose of forming large sheep runs and deer forests.* *Badenoch*.—If we travel from Newtonmore to Loch Laggan, we find large patches of arable land and excellent pasture, which was at one time the happy homes of a brave race, now sacrificed to sheep, and in some instances still worse, to deer. If we follow the course of the beautiful river Spey from Laggan to Lochan Spey (a distance of thirteen miles), we find six good-sized farms turned into two large sheep farms, till lately in the possession of two tenants, and now in the hands of the proprietor, and if the hand of destruction is not restrained will probably ere long be converted into a deer forest. The arable lands on these farms extend fully six miles along the banks of the Spey, and taking arable and pasture together they extend to thirteen miles along its banks. I had occasion four years ago to spend some days there on business, when the late tenants left, and a more glaring abuse of land and homesteads I never saw, some of the once comfortable dwellings were in a most dilapidated state, others with only the roofless walls remaining, barns (and what was at one time well-filled byres, levelled to the ground), excepting a corner here and there to shelter a shepherd's cow. *Glen Banchor*.—Seven tenants were cleared out of Glen Banchor two or three years ago, and their land was given on a nineteen years' lease as a sheep run, to a tenant who has a fine farm on a neighbouring estate, Dalchummore, at same rent. The rental of the seven was £111, 10s.; the one tenant pays £146, 10s.; the property was reduced from forty-four to twenty-eight tenants in ten years. But coming nearer home, let us take the fine stretch of land (Stratherick) between here and Fort Augustus, comprising several estates; during the last eighty years there has been about 100 well-to-do small farmers, and about an equal number of cottars removed to make room for sheep farms or large holdings. *Abdourie*, 1836–40. *Balcharnach*,—containing about 300 acres arable and a large tract of pasture, was occupied by eleven farmers; they were turned out, and the land given to the late Mr Gentle. 1838. *Bunchrubin*—four tenants had about 120 acres arable and 600 sheep, paid £150 rent, now in one farm at £180. *Balchnim*—two tenants has been added to Ballaggan. *Balnain*.—*Dunchia*—about 120 acres arable and 600 sheep; five tenants removed in 1828, and the land added to Abersky. *Lovat*.—*Ruthven*—about 120 acres, 600 sheep, thirty-six cows, six tenants, turned into one sheep farm; these had pasture at Killin Dell, Drummond, Crockchinlan, Kilchuilam, Ardochy, and Glendo; were occupied by a great number of small farmers, but are now large sheep farms and a deer forest. *Dunmaglas*.—*Aberchalder* was cleared of thirteen farmers in one year, 1839–40, and the whole turned into one large sheep farm. *Gorthlick*.—Three tenants turned out,

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INVERNESS.

Charles
Mackay.

' and their land given to sheep. Lyne—two tenants for thirty years in it, turned out, and the land given to Mr Arkly. Forty years ago there were five meal-mills and one carding-mill in Stratherrick; there are now only two meal-mills and no carding mill. It does not, properly speaking, belong to my function to state in any measure of detail what are the remedies which in the opinion of the members of our society would effect a cure of the evil whose existence the Royal Commission was appointed to investigate. Some indication of a few remedies has been given in the course of the statement which I have read. I may be permitted to suggest the following, viz.:—(1) Increasing the size and number of the smaller holdings by the division of large farms and deer forests. (2) Granting to the tenants of small holdings security of tenure at equitable rents. (3) Compensation for permanent improvements on land and building. (4) The restriction of deer forestry and game preserves, or their entire prohibition on lands that could be cultivated, or that are capable of rearing sheep or cattle. (5) The providing of harbour and other facilities for the encouragement of fishing industry in the Highlands of Scotland.'

40928. In the paper you have read to us there are several examples given of the consolidation of small holdings in the form of large sheep farms. You have not given the dates in all cases at which these consolidations were effected. I cannot, of course, enter into the details of each case, with which I am unacquainted, but I would like to know from you at what period any important consolidation has of recent years occurred. What is the last case you know of eviction in a township and the consolidation of the land in the form of a farm or forest?—The latest case I refer to is in Glen Banchor, which took place over two or three years ago. I did not ask exactly the date of it, but it can easily be ascertained from the valuation roll.

40929. Whose property is Glen Banchor?—Mr Macpherson of Belville.

40930. Is that an old property in the present family, or is it a recent purchase?—It is an old property. It was bought by Mr Macpherson, the translator of Ossian's poems. It will be about one hundred years in the possession of the family.

40931. How many tenants were evicted in this case?—Seven, as far as I am aware.

40932. Do you understand that these tenants were removed at the end of the lease, or were they the old hereditary tenants of the place sitting at will?—I think they were sitting at will. From the valuation roll of that period I cannot find that they had leases, while the present single tenant has a lease of nineteen years.

40933. Do you know whether these tenants held, as it were, in the form of a township?—There were two townships, at least they were under the name of two townships—Easterton and Westerton.

40934. They were to be looked upon as two townships in the ordinary acceptance of the word, with a common pasture?—Yes, they had pasture along with it.

40935. They had an outrun or common pasture?—Yes.

40936. Do you know whether they received any compensation?—No, I don't.

40937. There was no compensation for improvements?—I don't know whether there was.

40938. Do you know whether they were otherwise provided for upon the estate?—No, I don't; but it was generally said at the time that they were purely and simply turned out.

40939. Do you look upon this as a typical case of an eviction of two small townships?—I do—a modern eviction. INVERNESS.
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40940. Within the last two or three years?—Yes. INVERNESS.
40941. Do you know what became of the families; into what condition of life did they pass?—No, I don't. Charles Mackay.
40942. Do you know whether any of them emigrated?—No.
40943. You never heard whether they received any assistance in any form towards their future lives from the proprietor?—No, I did not.
40944. The land has been turned into a sheep farm?—Yes.
40945. At an increase of between £30 and £40 a year of rental?—About £30, I think.
40946. Do you know whether the proprietor has had to lay out any considerable sum of money in connection with the change?—No, I don't.
40947. Is the sheep farmer resident, or does he reside on another farm?—He resides on another farm, on a different estate. He is on Sir George Macpherson Grant's estate.
40948. And I suppose he keeps shepherds or managers there?—Yes.
40949. The rent of the farm is £146, 10s.?—Yes, that is what the valuation roll gives.
40950. Do you know whether any land held or used as arable land on those townships has gone out of cultivation and is now in grass?—I cannot say. I believe myself it has, but I would not like to say.
40951. Then in the districts to which you refer in your paper, do you consider that the tendency to consolidation has gone on up to the present time, or did it terminate, as a rule, many years ago?—It has a tendency to go on to the present time.
40952. Can you give me any example in districts you allude to of a deer forest having been established or enlarged at the expense of the small tenants' lands?—I cannot exactly say at the expense of the small tenants, because they were generally converted into sheep farms first, and latterly converted into deer forests.
40953. Then you think that the substitution has not been deer for people but deer for sheep?—Deer for sheep; but if we go to the root, it is deer for people.
40954. Then you go a stage further back?—Yes.
40955. You mentioned that the persons whom you represent regard emigration with some jealousy, as I understood?—Yes, the majority of us do.
40956. You think that the labour of the people will be better expended in the cultivation of our own land than in the cultivation of colonial lands?—Yes, my own opinion is decidedly so, from taking observations of my friends and acquaintances who had gone there, and some of whom came back.
40957. But you spoke of emigration as an impoverishment rather to our own country. You are not, I suppose, disposed to deny that when people emigrate and establish new communities they have new wants, and become large consumers of the manufactures and produce of our country?—I don't deny that. I quite admit that, but I maintain also that, while they do emigrate and become large communities in other places, they impoverish our own country, because they leave our places empty, and consequently we want both their produce and their consumption.
40958. You think it would be better that more consumers should be established in our own country, than that people should go abroad and become consumers there?—That is decidedly my opinion.
40959. But don't you think that people who emigrate may, from the

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INVERNESS.

Charles
Mackay.

advantages of their position abroad, become more important consumers abroad than they would be if they settled on our comparatively sterile lands in this country?—My experience for the last forty years—and I have been taking particular notice of it, for I had a very great mind to emigrate myself—is, that they are not such great consumers as the public at home are; and I think we have examples of that in a great many of those who come back from the colonies, and who have been fortunate; they are more careful, and don't consume so much as people who have been brought up at home.

40960. At any rate, whether they are better or worse consumers abroad, you desire there should be an expansion of cultivation in this country so as to create consumers here?—Yes.

40961. You say there are waste lands in these districts here which are susceptible of cultivation and improvement; have you any suggestions to make as to the manner or terms on which waste land might be reclaimed here?—Well, it is not for me to make any suggestions, because I expect when it comes to that, that wiser heads than mine will be engaged in making arrangements for that; but I don't see any difficulty in its being done. The people had been doing it formerly without having any encouragement or reward for so doing, and I don't see how some encouragement could not be given to a greater extent now.

40962. We may assume that, up to the present moment, the usual course has been that when unclaimed land has been given to a family they held it at an easy rent for a certain length of time, and that they cultivated or reclaimed it, and that at the end of nineteen years, or some term of that kind, the land is revalued, and they are continued in the occupation at a higher rent. That, I think, is what has usually been done?—Yes.

40963. Have you got any distinct plan by which you think that process could be advantageously regulated?—It could be advantageously regulated, and would be a very great benefit to the country and to the nation at large, if those parties, the tillers of the land, who improve the land, had longer tenure of their land, and did not run the risk of its being put up periodically, until they are actually squeezed out of the land, even without being evicted in the actual sense of the word; we have instances of that in this neighbourhood. That fine place over on Leachkin, on the north side of the canal, was, sixty years ago, just waste land. That was given in small lots to tenants, and they got on very well. I lived in the neighbourhood for years, and a more industrious set of people you could not see, and, with one exception, they were all comfortable. They got on very well, and were all comfortable, but within the last ten years—about that time back—a new factor came on the estate, and he went over the ground and considered they had it too cheap, and it was put up about 200 per cent. upon the rent they were paying before.

40964. How long had they been in occupancy?—It is about sixty years since the place was originally cultivated. They would be in occupancy from forty to fifty years. Their lots are from 6 to 8 acres, and they paid originally from 50s. to 60s. for the lot, and they now pay an average of £8 and £9 for the quantity of ground. Our association would like that these things would be put on such a footing that the people who actually improved the land would not be liable to be moved about at the mercy of any new incomers by rack-renting.

40965. Have these small tenants left their holdings?—No. The place was advertised before they got even a chance of it at a high rent. It was advertised to be let in one holding, and that was the first intimation they got of it; and they went in a body to the proprietor, and said they were

ready to give the rent that was asked for it, and they got a twelve years' lease at the advanced rent. That lease was out last year, and I believe there are new leases now written out, though not handed out to them, upon the new system that is upon the estate—three years' lease and two years' notice.

INVERNESS.
INVERNESS.
Charles Mackay.

40966. Is it let at an advanced rent or the same rent?—I don't know what the new lease is, but I don't think it could be advanced, because it was as far advanced as any one could put it twelve years ago.

40967. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—You mentioned that you believe there is a great deal of land in our country, formerly tilled and ready for spade and plough, capable of maintaining a large rural population. Have you any information as to what kind of a livelihood the former rural population made in these districts?—I have. I was born and brought up amongst some of these myself. I was for six or seven years as a boy living in Stratherrick, and I scarcely knew any poor man in that district. I believe there are old men in the hall here who had some of these holdings, and I know that when they were turned out of their holdings they had a considerable sum of money even in those small places; and I also knew of even cottars upon these holdings who had a little money lent to the large farmers.

40968. What was the size of the holdings where the people were able to make a comfortable livelihood?—They were from 25 to 30 acres, with a good outrun of pasture that kept about 100 sheep or so.

40969. And what sort of rent did they pay for these?—The farm of Bunchrubin was occupied by four tenants. They were turned out in 1838; they had about 120 acres of arable land, and 600 sheep between the four tenants. They paid £150 of rent. It now pays £180, and I believe the late Sheriff Tytler improved about 40 acres, and that is the excuse he made to the four tenants for removing them. I think one of the tenants is here who was turned out.

40970. Well, the rise of rent was from £150 to £180?—Yes.

40971. Would these four tenants have given the same rent?—I don't know if they would give the rise; but it was against their will that they left the place. I believe they did not get a chance. I believe one of the men is in this hall, and, if I remember, he told me they did not get the offer of it.

40972. As I understand, this farm has not been added to any other farm. It was formerly a joint occupancy, and now it is a single occupancy?—Quite so.

40973. And the only apparent reason for removing the tenants was that a higher rent was given for the farm?—I don't know. I believe there would not be much difference on the rents, but the proprietor improved about 40 acres of land after they left, and that was the only excuse that was given to them for being removed.

40974. Then you cannot assign any reason for the removal of these four tenants?—No, I cannot.

40975. Can you not assign generally any reason for the removal of the tenants throughout the country?—Yes, the great reason was the craze for large holdings.

40976. But did these large holdings afford an increase of rent?—There might be, as a general rule, because we are well aware that rents were increasing all over during that period.

40977. What I want to arrive at is this, can the large farmer pay a larger rent than the small one?—I don't believe it.

40978. Of course, there is a limit to that. There is a size of farm below which a man cannot afford to pay the full rent. What is the

INVER-
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INVERNESS.

Charles
Mackay.

smallest size of farm at which you think a tenant should pay as good a rent as if he had double or treble the quantity?—I think a farm of from twenty to thirty acres of land, with ordinary pasture to keep from 60 to 150 sheep, is a farm that with any industrious man attending to his business ought to pay and keep him comfortable.

40979. And that is the class of farm you would wish to see made?—Yes, and that is the class of farm that was in Stratherrick at that time.

40980. And you think if the farms in Stratherrick were divided into farms of that size, there is land there that was ploughed, and that can be ploughed again without any trouble?—Yes, this Bunchrubin was occupied by towns, and each holding was named by a name. Each had from six to seven cows, nice stackyards (I have seen some of them myself), and from fifty to one hundred sheep; and each of them was in comparative comfort. I may be allowed to state, in regard to the farm of Bunchrubin, I don't know how the man who succeeded the four tenants prospered to the end of his lease, but I know the farmer before the present one went out of it penniless, and the four tenants who went out of it, or who were turned out, were each of them able to take other farms. One of them took a farm down about Culloden. The others took the farm of Lyne, which was a larger holding.

40981. *Mr Cameron.*—Will you give us information as to the seven farms in Ballenoch, on Speyside, that were consolidated into one holding?—I cannot give you the information, because I did not go into the inquiry when they were consolidated, but I spent four days there in connection with valuations, going along these places, and I assure you it was a sad sight to see them. It was not even crofters or small farmers, but what were termed in my younger days, gentleman farmers, who occupied some of these houses; they were excellent houses—slated houses. I could not say exactly as to the extent of the different holdings of arable land, but they were, I would say, farms that would be paying from £100 to £150 of rent each.

40982. They would hardly come under the description of crofters then?—No, but from the appearance of the homesteads there must have been a good many cottars who generally followed these farms at that time, and lived in great comfort.

40983. What estate is that on?—It is now Sir John Ramsden's, but then it was Ballybristle's, and I may be permitted to refer to that as a very great example of the evil of non-resident landlords. Ballybristle lived in England. His principal man of business was in England, and there was just a local manager upon the estate.

40984. I want to ask a little more about these farms. Do you mean that seven farms of £150 apiece were consolidated into one farm?—They would not be £150 over all, but I would say from £100 to £150. There were Strathmashie, Dalchully, Shirrabeg, Shirramore, Garnamore, and Garnabeg, with the finest pasture.

40985. They were always sheep farms?—Mixed farms, but principally sheep farms. That is a class of farms that always paid in the Highlands, and that is the class of farms we would like to see still.

40986. Is Strathmashie now a deer forest?—No, it is a sheep farm.

40987. Talking of deer forests, I understood you to say, in answer to the Chairman, that though the people were removed to make way for sheep, yet, as the sheep were removed subsequently, to make room for deer, it was only going a step further back?—Yes, the people were removed first for sheep, and then deer in a great many instances followed the sheep.

40988. But the proprietor who removed the people to make way for sheep could not have foreseen that the system of deer forests would grow up subsequently,—the rage for deer forests, as you would put it?—No.

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40989. Therefore the deer forest system could not be responsible for the removal of the people, as it did not exist then?—Certainly, it would to a certain extent, because of curtailing the land from the few remnants of people remaining.

INVERNESS.

Charles Mackay.

40990. I am only talking about responsibility. I said that as the proprietor who removed the people for sheep could not foresee that the large sheep farms would be appropriated for deer, the deer forest system cannot be held responsible for the removal of the people. It was done by the proprietor for the sake of the rent he would derive from the large farms?—Certainly.

40991. So that when people write or talk about the people being removed to make way for sheep or deer, it ought more accurately to be described as making way for sheep, which in their turn made way for deer?—It would be the most accurate way, certainly.

40992. Now, this process of consolidation to which you have referred, appears to have gone on in a very extensive way. I should like to have your opinion about whether you think that process is now in a fair way of being stopped, or are you apprehensive that it will still continue?—I believe it is in a fair way of being stopped to a certain extent, and I believe the reason for that is very much owing to public opinion, and also that they find that consolidation does not pay even so well as the ordinary-sized farms.

40993. Don't you think that proprietors, if it could be done, would be very willing to get back their people, and cut up their farms and perhaps deer forests into small allotments, so as to restore to a great extent the state of things that existed before?—I believe a great many of them would be very glad to do so.

40994. You are aware that a sheep farm is now an article almost unmarketable?—I am aware of that.

40995. So that the successors of those people who cleared their lands—perhaps in a very wrongful way—are now being punished for what their predecessors did?—Yes, I have no doubt, if they continued very much longer, they would be punished much more, for the simple reason, that I am quite certain that a very few years will bring landlords to be far more anxious to get their men back than they are just now. Of that I am quite convinced from experience. As a tradesman taking contracts from Badenoch to Loch Inver, right along the whole country, I have had an opportunity of seeing the great evil that has been caused to the country from an economic point of view.

40996. Assuming it to be the wish of the landlords voluntarily to cut up these large farms, and to have a greater number of tenants on their estates, can you suggest any proposal by which this wish may be encouraged and assisted so as to become a real fact?—I think there should be no difficulty in that. I know there is more difficulty in it than if the people had been retained on the land; for a great many of the people that would take moderate-sized farms have either died out or left the country. We had examples not very long ago of some large farms being advertised for small holdings, and I believe they got no offers, but the reason for that is quite clear. People who could stock a farm of twenty-five or thirty acres of land, are not in the neighbourhood now, and the larger farmers would not be inclined to go and take them, unless they got them altogether; and in order to bring about the occupancy of moderate-sized holdings, there would require to be some help given to them, by

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INVERNESS.
Charles
Mackay.

the advance of money by Government, or in some other way, and I don't think there is any difficulty in that any more than there is in advancing money for large properties for improvements. For instance, on the farm of Lyne, that was added to Gorthlick, they got some money, and improved some land, and paid the last penny of it all during a nineteen years' lease, and at the end of the lease they were turned out for no cause whatever, and their farm was added to a large one.

40997. There is one expression in your paper which I think you, perhaps, may be inclined to re-consider. May I ask, first, does that paper contain the views of the association which you represent?—It does. I may state that it is my own composition, but I submitted it to the executive committee, and to a general meeting of our society, and they all approved of it.

40998. I find a sentence in it, in which you express views against emigration, for fear of enlarging and strengthening countries that may some time become our formidable enemies?—Yes.

40999. Now, in writing that sentence, you surely don't mean to say that we should be chary of sending our people abroad, for fear they may, sometime or other, become enemies of this country?—Why do our statesmen object to the Channel tunnel?

41000. I don't quite see that the Channel tunnel has much to do with it; but if you like to illustrate it by that, I am willing to hear it?—They are chary of giving the power to any nation to take advantage of us in case of a difference.

41001. But if the views of your association had always existed, no colonists would ever have gone to America or Australia or anywhere else, because there would always be a fear that when rich and powerful, they would become our enemies, and the colonies would not exist if those views had always been entertained?—Yes, we want to have friendly and free intercourse with all nations, but we don't want to give them undue advantages, for when we send our people or means across there we weaken our own. If we keep our own and allow natural emigration, we have no objection to that.

41002. But, leaving Ireland aside, is there any evidence that people going from the Highlands have become disposed to be the enemies of this country; have they not been among the most loyal of the Queen's subjects?—There has been an instance to the contrary in the Canadian dominions. I remember they got up in arms against the power of this country, and, if I am not mistaken, one of the chief leaders was a Highlander—a Mackenzie.

41003. *Professor Mackinnon.*—Your knowledge of the whole country side here is very large?—Yes, pretty large.

41004. I think you stated that a croft of about 20 to 30 acres is the minimum croft you would like to see established?—Yes.

41005. What would be the rent, judging from the practice of the country side, which you think such a farm ought to carry?—I would say that the rent the people were paying at the time I refer to—forty years ago—would be a fair rent; that is, taking all the circumstances into consideration, they would pay the rents they were paying then. Taking those instances I brought forward—such as £150, their land was from 25 to 30 acres arable, and that is 112 acres divided among four, and they paid at that time £150 between them, which made it about £35 to £40 a year each. Now, considering the increase in the price of farm produce, I would say that, at the rents they were paying at that time, they should live very comfortably to-day, but there has been an increase between that period and now.

41006. You think the increase has been too much?—Yes.

41007. But I suppose you would not object to a certain amount of increase on the rent of crofts?—I would not. I would certainly say so, provided it were put upon a system that it would not be at the mercy of every new comer. There is now a tendency for property to change hands, and what existed then is not very safe now.

41008. Have you formed any idea upon what footing you would put matters so as to prevent the possibility of that?—According to my own idea, I would be in favour of long tenure.

41009. Long lease?—Long tenure, so as to encourage the people to improve, and give them an opportunity to benefit by their occupation.

41010. From your knowledge of the country, can you point to any holdings of the kind and size that you would like to see generally established?—Not so much now; of course there are a number; for instance, the Coigach district is a very nice type. That is a district where the land is limited. I have been there for some time. I have been there as a tradesman, and have tried to make myself as well acquainted as possible with it, and I would say that where land is limited to that extent, the holding would be a very nice one, but in that case they only pay from £5 to £10 of rent. They have a considerable extent of pasture, and in that case they were threatened with some of the ground being turned into deer forest not many years ago, which was not, as Lochiel put it, following the sheep.

41011. What I would like to get at would be this—whether you can point to a particular community just now, of your own knowledge, that are in a comfortable condition, such as you remember the Stratherrick people to have been forty years ago?—No, I can scarcely do so, because in most cases they have been curtailed of the pasture, which made them far more comfortable. Small farms are not so comfortable now. They were generally curtailed, and I can scarcely point to any place to-day that is so comfortable as they were at the time I refer to, in Stratherrick.

41012. I don't mean quite so comfortable, but sufficiently comfortable that it would be the interest of the country generally that their type should be increased in number?—Yes, I know they would be sufficiently comfortable, but they would be far more so by giving them more pasture. I refer to the estate of Glen Urquhart, which is almost all small holdings; and I might refer to another in Ross-shire, where I know some of them are very comfortable.

41013. That is the class of holdings you would like to see scattered all over the Highlands?—Yes, I hold that is the class of people who benefit the country.

41014. You would not like large farms to be done away with altogether?—Not moderately large farms, but we have some that are not profitable to the people themselves.

41015. You stated about Leachkin in this neighbourhood that the people reclaimed the place, and had it for forty years for a small rent, which was afterwards about trebled. Supposing that a suitable place were to be given to energetic people for reclamation, what period, what length of lease, would you think reasonable to give them, at a small rent, in order to enable them to recoup themselves for the work they would do upon the land in the way of improvement?—It would depend a good deal upon the subject they would get.

41016. Take a place like Leachkin?—I would certainly say that about the time they had it would be a fair time to recoup them if they had security that the rent would not be increased unreasonably after that,—

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Charles Mackay.

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Charles Mackay. 41017. Your objection to the treatment of these people was not that the rent was increased within that period, but that it was increased too much?—Increased too much; and, in some cases, some of the land taken away altogether and added to a large farm, and that was still worse than the increasing.

41018. Now, how would you settle the rate of increase under the new lease that would be given to such people? Who would be the valuator?—I think a court of inquiry such as we have appointed for other things by Government, would be the best means of doing it—the most just way of doing it for all parties, both proprietor and tenant.

41019. And would you allow that court of inquiry, if they thought proper, to fix the actual value of the land at that date, or would you allow them to take into consideration the fact that it was the people themselves who reclaimed it in the past?—I would allow them to take it into consideration that the people reclaimed it.

41020. Would you oblige them to take that into consideration?—I would.

41021. So that the people would have the land first on a lease at a comparatively nominal rent, and then during a second period with the consideration that it was they who had brought it to the state it was in?—Yes, distinctly.

41022. That is quite a different state of matters from the present?—Entirely, in most cases. I am glad to see we have some proprietors who give effect to that.

41023. I mean the state of the law; I don't refer to the occasional practice. The practice in some cases may be as good as the law you would wish for all?—Quite so.

41024. You would wish to make binding upon all what some at present do of their own accord?—I do.

41025. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—I want to put one or two questions to you with reference to your principal statement. Take first the case of Stratherrick which you have spoken of. Most of that is in the parish of Dores?—Dores, and the parish of Boleskine.

41026. Is it consistent with your knowledge that the population of the Dores parish is very much decreased?—It must have decreased.

41027. Are you aware that the amount of pauperism there is unusually large?—I am not actually aware of it, but I am aware by hearsay incidentally.

41028. What is the cause of that excessive pauperism in the parish of Dores?—I consider the cause is the way the people were turned out of their holdings. That is the cause of it in Dores, and it is partially the cause of it also in Inverness, by people coming in from that district. I may mention there is one who was turned out of one of these places who is now a pauper in Inverness.

41029. Has the town of Inverness not suffered very much within the last forty years by people coming in that were evicted from other parishes?—Very much.

41030. In answer to his Lordship, you stated you were not aware of any small people being put out for the sake of deer forests—that it did not come under your observation?—Not quite.

41031. You are well acquainted with Glen Urquhart?—Yes.

41032. Now, although it was done in a very mild manner, is it not a fact that some small people were deprived of their holdings in connection with the deer forest of Balmacaan?—Yes, it quite escaped my mind. I did not wish to avoid the question, but it quite escaped my mind.

41033. It was done in as mild a way as possible?—Yes.
41034. But it was done?—Yes, it was the case, and very nice holdings.
41035. Old holdings?—Old holdings.
41036. Now, on that side of Loch Ness, have there not been forests created of late years?—Yes, and there have been a number of larger holdings cleared for them too, and smaller ones that were not actually sheep farms.
41037. Take the very latest forest that has been created in the valley of Loch Ness—the forest of Glendo. What was it made out of?—Eighty years ago it was a mixed farm held by some five or six farmers,—arable and pasture. It was taken from them and added to a farm at Fort-Augustus for a sheep farm, and it is now a deer forest.
41038. Do you know that in the time of Simon, Lord Lovat, he could raise an entire regiment from Stratherrick alone, and did do so?—Yes, I know that from history.
41039. Could such a thing be done to-day?—No.
41040. Within your early recollection was it not a fact that there were numbers who might be styled gentlemen farmers in the district of Stratherrick?—A very great many.
41041. Are there any such now?—I am not aware of any.
41042. With regard to the particular evictions you referred to in Badenoch, viz., Glen Banchor, and Glen Balloch, are you aware that the whole matter appeared in the newspapers of the day?—Yes.
41043. All the particulars were then given and commented upon?—I remember them being commented upon. I don't remember how the particulars were quite given.
41044. And the facts are accessible to the Commission?—Yes.
41045. Do you see a gentleman before you, Mr Mackenzie of the *Free Press*, who knew all about it?—Yes.
41046. You are aware he wrote a full account of the matters at the time?—I forgot. I may have seen it.
41047. Are you aware of this further fact, that the tenant who was to come in in place of those evicted tenants, was very willing to draw back, but would not be allowed to draw back by the proprietor?—I am not aware of that; but I would imagine from the man that he would see the injustice of removing the people, and would be inclined to withdraw.
41048. Have you been in that valley yourself?—Not up through it. I have been up part of it. I have been doing some work in that neighbourhood, and I just went out to take a look at the country, not with any special object.
41049. I suppose then you are not so familiar with the subject as to enter into any details?—No, not to go into details.
41050. You are not aware that a clergyman of the Free Church was born upon one of those crofts of which the parties were dispossessed?—No, I am not aware of that; only I am aware that two of them were widows.
41051. Now, will you kindly explain why it was that you made reference to the large farms at the head of Spey that you were valuing; was it in illustration of the bad effects of large farms?—Yes, I was so impressed with it at the time that I could never get rid of it,—about how our country was destroyed by that system, destroyed in every way, because I considered it was destroyed actually for those who were able to take comparatively large holdings; it was destroyed as a means of employment, and it was destroyed as a means of produce.
41052. And these houses, you stated, were not merely the houses of poor crofters and others, but houses which what may be called gentlemen

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tacksmen, retired officers of the army, and others, at one time occupied?—I am very much under the impression that I was told there, by some of the parties about the place, that there had been some officers either born or residing there, belonging to that neighbourhood, natives of Badenoch,—that they had either been born in these houses, and joined the army out of these houses, or had come back to reside there. I was informed of that upon the ground.

41053. Let us come now to the Leachkin. Supposing there were written evidence in existence that a proprietor offered and wished the people to come and settle upon his land, and take it in as you have described, and that they did come forward and take it in—suppose that to be the case, and suppose afterwards that that proprietor's successors acted in the manner you have described, could that be described as anything else than a policy of converting the occupants of soil merely into land-reclaiming and rent-producing machines?—That is what I would certainly call it. They were just made a handle of to increase the value of the place and enrich one individual.

41054. Do you believe that one sixpence was ever laid out by the proprietor upon the houses or lands of Leachkin?—I am told, but I have no evidence of it, that when they commenced there first they were to get £10 an acre for every acre they reclaimed, and a few of them who commenced there first got it for a few acres, but none of them got the full amount for the whole they brought in. I know as a fact that some of them who had reclaimed some of it during the last thirty years did not get one penny, and after being raised from 50s. to £12, 10s. for their lot they were latterly deprived of it, and it was added to the large farms for no reason whatever.

41055. As a matter of picturesqueness or beauty, is the Leachkin a very pretty object as lotted out particularly in harvest-time?—It is one of the finest places I like to look at.

41056. Would it be as fine a sight if it were one big farm?—Not according to my view.

Alexander
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ALEXANDER MACKENZIE, Dean of Guild, Inverness (44)—examined.

41057. *The Chairman.*—Do you appear here as a delegate?—I do not. I just offered to give evidence as an individual.

41058. Were you not elected as a delegate for Gairloch, as I believe some portion of your statement may have reference to Gairloch?—I was elected as a delegate for Gairloch, but I thought it was best that in Gairloch they should send local people forward to give evidence there; but I promised that, in the event of certain evidence not coming out in Gairloch, I should present it to the Commissioners in Inverness.

41059. Then you appear in some degree as a delegate of Gairloch, and in a greater degree as a general adviser on this subject?—I can scarcely assume that position.

41060. Well, will you kindly read your statement?—‘My Lord and Gentlemen,—It may be well that I should state at the outset a few facts, in my own experience, with the view of justifying me in offering myself for examination before Her Majesty's Commissioners:—I was born, and lived for nearly twenty years, on a west coast croft of about four acres, and I am one of a family of seven children reared upon it. During my youth I took an active part in fishing in the west, as well as in

' everything else a Highland crofter has to engage in. I afterwards left home, and engaged and continued as a ploughman for a few years, going through every stage of practical farming, from "orra man" to working grieve. After this experience I went as a hired servant to the herring fishing on the east coast and at Wick, for three seasons in succession, working during the remaining portion of each year, first as an ordinary railway labourer, but ultimately as a foreman, and as a plate-layer. I submit that I thus possess an experience and a personal knowledge of my countrymen and their manner of life, at home and from home, which fully justified me in asking the Royal Commissioners to afford me the opportunity, which they were pleased to grant me, of laying a statement before them. In addition to this, I have since made the position of my countrymen at home and in Canada a special study, having visited the Dominion a few years ago for the purpose of enabling me to do so there from personal knowledge. Further, since this Commission was granted, I visited most of the places where the Commissioners held inquiry, and this enables me still more to speak from recent personal observation and direct contact with the people as to their position and requirements. It is, however, unnecessary, after the mass of detailed evidence which has been led before the Commission, that I should go into further detail, except as to my own native parish of Gairloch, with which I shall deal further on; but I may be permitted to state generally the conclusions at which I have arrived, after having driven over and seen the ground and the country, in a manner which it was impossible the Commissioners could do, going, as they generally did, by sea. The first thing that strikes any intelligent observer who goes through the country is, that the fertile portions of the land—which still show unmistakable evidence of having been once under cultivation and occupied by a large number of people at no remote period—are now generally included in the sheep farms, and occasionally in deer forests, while the people are congested on rocky promontories and scattered patches on the sea-shore. This is indisputable. It is also indisputable that, in many cases, their holdings in these wretched situations have been curtailed—especially their hill pasture—without any reduction of rent; indeed, very often where the holdings were curtailed the rents have been increased, and that although, according to Sir John M'Neill's report (pages xiv. and xvii.), the value of the products of the crofts has been reduced by one half in consequence of the failure of the potato. To this depreciation in value must be added the deterioration of the soil from constant cropping, which is so great that in many instances the land scarcely produces a single return of the seed. True, the value of cattle has increased, but to people who, in consequence of the smallness and barrenness of their holdings, cannot grow enough upon them to winter their "souming," this increase in the value of cattle—of which so much has been made—will not make up for the depreciation of the value of their crofts, and especially when the summering of their cattle is often made impossible by the curtailment of their hill pasture. The cattle are thus semi-starved in summer as well as in winter. An ordinary passer-by will almost in every case, from the high-way, point out, from its black and barren appearance, the portion of the hill pasture now in the hands of the people from that in the hands of the sheep-farmer; for the latter has not only succeeded in getting the best of the arable portion of the land, to let it out of cultivation, but has also managed to secure everywhere the best portion of the hill pasture. With this constant curtailment of their holdings and insecurity of tenure—as in the Isle of Skye,

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' where every one of the population, as shown by the Sheriff-Clerk's books at Portree, has a decree of removal issued against him or her every twenty years, or three times in every two generations—the people have no incentive to work or to improve their condition; the consequence being that we have periodical destitution, and appeals to charity which, largely and necessarily, demoralises its recipients. Of this result we have had ample testimony this year, though the destitution has not, in my opinion, been anything like what it has been represented by landlords and factors in the west. On this point I can testify from personal knowledge obtained among and from the people themselves; but the demoralisation produced among a section of them, in less than a year, is as glaring as it is painful to their best friends. Many persons possessing property—heritable and personal—not only sought a share of the charity sent from the south for the destitute only, as a matter of right, but, I am sorry to say, in many instances, obtained it. *Effect of Decrees of Removal and Evictions.*—One removal would naturally paralyse a whole district, when every man knew that it might be his turn next, just as one arbitrary eviction of a proprietor from his estate, say by Parliament, would paralyse landlords and reduce the value of all their estates. Supposing this were possible, how many proprietors would spend any money on improvements? But what must be the effect in this respect on the poor tenants at will throughout the whole Highlands, when we consider not only the number of decrees of removal issued against them, but the thousands of them who were forcibly evicted from houses built and lands reclaimed from the waste by themselves or their predecessors, without any compensation whatever? No rational person will expect the necessary energy and desire for improvement and good cultivation of their holdings, by any people, under such conditions; and matters must continue to go from bad to worse, until we have a revolution in the Highlands, unless a change for the better soon takes place. *Gairloch under Dr Mackenzie.*—Though I would have much preferred that some of the proceedings which were carried on in my native parish of Gairloch should have been told by others, I feel in duty bound to refer to some of these. I do not know of anything that more completely shows the evil results of uncontrolled factorship than what took place in Gairloch during Sir Kenneth Mackenzie's minority. Before referring to these proceedings, however, in detail, I would mention that in the memory of my own father, still alive, fourteen families were removed from Isle of Ewe; five or six from Ard-na-Faoileann; eight from Drumchorc; fourteen from Turnaig and Inverewe; and ten from Kernsary, all in the parish of Gairloch. I, myself, remember when the crofts were being surveyed and measured off, and the whole of Sir Kenneth Mackenzie's estate transformed from the "runrig" to the lotting system. I remember the failure of the potato crop and the destitution of 1846-47, and at that early age I was obliged to work on my father's croft—a great part of which was an actual quagmire—filling drains and removing stones, for which we got Indian and bad oatmeal in payment. This meal, I always understood, was "destitution" meal. But whether that was so or not, interest was charged for the improvements made, and my father had to pay it so long as we remained in that croft. Being the oldest of the family, I had to work in this way for years, so that I was never able to get a whole year, at one time, in school, but had to be satisfied with the winter months, and a few weeks in summer, after the crops were laid down and the peats cut, in the beginning of June. This meal was kept in the cellars at Charleston, until, as said by the people, it "became alive;"

while many of those for whom it was intended were on the verge of starvation. It was a common saying in the parish, that the Diabaig people—who had to come for their dole ten or twelve miles across the hill, “might stop at home and whistle for it, for that it could walk to Diabaig.” Ultimately it was put into the sea, and being a calm night, it floated on the surface, and next morning, a border of meal was found all along the shore, while the people were still in a state of semi-starvation. Several persons, who knew the facts, have narrated them to me since, and refreshed my own recollections of the time; while I had the whole confirmed in March and April last by one of the men who personally threw the meal into the sea, and was alarmed to find it floating, and on the beach, next morning. He was one of Dr Mackenzie's subordinate officials, and had a personal share in all the meaner proceedings during the latter and more disastrous period of the Doctor's factorial rule. The leading features of Dr Mackenzie's scheme were—after getting the people to trench and drain their crofts—to insist upon a rotation of crops, sow grasses—clover and rye-grass—turnips, cabbages, carrots, Jerusalem artichokes, and numerous other vegetables of which they never heard before, so as to enable them to feed their cattle indoors, and to have plenty green vegetables for their own consumption. The idea was a good one, but the instruments and manner of carrying it out were unsuitable, mainly because rigid rules were laid down all at once, and these rules imperiously enforced by subordinates entirely ignorant of agriculture, without attempting to carry the people intelligently along with them. The seeds were forced upon them, without any instructions as to how they were to use them, and they had to pay for them before they paid their rents. I well remember one occasion, on which some carrot seed was forced upon us, and shortly after, when my father was away at the herring fishing, Murdo Maclean, the official already referred to, called for the price of it, but having charge of a family of children, with scarcely anything to give them, my mother could not pay the sixpence demanded. Maclean, however, on coming out, espied a hen on the manure heap, and sprang at it, saying he would take it for the sixpence. He succeeded in capturing it, when I, quite a young lad, got in a rage, and freely abused him, saying that he was not to take away a hen that was laying an egg a-day for the family in such a time of distress, and I gave him a sixpence which a gentleman had given me that morning, and which I treasured much, it being the first coin of that value I ever possessed; and so the hen was left to us. But the most unfortunate act of Dr Mackenzie's factorial career—and what far more than counterbalanced any immediate good that might have been the result of his other proceedings, was when he virtually ruined the tenantry by taking away their cattle, and glutting the market to such an extent that the people received no benefit from their sale. He refers to these proceedings himself in Sir John M'Neill's report, where he says, “I found it necessary last summer to sell part of their stock to pay arrears of rent.” The manner of doing it was as follows:—Two or three of his subordinates went round with paint pots and brushes, and marked, with large letters, almost invariably every animal in each crofter's possession, and intimated that they were, in consequence, the legal and absolute property of the landlord, while the tenants had to feed them until they could be sold, unless, in the meantime, they paid their arrears of rent, which, I was told, included an additional half-year's rent in that year—one of unusual poverty and distress—so as to make the rent, hitherto payable after-hand at Martinmas, payable, in future, half in advance. Such a harsh proceeding could not have been

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'carried out at a worse time, just when the people were beginning to have a chance of recovering from the effects of the recent potato famine, and when the prices for cattle were, even in ordinary circumstances, unusually low. Soon after this, thousands of cattle were sent to the local cattle market at Tolly, where, in consequence of the glut, scarcely anything could be got for them. The different routes to the market were literally covered with them. They were afterwards sent to the Muir of Ord market, but, for the same reason, prices were quite as bad, if not worse, there, while the expenses of driving the cattle thither had to be deducted from the nominal price obtained when a sale was effected; with the result that scarcely anything was placed to the credit of the poor people from whom they were taken—and who were impoverished for years in consequence—without form or pretence of law. In many cases, I was informed by some of the owners, that they were only brought deeper into debt. The factor himself then had the fine farm of Isle of Ewe—the finest on the estate—in his own hands, and from which, as I have already said, fourteen families were formerly evicted. Some of the best heifers were taken there to graze, while others were sent to the Island of Longa, with the result that they not only "ate their own heads off," but in some cases brought their owners further into debt. There are many still alive who can testify from personal knowledge to this unfortunate period of factorial reign in Gairloch, and some of the delegates examined at Poolewe, and others present, but not called, were ready to do so had they been examined on the subject. But they were afraid to volunteer evidence not only on this, but on many other important points, unless the information was drawn out of them by the Commissioners. Fortunately for the people, very soon after this, their young proprietor came of age and got possession of his estates. The past policy was changed, or, at any rate, not enforced; arrears were wiped out in many cases, where parties had large and young families; the factors disappeared, at least for a time; and under his rule I am safe in saying that Gairloch advanced in comfort, comparatively, and in many respects, more than any other property on the west coast. The proprietor is revered by the people, and if he loses any hold on their affections and respect now or hereafter, it will only be in proportion to the period of his absence from amongst them, and to the rising power, in consequence, of his local manager, whom the people fear, as they do in most places, much more than any proprietor. Indeed, a visit from an absentee landlord is generally looked upon as a welcome blink of sunshine through a constantly clouded sky on a harvest morning. One of Dr Mackenzie's managers, Macleod, from Gesto, was a perfect terror to the people, and there are persons still alive who heard him saying that he "would make the people eat one another" before he was done with them; but, fortunately for them, he died very suddenly a few days after. His memory is execrated by the people, and his deeds and himself have been commemorated in scathing Gaelic verse.'

41061. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—What was the date of the poem?—About 1850 or 1851.

41062. *The Chairman.*—I have not arrested you in the course of this statement, with reference to the character of a deceased person, and of individuals employed at that time upon the estates. I was anxious, if possible, to allow the whole statement to be read. At the same time, I must say that I deprecate allusions to persons either deceased or aged, or absent, or unable to defend their own characters. These persons may have relatives still existing who may have great difficulty

in vindicating the memory of their relatives from public statements of that sort?—Well, if I do not refer to absent people, I do not know what I can say at all.

41063. It depends a good deal upon the nature of the reference?—That is the end of that portion of my statement:—‘ It may be asked why, ‘ when Sir Kenneth is such a good landlord, the people should ask for a ‘ change in the law, such as I am going to ask. My reply is that Sir ‘ Kenneth will not unfortunately, always live, and that it is quite possible ‘ that the past may be repeated, at any time, in other places, if not in ‘ Gairloch, unless it be made impossible by an alteration of the laws which ‘ admitted of such proceedings as I have here detailed, and which are at ‘ this moment the laws of the land. I may state that the secretary of the ‘ Gairloch committee wrote to me, after their first meeting, intimating that ‘ it was their wish that I should be appointed a delegate to appear before ‘ the Royal Commission in Gairloch on their behalf. I at once declined, ‘ at the same time pointing out to them how much better it would be that ‘ some of themselves should go forward and state their grievances. I, ‘ however, addressed a public meeting afterwards in the parish, at their ‘ request, and on that occasion I promised, in the event of their not being ‘ able to get the evidence out at Poolewe, to state at Inverness what I have ‘ now stated about the management of the property during Sir Kenneth’s ‘ minority. The tenantry always thought that Dr Mackenzie himself was ‘ one of the trustees—not a mere factor; while his managers were ‘ invariably termed and looked upon as factors. One of these, Dr ‘ Mackenzie informs us, in his *Letter to Lord John Russell*, p. 17— ‘ “had been nearly all his life in the Highlands as a shepherd,” and that ‘ he left his situation because “he was unfit for it from want of firmness ‘ of character, and over good nature.” Of the other, Macleod, already ‘ mentioned, the Doctor says, p. 18 of the same letter, “the present ‘ excellent manager was selected in the Isle of Skye on account of his ‘ well-known firmness of disposition, and reported capability of putting a ‘ stop to those Socialist views, now [1851] so prevalent, as to the rights ‘ of tenantry superseding those of a landlord, which evil-disposed persons ‘ had been busy sowing among minds discontented with drainage, &c., ‘ without understanding its use and importance; when they would, no ‘ doubt, have preferred being entirely idle. He does not pretend to have ‘ any skill whatever, practical or theoretical, in agriculture.” The last ‘ clause of this question Dr Mackenzie emphasises by printing it in italics. ‘ Such were the Doctor’s instruments and the instructors of the people of ‘ Gairloch in those days, all armed, so far as the people could see, with ‘ full factorial powers. The present “Manager” is also factor, to all ‘ intents and purposes, in the eyes of the people; and, whatever number ‘ of petitions and certificates may be got up to the contrary, I unhesitatingly assert that the people generally disapprove entirely of his operations ‘ as a meal, seed, coal, lime, salt, agricultural implement, and guano ‘ merchant on the Gairloch estate. Every reference made against his ‘ operations at my meeting was loudly applauded by those present. Not ‘ one of them believed that Sir Kenneth could be aware of what was ‘ going on. Petitions, my Lord, are easily got up when a factor is concerned. In my opinion, it should be made illegal for any such to hold ‘ a farm on any estate, or to deal in anything whatever. A factor should ‘ confine himself strictly to his own business as such. *General Remarks.* ‘ —It has been asserted in anti-crofter quarters that the evidence presented ‘ to the Commission was tainted by having been prepared beforehand by ‘ outsiders. I think I may take it for granted that the Commissioners ‘ are aware that this charge is not true. If it were, to any material extent,

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' I must have known of it; for I was in advance of the Commission in the whole of the Isle of Skye; in parts of North and South Uist; in Benbecula; and round all the north-west coast of the mainland, from Thurso to Lochcarron. During that journey I do not remember that I called on a single crofter or delegate, except clergymen, doctors, and men of such positions, at their own houses. I have not written a single word of a single statement presented to the Commission except my own. I have neither directly nor indirectly dictated what they should contain, beyond recommending that they should contain the truth, and nothing but the truth. I strongly urged that the truth itself should be understated rather than over-stated. I advised, in many cases unsuccessfully, that the delegates should not be asking, in Irish phrase, for "fixity of tenure," nor for such an unlikely and, in my opinion, unreasonable thing as a loan of Government money to stock their crofts, in the absence of a better guarantee than they could possibly give under the present land laws. My meetings were always public, presided over by a minister, doctor, or some other leading local gentleman, and were generally attended by the ground officer, or by some other representative of the proprietor, and in one case by the proprietor's heir and some of his friends. Baseless charges to the contrary having been made in partisan quarters, I felt bound to say so much. This was due to the Royal Commissioners, to myself, and to my countrymen, in such an important crisis in our history as the present. Had not the newspaper which circulated the baseless charges refused to publish my denial of them, I certainly would not have troubled the Commission with them, as I have now done. I trust, however, that the Commissioners are satisfied on the point. At all events, I challenge any one to substantiate a contradiction of what I have now asserted. I must, however, state that I found the people generally very much afraid to come forward and give evidence, wherever I went, though they were most anxious to do so. I am not ashamed to say that I urged upon them the necessity of more manliness than their fears indicated, and that they should, like men, go forward and present their grievances to Her Majesty's Commissioners, who were so graciously coming to their very doors. But, though I have been to some extent successful, the whole truth has not been told; for those who, in many cases, had the worst grievances to tell, would not muster courage enough to present them, unless they were questioned regarding them in detail by the Commissioners; and it was, of course, impossible that your Lordship or the other members of the Commission could possess the local knowledge, in all cases, which would enable you to do so. I ought also to state that there are several districts in this neighbourhood that have not sent forward delegates, from which urgent appeals reached me to go and address meetings to explain to them how to act, but I refused, intimating that, after what has been done in other places there was no excuse for them; that they should have the manliness to come forward and say what they had to tell; and, if they did not, that they deserved to continue to wear any chains by which they might at present be bound. The atmosphere in which they move has, however, proved too dense for them; but it must not be concluded on that account that some of the people have not very decided and substantial grievances on several properties not far from Inverness. The free labour exacted from the crofters in the Isle of Skye, and other places in the Highlands, of which so much has been heard, should be made impossible by the infliction of a heavy penalty for its exaction. It may not be generally known that the practice is, already, utterly illegal, by 20 Geo. II. (known as the Ward-holding Act), chapter 50,

' section 21. This portion of the Act is still the law of the land, and it
' declares that no tenant or tacksman of any lands or heritages in Scotland,
' by virtue of any lease or tack which shall be made in writing, or by
' verbal agreement, tacit relocation, or otherwise, after the 1st of July
' 1747, or by virtue of the prorogation of any lease or tack, made before
' that date, nor any assignee of any such lease or tack, " shall be obliged
' or liable to perform any services whatsoever to his heritor or landlord
' other than such as shall be expressly and particularly reserved and
' specified, and the number and kinds thereof enumerated and ascertained
' in some written lease or tack, or by some agreement made *in writing*, and
' signed by the parties thereto, or some persons authorised by them, any
' former law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding." I have pleasure
' in handing your lordship a copy of the whole section. The landlords of
Scotland could, under the present land laws, join together, when the
present leases expire, and evict the whole of the Scottish people, except
those holding feus or perpetual leases, and then, if they liked, give it
over, not only to deer forests, but to wolves and tigers. Is it not unjust
that a legal power like this should be virtually possessed by a minority
of the nation, composed only of about thirty landlords born into such
unnatural privileges? And these are the only people, that I know of,
who claim to do what they like with their own, independently of how
their use of it may affect their fellow-subjects and the public weal. The
proprietors of household property in towns would never dream of claiming
such a right. If they did, they would soon find that, under the
various Police and Burgh Acts, no such claim would succeed for twenty-
four hours; though it is admitted by all the authorities that the rights
of owners of household property are much more nearly absolute than
the rights of those who hold land. In point of fact, neither Parliament
nor the common law ever did admit of absolute property in land, be-
cause, for one reason, land is limited, and is as necessary for man's
existence as water and air. But not only has it become necessary to
show that it is impossible to admit this claim by the landed classes, but
the tendency of recent legislation by which the landlords have been
appropriating everything on or under the earth, in the sea, or in the air,
worth having, or which could be turned into money, must be checked
and perhaps reversed. Salmon and trout, foreshores (including the
sea-weed), rights of way, wild animals, and the fowl of the air, have
nearly all been appropriated in this way by law. They have even
attempted to appropriate the herring. I do not see that there is any-
thing wrong in curtailing, or even in reversing this tendency, always, of
course, by other laws; for no compensation whatever was given to the
public for this transfer of national property and large incomes to the
possession or pockets of the owners of the land. It is important to
keep this in view in the event of its being found necessary to break
down deer forests and huge sheep farms by compulsory legislation, so
that the people might be re-possessed of the best portions of the country
from which they were so cruelly removed to make room for these farms
and game preserves. In that case no compensation should be given for
the present inflated value of deer forests, entirely due, as it is, to statu-
tory enactments, which by the preservation of wild animals increase the
rental of the soil they injure. All increased value arising from the
effect of Acts of Parliament should belong to the nation that gave it,
especially when this was attained by laying waste the land to the serious
injury of the general public. The landlords get it all now, though they
have never done anything to create it. Instead of feeling aggrieved,
should Parliament find it necessary, in the public interest, to take

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Alexander
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Alexander
Mackenzie.

' back what it has so long given, without any return, the landlords should
' only feel grateful for being allowed for so many years to enjoy property-
' rights and large incomes that unquestionably belonged to the nation.
' I shall conclude my statement by quoting two or three short extracts
' from an acknowledged authority on this question—*Scottish Legal
Antiquities*, by the late Cosmo Innes. Referring to the appropriation
' of the people's ancient rights to the land, foreshores, and fishings, by the
' landlords, he says (p. 154)—“I do not suppose that any cruelty or
' injustice was ever premeditated by the Legislature or the Government—
' that there was any intention to favour the rich at the expense of the
' poor, but there are things in the history of our law that I cannot help
' censuring—the more because I believe the evil was for the most part
' attributable to the straining of the law by lawyers. The books tell us
' what impediments the humane law in favour of the ‘puir pepil that
' labours the grunde’ had to encounter from the practising lawyers of the
' day. I think as little humanity has been shown in the divisions of
' commons. Looking over our country, the land held in common was
' of vast extent. In truth, the arable—the cultivated land of Scotland—
' the land early appropriated and held by charter, is a narrow strip on the
' river bank or beside the sea. The inland, the upland, the moor, the
' mountain, were really not occupied at all for agricultural purposes, or
' served only to keep the poor and their cattle from starving. They were
' not thought of when charters were made and lands feudalised. Now, as
' cultivation increased, the tendency in the agricultural mind was to
' occupy these wide commons, and our lawyers lent themselves to appro-
' priate the poor man's grazing ground to the neighbouring baron. They
' pointed to his charter with its clause of parts and pertinents, with its
' general clause of mosses and moors—clauses taken from the style book,
' not with any reference to the territory conveyed in that charter; and
' although the charter was hundreds of years old, and the lord had never
' possessed any of the common, when it came to be divided, the lord got
' the whole that was allocated to the estate, and the poor cottar none.
' The poor had no lawyers! Something of the same kind, I think,
' is taking place now (1872) by lawyers extending the meaning of words
' used in charters. I am afraid the grant *cum piscariis* has been pushed
' lately beyond its original meaning; and the question still so fresh, of
' the right to sea-shore has been determined somewhat harshly against the
' poor fisher seeking for bait, while the interest of the Crown has been
' made a pretext to annoy both the proprietor of the soil and the poor
' commons, who used to be considered the proper enjoyers of the Crown
' property.” Again he says—“I must go back for my great grievances
' to the time when wide territories that had long been held without
' charter first were sought to be held by parchment tenure. That was
' not a mere change in law and land tenures—it was part of a great
' revolution in society. Mr Maine lays it down, and truly, that the
' greatest revolution in the history of any people is when the patriarchal
' or tribe association is changed into the connection arising from land—
' the territorial, if you will—the patriotic bond, instead of the patriarchal.
' The misfortune was that in Scotland all such changes told against the
' poor. A clan in the Highlands before the fifteenth century lived in
' patriarchal fashion. The clansmen looked to the chief as their leader
' and father, but what we should call the common people of the clan held
' their crofts and pastures from father to son, from generation to genera-
' tion, by a right as indefeasible as the chief's.” A Crown charter was
' taken in favour of the chief “who got the whole land of the tribe in
' barony. And in the charters of the lands of a great clan the Crown

' charter bestowed upon the chief all the rights of jurisdiction, civil and criminal, with pit and gallows, instead of his old patriarchal authority. ' It (the change) was an immense advantage, speaking merely commercially, to the lord. He could now raise money upon the security of his seisin, could provide for his family, could if need be sell the lands which he had thus acquired in property. But it was not so advantageous for the poor clansmen, who had never thought of writings to bind their patriarchal head, and who now found themselves with no title of property, often without any written leases or rentals. They became altogether dependent on the will of the laird, and fell a long way below the position which they had held before the lands were feudalised. That, I think, was the most flagrant injustice inflicted by lawyers carrying out to the letter the doctrines of feudalism, which they assumed were the same with the old patriarchal occupation. Other and smaller rights of the people have been encroached upon by lawyers stretching a written title beyond its meaning. Amongst these perhaps some of us may hold the law as now settled in the matter of trout-fishing. Craig, a great feudalist, allows an exclusive right of the feudal proprietor in all fishing, even trout-fishing, where practised *lucri causa*, but distinguishes the trout-fishing which is pursued only for recreation; this distinction, however, has been lost sight of in modern times, and the most innocent and cheapest of sports wrested from the poor. One popular question was fortunate enough to come into Court only after the modern restoration of jury trials, and after the minds of our educated classes had come to appreciate the poor man, and I think there is now no danger of the people being deprived of their old rights of *road* and *way*. Let us hope that these rights may be vindicated with moderation and without encroaching on the rights of property. In England the paths to villages and churches, with styles through the hedges, contrast with the stone walls and the threatening placards that confine the wanderer through Scotland to the dusty high road." In another chapter he says—"I think it appears plainly that a large part of the population of the Highlands had no written tenures, and it suited the factors of those days—the Bailie Macwheebles of the time—to represent and to treat those immemorial occupants and dwellers on the land as holding at the absolute will of the first chief who was knowing enough to obtain a Crown charter." It is unnecessary to add anything to these remarks, but they are well worthy of consideration by every one interested in the question now being inquired into by the Royal Commission which I have the honour to address. I fear it might be considered presumptuous on my part to suggest any remedies here for grievances, now admitted to exist by most, if not all, of those who, when this Commission was granted, strenuously maintained that there was no foundation whatever for the statements, made by myself and others, as to the miserable conditions under which the crofters generally lived. One prominent factor then courageously wrote as follows:—"I am confident the result will not only prove beneficial to my worthy but misguided fellow-isleman, but will also vindicate many sorely-maligned proprietors and factors from the charges made against them by untruthful outside agitators, not to speak of others who, while personally conversant with local conditions, have not scrupled to throw out inferences which no view of the facts can justify." I doubt very much if this prediction has been verified altogether to the satisfaction of my friend. But the grievances are now very generally—I might almost say universally—admitted, and the time has, therefore, arrived when those who advocated the claims of the oppressed may fairly be asked to suggest

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Alexander Mackenzie.

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Alexander
Mackenzie.

' the remedies. And if the Commissioners wish to know my views on that point, I shall briefly state them. I shall afterwards be glad to answer any questions put to me, to the best of my ability, on the subject of this statement, my experience among the Highlanders of Canada, emigration, the feelings and determination of the people, and any other point on which I have gained any experience and formed an opinion. The principal remedies which I would propose are as follows:—1st, To break down the present deer forests and great farms, compulsorily if need be, and divide them among the people in small holdings, ranging from a few acres to moderately sized farms, so that the man at the bottom may fairly hope, by industry and economy, to climb further up the ladder of success. Under the present conditions there is nothing for a man to hope for between a small croft and a farm that will take several thousands of pounds to stock. The system could not have been more admirably planned had it been intended to drive the people to despair, with the view of their being finally forced by sheer necessity to leave their native land. 2nd, I would have the present value of the land ascertained by independent Government valuers, and give it to the people at that valuation on a permanent tenure, and on such conditions that they or their representatives could never be removed so long as they paid their rents. In the event of their being unable to pay their rents, and having in consequence to give up their holdings; or in the event of their leaving of their own will, I would have the value of the land ascertained, and on the landlord refusing to pay the difference, capitalised, between its original and improved values, I would allow the tenant to dispose of his holding to the highest offerer. Thus the results of the tenants' improvements as a class would be secured to themselves, instead of, as hitherto, periodically appropriated by the landlords. 3rd, I would accept no leases, on any conditions; for a lease only means that the landlord will get the tenants' improvements—the result of his expenditure of labour, brain, and money—for nothing, a little later on. 4th, Government should also form a scheme of peasant proprietary, by buying up estates coming into the market, and granting them in small holdings of various sizes to those who could pay a portion of the price down, the Government leaving the balance as a loan on the land at a moderate rate of interest—sufficient to pay up capital and interest in forty or fifty years. 5th, Landlords in legal possession of their estates, in the event of their being required by the State for a scheme of peasant proprietary, should get full compensation for the present agricultural value of their land, whenever any part of it may be acquired for the public by the nation. Thus the legal rights of those in possession may, to some extent, be brought into harmony with the moral and higher rights of the Crown and the people.'

41064. As a considerable portion of the paper which you have read refers to particulars concerning a single district and a remote time, I shall first ask you one or two questions connected with this part of your statement. You have stated or implied, with reference to the distribution of charitable assistance in the West Highlands,—and, I presume, particularly the district of Gairloch,—that money subscribed by charitable persons was disbursed in the form of wages for labour in the improvement of the soil; and that, in cases of that nature, the rent was raised upon the improvements thus effected?—Yes, there was interest charged on the money expended on this work that we did, and the payment that we got for that work was this meal.

41065. And you are well advised that the meal was the result of charitable subscriptions?—It was called, in the district, the destitution meal.

41066. But do you feel yourself really enabled to state that the labour paid for in that way—we may say from charitable sources—was made the basis of an increase of rent; or might it not have been that this meal was purchased with the funds of the proprietor?—That is quite possible. I don't commit myself to the statement. I say in my statement that this was understood in the district.

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INVERNESS.

Alexander Mackenzie.

41067. But you are not perfectly advised that that was the case?—I am not. I think, as a matter of fact, no money was sent. It was all sent in the shape of meal.

41068. In reference to the alleged conduct of Dr Mackenzie, who was factor on the Gairloch estate, one of the complaints seems to have been that he endeavoured to introduce a variety of small changes in a despotic manner; but I suppose it is allowed that his intentions in that respect were good?—Undoubtedly.

41069. Do any traces of his endeavours in that way remain?—Yes, I think on the whole, that the result of his proceedings has been beneficial. You will notice in my statement that I say so, but the act of taking away the cattle from the people in the manner in which it was done was indefensible.

41070. That is another subject, but I wish to know whether his proceedings in reference to the introduction of garden cultivation—though they may have been despotic or precipitate; I don't say they were so, but that they may have been so—have left any good traces behind them at all?—Do I understand you to mean the garden part of the scheme, or the whole scheme, including the trenching and draining of the crofts?

41071. No; I rather mean the cultivation of vegetables previously unknown to the people. Have they become better gardeners and cultivators than they were?—I don't think so. I don't think there is much trace of that left now.

41072. I understand also he was a great advocate of spade husbandry; have they remained better spade husbandmen and cultivators than they were?—I think the spade is hardly used now in the croft, except in the little plot of garden, and that very seldom. They use the *cas-chrom* or crooked spade.

41073. Then you don't think his views as to spade cultivation have left any traces behind them?—Not any material traces.

41074. But his intentions at the time you allow to have been good?—I allow his intentions to have been good all through.

41075. You mentioned in connection with one portion of this property, and with reference to others, that there had been a good number of evictions, as for instance in the Isle of Ewe and other places mentioned by you in that connection; were any of these evictions carried out under factor Mackenzie's rule?—I can scarcely give your Lordship a date. I rather think not; but there is one place—I don't know whether I should describe it as an eviction—I call it a removal. I think, in the district of Kernsary, the people must have been removed during his time or later. I am not however positive on that point.

41076. I believe Dr Mackenzie was not only a factor, but a farmer also. Are you enabled to state whether any removals or evictions were carried out by which he, as an occupier, personally benefited?—I think not. I think it was rather the other way. I think, when he took the Isle of Ewe, he had to import labourers to the island to work on the farm.

41077. With reference to the confiscation of cattle for the purpose of paying arrears of rent; at the time that was done, was Dr Mackenzie factor?—He was. I thought he was a trustee at the time, but I know since he was only a factor.

INVER-
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INVERNESS.

Alexander
Mackenzie.

41078. Then may he not have been acting under the direction of the trustees?—Possibly.

41079. Is it not possible that Dr Mackenzie may have been obliged to take severer measures for the recovery of the rent as a factor, than the proprietor would have felt himself justified in doing, had he been in independent management of his own estate? May he not have been acting under some official constraint in the matter?—It is possible, but my recollection of the time is that the Dowager Lady Mackenzie of Gairloch, who, I understand, was one of the trustees, in many cases reversed what Dr Mackenzie was doing in the case of the attempted removal of some of the people. Lady Mackenzie was considered to have behaved excellently to the people during the whole of that period, and I know myself that parties appealed to her when the Doctor wanted to remove them, and she insisted upon that not being done.

41080. Can you imagine any particular motive which Dr Mackenzie may have had for carrying out these measures with that unusual rigour? Was it in conformity with some rule of estate improvement and management, or was it just in the exercise of his ordinary functions as factor?—From having read a good deal of what he has written, as factor. I should be disposed to think it was a peculiar hobby of his own that he wanted to carry out. I believe one of the trustees was Mr Mackenzie of Ord, who was never seen in Gairloch. I never saw him, and a stranger who came into Gairloch in those days would have been noticed by everybody—they were few and far between. My idea is that Dr Mackenzie was allowed to do almost anything he liked in the circumstances.

41081. To turn to the more general branch of inquiry, you have given us very interesting particulars of your own early life and experience, and you, no doubt, from your earliest years, have had a full knowledge of the feelings of the people, especially the smaller tenants, with reference to land questions. Your furthest memory goes back to the time when the runrig system was superseded by the lotting system?—Yes, I remember it quite vividly.

41082. Among speculative writers, as you are well aware, there has been a reaction of opinion, and there has been an attempt made to show that some benefits or advantages were attached to the old system of cultivation by runrig. Do you think, from your memory, and from what you have since learnt, that the benefit of lotting, when properly carried out, is universally recognised; or do you think that some still look back with regret to the runrig system?—I believe there are a few who look back to it with regret, but I do not think that regret is well-founded.

41083. You think, so far as arable ground is concerned, the separation of lots is an unmixed benefit?—I do.

41084. Well, with reference to common holdings in pasture, do you think that the possession of a common holding in pasture is of essential benefit to the crofting community?—I believe that the crofting community cannot exist without it.

41085. But is there a benefit attached to the existence of the crofting community itself, or would it, in your mind, be preferable that the township should be, as it were, dissolved, and that the tenants should fall back on the possession entirely of individual tenancies—that all connection between the members of a township should be severed, and that they should be separate tenants; or do you think the preservation of a township, and what remains of it, is a benefit to the people?—I am not quite sure I understand your Lordship.

41086. One link that constitutes a township, we may suppose, is the possession of common pasture?—Yes.

41087. Well, do you think that is a feature that ought to be preserved, that the common pasture should not be divided and given separately to the people, but that there should be a common pasture preserved?—Yes; from what I know of the country I think anything else would be utterly impracticable, apart altogether from the question of which is the best. I think that system is the best. They have been combined as they are now in holding the pasture, but even if it were not so, the other is impracticable. You could not divide the pasture between the various crofters.

INVERNESS.
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INVERNESS.
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Alexander Mackenzie.

41088. But it has been suggested to me that common pasture may have this bad effect, that it may induce people to rely upon the possession of a certain quantity of inferior stock, and may make them careless of the improvement of the arable ground, and that it may be in the general interest of the people that they should be deprived of the common pasture, and that they should be thrown upon arable cultivation more exclusively, and that then they would draw the greatest resources from the cultivated ground?—I do not think so.

41089. Do you think that the arable lands of a township where there is no pasture would be in any degree better cultivated than the lands of a township which had pasture?—I believe they might be better cultivated if the holdings were larger, and if the people were quite sure of getting full value for any improvements they made, and were sure of not being removed. But, as I said already, a small arable croft is, in my opinion, quite unfit to maintain anybody in decent prosperity. The fact is, I think, a man is on the whole, except among the fishing population, almost as well off without a croft of that nature as with it, unless he has pasture.

41090. If it were possible in any way to promote the expansion of the small holdings or promote the restoration of land to the people as occupiers, do you think they would be more anxious, in the Western Highlands at least, to obtain it in the shape of arable or in the form of additional common pasture?—Well, both are very much required, but I think it has always been the feeling of the Highlanders that they preferred pasture.

41091. Have you any personal experience or knowledge of the club farm system as distinguished from the common pasture?—Nothing special.

41092. Do you think the people would be inclined to contemplate the institution of club farms, or do you think they would generally prefer personal shares in the cattle themselves?—Possibly there might be some difficulty at first in getting them to agree about going into a club farm, because some will have more stock than others, and there will be other difficulties in the way. I have no hesitation in saying that the club farm system is by far the best of the two, and I believe the people, after a time, if that system were encouraged, would come into the adoption of it.

41093. Do you think, supposing tracts of common pasture were restored to the township, that the people would generally be able, in time, to stock the ground without Government assistance?—A great many of them would be, if they had a permanent hold on the soil, because there would not be the slightest difficulty about getting money from friends, and money from bankers, if the parties lending the money knew perfectly well that the people could not be disturbed at any moment the proprietor thought proper. They would have something to fall back upon.

41094. It was suggested to us the other day that some change on the law might take place by which the people might be all able to mortgage their stock, and give a preferential claim upon their stock to parties advancing money upon it. Do you think it would be desirable to facilitate the practice of raising money upon stock in any way by law?—In

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Alexander
Mackenzie.

my opinion that is about the most practical suggestion I have heard since this Commission sat. I may state that in America that system prevails, and there is another by which a man can even mortgage the crop on the ground when it braids. He can have money advanced on it, and it is a heritable security as long as it is not cut. Immediately it is cut and removed from the ground it loses that character. Consequently it usually leads to short loans for two months.

41095. Are you well satisfied that a system of that sort for increasing and facilitating credit would succeed as well in this country as it does in the colonies, where there is such a rapid natural increase in the value of property?—No, I do not think it would be wise to do what they do in the colonies in that respect, for the reason your Lordship states, as well as on account of the different way in which they hold the soil. That is to say, people will not trust them with money under present conditions.

41096. You don't think, then, the crofters have much to hope for from borrowing money to purchase stock, but rather from the natural increase of their stock, and the assistance of friends?—Not unless you give them a permanent hold of the soil.

41097. You have spoken about the partition of common, and in speaking of that it would rather raise the question as to who possessed the common rights. As the lawyers interpret those rights, the common belongs to the proprietor, not to the occupier, and a partition has been effected between the proprietors without any reference to the claims of occupiers. Well, there is a good deal of common or commony which is not yet partitioned between proprietors. Under the present law, how do you think that that might be dealt with, so as to save the interest of the occupier in some degree? Granted that the commony is shared among the proprietors, could any restriction be imposed on each individual proprietor as to the appropriation of the common ground, so that he might be obliged to leave a portion of it at least in the occupancy of the small tenants?—Well, I am not a lawyer, and that is rather a difficult question. My own position in regard to that is this, that, although I mentioned ancient rights and tenure, I only put them forward with the view of showing that the people, the tenants, have a moral right to look to the present owners of the land to meet them and do something for them in the present circumstances. I hold that any proprietor in possession for forty years is legally unassailable so far as his legal rights are concerned, and any discussion we may have about that, except in the sense in which I use it, as showing we have a moral claim, seems to me a waste of time in a question like this. At the same time, I hope our friends in this crisis will keep in view how they got possession of the holdings they now occupy; and though we cannot claim any of the land legally, that they will be disposed to meet the demands of the people, and behave to them as well as they can in present circumstances.

41098. What you look to, then, is a sort of benevolent compromise by which they will make all reasonable concessions?—Yes; but stop them from appropriating in future anything belonging to other people. I want them to possess everything that can be proved to belong to them at present, but, from this moment not to be allowed legally to appropriate any single thing that belongs to others.

41099. That does away with all necessity on this occasion to enter into the question of the ancient tenure of land, and the period at which what you call feudal rights were introduced?—Yes, for all practical purposes.

41100. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You are a magistrate of Inverness?—I am.

41101. And you hold several other offices in connection with that position?—I do.

INVERNESS.
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41102. You have taken a great interest in this Commission from the beginning?—I have; very much so.

41103. And I believe you make some claim to being the person who first suggested that it should be issued?—I think you admitted that.

Alexander
Mackenzie.

41104. How many years ago was that?—I think it was in 1877.

41105. You have explained in the statement made what you have done yourself in going about among the people. Were you requested by some friends of the Highlanders to undertake that duty?—I was.

41106. May I take it for granted that the object of that was, that it being so very novel a procedure altogether, and many of the people being unable to speak English, and long depressed, there might have been a difficulty in getting proper evidence brought forward?—Was that the chief reason that caused you to be employed in this manner?—Yes; and feeling as we all did who knew anything about the Highlands, that the people were in such a state of—I will not use the word terror, but the next thing to it—of the factors throughout the country,—and especially the ground officers, that they would be afraid to open their mouths even to Her Majesty's Commissioners, unless they were roused up and encouraged to do so.

41107. And you and others considered that the issuing of this Commission was a matter of very great importance, or might be a matter of such importance to the Highlanders, that the people should be encouraged in every way to speak out?—I think so, and I think indeed that it is the most important event for the Highlanders since the battle of Culloden.

41108. I suppose no ordinary commission would have prompted you and your friends to take the step you have done?—No.

41109. I understand you to wish to make an explanation of something that appears in the minutes of the Commission, with regard to Mr Macdonald, Tormore. There is something in the minutes about a conversation or alleged conversation in a railway carriage?—Yes.

41110. Is it correct or not?—It is not. There is not a word of truth in it, as I can prove by gentlemen, some of whom are here present, holding the highest offices in Inverness, who were in the carriage with us.

41111. Now among the different things you say landlords have been taking, or trying to take away, you made reference to one subject which I don't understand very well, you said they tried to get possession of the herring; what do you mean by that?—I mean that in the past, grants were given to the proprietors by the Crown of the white fishing along the coast, and that they often tried to establish their rights to the white fishing, which included the herring, and that they succeeded so far that they got their electoral privileges,—in fact, they managed to secure qualifications to vote on these rights to fishing herring and white fish, and Stair in his *Institutes* distinctly declares that they not only maintained they had these rights, but that they actually had the rights, and on the east coast of Banffshire, I think there are about thirty cases recorded in which sasines were granted on such bases as white fishing. But I am happy to say that recently, by a decision of Lord Cairns in 1875, the last vestige of that claim has disappeared, and our friends can have no claim to the herring and other white fishing at any rate.

41112. Referring to matters at Gairloch for one moment, in which Dr Mackenzie's name was frequently mentioned, has Dr Mackenzie, all his life, not had the reputation of being a most humane and benevolent man?—Yes, he had.

INVERNESS. 41113. Another question. If I am not very much misinformed, Dr Mackenzie is a member of your Land Law Association?—Yes, but he is not now a factor.

Alexander Mackenzie. 41114. You were asked a question by Lord Napier about whether you approved to some extent, or to any extent, of the system of mortgaging stock. Although it might be a dangerous thing in some respects to give such preferences, don't you think it would be very desirable to have some means, in the event of a peasant proprietary being established, whereby, for the original stock necessary to stock the enlarged crofts, they might give such a security to their friends?—Yes, I think it would be an excellent plan. There may be difficulties as to details, but the Royal Commissioners and members of Parliament could have no difficulty in regulating details in a matter of that kind.

41115. The system of mortgaging movable property is very much used in America and Australia, is it not?—I am not so well acquainted with Australia and the other colonies, except from reading about them, but I know it prevails largely in Canada, where I have been.

41116. The persons there are proprietors, and therefore there is a difference?—Yes.

41117. But there would be no difference if they were peasant proprietors?—No practical difference.

41118. It is commonly stated that there would be a practical difficulty in establishing a peasant proprietary?—I have heard that stated.

41119. Suppose, however, there were a peasant proprietary or fixity of tenure and compensation for improvements, is it not your experience that the crofter class have saved a good deal of money which is now lying in the banks?—Undoubtedly.

41120. Take the case, for instance, of the Highlands; is it not a fact, or is it not commonly reported as a fact, that a great deal of the deposits in the banks come from the crofting class, and those in that position?—I have heard it reported, but it is a statement as to which I cannot say from any experience of my own whether it is accurate or not. My impression is that it is accurate; that the largest portion of the deposits are from the crofter class; but I may be allowed to say that my experience is that those crofters who have deposits have earned those deposits, not from the crofts but from the sea.

41121. What I was pointing to is, that it is perhaps not the crofters themselves but their relatives,—people belonging to the crofting class, for instance, a daughter of a crofter who has earned some money in service, or the second or third son who is away from the croft altogether. Don't you think they have a good deal of money?—Yes, there is no doubt of that; and many of them who are away in the colonies possess a great amount of wealth, and would only be too glad to help their relatives if they saw them in a position where they could get a comfortable livelihood.

41122. From what class could deposits come in the north except from the crofting class? Could it come from the proprietors?—We have not any evidence of it in the Highlands.

41123. Do you think the large farmers have much?—Well, I think their days are about done.

41124. Then don't you think, following out this idea, that the relatives of the crofters, the people who could get enlarged crofts and become peasant proprietors also, would take their money out of the bank if they knew they had a safe security in giving it to their friends?—There is no doubt at all but they would, but my idea is that no scheme can ever succeed unless you give the people full rights to the land. There is no

use borrowing or talking about anything except on the basis of the people being secured in their own improvements.

INVERNESS.

41125. I am speaking of the proposed peasant proprietary?—Yes.

INVERNESS.

41126. Are there any banks so safe as the land, according to your opinion?—I believe not.

Alexander Mackenzie.

41127. Talking of emigration, as long as there is land in this country capable of profitable cultivation, what benefit could it possibly be to a man to emigrate to any country where he may have, probably, the same quantity of hardships to go through that he has at home, if not more?—As a matter of fact, the hardships which the early colonists in Canada suffered were much more severe than any labour that they would have to undergo at home in working the land here.

41128. You have carefully guarded yourself, I observe, against going into matters of title of estates beyond the prescriptive period. May I ask your views in regard to forests and game? I presume you are not in favour of disafforesting every forest in the Highlands?—No, I should be very sorry to see all sport abolished. I have, perhaps, too much clannish feeling towards the old chiefs to allow me to desire to see them done out of their sport altogether.

41129. Then I presume that where the land is high and suitable for them, you have no objections at all to deer forests, and particularly where it does not in any way interfere with the possessions or the comforts of the people?—None whatever; at the same time, I look upon sport as a luxury quite as much as brandy and whisky, and I think those who use them should be very heavily taxed for them.

41130. Very good; but you think the tax must be reasonable, because you don't want to destroy sport?—No.

41131. With regard to grouse shootings may I take it that your views are much in the same position as those with regard to deer forests,—that so far as they don't in any way interfere legitimately with the people and their rights to the soil they occupy, you have no objection?—No, I have much less objection to grouse shootings than to deer forests, because I do not think that in many places they do injury at all. They are often away from the crofts.

41132. We come now to another species, and that is what you call low country game. May I ask what your views are in regard to game upon cultivated lands; I mean not winged game, but four-footed animals? Do you wish to go any further than has been already done?—That is a question I did not pay any attention to. I devoted my attention almost entirely to the crofter phase of the question, and I think you will find the large farmers are perfectly able to take care of themselves.

41133. But we are speaking of the small farmer with ground game upon his arable land?—There is no doubt ground game on these farms do an immense amount of mischief.

41134. Do you propose anything further than the present law allows with regard to ground game upon the arable land of the tenants?—I think, as the Commissioners would have seen very well throughout the inquiry, that there is no great use in legislating on the question of ground game so long as the people feel that they may be evicted next Whitsunday if they touch a rabbit or a hare. As you heard all through, the last Ground Game Act is virtually a dead letter in the Highlands. All a factor has to do is to lift his finger in a township, and the people will not touch an animal.

41135. Then you are not satisfied with the state of ground game law upon arable land?—No.

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INVERNESS.
Alexander
Mackenzie.

41136. You have been over a great deal of the Highlands?—I think I have been over nearly all, at one time or another, except the island of Lewis.

41137. In what state of mind did you find the people you visited and spoke to in your recent journeys as regards their present condition; were they satisfied?—Far from that, but I found generally (especially in the west) the people in a state of despair. At my own meetings people would come to the place, and say ‘Oh, what is the use? What can they ‘do?’ The people seem to have lost all courage, and to be almost in a state of despair. They have no encouragement or incentive to live, and they simply vegetate, as it were, where they are, and they cannot see a door of escape in any direction.

41138. Not only in a state of depression, but in a state of despair, for the future?—Yes.

41139. Do you think they are very much poorer in their circumstances than they were forty years ago? They generally told us themselves that they were?—Well, as to their condition forty years ago I cannot speak from personal experience.

41140. I will put it to your own experience thirty years ago?—Well, in Gairloch, where I knew people, I have no hesitation in saying they are much better off now than they were when I remember.

41141. Better clothed?—Yes, I think they are; but as to other places which I have only known within the last fifteen years or so, I could not make a comparison.

41142. Do you think the people in the Highlands are much better educated than they were in your younger days?—Yes, they are.

41143. Don’t you think a good deal of that education has arisen indirectly from their being obliged to go year by year almost to the south and east for work, and that they have thereby picked up a good deal of information?—I do not know; I think you will find the Highlander is naturally shrewd. I think, speaking from my own experience, and from what Mr Jolly, Her Majesty’s inspector of schools, told me, that with fewer advantages the Highlanders progress in education much more than those in the south.

41144. Did you, in your recent journeys, find any feeling of what I may call political discontent at their position further than mere poverty?—I do not exactly know what you mean by ‘political.’

41145. Except their social discontent, did you find any symptoms of any other discontent?—I found no discontent except discontent with the laws and with the proprietors and factors.

41146. But that altogether arose, I suppose, from their being poor?—From their being poor.

41147. Do you think they would be contented with moderate reforms in their favour at present?—I am disposed to think that if steps were taken, and the people were satisfied with them, you might check the feeling which I know is getting very strong among the people.

41148. Then there is a feeling?—There is a feeling, and a growing feeling.

41149. I shall put it in this form. Do you consider from your knowledge of the feeling of the Highlanders whom you have seen in this country, and what you may have seen and heard abroad from those who have gone abroad, that the present is a very critical period in the history of the Highlands altogether?—Undoubtedly.

41150. And you think that now is the most opportune time for doing something to put matters on a different footing?—Yes, and I feel and believe that if no steps are taken almost immediately, you will have a

social revolution in the Highlands. I have heard expressions made use of by the people that I would not like to state publicly—a determination expressed in the event of remedies not being forthcoming.

INVERNESS.

41151. You have yourself seen a deal of the world, and I presume I may take it you are a Highlander to the backbone; and without being very extreme in your views, I suppose you feel very strongly about the state of the Highlanders?—I do.

INVERNESS.
Alexander Mackenzie.

41152. And I suppose you represent many people like yourself when you say that you will be satisfied with a reasonable reform?—Yes; we will be very glad to take all we can get, but I have no hesitation in saying that if no remedies are forthcoming there will be an agitation in the Highlands that there was never the like of. I know we had to keep it back instead of encouraging agitation since this Commission commenced.—I and others of my friends who take an interest in the question. We found people who were forcing on public meetings and a regular propaganda throughout the Highlands in connection with this question, and we had to put our foot down pretty firmly to keep the people from the south from coming here, and carrying on an agitation, independently of us, in the north, into every corner of the Highlands. We thought it only respectful to this Commission that no such agitation should be permitted till this Commission was at an end; but the feeling exists very strongly in the Highlands, and among Highland people at home and abroad,—for I get letters from Highlanders in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada pressing us to go on and get up an agitation from one end of the country to the other; and not only so, but to send lecturers to the large towns in England to rouse the people there; because many feel that, until we get the English people to take up the question, we will scarcely ever get anything from our own representatives.

41153. Then your influence, and that of your friends who have taken the lead in this matter, has been of a restraining character in every respect? May I say so?—Yes, entirely so.

41154. Are those recommendations that you suggest in the paper you have read to-day generally approved of by people in the same position as yourself in this movement?—Very extensively indeed.

41155. And whatever reforms may be granted, should, in their opinion, go upon the lines there represented?—Well, I think so; and I know that is the prevailing opinion among those who take a leading part in the question.

41156. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—In the first answer you gave to Mr Fraser-Mackintosh, I think you stated that, in going round the country, your object was to rouse up the Highlanders to a sense of their duties, and in the last answer you said it was to restrain them. May I ask what was your object?—I think you misunderstood me. I said my object in going round the Highlanders was to rouse the people to their duty, to give evidence before this Commission; but in regard to my answer to the last question, I understood the question to be of a different character, whether we were keeping down agitation, while the inquiry was proceeding, in favour of a change in the land laws. The Crown having appointed this Commission, I went round and pointed out to the people the absolute necessity that they should come forward, and, like men, present their grievances to the Royal Commission; that was the burthen of my song.

41157. Are you the gentleman referred to by the Federation of Celtic Societies in their circulars as having been employed to go round the country?—I am not; I refused to have anything to do with it.

41158. In going round the country did you find it difficult at all to arouse the people to a sense of their duties?—I did in some cases. They

INVERNESS.
were perfectly sensible of their duties, but they were so much afraid that they were unwilling to come forward.

INVERNESS.
Alexander Mackenzie.
41159. You, I think, preceded the Commission in most parts of the mainland, and in a considerable portion of the islands?—I preceded the Commission in the whole of Skye, and part of North Uist, in Benbecula, and in part of South Uist, and then, on the west coast all along, from Thurso to Loch Carron.

41160. You have, in your paper, given us your proposed remedies for the present state of things, and among other points you remarked that you thought the people should have land at a valuation on a permanent tenure. Did you give no intimation of your views on these matters to the people whom you met on your rounds?—Yes, I stated them sometimes at my meetings.

41161. Because in another part of your paper you say you dissuaded them from asking fixity of tenure?—In the Irish phrase. I objected to the term, because I did not like the look of it.

41162. But you told them your own opinions?—I did.

41163. And so far you influenced them on that question?—I did.

41164. You also took a considerable interest in the question of evictions?—Yes. Will you allow me to say, with reference to what you said about my going for a certain association, that I refused to go for any association whatever, unless I was absolutely untrammelled and left to use my own discretion in whatever I did. I went entirely free from any control of, or responsibility to, any association in the world.

41165. You stated rather broadly that the evidence was in no manner prepared by you. Now, you preceded us in the greater number of places where we went, and you admit that in those places you intimated your views?—Yes.

41166. You also took considerable interest in the matter of evictions?—I did.

41167. Did you not take the trouble, as you went round, to find out what evictions had taken place?—Well, no, I did not, because, as you are aware, I wrote a history of the Highland Clearances, and the book was published before I went out, and I had no interest in making that inquiry.

41168. There are certain statements about matters within my own cognisance, with regard to Gairloch, which, I need not say, fill me with indignation, but as to which I cannot enter into dispute, though I will ask you one or two questions respecting them. I refer to a point on which Lord Napier has already spoken—the statement that 'I was obliged to work on my father's croft—filling drains and removing stones, for which we got Indian and bad oatmeal in payment. This meal, I always understood, was "destitution" meal. But whether that was so or not, interest was charged for the improvements made, and my father had to pay it so long as we remained in that croft.' Do you mean to insinuate or allow it to be understood that it was possible that this money, which was advanced by the Destitution Committee in charity, was spent on the property, and interest charged for it?—I know that was the feeling on the whole property at the time.

41169. Might you not easily have ascertained for yourself, before you made this charge in public, whether it was true or not?—I do not know how I could.

41170. Might you not have put a question to some person who knew?—I do not suppose, if it were true, that anybody would now admit it.

41171. But might you not have asked to have the facts explained to you if they required explanation?—If I knew of whom.

41172. Are you aware that, at the time of the destitution, the trustees on the Gairloch estate borrowed £10,000 from Government, for the purpose of giving labour?—I was aware that they borrowed money, but I did not know the amount.

INVERNESS.

INVERNESS.

41173. You are aware also that there was money got from the Destitution Committee for charitable purposes?—I was not aware that money was got. I understood meal was got in considerable quantity. It was sent in the shape of Indian meal and oatmeal.

Alexander Mackenzie.

41174. At that time, I presume, the merchants in the country were unable to advance meal?—I think at that time, there was only one merchant in the whole district.

41175. And when the potatoes failed it was necessary to provide the people with meal?—Certainly.

41176. But whether they were paid in money or the money's worth in meal, the question here is as to the money advanced, or meal advanced by the Destitution Committee for charitable purposes,—whether you wish it to be understood that interest was charged to the tenants for that, and paid to the trustees on the Gairloch property?—All I can say is this, that we did work for which we expected to get payment in money. Instead of that we got payment in meal that was unfit for human food, and an additional rent of 15s. or 16s. was put on my father's croft for the labour for which we got that meal in payment.

41177. But that meal was not destitution meal?—It was called so in the district. I was only from eight to twelve years of age, and I don't know of my own knowledge whether it was so or not,—and I say so in my statement.

41178. You mention that the seeds which Dr Mackenzie forced on the people were forced on them without any instructions how to use them. Did he not circulate a small pamphlet, at the time, containing instructions?—I need not tell you, there were very few people in Gairloch who could read in those days.

41179. The ground officers could?—Well, the ground officers were just about as bad.

41180. You refer to Dr Mackenzie seizing cattle and glutting the market; do you think all the cattle in the parish of Gairloch would have glutted the market?—I do, at that time of the year.

41181. Is it not the case that the prices of cattle happened to be abnormally low over the country?—I say in my statement the prices were unusually low at the time, and the consequence of these thousands of cattle having been put into the market at a time when prices were so unusually low was, that there was no return to the people, and of that I can produce evidence on oath from many people in Gairloch still living.

41182. The statement is that the Gairloch cattle glutted the market?—Just so.

41183. Are you aware of the system on which the rents of crofts all over the Western Highlands, and I am surprised to find, in some parts of the Eastern Highlands, used to be paid—at what time they were paid?—I always understood it was afterward in Gairloch.

41184. As a matter of fact, it is the case that all over the Highlands all the crofters' rents were forehanded. It was presumed to be an illegality on an entailed estate, and Dr Mackenzie, instead of exacting, remitted a half year's rent. Will you modify the statement now which says that Dr Mackenzie exacted an additional half-year's rent in the year of the destitution?—You know the fact, and I don't, but I say that was

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the common report in the district. You having stated the fact that he forgave a rental, I, of course, withdraw the statement.

INVERNESS.
Alexander Mackenzie.
41185. But why do you give expression to common opinion in the district when you don't know the real fact?—I just say what I was told. The great fact remains that nearly all the cattle were taken away from the people, and the people were nearly ruined in consequence. There was scarcely a cattle beast in Gairloch, without a big patch of white paint on its side.

41186. *Mr Cameron.*—You stated that the destitution last year in the Highlands was not such as was represented by the proprietors and factors; what do you mean by that? Do you mean that the proprietors and factors were the means of calling public attention to it?—Yes, nearly all the meetings that were called on the west coast were called by factors and addressed by factors.

41187. You are surely aware that public attention was first called to it by a Bill which was introduced into the House of Commons called The Seeds Bill, introduced by Dr Cameron?—Yes, I know there was such a Bill.

41188. So you may say he was responsible, if anybody was, for calling attention to the destitution?—Yes, in that case. Allow me to add that I make this same declaration about the extent of the destitution that prevailed, at the beginning at a meeting in Edinburgh.

41189. With regard to your own position, as I understand, you went round the crofters in the Long Island, and the north-west coast of Sutherland, with the idea of what is commonly called educating them?—Well, you may call it that.

41190. But it was called so in the public prints?—*The Scotsman* is the only paper that called it so.

41191. You don't call it educating them?—No, I call it encouraging them to come forward and present evidence to the Commission.

41192. Then, if it was not for the purpose of educating them, may I ask for what purpose it was?—Yes; I will repeat what I have said already. I went to encourage them, knowing that they were so much afraid of proprietors and factors and ground officers that they would be afraid to present themselves at all before the Commission. I went and pointed out to them the utter fallacy of this notion, and that the Crown had sent down gentlemen to inquire into their grievances, who would listen to all they had to say and protect them. I encouraged them in every way to come, and, if they had grievances, to present them to their Queen through the Royal Commission.

41193. But do you believe that without your presence the crofters would have been afraid to state their grievances to the Royal Commission in open Court?—I do; and not only would they have been afraid to state them, but many of them would never have come before the Commission.

41194. But how is it that the Commissioners—at least I can answer for myself—have found no distinction as to the courage of the crofters between those places where they had the advantage of your presence and other places where they had not?—There is a reason for that. I think I may fairly say that some portions of the districts which I did not visit were not so much trampled down as those districts that I visited, and further, that they had the advantage of seeing what the people in the west did, by coming forward manfully, and finding no bad consequences from their having come forward. I think these two reasons will account for the fact; and another reason is that although I did not go, other people did.

41195. With the same object?—Well, I should think so; I fancy so.

41196. Although, of course, I am answering for myself, yet I believe

I am answering for the rest of the Commissioners, that it made no possible difference in our views, or in our acceptation of the evidence which we received, don't you think that possibly it might have had a prejudicial effect on the public mind, this evidence being prepared by you and others going round in front of us and the result being, that papers were produced which were excessively like each other, and bore the traces of the same hand?—I have already said that no evidence was prepared by me, but I have no doubt going did influence the public somewhat in that direction, but we had faith in the Royal Commissioners, and felt that they would not be so influenced, when they knew the facts; and we had to decide between two things—whether the evidence would be presented at all, or whether, having been presented, its weight would be diminished in consequence of our having gone forward in advance of the Commission.

41197. If the thing had to be done over again you would do the same?—I do not think it would be necessary now.

41198. But with the experience you have had, would you do the same if it had to be done over again?—I would, in similar circumstances.

41199. You say the crofters at Poolewe were afraid to give evidence; have you any evidence of that?—They told me so themselves.

41200. But do you think they kept back any evidence we don't possess, in consequence of that fear?—Yes.

41201. There still is evidence which might have been brought before us, but which was not brought forward in consequence of their being afraid?—Yes.

41202. In spite of your visit?—Yes.

41203. Then in that case your visit does not appear to have done much good?—Possibly not. The people were afraid to volunteer information, and expected the Commissioners to ask certain questions, which they did not ask, not knowing the local circumstances.

41204. Now, as I understand, one of your proposals is that you think all sporting rights of proprietors should be confiscated; I don't use the word in an offensive sense, but I mean they should be taken possession of by the public?—I mean, in the event of the land being required by the people or the nation, that, in estimating its value, its value as a deer forest should not be taken into consideration by the Government or Parliament. I do not know whether you would call that confiscation or not; it is not long since these rights were established by Act of Parliament, and if Parliament could give these rights, I do not see why they should not transfer them to others, if necessary in the public interest.

41205. But at present they form part of the value of the estate?—Yes, a very important part.

41206. You said, in answer to Mr Fraser-Mackintosh, that no bank is so safe as land. How do you reconcile your ideas as to what should be done with the land with the statement that no bank is so safe as the land?—In what way?

41207. You suggest that what you admit to be the principal value of the land at present should be taken over by the public, and yet you say the holding of land is the very best security a man could have. If it is to be taken away, how can it be good security?—If you get full value, what could be better security? I hold you will get full security not only for the land, but for its agricultural value, but I hold that you have no right to expect value for this inflation—large sums of money given by wealthy people for the mere purpose of sport; and I may say, in many cases known to myself, mere brutality.

41208. But you admit that at present it forms part and a large and valuable part of the value of the land; and therefore, if that is

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considered as being a part of the value of the land now, if it were taken away the value of the land would be reduced by this valuable portion of it?—No doubt, the value of the land would be reduced to the extent of the value put upon the land—but which did not belong to the land itself—by Act of Parliament, but which is no intrinsic part of the value of the land itself.

41209. Still it would be part of the security which you say the land constitutes to the greatest degree?—No; I only say the land would be the best security—not the sources of revenue that you can plant on it to-day and take off to-morrow.

41210. With regard to these sporting rights which you would take away, is it not a fact within your knowledge that many proprietors in the Highlands really live by the rents which they obtain from shootings?—I believe that is so.

41211. And that if these were taken away from them, they would be unable to do that amount of justice to their properties and their crofters—moderate though it may be in some cases—which they do at present?—I believe they could make their properties equally valuable by encouraging the getting back of the people, whom the sheep farmers undoubtedly drove out of the country. My belief is the people will very soon drive the deer away, and get back to their old position; and I believe the landlord will be better off having the people cultivating the land, with the land as their only security.

41212. That is hardly an answer to my question; what I want to know is, if these sporting rights, which form an important element of value, are taken away, what is the proprietor to do in the meantime, and in what manner will he be able to do justice to the crofting population he may have?—I suppose he will have to do as other people do. He has been getting an inflated income, and living up to it, and if it is curtailed he will just have to modify his expenditure.

41213. May he not have to sell the property?—He may have to sell part of it, and very likely that would be a good thing for him and the country too.

41214. Would he not, in some cases, have to sell the whole of it?—I do not think so.

41215. With regard to another remedy, I may assume it as a fact—indeed you have admitted that at present bankers will not advance money to the crofters to stock farms?—No, I believe that to be the case. I believe more—that they will not even advance it to the sheep farmers, and consequently the farms when they fall vacant are not let.

41216. But you stated also, that if the crofter had a permanent hold of the soil, then the banker would be willing to advance money?—I do, because I have spoken to bankers, and they said unhesitatingly they would advance it.

41217. I suppose you will admit, nobody can have so permanent an interest in the soil as the proprietor?—I am not quite sure I understand you.

41218. You say that at present the crofter has not a permanent interest in the soil; will you admit that the proprietor has?—Yes.

41219. Now, supposing you were told that a proprietor who has a permanent interest in the soil wished to raise money to stock a farm, and that he was told by the banker that stock afforded no security, and that he could not lend him money on such security, would you not modify your view as to the crofter being placed in that position—and being able to obtain money?—No, I would not, because I assume that the crofter has a permanent hold of the soil, and could offer as security not merely

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Alexander
Mackenzie.

his stock but the improvements he may be making or going to make on his property ; whereas the proprietor going to a banker may already have burdened his estate to the last penny he could borrow on it, and may not have anything to offer but the stock, such as the crofter has under present conditions.

41220. But do you say the banker would lend money on improvements which he was going to make ?—Not exactly that, unless they were in the course of being made.

41221. But even then, do you think a banker would lend money upon improvements that were not actually finished ?—I believe he would sooner lend money on these conditions than under present conditions, because a man may make improvements now, and next Whitsunday they may go into the landlord's hands ; whereas, with permanency of tenure, there is more probability that the tenant will make them, and when they are made, they are his own, and cannot be taken away by any one else.

41222. I was not comparing the crofter of the present time with your ideal crofter of the future. I was comparing the crofter of the future with the position of the proprietor of the present time, who is surely in a better position for raising money than a crofter in the most favourable circumstances could be ?—I have no hesitation in saying, that if any proprietor goes to the bank for money to stock a farm, and if he can show he has not mortgaged his estate to the last penny, and gives a mortgage to the banker in addition to the security of the stock, the banker will be very glad to lend money on such security.

41223. I have not the slightest doubt he will do so, but the security of a property which now could be obtained without going to a banker at all, at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is surely not the same as the security of a flying stock ?—No, but we seem to misunderstand each other. My idea is, that if you give a permanent tenure to the crofter he can offer more than his stock, he can offer his interest in the improvements on his lands, they being his own, whereas now neither he nor the proprietor who is already mortgaged up to his ears can offer anything but the stock itself ; and then there is the additional fact, that the proprietor can now come in and take the stock away from the crofter for his rent.

41224. Is it not a fact that the crofter will require to get the stock before he commences the improvements ?—Yes.

41225. How can he offer improvements which are not begun as security for the stock on which he wishes to borrow the money ?—Well, there is a great deal of friendly feeling existing among Highlanders at home even yet, though it is deteriorating, and I have no doubt they would club together and become security for one another to the banks if they got hold of the soil in the way I suggest ; and seeing this the banks would not hesitate to advance the money even on their personal security, and much less so when they know that those who become security have an incentive to go on and improve their holdings.

41226. In fact, you suggest that the crofter should go to the banker in the usual way with a collateral security ?—Yes, and say, ‘Here we are with ‘permanent rights to our holdings, instead of being tenants at will, as ‘we were before, and no landlord can come in and take all in the shape ‘of additional rent, and leave nothing for you.’

41227. All I want to point out is that the stock is not sufficient security ?—No, if you look at my statement you will find that I call it an unreasonable proposal that money should be advanced on stock under the present condition of the land laws. I consider it most unreasonable of the crofters to ask such a thing.

41228. But even in the future you admit he will require some friends

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INVERNESS. as collateral security ; the tenure in the future will not be sufficient to give the security required by the banker ?—It would be sufficient after a few years, when he had made certain improvements, unless he mortgaged the improvements which he had already made.

Alexander Mackenzie. 41229. But he would want the money at once and not after a few years ?—You know that, in these crofts and small holdings, if you put a small stock on at first it will very soon increase if looked after by the parties themselves, instead of leaving it to other parties to look after.

41230. Do you believe that the consolidation of farms which has been going on to the detriment as you think, and as I think too, of the Highlands in general, is coming to a natural end ?—I believe practically it is coming to a natural end.

41231. Then, without coming to those remedies which you point out, can you suggest any other means of harmonious co-operation between landlords and tenants by which large farms may be again re-distributed among the smaller tenants ?—Well, it is very difficult, but I think it is made to appear more difficult than it really is. Two or three farms have been advertised recently to be given up to small tenants. There are two especially in the Isle of Skye,—one, I think, on the farm of Ullinish offered in six holdings, but I happen to know that they are asking the same rent for these six farms that the old tenant was paying.

41232. Do you know the date of that ?—I do not, but there is another, Suishnish and Borreraig, until lately in the possession of the Established Church minister of Strath, and it was paying so badly that he got the proprietor to take it off his hands, and put it into the market, and he was asking the same rent as the old tenant had paid for it. He was asking the same rent from six new tenants, and I know a gentleman who offered within £30 of that rent, but the negotiation was broken off, yet he expects crofters not only to give the old rent and build new houses on the place, but also to take over the sheep stock at valuation in a year like this, when the price of sheep is unprecedented in the history of the country. That is the reason. Old rents are asked, and the tenants are asked to take over stock when prices are unprecedentedly high. No sane man would do anything of the kind.

41233. Then you think the only way in which that should be done would be by the valuation of these farms ?—I believe proprietors could do a great deal just now, by breaking up these farms and offering them to people who would take them ; not to insist on the stock being taken at valuation, but to put it in the market, getting the highest price which the market would give to the proprietor.

41234. Of course you know the proprietor is bound to take the stock at a valuation ?—Yes, I know that.

41235. Then that would be a loss to the proprietor at once ?—I do not know that it would. I believe this is the great obstacle at present against these small people accepting these farms even when broken down, and any representation made simply to the effect that the people will not accept them is not true. But they have to face the taking of these big stocks at an enormous price, which is not likely to be maintained.

41236. I am afraid I must adhere to my view that that would form the first obstacle. The next point would be whether the proprietor would not have to build suitable houses for these tenants ?—I think not. I think with a very little encouragement the people would put up their own houses. My experience of them is that they are generally very well disposed to do that work themselves, if they get some help in the way of wood and perhaps lime, or a little in that way. I believe if lime and these things were given, and if they were met and treated fairly, and

began to understand that the landlords wanted them to stop, instead of wishing them to leave the country altogether, they would erect their own houses.

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Alexander
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41237. But you would require to have parks enclosed, and a good deal of fencing and draining done?—No doubt a great deal of draining would require to be done in some places, but there are places where all you have to do is to put a plough or spade into the soil. In fact, it is better land now than when it went out of cultivation.

41238. You say yourself that the days of big sheep farms are over?—I think so.

41239. Then don't you think it possible that the course of events, without any strong legislative remedies beyond what are absolutely essential to carry out the programme, would be sufficient, that proprietors and crofters might come to some harmonious understanding as to the disposal of these farms?—If it were based on a principle by which each party was sure to have his own in the future.

41240. But if the days of big sheep farmers are over, proprietors are rather, to use the common expression, 'in a hole,' and would they not therefore be more disposed to listen to reasonable proposals on the part of the tenants?—I think if they would look a little ahead they would, because these sheep farms having now virtually become a failure, there is nothing for the proprietor now-a-days but to turn his land into deer forests, and if he does that he will probably get a larger revenue; but I have no hesitation in saying that that will not be a lasting remedy, and that the country will rebel against it so soon, that the proprietor will find himself in a bigger hole than if he took the bull by the horns now.

41241. We agree about that. But I rather point to the impossibility of turning these lands which remain, and which are generally much lower than deer forests, into deer forests. I rather point to the impossibility of doing that, and I ask you if you see any chance of a harmonious co-operation between the landlord and the tenant without compulsory interference such as you point to?—I do. If the proprietors make fair advances to the people, and communicate to them in an unmistakable way that it is their desire that a good relationship should be established, I have not the slightest doubt there is an excellent feeling yet among the people—a strong clannish feeling—and they would be very much disposed to rest and see how things would end.

41242. Then you think there is yet time, if proprietors in the Highlands are wise, for coming to an understanding with those crofters who desire to have larger holdings, and by that means avoid any compulsory interference on the part of the Legislature?—Yes, I believe that if any good system, or any clear advance were made on the part of the landlords, it would at least put down for the present any drastic agitation in the Highlands of Scotland.

41243. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—You are editor of the *Celtic Magazine* among other things?—Yes.

41244. It has a considerable circulation?—Yes.

41245. When this Commission was appointed, you expressed an opinion about the constitution of the Commission not entirely favourable to it?—I did. I have, however, changed my mind.

41246. You thought that territorial influence predominated too much in this Commission?—I did not think it was equally balanced. I did not object to the territorial members.

41247. But you have better hopes of it now?—I have no hesitation in saying that everybody is getting ample justice and fair play in the inquiry.

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Alexander
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41248. With regard to the inquiry which you made preceding us,—I believe you did not go entirely on your own responsibility. You went to represent certain people?—My outlays were paid by certain parties—virtually by a few friends connected with two or three associations, I myself subscribing a portion of the expenses—but I went on the distinct condition, and I refused to go on any other, that I was to express the opinions of no one but my own. I refused to go at all, except on the condition that I was free to do what I thought proper, and nothing else.

41249. These friends, chiefly in the south I think, were of opinion that the crofting population laboured at a disadvantage as compared with their superiors, in regard to this inquiry, and that they would be the better of some assistance in preparing the statements they were to make. Was that so?—No, there was no idea about the preparation of statements.

41250. I don't mean to suggest that you helped them to prepare their statements, but that you went to assist them in formulating their ideas, which they were not accustomed to do in the shape of writing?—No, the fact is, I went this length the other way,—at the meetings there was, as a rule, some minister or schoolmaster or prominent person present, and I even recommended these people not to go to the schoolmaster or their minister to prepare their statements. I said, 'If you go 'and polish up a statement, and do not put it in your own simple 'language,—bad grammar and everything included,—the Commissioners 'will at once suspect these statements are not your own ;' and at every place I went to, I not only did not do anything of the kind myself, but I strongly urged upon the people that they should put them down in their own simple language, and present them in that state ; and they would be more thought of than if they were the productions of educated men.

41251. Personally, then, you had no hand in the composition of any of these documents?—None whatever, directly or indirectly, except expressing my opinions occasionally on certain points ; but I need not have done that. Their opinions were well enough formed on these points.

41252. Did you find in the Western Islands any traces of Irish influence having been there before you?—Well, I found some Irish terms used.

41253. Do you think that Irish influence had been exercised to any considerable extent?—I think Irish influence was attempted, but I do not think it was at all required. I think the people had all made up their minds before anybody from Ireland went among them ; and I think the people are more resenting this Irish interference than otherwise.

41254. You visited the whole of the Western Islands, except Barra and Lewis?—Yes, and the south end of Uist.

41255. Was there any reason for your omitting these?—Yes.

41256. Did you think the Lewis people were not so much in need of encouragement as others?—No, I thought they did need it.

41257. But you had reasons for not going?—Yes, I did not want to go when certain other people were there. That reason was stated publicly in the newspapers at the time.

41258. What, in your opinion, is the smallest amount of land on which it is possible for a crofter to live, in a comfortable and decent way?—Well, before I would answer that question, I would almost require to define what I mean by a crofter.

41259. Well, do so?—I have heard various statements made on that question with which I did not at all agree. In making a proper comparison I have always kept in view the position of a labourer in a town as compared with that of a man living on a plot of land in the country, and if I com-

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Mackenzie.

pare a man living in the country with a labourer living fairly well on the proceeds of his labour in a town, I think that a much smaller amount of land than has been stated before the Commission all over the country would be sufficient to enable a man to live better and more comfortably than he could possibly do as a town labourer; on the same conditions, however, that he should work as hard on his farm as a labourer has to do to provide a livelihood for himself in the town; and if a man gets about eight acres of arable land in fair condition, improvable land, and a sheep run upon which he could have twenty or thirty sheep, or perhaps a smaller number, from twelve to twenty, and a couple or three cows—two cows and their followers—my opinion is that a man working as hard on that land as he would necessarily have to work as a labourer in a town, is out of sight in a better condition than the town labourer. As to the farms that were spoken of here, 30, 40, and 50 acres, I do not call them crofts, as I understand crofts, at all. I call them comparatively large farms; but what I would like to see is crofts of the size I have stated, and a gradation of holdings from that up to considerable farms, so that these would be stepping stones for people ambitious to improve their position, and be an incentive for them to try to succeed in life; and I think that if people were placed in a comfortable position of that nature, instead of congesting, as they have been obliged to do, on the land,—immediately a man found himself fairly comfortable, or his parents fairly comfortable, so that he could leave them without fear of anything happening to them,—as soon as he began to find the taste of a £5 note, he would think it a good thing to have money; a great many would hie off and go to other places, and I don't believe there would be the slightest fear of any over-increase of population if the people were placed on that footing; but I believe that it would rather have a tendency to encourage them to leave, than induce them, in a state of despair, to remain at home.

41260. Take the Isle of Skye, for instance, where there is hardly any work to be had, what do you think is the smallest amount of land there on which it is possible for a family to live?—I assume, in the answer I have given, that the labour I refer to is to be given on the croft itself,—constant labour on the croft.

41261. And you think, that with as much land and stock as you have stated, it is possible for a family to be brought up comfortably and respectably?—I say more comfortably than a town labourer can be; and I think you know, as well as I do, that the people who have been brought up in the west in such circumstances are equal in physique to any people we find in the world.

41262. I need not ask you if you think it a more desirable position and a nobler thing for a man to occupy a croft and pay rent for it, than to be employed as a day labourer?—I don't think there can be two opinions on that point.

41263. Are there not some of the islands, and perhaps some places on the mainland, on which there is overcrowding of population at present?—Undoubtedly.

41264. Don't you think emigration to some extent absolutely necessary before there can be any great improvement of their condition?—No, I do not. I think migration is necessary, not emigration; and I may say that I have always advocated emigration. I believe voluntary emigration is one of the best things for the people that can happen them; and I go further and say that if there should not be a change of the law in favour of these people, I would recommend every man of them to go in a body and leave the country, and settle down where they could carry their feelings, and in-

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NESS. — 41265. You visited, I think, all the settlements in Canada which were chiefly populated by Highlanders?—I visited all the Highland settlements of any note in Canada, but I did not go to the north-west.

INVERNESS. — Alexander Mackenzie. 41266. You found their condition very satisfactory?—Very.

41267. Did you find any considerable number of people, who had emigrated within recent years, whose emigration had not turned out satisfactory?—No, on the whole I found that the people, if it was not their own fault, were very prosperous. Where they were willing to work—as I find they all are, when they have an incentive to work, and get the benefit of their own labour—I found the Highlander at the top of the tree there. When they want a Premier he must be a Macdonald or a Mackenzie, and when they want a Governor-General he must generally be a Highlander. I found it was the same in regard to agriculture. Though they went away comparatively ignorant of agriculture, when they mixed with other people, and found that every spadeful they turned was to their own advantage, they set to work and reclaimed the land in a way which showed that if they had been able to apply their energies at home, there would never have been the slightest reason for going to Canada at all. When he is sober—and the Canadians will not look at a man who takes too much drink—any man of steady habits there is in a fair position. At the same time, I found all over a sort of acheing, longing feeling for home. I found they were not nearly so happy in their minds, though comfortable in outward circumstances, as they would be at home in worse circumstances.

41268. Do you think Highland crofters could carry on a sheep farm as well as a man from Dumfriesshire or elsewhere?—I believe, if you have, say any dozen crofters, you can get one among the dozen who can manage a sheep farm as well as anybody.

41269. Don't you know some examples of successful club farms in some parts of the west coast?—Yes, there is a very comfortable one at Strath Carron, New Kelso, on Sir Alexander Matheson's property. I know the people there are in most excellent circumstances.

41270. What rent do they pay?—I think it is something like £20 a piece, but I am not sure.

41271. But they have their stock in common?—Yes, and there are several others. There has been another started on the same property within a few years, and I think nearly all these club farms have been a success.

41272. It has been suggested or insinuated that the love of the Highlanders for pasture rather than for agriculture is due to their inherent laziness of character; what do you think of that?—I don't think it is true. As I said before, if you give the Highlander an incentive to work by letting him see that he is working for himself, he will work equal to any class of men you can meet with. I have met Highlanders at the fishing who had work of the hardest description a man could perform, and I never discovered that the Highlander could not work and command the highest wages going, so long as he saw he was getting the proceeds of his own labour.

41273. Are there any circumstances in their condition—hereditary circumstances—that account to a very large degree for what appears to be their inherent laziness?—That is my opinion.

41274. Are there any circumstances, particularly in the winter season, making it almost impossible for them to work the same as if they were labourers getting regular day's wages in the south?—In the first place, there is no outside work they can do, and, as I said before, if they do it, who

is to get the benefit?—There is no doubt their double existence, with one foot on the land and another on the sea, has a tendency to produce that failing.

41275. Do you think it is possible to create a fishing population on the western coast independently altogether of the land?—I believe in time it might be, by giving proper facilities.

41276. What do you think should be done?—I think there should be a system of harbours to make it possible for them to go out to sea, and, if possible, by some arrangement, to encourage them to get fishing tackle and boats.

41277. The men on the west coast who go as hired fishermen to the east coast are good fishermen, are they not?—They are always in demand by the east coast fishers before any other class of men.

41278. That is very laborious work. You have had experience of it?—I had. I think it is the last work in the world. If you could remove the moral stigma from transportation, the one occupation would, I believe, be as disagreeable as the other. I am speaking only of the herring fishing on the east coast, and of the hired men, which is the worst class of fishing labour.

41279. The number of men in the Highlands now who enter the army is exceedingly small compared with what it used to be; to what chiefly do you attribute that?—I am not quite sure. There are differences of opinion on that point. There used to be a strong feeling, so far as I can gather, on the part of the people in favour of the chiefs in the good old days, when the chief was the father of his people or his tribe; and when the proprietor or chief went to the people, and said, 'Here is my 'son; I want a commission for him in the army, and if he gets one 'hundred men he will get a commission,' there was a feeling of patriotism roused, not only towards the nation, but towards the chief, to whom they looked as a petty king, and the people turned out with spirit; but I cannot say there is anything now that draws out that feeling, because the properties are now managed on the commercial system, and the common expression I often hear is this—and, I am sorry to hear it—that even if they emigrate they will not emigrate to Her Majesty's dominions,—they would rather go to the States. That is pretty freely said; and another expression is—'Let them send their sheep and deer to fight the 'battles of the country when they want a fighting force.' The reason, I think, is patent from these remarks to all.

41280. Don't you think something more could be done to make recruiting more productive than it is at present? If there were a little more *éclat* about it, don't you think it would have some influence on the Highlanders, instead of sending a solitary sergeant to pace about like a policeman?—I am afraid my experience and the time I have devoted to the study of that question will not justify me in giving any distinct opinion upon it, but I think I am safe in saying that the new military system, which many people believe in, has virtually broken down that spirit in the Highlands, because people used to take a great pride in joining one particular regiment, and keeping up the spirit and reputation of that particular regiment; for they would go away in batches, and when an honour was gained by the regiment it was gained by the county, but when the man enlists in a Highland regiment now he may find himself in an Irish regiment next month. As to the short service system, I happen to have a brother in the Scots Greys. He enlisted for seven years first, and when his time was up he was dubious as to whether he should leave or not. He did not see quite well what he should do if he left after sacrificing seven years. I said, 'You are very foolish; you should 'continue your career, and take another term.' He did so. He got up to

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be a sergeant within five years of his first enlistment; his statement to me was that only certain men were allowed to stop on,—that actually they had to go away at the end of the seven years, but they picked out some of the best men and asked them to stop. He was asked to stop, and he remained. But what is a man in this country to do who served seven years in Her Majesty's service, and is then thrown upon the public? I think that is one great reason why men will not enlist.

41281. I suppose that sentiment which some political economists make rather too little of, but which is a great power in life and in history, which formerly led men to enter the army from attachment to their chiefs, has ceased to exist, and is not drawn forth to any extent by the recruiting sergeant as representing the chief?—No, I believe not.

41282. In an article in the *Celtic Magazine* for this month, giving the number of decrees of removal in Skye in the last forty-three years, you say that 'in the Isle of Skye every one of the population, as shown by 'the Sheriff Clerk's books at Portree, has a decree of removal issued 'against him or her every twenty years, or three times in every two 'generations.' Will you explain that?—I speak of the average.

41283. Perhaps you would mention what the figures are: what number of summonses of removal have been issued?—Of course, you understand I am not personally responsible for these figures. The number in forty-three years, from 1880 to 1883, is 1740 decrees of removal; but you may confine this to forty years, because during the three last years there were only six decrees of removal. Now, to understand the force of this, it should be explained that the practice is to issue these summonses in batches of six,—that is, one summons of removal is issued against six persons, so if there were twenty-one persons there would be four summonses—three sixes, and a three. But the sheriff-clerk who prepared this statement was so anxious, that instead of taking the average at six or five, he took the average at four, and if you multiply 1740 by four—my opinion is that you would be perfectly safe if you averaged $5\frac{1}{2}$, but he takes an average of four,—the result is that you have 6960 heads of families against whom decrees of removal had been issued in the island of Skye during a period virtually of forty years. If you take the average of families at five, which is under the average in Skye in my opinion—and I appeal to Sheriff Nicolson on this point—the total result is that 34,800 persons have had decrees of removal issued against them in the island of Skye virtually in forty years,—which is double the whole population of Skye,—man, woman, and child,—and it brings out exactly what I said, that on an average there is a decree of removal issued in Skye against every man, woman, and child in the island every twenty years.

41284. Is it possible to tell how many of these decrees were carried out?—I believe a great many were not carried out.

41285. But the expenses would be all against the people on whom they were served?—Yes, and the average amount is put at 10s. each, though I am told the usual charge is 17s. But it is not the actual removals I complain of so much as the constant persecution and feeling of insecurity on the part of the people,—that they cannot go and do anything to the land or raise their position when this constant system of interference is taking place at—I will not trust myself to describe—the rate at which these decrees have been granted.

41286. *Professor Mackinnon.*—When you were answering questions about the pasture ground you said you had in your view only the breaking up of ground that was chiefly pasture, but in your first remedy you propose to break down the present deer forests and sheep farms; don't you include arable farms as well?—Yes, and I ought to have included farms partially arable.

41287. In that case you would require to have crofts where there would be very little pasture ground upon them in some places?—Yes.

INVERNESS.

41288. And your system would be quite as well adapted to that state of matters as to the places that you more particularly describe, where the pasture ground is the chief thing?—Yes, because the large arable farms would be in the south, where the people were in the habit of cultivating them, and crofts in this particular position would require to have more of the land, to enable them to live upon them without the aid received from the cattle on the pasture.

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41289. Your system would apply to arable crofts quite as well as to pastoral crofts or to mixed crofts?—Yes, quite.

Alexander Mackenzie

41290. And you would wish that, while a large number of them should be comparatively small, there should be a regular gradation up to fairly sized farms?—Yes.

41291. Do you know any places throughout the country where such a thing exists with respect to the size of crofters' farms?—I know of no place in the Highlands where such exists.

41292. All the places have the crofts too small and the farms too large?—Yes, there may be exceptions, but that is so, speaking generally.

41293. Do you find that a great difficulty in bringing about the state of matters you wish for is the very great gap that exists between the crofter and the farmer?—Yes; there is really no stepping stone; you can only go down; you cannot go up.

41294. And you think that if small crofters saw before them the prospect of having larger holdings by-and-by, they would then have an incentive to work and to save which they have not got now?—Yes, I think so.

41295. Will you tell us exactly what is the tenure you wish to see provided by law. It looks very like a peasant proprietary?—Yes, that is practically what I mean, that you should have a tenure under which you could not possibly remove a tenant so long as he pays his rent. I know there are difficulties in connection with that question, which I did not go into, because I was not asked as to the natural increment of land and questions of detail, but these I think could all be got over.

41296. You seem here not to contemplate the idea of a rise of rent at any time?—Well, I contemplate the rise of rent in this way, that the landlord should at all times receive the present value, which must necessarily be more money after a certain period of years, because money will depreciate in value.

41297. There are general conditions, and there may be general conditions in the future, that would affect the value of land, so that the rent paid ought fairly to increase to the proprietor more or less under the new system?—I would not admit in principle that the real actual value should increase, but that the money representation of it should increase.

41298. The rent of it should increase. That is scarcely provided for here, but would you carry down that right of virtually permanent possession to the very smallest holding?—Yes, I think I should.

41299. Well, how would you establish the right of succession?—I think I would require to leave that to the lawyers. I don't approve of the right of succession now. I don't know what the new system should be.

41300. It is chiefly with respect to what we found in the Isle of Skye and Lewis that I ask the question. At the present moment, without any tenure at all, these people have overcrowded the places they occupy. Supposing they had the indefeasible right you wish them to have, what security would you have that they would not crowd and crowd even more

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Alexander
Mackenzie.

than they have done under the present system?—I am so much opposed, and always was, to the breaking up of these small holdings among the people themselves, that I would make it almost impossible legally that these holdings could be broken up at all. There are certain cases in which it would require to be done.

41301. Even under any system?—Yes.

41302. What I wish to direct your attention to is this, that there would be a peculiar temptation, in the event of one having a permanent right, and a peculiar difficulty in the way of preventing him from allowing his married son or daughter to squat upon his holding?—Of course; you can do nothing without special legislation, and in any legislation that might take place I would be disposed to make it illegal that a holding under a certain number of acres should be subdivided at all.

41303. By the proprietor or tenant, under any system whatever?—Yes.

41304. In your fourth remedy, where you wish to see peasant proprietors, you would fence it round by the same conditions, that under a certain area and under certain conditions ground should not be divided?—Unless in very extraordinary circumstances.

41305. Would you fence it round in such a way that the present state of matters could not be allowed to exist?—Yes, because if according to that plan of mine you got the country populated as it ought to be populated, I do not see any hardship in the people hiving off and providing a living for themselves.

41306. In reply to Sheriff Nicolson, you stated you did not at present see any necessity for emigration, but only for migration. Don't you think there are some estates along the west shore where there may be a necessity for both?—Yes, if you confine the system to estates, but if there is migration over the whole Highlands there is not the slightest necessity. I don't think the Highlands are half populated at present.

41307. You have the whole Highlands in view from side to side?—Yes.

41308. You know there are some particular estates that are overcrowded?—Yes, and there are some in regard to which, I do not know very well how any new system could affect them in giving larger holdings to the people, such as the one I am specially interested in myself.

41309. In all the remedies you suggest, there is underlying them a very material alteration on the law?—Yes.

41310. Indeed, you expressed your opinion that good laws at present could be enforced, because there is no tenure to the crofters,—such as the ground game laws?—Yes, you may place laws on the statute book, but they are a dead letter in the Highlands until you give the tenant a hold of his land.

41311. If you make a tenant more or less dependent on the landlord or the factor, it does not so much matter what the statute law may be; it cannot be so well administered?—No. Allow me to say that I know most of the factors throughout the Highlands, and I wish to say that as men I do not know a better class of men. It is only when they become factors that they seem to me to completely change. As private gentlemen, I do not know nicer and more agreeable men than the most of them.

41312. You think, if there was a gradation of holdings such as you contemplate, the people by their natural energy and ambition, intelligence and education, would of course clear away, and that such things as we have at present would not occur again?—I almost feel certain of it. That is my experience; whenever they get a little better off at home they immediately want to leave and go somewhere else.

41313. As a matter of fact, we find now that the poorer they are the more closely they stay at home?—Yes, and the moment they get better off there is always a tendency to go away—I am happy to say not going away and forgetting their people at home, but constantly sending home means, without which their relations would in many cases be paupers.

41314. Have you found at home and abroad that there is a remembrance by folks that are going away of the poorer folks that are left behind?—My experience is that generally Highlanders who go away and leave their parents at home are very mindful of them, and send them home considerable sums of money.

41315. So in that respect they stand well generally?—Generally.

41316. *Sheriff Nicolson*.—I have heard it said the Irish are better in that respect?—I think not. The Irish send home more money, but for a different purpose. We have never appealed to the Highlanders to send money home except for their own relations, but I have not the slightest doubt if an appeal were made to them they would send money home for other purposes as well as the Irish.

41317. *Professor Mackinnon*.—Have you accounted in your own mind for the extreme reluctance the people have to leave their homes when they are poor, although they have no reluctance to leave when they are well off?—Well, I think it is the case that when people are poor they are, as a rule, comparatively distrustful of countries far away from themselves, and there is a kind of feeling, in addition to the despair and hopelessness of their existence, that they are going away, not merely to a strange country, but almost to a strange world. As education advances, in ten years we shall have a very different state of matters in the Highlands from what we now have.

41318. You recollect that thirty or forty years ago, emigration was rather a favourite scheme among the people?—Yes, but at that time a great many of them went away in communities, and they felt, when they were going all together, that they would at least have some of the associations of their own country, and see some of their friends, but according to the present system there is no chance of doing that. When I was over in Canada I had the honour of an interview with the Marquis of Lorne, and discussing that question with him, as well as with the Premier of Canada, and others, and I tried to impress upon them the necessity of giving an opportunity to Highlanders of going as a colony to Manitoba, but I found the Canadian Government had strongly put their faces against anything of the kind, and would not listen to any proposal on the basis of people settling in bodies, the principal reason being that they have given out the land in Manitoba in squares, every second one of which they have granted to the new syndicate constructing the Canadian Pacific Railway, and they cannot give it out in districts. The Opposition party are of a different opinion, but they have very little chance at present of getting into power.

41319. Did you find the people who have gone there, and their descendants, very far in advance, in point of comfort, of those they left behind?—Far; there is no comparison.

41320. Do you think, if a different policy had been pursued at home, of giving the lands of those who went away to those who remained behind, that those who remained might be more nearly the same in point of comfort as those who went away?—Yes, they might in many cases be as comfortable. In other cases they might have been better off, so far as money is concerned, because a man can hardly make money in Canada. He will have as much as he likes to eat and to clothe himself with, but there is scarcely such a thing as making money. A pound of beef is sold for $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., and a first-class turkey for 2s. 6d. The produce of the farm does not produce much money.

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41321. Did you find that a very large number of those who have the smaller holdings there are sorely pinched by mortgages upon their holdings?—There are a good many. Those in Canada who are not shrewd, like those in other places, borrow money upon their holdings, and in consequence are very much hampered.

41322. I am told they have even rendered 'mortgage' into Gaelic?—Yes.

41323. From what you know of the circumstances of the people there, and the inconvenience that attaches to heavy loans upon property, you would not have your views affected in the least with respect to the desirability of having small holdings upon a permanent footing?—No, because even with those mortgages on the land, the land is constantly increasing in value in Canada, as it would do here when improved; and when they hold it a few years it is free, and the improvement is not appropriated by anybody else as it is in this country.

41324. Would you have any fear that, if the people got very small holdings here, they would borrow money upon these holdings to such an extent that the interest of it would be a rent, and that perhaps the money lender would be a worse proprietor than the present!—It is quite possible, in some cases probable, that that would happen; but the land, as I said, by being reclaimed would get improved, and be worth more money.

41325. You think the advantages would be considerably greater than any possible disadvantages?—Yes; there is no rule where there will not be exceptions, and we shall always have the poor as well as the rich, make any regulations you may; but with this scheme, speaking broadly, it would be a great advantage.

41326. It would give a decided advantage to the shrewd and energetic?—Decidedly, and those that did not deserve it would not get it.

41327. When you were away among the people, in Skye and elsewhere, did you find that the evidence that was laid before us was virtually the expression of the ideas in the minds of the people themselves?—I think I am safe in saying that among the people—among whom there are many intelligent men—those ideas, though they could not perhaps put them into very intelligible shape, were as clear in their own minds as they were to me, long before anybody went near them.

41328. And I suppose you would say the ideas are so few in number, and of such a well-defined character, that they would not require to be elaborated before being laid before us?—Yes; you cannot have half-a-dozen different schemes when the simple opinion in the mind of all is 'give us a permanent hold of the soil.' You don't require to go into any detail beyond that; everything else will follow.

41329. So the similarity of the case presented to us in the different localities was due to the nature of the case itself?—Yes; and if you look into it, I do not see how you can get anything else.

41330. They don't require teaching from the outside to formulate their ideas?—No.

41331. You stated as your opinion that the proprietors and factors rather encouraged the idea of excessive destitution last year?—I did; they got up the meetings in the west.

41332. You think that those in authority there—proprietors and factors—rather encouraged the idea of its being supposed that there was more destitution than there actually was?—Yes, I believe, and I said publicly before, that there was real destitution in the Lewis; in Skye there was poverty; but that the destitution there and on the mainland was nothing

like what it was represented to be; and I say so now after having gone over all the districts and come into contact with many of the people, not only in connection with this Commission, but seeing some of them with the view of giving them money sent me from New Zealand to be distributed among them. I observe a distinct and painful difference on the people when I was there a month ago compared with what they were last year,—people who would be ashamed to ask for anything a year ago came in clamouring for it then.

41333. I suppose that follows almost every indiscriminate distribution of charity!—Yes; people who were pretty well-to-do got it; and, therefore, those who were not so well off thought they might as well get it too.

41334. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie*.—Then the landlords and factors in the west who encouraged the idea that there was destitution, are found in Skye. You admit there was destitution in Lewis!—Yes.

41335. But you don't charge that against the landlords and factors on the mainland?—Not so much; there were some.

41336. Can you mention any place where such was the case?—In the Ullapool district.

41337. That the landlords encouraged the idea that there was destitution?—That their factors did so.

41338. In regard to this enormous number of summonses of removal in Skye, you stated I think that they were not all acted upon?—I believe nothing like it.

41339. Do you believe any considerable proportion was carried into effect?—Yes; a great number were carried into effect, because I find it was within that period that a district in a fine portion of Skye was cleared—the Bracadale district—on the MacLeod estates.

41340. Then I have been misled by your statement that every man in Skye was removed every twenty years?—No, I did not say so; decrees of removal were issued on an average every twenty years.

41341. But these summonses of removal were issued to a great extent during the time the Bracadale evictions took place?—The earlier of them.

41342. Since the days of those great clearances for what purposes have these summonses of removal been issued?—That is more than I can tell; but I have an opinion.

41343. Have you any reason to suppose it has not been on account of arrears of rent?—I do not think that they would have been likely to be issued, unless the people were slightly behind with the rents in many cases; but there is a system there which I think will account to some extent for them,—that often the same gentleman is factor and law agent, and that he pockets the fees for the decrees of removal as law agent, which decrees he issues as factor on the property; and so long as human nature remains what it is that is not to be wondered at, I suppose.

41344. At the same time, you admit it is not likely these would have been issued, unless there had been some arrears standing against the tenants?—I think it is unlikely.

41345. And in your statement here you ask for a permanent tenure—that they or their representatives should not be removed as long as they paid their rents,—but in the great majority of these cases you admit they had not been paying their rents?—I admit in the cases where these notices of removal were issued a small amount would probably be due; but I know this, that, as a rule, with this class of tenants, there are arrears more or less wherever you go, although, as a matter of fact, the proprietor gets a full year's rent within the twelve months. There is always a little margin of arrears. Even some of the factors were good enough to

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INVER- show me their books, to show that this state of things existed, and, in
NESS. many cases, they told me that while there was always a margin of arrears,
 as a rule a whole year's rent was paid in the year.

INVERNESS. 41346. Do you think it fair to state that these factors, who in private life are honourable gentlemen and friends of your own, when they become factors and law agents are sufficiently mean to take advantage of summonses of removal in order to transfer 10s. into their own pocket?—I do not insinuate anything but what the facts suggest.

41347. *The Chairman.*—There are just two or three questions I wish to put to you in consequence of statements of your own. I wish to understand more distinctly from you what you consider a desirable minimum for the formation of a croft? Do you think that a croft, to be the source of useful and prosperous life to a family, ought necessarily to afford food for the family during the whole year, or do you think a croft may be a useful auxiliary to a wage-earning family?—I think a small croft, a good-sized plot, is a useful thing as an auxiliary to other labour, but in the Highlands there is so little labour to be got, that as a practical question you will not often meet with the conditions where the labour is forthcoming. It would apply to fishing industry.

41348. You mean to say you do not think a croft would be a useful auxiliary to a wage-earning family if the members of the family are allowed to go beyond their native district,—for instance, if they go away to the Lowlands on wages for a time and return to their family, or if some members of the family go away and return and help the others. Do you think that in a composite life of that sort a small croft may be a useful auxiliary? — I do; because the older members of the family must necessarily remain at home.

41349. We may look forward perhaps to increasing the area of crofts, but we must look forward very far indeed to be able to hope for the formation of crofts generally, which would afford complete sustenance for an average family. But, in your opinion, we may hope that in the meantime, till there can be a great consolidation of crofts, a small croft ought not to be despised, and that it may be a useful auxiliary to a labouring family, and still place that family socially above the level of mere labourers?—I do believe so. I think it is a most important auxiliary.

41350. Then, particularly with reference to the fishing, the most discordant opinions and evidence have been given to us on the subject. Some people think decidedly there should be a complete divorce of the fishing industry from the land industry, others think they can be usefully allied, and one, the other day, said that fishing could not be prosecuted without land. Do you contemplate, as an object at which we should aim, a complete divorce of the two industries or not?—I believe that if there were suitable harbours round the west coast, a fishing population would naturally grow up even with the crofting system,—that some people would take to the fishing and some to the land. I do not know whether you want my opinion as to whether the one occupation is compatible with the other.

41351. I do. I want to know whether the two occupations are compatible in the same family,—I will not say in the same individual?—Quite; in my opinion they are. But I have a different opinion as regards the same person.

41352. The question becomes one rather of family,—whether in the nature of things, in the same family some members—the older members or particular members of a family—might be usefully engaged on the croft while others are usefully engaged on the sea, and whether those who are

Alexander
MacKenzie.

usefully engaged on the sea at one period of the year may not be giving useful assistance on the croft at other periods of the year?—They may, but I am rather disposed to think that that sort of semi-existence—half the time on land and half the time on sea—is calculated to spoil the party so employed for both occupations, because when I myself had to do both I felt, especially so far as the fishing was concerned, that there was a sort of feeling on my part against going to sea on a very stormy night that was not entertained by the men who were virtually sea-birds, and who were constantly on the sea, and did nothing else.

41353. Then your opinions rather tend to a division of the two industries, in time and with prudence?—Yes, so far as the same individual is concerned. At the same time, a family may be divided so that some may take to the fishing industry while the other members may adhere to the cultivation of the croft, and there is nothing to hinder a seafaring man giving assistance on the croft, though I think the life on the croft may spoil him for a fisherman.

41354. Is it not a fact that after a certain time of life exclusive devotion to fishing becomes impossible? By the time he is fifty a man is pretty well worn out; but he may be a very useful crofter?—Yes,—that is quite the case.

41355. Then if you take away his croft, what is he to do?—If my ideas were carried out, there would always be openings for them to take crofts and settle down if they had made money as fishermen.

41356. But consider the precarious nature of the results of fishing. We have seen extinct centres of industry in the Highlands,—dead villages, created by Government interference,—all because the fish have forsaken their localities. Can you contemplate the creation of centres of fishing population which might become deserted by the very sources of their industry?—I would not go the length of creating centres of this industry beyond giving fairly cheap harbour accommodation, which would be useful to the people in almost all circumstances. What you state about the fishing disappearing from localities is a thing quite well known, so far as the west of Scotland is concerned.

41357. I have only one more question to put to you. You have mentioned the great hardships, and I think you said almost the degradation, that attached to the life of a fisherman when hired as a servant on board a fishing boat. We, nevertheless, have heard that some of the most prosperous labouring people in Scotland are fishermen on the east coast; do you think there is anything in the fishing industry, where people become shareholders and part proprietors of boats, that is so laborious or degrading that it ought to be avoided?—I think your Lordship misunderstood me as to it being degrading—morally degrading. I mean it is slavish, dirty work, and there is no rest night nor day for the man who is on the sea during those eight weeks. I referred only to the hired fishermen at the herring fishing. I do not think fishing generally is degrading, but rather the reverse.

41358. Do you think there is anything in the nature of the fishing labour that is so hard and so exhaustive, that when it terminates, and the man returns to the shore, it might account for the almost proverbial idleness of the Highland fisherman on shore? Do you not think there is a certain repose necessary to them?—No, I do not, because if the fishing industry may be very hard occasionally, often when a man has to sail a long distance out to sea, it becomes rather a lazy avocation of itself in such circumstances, and I would be disposed to think that, perhaps, the long period of want of hard work the fishermen may have at the fishing industry may be more the cause of his want of industry when he goes on shore than any deterioration of bodily strength.

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M. ELLIOT, Butcher, Inverness (55) examined.

41359. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement you wish to read?—

Yes.

41360. Will you read it?—‘My object in this short statement is to direct attention to certain results of large farms and deer forests, which I humbly think the Commission should take into their consideration. The effects of the system referred to has frequently come under my observation in course of my occupation and business, during the whole of my life; and as my statement is to be general, and without particular reference to any particular person or place, I believe it is proper that I should state in a few words what experience and connection I have had with the subject in hand. I was born in Dumfriesshire in 1828, on a farm partly arable and partly pastoral, in the working of which I took an active part. After leaving home, I was employed in connection with arable and sheep farming for sixteen or seventeen years, and after that entered on my present occupation, both of feeder and butcher, by which I have a keen interest in the breeding and feeding of live stock, which also brings me constantly into contact with producers, as well as the maturers or fatteners of the animal food of the nation. In a healthy state of agriculture, such as would be in the long run the most profitable for the proprietors, for the whole farming interests, and for the nation at large, three classes of men are necessarily engaged in connection with the produce of the soil, namely—1st, The producer, or in the case of live stock, the breeder; 2nd, The maturer or feeder; and 3rd, The trader who dispenses to the consumers. So long as these different classes are in a position to suit each others’ requirements, and to provide the produce in demand by the consumers, the agricultural interest will prosper in all its branches. Keeping specially in view the matter of live stock, it is found that almost all the natural pasture lands will produce and rear sound and healthy stock, which will naturally be handed over to the low ground farmer to be matured and fattened before going to the consumer. On the other hand, a great proportion of the more productive low grounds of England, and also of some parts of Scotland, while it is perfectly suited for rapidly maturing any class of stock, is found by experience to be quite unfit for producing or at least of continuing to produce a healthy stock. The attempt to breed sheep largely and continuously, in such low ground, resulted a few years ago in the well-known losses among sheep stock in England, by what is known as sheep “rot.” Taking Great Britain as a whole, I believe I am right in saying that the land is nearly equally divided between what is arable—or what might be made arable—and natural pasture lands, and that nearly the whole of both classes of land is well adapted either for the breeding or maturing of live stock; and I believe that the higher pasture lands, with their due proportion of wintering grounds, are sufficient to breed as much live stock as the richer arable lands are capable of maturing. In this way this country would be self-supporting, in the sense of the breeding districts producing all the stock required for feeding on the lands adapted for maturing only. The formation of large sheep farms and of deer forests has resulted in the following evils, which are still in course of development:—1. The land has been depopulated, and the ancient inhabitants of the soil have been forced to seek subsistence in foreign countries, or to take up their abode in sea coast villages, or in the overcrowded parts of large towns, where, from being quite unadapted

' for their new position, they become, as a rule, quite discouraged and
' helpless. Of this evil it is not my object to speak further. 2. The
' second evil result is the disarrangement of the healthy relationship and
' direct intercourse between the producer and the maturer, and the intro-
' duction, or at least the unnatural increase of middlemen or dealers, who
' are entirely non-productive and an unnecessary class. The large sheep
' holdings produce more stock than almost any one arable tenant
' requires for his land. The consequence is that a middleman comes in
' and buys up stock from the large holders, and retails to the maturer;
' and the profit which rightly belongs to the agriculturist—whether
' breeder or maturer—goes into the hands of the non-productive middle-
' man, who does nothing to add value to the produce. The tenants lose
' their fair profits, and eventually the proprietor suffers loss through his
' tenants. 3. A third bad result of the system is that the land is
' necessarily let to men with money rather than the necessary qualifica-
' tions for making the best use of the land. A large sum of money is
' required for the stocking of such a farm as we have in view; and if
' the proprietor cannot get a skilful tenant with sufficient capital, he is
' tempted to take the man of money without the skill. The result on the
' whole, and in the long run, is that the more numerous the large farms
' become, the smaller is the proportion of skilful practical men who can
' become tenants of them; and there can be no greater mistake than to
' suppose that capital is the only requisite for profitable and productive
' farming. 4. Another evil result is, that the maturer, finding his profits
' going into the pockets of the middlemen, attempts to regain his original
' position by becoming a producer as a feeder—his land being in many
' cases unsuitable for producing healthy stock. As already indicated,
' his new effort results in disaster to himself in many cases, and in
' injuring the market of the natural producer. 5. Another evil, arising
' from the decreased production of large farms and from the entire unpro-
' ductiveness of forests, is the importation of cattle from foreign countries,
' and the introduction along with them of cattle diseases that are quite
' foreign to this country. The fearful losses to individuals, and the great
' expense to which the country is put, in stamping out these foreign
' diseases is a matter for serious consideration. These evils, and the
' dependence of parts of the country on such foreign supplies, might in my
' opinion be in a great measure prevented by the proper and healthy
' development of the resources of our country. It would be easy to point
' out how the system of turning the land into large farms and forests
' came into favour with proprietors, and how it was at the outset more
' profitable than a more numerous tenantry. At the beginning of the
' system, agricultural skill was in a backward state, especially among the
' smaller tenants, and the inducements to the proprietors to adopt the
' course that was immediately the most profitable were certainly very
' strong. The result of the system in the end, however, is the bad
' effects I have mentioned, and affects the proprietor as much as the tenants,
' and the community generally. With regard to deer forests especially,
' it might be said, that inasmuch as they cannot be ranked either with
' producing or maturing farms, they as forests are almost useless for the
' production of food. It is often assumed that forest, as a rule, is not fit
' for stock. This is not the case, for in all my experience I never met
' with land in which deer could live that is not suitable for sheep. The
' increasing extent of land under deer forests has seriously reduced the
' extent of breeding or producing ground for both sheep and cattle. The
' remedy for the evils I have spoken of would, in my opinion, consist in
' a great measure in a return to moderately sized holdings. In some places

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M. Elliot.

' it might be found desirable to have an occasional large farm, but say
' not exceeding 3000 sheep for a sheep farm, and not over 300 or 400
' acres for an arable farm. The general size of farms, however, should
' range from 50 to 150 acres of arable, and, where possible, with pasture
' for 500 to 1000 sheep, or a proportional number of cattle. As to
' crofters in club farms, in my opinion each man should have a separate
' lot of arable, in no case less than twenty acres, with his share in the
' common pasture. 1. Fishermen's crofts should, I think, have only as
' much land as would keep them occupied when unable to go to sea, and
' keep their families in milk, potatoes, and wool for stockings, and feeding
' for the cow, being the principal produce of the croft. 2. Where factors
' are at all required they should not be mere office men or lawyers. 3.
' Absenteeism proprietors and tenants are productive of much evil in
' many cases, and so far as possible should be discouraged. 4. On all
' farms there should be some cottages for work people and servants.'

41361. *Mr Cameron.*—You are a butcher in the town of Inverness?—
Yes.

41362. In spite of those changes and alterations to which you have
alluded, may I ask whether your business has not increased very much of
late years?—Yes, my own business may perhaps have increased; but I
don't think it has done good to the community.

41363. But your own business has increased in spite of those alterations
in the system of farming?—Yes.

41364. So we may assume the system has not been productive of evil
to butchers?—It has, in so far as I have already stated, that it does not
allow them to deal direct with the maturers—it allows middlemen to step
in between us, and consequently does away with a large part of our
profits.

41365. But is a butcher not a middleman?—I don't think so. The
community could not receive their supplies without him.

41366. Don't you call a middleman one who interposes between the
producer and the consumer?—Yes, but no consumer could manufacture
the live animal into food without the butcher.

41367. You mean that the trade of a butcher is a necessary one. But
I only allude to a middleman in the sense in which you defined it—one
who steps in between the producer and the consumer?—No, I cannot say
that. The meaning I apply to the term middleman is a man of capital,
who steps in between a man selling a certain article and a man requiring
to buy the same article, preventing the man requiring it and the man
disposing of it from having direct contact with each other.

41368. Then you think a community could not do without butchers,
though they could do without dealers?—I think so.

41369. Then how would the butcher obtain his fat meat?—Direct from
the producer.

41370. But a producer who has a considerable number of cattle or
sheep to sell could hardly sell these all at once to the butcher; he must
sell to somebody else first?—I don't think it. If there were no larger
holdings than I recommend there would be no butcher but could use up
any one maturer's stock.

41371. Then you recommend that no holding should be of a larger size
than would contain the number of animals that one butcher could buy at
one time?—I should think so.

41372. You talk about the sheep rot in England as if it were a nor-
mal state of things; was not the sheep rot produced by one or two or
three particularly wet seasons?—I don't suppose it.

41373. Of course the sheep rot has always existed, but has it existed to

the alarming and tremendous extent that it did a few years ago?—Yes; wherever it was attempted to breed on land not adapted for them, and there are many places of that nature in Scotland.

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41374. We all agree with that; but I am alluding more particularly to the outbreak of sheep rot which devastated the flocks in Great Britain, and which is supposed now, and I believe justly supposed, to be the cause of the high price of sheep. That was not usual but abnormal, and produced by a few bad seasons?—The high price of sheep was because of attempting to breed sheep and lambs that ought not to be used for breeding purposes. It commenced about 1866, and continued for a number of years, until the sheep rot set on to the stock which they produced or reared in those places where they ought not to have attempted it.

INVERNESS.
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M. Elliot.

41375. Then you mean to say the sheep rot only existed in places where people recently took to breeding sheep where sheep ought not to have been bred?—Yes, that it is so.

41376. But surely it existed over a very large part of England? You don't mean to say that in all these places sheep were introduced where they should not have been admitted?—No, I mean sheep will keep quite healthy for one or two years if brought up on pasture lands where they ought not to be bred; but if you attempt to breed them on those lands they will rot in a few years.

41377. I quite understand that, but the point I wish to ask is whether the enormous losses caused by sheep rot were confined to places you describe as being unfit places for sheep, or whether they did not extend to places which in usual years, not very wet, produced no evil effects on the flock?—Well, in rare cases, but not often.

41378. Then you state in your paper that one bad result is that the land is let to men with money. Now, can a man without money work a farm as well as a man who has money?—A man without money cannot, but what I hold is that if, instead of turning your land into large holdings, you had a number of small men, small holdings, out of these families that were raised in the small holdings, you would always get practical men to take up your lands; whereas, if you take it all in under one man, that man may be a practical man, but ten to one none of his successors are practical men. All men born on farms are not fit to be farmers.

41379. But do you suppose that a man who takes a large farm, and has a practical knowledge of farming, will not bring up at all events one member of his family to succeed him in the business?—I have given that particular attention for a long period, and I have not found it so, with very few exceptions.

41380. You think that these large farmers, after they make a lot of money, bring up their sons as gentlemen?—I think there is something in that.

41381. But, as a rule, I suppose you admit that in farming, as in all other trades, the men with most capital to start with, provided they have knowledge, are more likely to succeed than people who have equal knowledge and no capital?—The most successful farmers I have known started without almost any capital. They were pushing men, and made the most of everything, but I rarely knew it going beyond one or two generations.

41382. These people, of course, could not take even a moderate sized farm at first?—They could not.

41383. And when they wanted to take a moderate sized farm they had capital; they had made it themselves?—They had made it themselves.

41384. But without that moderate capital they could not even take a moderate sized farm?—Not without capital. The proprietors very soon picked out the most sagacious of them as tenants.

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INVERNESS.

M. Elliot.

41385. I quite see your theory, but I must ask you whether your theory about capital is not rather a novel one?—Without capital, no man can do anything in farming.

41386. Then you say that, in consequence of deer forests, cattle have been introduced from abroad; but as I understand the matter, these deer forests were formed out of sheep farms, which were principally situated on very high grounds, and which fed what we call a wedder stock. Now, cattle could not have been introduced to supplement wedder stock. These forests did not grow cattle at all, did they?—They began with sheep, but the result is the want of practical men to take up the sheep runs now, and the plentifulness of men to take them up as deer forests.

41387. But I am talking of your remark in regard to the importation of cattle in place of sheep. When the deer forests were created could the necessity for importing cattle have arisen in a case where no cattle were grown upon these grounds, and where the lands produced sheep only?—In all moderate-sized farms there are less or more cattle.

41388. But as matter of practice were cattle grown on those high lands?—They were at one time.

41389. When they were turned into forests?—They were under sheep at that time.

41390. Exactly. These lands grew wedder sheep chiefly?—Yes.

41391. And therefore the result of that could not have been to introduce foreign cattle, because they did not grow cattle?—No, but what I mean is simply this, that if the land was used for that purpose it would prevent the necessity of having foreign cattle. There is quite enough pasture land or lands unsuitable for maturing or fattening—quite enough to supply all the breeding animals in the country.

41392. Yes, that might be, but I am talking of what it was when they were made forests?—They were made forests out of sheep stocks.

41393. And therefore the importation of foreign cattle could have had nothing to do with the previous state of things?—No, certainly not at that time.

41394. But you think these lands might possibly be made to produce cattle?—No doubt of that.

41395. These high lands that are now in forest?—No doubt of that.

41396. How would you winter these cattle?—Give them to the maturers in the low lands in winter.

41397. But would that be a profitable occupation?—No doubt it would.

41398. Would you like to take a forest and turn it into a cattle farm?—I would not take a deer forest for anything. It would be of no use for years. You would not get any stock to fatten on it.

41399. Would it not be in a virgin state?—No, I think it would be very much deteriorated.

41400. But, giving it a few years of rest,—though I don't see that it should need rest,—how would you set about stocking it with cattle and rearing cattle on it?—You first require to put practical men into it, and give them accommodation, with houses, and they, as a natural result, would produce the cattle.

41401. But I want to know what you would do with your breeding stock on these high lands, that are now forests, in winter. The surplus stock you might sell, but how would you winter the breeding stock?—There are no lands in the Highlands but are capable of growing wintering for animals. I am acquainted with the highest land in Ross-shire, and have seen them wintered on the very highest tops of it.

41402. Then you think that on these high lands cattle would do as

well as sheep?—In some parts they would not, but there are many parts of the Highlands well adapted for the rearing of cattle.

INVERNESS.

41403. Then why do those farmers who have got sheep farms—which are certainly more favourably situated than the high lands occupied as forests—stick to sheep if they can rear cattle more favourably?—The want of accommodation and want of knowledge; besides they could not get winter pasture if it was eaten up by sheep.

INVERNESS.

M. Elliot.

41404. But they need not keep sheep?—It is easier keeping sheep than cattle.

41405. Have you ever asked a practical farmer who occupies one of these large tracts in the Highlands as a sheep farm whether it would pay him better to turn it into cattle?—No, I have not.

41406. *The Chairman.*—You mentioned that it would not be a profitable thing to turn a forest, at this moment, into a breeding ground for cattle—that they would find the pasture very much deteriorated; what is the cause of the deterioration, and how does the pasture under deer become deteriorated?—All other animals except deer, I believe, return a certain amount of manure back to the soil. Deer don't do that so much, and deer don't eat up certain parts of the land so much as sheep and cattle do. Cattle are much better for land, even grazing land, than sheep are, but sheep are much more preferable for the continuing of good pasture than deer are.

41407. Deer devour some kind of grasses and don't eat others?—Perhaps they may devour all grasses, but they return nothing back to the soil.

41408. Then you think all pasture under deer, without the assistance of some other stock, must be deteriorated?—No doubt of it.

41409. But does the deterioration of the pasture under deer not depend in some degree upon the fact that draining will be neglected, and other improvements of that sort?—No, as a rule deer forests in that respect are better with sheep pasturing on them. I have seen it in many cases. The only improvements are trenching and burning. You will find that more attention is paid to that on deer forests than on sheep farms.

41410. Is there more attention paid to surface drains?—There is.

41411. But we have heard, in the course of our inquiry, complaints made not only that the pasturing of deer deteriorates the ground, but that sheep deteriorate the ground; do you believe there is any foundation for the notion that the constant depasturing of ground by sheep deteriorates the grass?—I do, compared with what cattle would do. Cattle or horses will keep it in a much better condition than sheep will do.

41412. Do you mean cattle associated with sheep, or cattle alone?—Cattle alone, or cattle associated with sheep.

41413. Which will be best, cattle alone or cattle associated with sheep?—There are many bits of hill pasture that cattle could not get at, but a mixture of sheep and cattle will do well.

41414. You come from Dumfriesshire?—Yes.

41415. Have you ever heard it asserted in Dumfriesshire or on the Borders, that the pasturing of ground by sheep, for any length of time, if proper attention is paid to drainage, deteriorates the ground?—I never knew they did, where there were cattle or horses. I never had any experience of pasturing without horses or cattle.

41416. Are there many sheep farms in the south of Scotland, where horses are unknown, and cattle very rare?—I have never been upon one of them.

41417. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—You state in your paper, as to crofters

JNVER-
NESS.

INVERNESS.

M. Elliot.

in club farms, that in your opinion each man should have a separate lot of arable, in no case less than twenty acres, with his share of the common pasture; how do you propose that share in the common pasture should be grazed—by each man having his own stock or by a common stock?—There are two methods which might be wrought profitably. One is to have it a common stock with one mark, under the management of one man mutually chosen among themselves, or it might be managed by one man mutually chosen in the same way, but each man having a separate mark on his own stock.

41418. But the management should be by one shepherd?—The management should be by one shepherd.

41419. You refer in a previous part of the paper to the fact that skill is more valuable than capital—‘There can be no greater mistake than ‘to suppose that capital is the only requisite for profitable and productive ‘farming.’ Of course, capital is required, but skill is even more requisite?—Both are requisite for practical farming.

41420. In a club farm can the same skill be brought to bear upon their stock as when the whole stock is held by one individual man?—It can.

41421. But is it the collective skill of the club tenants or the skill of the shepherd that you refer to?—There may be one among the club who has a practical knowledge of the management of live stock, and if there is one, he will manage the whole thing.

41422. And you think the club tenants would have sufficient good sense to leave the management to the man who had the most skill?—I have no doubt of it.

41423. You stated, in answer to the Chairman, that deer returned nothing to the soil, and therefore you think they deteriorate the pasture; what has led you to that conclusion?—From personal observation. I have seen the land very much deteriorated.

41424. The amount of flesh, meat, and bone that is absolutely taken away from a deer forest every year is surely very much less than the amount of meat and bone and wool that is taken away from a sheep stock, is it not?—Well, in one sense it is; but the animals that take away most bone and meat are the animals that return most to the land in the shape of manure.

41425. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You have had a good deal of experience, I believe, of the Highlands of Scotland since you came?—Yes.

41426. And this particular matter of the deterioration of pastures and forests has engaged your special attention, has it not?—It has.

41427. What do you expect will be the result of deer forests in a few years as regards pasture and food?—They will both deteriorate very much. Pasture will deteriorate very much, and as for food it is very little food that comes out of a deer forest.

41428. Have wild grass, moss, scrub, and such like constantly a tendency to increase in lands which are not constantly cultivated, eaten down, and pastured?—They have.

41429. Is it consistent with your observation, since you came to the north, that the lands and grazings now will not carry the same quantity of sheep that they did in your first days?—It is true.

41430. Is that process going on?—It is.

41431. Notwithstanding there is a deal of draining and burning attempted to counteract it?—It is.

41432. If that process is going on, then, I presume it has a very prejudicial effect upon the country generally, or will have that effect?—No doubt of it.

41433. And you deprecate that state of matters, and you believe that the proper adaptation of the pastures in the Highlands is for men with both cattle and sheep?—It is.

INVERNESS.
INVERNESS
M. Elliot.

CHARLES SHAW, W.S., late Sheriff-Substitute of Inverness-shire, at Lochmaddy (72)—examined.

41434. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement to make to us?—Yes. Charles Shaw. Being a native of Skye, and having spent the greater part of my life in the Western Islands, I feel a deep interest in all that concerns those parts, and I have in consequence closely followed the investigations recently pursued there by the Royal Commissioners. Having filled public offices which brought me into frequent contact with all classes in the islands, and having for long been an observer of the relations which subsisted between landlord and tenant, and acquainted with the history of the people, I have read with surprise and regret many statements made by delegates which I know to be erroneous and misleading, and many statements which I know to be ungenerous and unjust to good and philanthropic men who cannot now explain their actions or the motives by which they were influenced. It has therefore occurred to me that a simple narrative of a few facts within my knowledge may be useful to the Commissioners, and without any desire to challenge the veracity of any man, and in bringing to light the actual facts as they presented themselves at the time to one who was equally interested in all. I began business in 1835, by receiving from Lord Macdonald a joint commission with my father as factor of North Uist. I also to some extent assisted him in the management of Lord Dunmore's estate of Harris, and of Clanranald's estate of South Uist. I was also factor during part of 1836 and 1837 for the trustee on the sequestered estate of General MacNeill of Barra. At Whitsunday 1838 I was appointed factor on Lord Macdonald's estate in Skye, which then included the large property now possessed by Major Fraser of Kilmuir. I held this last office till I was appointed Sheriff-Substitute of the Long Island in November 1841, and I remained there till 1851, when I left the Long Island. My earliest recollection goes back to 1817, and the great famine of that year. This famine was not owing to a failure of the potato crop in particular, but to a generally very bad and late harvest in 1816 over all Scotland. The spring of 1817 was also bad and backward, and of both these the Highlands had more than their proportion. The proprietors of the Long Island imported meal largely for the crofters, and Government supplied a considerable quantity of oat seed, which gave the year the name of the "the year of the big seed," and it is, I have no doubt, still known by that name to a few old people. The seed was of no use in the outer islands for the purpose for which it was sent, being unsuitable for the soil. The people got it ground into meal, and in this way it was of service. The crofters were due to the proprietors a considerable portion of the price of that seed, when I ceased to have anything to do with Long Island estates in 1838. When in Edinburgh learning my profession in 1828–35, I made the acquaintance of Mr Robert Brown, at that time factor for the Duke of Hamilton at Hamilton. Mr Brown had gone to Uist as Sheriff-Substitute of the Long Island District, and factor for Clanranald, I think in 1796, and remained there till he went to Hamilton in 1811. My father succeeded him at Nunton in Benbecula in both offices. I often spent some days with Mr Brown at Hamilton, and our conversation frequently came upon

INVER-
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INVERNESS.

Charles Shaw.

' Uist and its affairs, for Mr Brown was then Clanranald's sole surviving trustee. There was nothing he dwelt so much upon as the kindly relations that had always existed between Clanranald and the crofters on his estate. He always said they were more like members of Clanranald's family than his tenants. My own experience confirmed this view of their relative positions, and it continued the same down till one or two years before the sale of the estate to Colonel Gordon, when perhaps there was a little irritation created among the crofters by a small deduction having been made in the price of the kelp manufacture, a curtailment of advances before then freely made to them, and a more punctual collection of rents and arrears. To justify what has been said as to the relations between Clanranald and the crofters I may mention—1st, If at any time the crofter ran out of food he applied to the factor, and at once got a supply furnished by the millers on the estate, if there were only a few cases of want, but imported from Glasgow if the need was more general. 2nd, A medical man who was resident in North Uist was specially engaged to attend the crofters in Benbecula, and afterwards another medical man resident in South Uist was engaged to attend the crofters on the whole estate, and to supply them also with medicine. It was his duty to come at a call, but whether he was sent for or not he paid frequent visits to the Island of Benbecula. For these medical men the crofters were assessed 2s. or 3s. each; but the factor paid the medical man whether the assessment was paid or not, and it was often in arrear. Besides this the factor kept a large supply of ordinary medicine which was at the command of the crofters when required. 3rd, When a crofter or any member of his family died, the survivors at once came to the factor and got timber for the coffin, and money to defray the funeral expenses. 4th, If a crofter lost a horse or came by any unusual misfortune, he came to the factor, and except in the rarest case, such as being very heavily in arrears, he got means to buy another horse, or whatever else he required to relieve him. In short, in every difficulty he sent to the factor for help and advice, and was rarely disappointed. 5th, Each crofter had in general a piece of shore that pertained to his croft, the sea-ware on which in favourable seasons, and with due industry on the part of the crofter, paid his entire year's rent when made into kelp, and the time occupied in the manufacture seldom exceeded six weeks. 6th, Besides the parish school in South Uist, there was another school in the north end of the island, and one I think also in the south end of it. There were in the island of Benbecula two excellent schools, one situated towards the north end of the island and another towards the south end, and all the children in the island could attend these schools, except those whose parents resided in remote corners. To the support of these schools, including of course the parish school, the proprietor contributed annually, besides being at the original expense of the buildings. In addition to the schools I have mentioned, in all of which the three R's were taught, and in two of them Latin, mathematics, &c., there were several itinerant Gaelic schools to teach the children to read the Scriptures in their own language, but to what extent Clanranald contributed to these schools I am not now able to say. There was in Benbecula a missionary clergyman under the Royal Bounty, and to his pay the proprietor contributed £10 a year. My connection with North Uist began in 1829, when my father got the management of it from Lord Macdonald in succession to Mr Cameron. I am not able to speak as to the relations between the former factor Mr Cameron and the crofters. After my father got the management the treatment of the people by Lord Macdonald appeared to me to be very much the same as that of Clanranald to his people. In some respects the North Uist

' people had the advantage over the Clanranald crofters. They had for a long time a medical man resident in the island, though, as has been already stated, he was at one time regularly engaged for Benbecula also. For generations Lord Macdonald gave him an allowance annually of £10 for attendance and medicine given to poor people who had no crofts. There was also Lord Macdonald's compassionate list, being a list of persons who received an allowance on an average amounting in all to about £40 a year, given by the millers on the estate to old and poor people. Lord Macdonald gave £10 annually in premiums of £5, £3, and £2, to the crofters' townships on the estate that exhibited the best bulls in competition for improving the crofters breed of cattle. In the matter of education, the crofters of the North Uist were, I think, better supplied than the inhabitants of any parish in Scotland. There were at the time of the sale of the estate by Lord Macdonald, besides the parish school, six others, all fairly taught, and two of these six in which the higher branches were given. Lord Macdonald was at the expense of building all the school and teachers' dwelling-houses, besides contributing an annual sum to the teachers. There were besides schools in the parish placed there by a Ladies' Association and the Gaelic School Society. There was in the south end of the island a mission under the Royal Bounty, to which Lord Macdonald contributed £10 a year. There was a Government *quoad sacra* church in the north end of it, to which Lord Macdonald gave a glebe, and besides bestowed also in perpetuity to the clergyman a grazing on the neighbouring farm of the annual value of £5. General Lord Macdonald got a special valuation of North Uist made in 1830, by the late Mr Neil Maclean of Inverness, one of the most experienced valuators of Highland property then living, himself also a native of North Uist. By this valuation the rents were slightly reduced. Lord Macdonald left the crofters' rents at the valuation then made till the sale of the estate in 1855, and Sir John Campbell Orde and his father have continued the crofts at the same rents to this day, notwithstanding the great rise in the price of cattle and a large advance in the tacksmen's rents. The crofters' rents have thus been the same for upwards of fifty years. In a book lately published in Inverness, called *Highland Clearances*, by A. Mackenzie, it is said in a chapter on the Hebrides, that the rents were raised to more than double on account of the kelp. This is a most erroneous statement. When in 1842 it became evident that the kelp manufacture must be abandoned, and that the potatoes were beginning to fail, Godfrey Lord Macdonald brought to North Uist from Perthshire a man to superintend the making of drains on the crofts. A sum of about £800, exclusive of the superintendent's wages, was expended in draining the crofters' holdings in that part of the estate where it appeared drainage was most necessary and most likely to do good, and no interest or additional rent was charged against the crofters for this expenditure. On other estates complaints are made because increased rents are charged on tenants for improvements made by themselves, but here neither interest nor additional rents were charged for drains made at the proprietors expense, and yet no mention is made of this very liberal dealing with them by any of the delegates before the Commissioners. During the famine of 1836, George Earl of Dunmore sent about 700 bolls of meal to the crofters in Harris, and in 1837, his son Alexander Edward Earl of Dunmore sent 1000 bolls all at prime cost and on credit, and larger quantities in subsequent years, as to which I am not able to speak, having ceased to have official connection with Harris. There was a medical man on the estate, paid much in the same way as in North Uist, and there were three or four schools besides the parish school, all contributed to by Lord Dunmore, and

INVERNESS.

INVERNESS.

Charles Shaw.

INVER- ' a sewing school kept up by the Countess. During the minority of the
NESS. ' present Earl, the Countess, who was his guardian, was unremitting in her

INVERNESS. ' attention to the wants of the crofters, and in the trying times that

Charles Shaw. ' began with the famine of 1846, expended large sums out of her own
' private means in improving their condition. At an early stage of her
' connection with the estate, she expended large sums in the purchase of
' wool and in the employment of the females on the estate in various
' kinds of manufactures, and exerted herself to an extraordinary extent
' in the sale of these manufactures. I regret that, owing to the distance
' of my residence at Lochmaddy and the indifferent communication then
' between these parts of my jurisdiction, I am unable to give such full
' particulars as I should wish of a work so deserving of being better
' known. There were at the same time considerable sums laid out on
' drainage and other improvements. Lord Macdonald, like Clanranald in
' years of scarcity, gave the crofters meal on credit, and at prime cost. In
' 1836 I distributed among the crofters of North Uist 800 bolls of meal,
' and in 1837 770 bolls on account of Godfrey Lord Macdonald, besides
' making heavy advances in the spring of both years to the crofters on the
' north end of the estate, where the crofts were very bad, to provide pro-
' vender to keep their cattle alive. Between 1837 and the total failure of the
' potato crop in 1846, Lord Macdonald on frequent occasions imported large
' quantities of meal from Glasgow for the crofters. Not having been con-
' cerned in the business I am enable now to specify the quantity, but I know
' it was considerable, and imported almost annually. When the potatoes
' failed entirely in 1846, Lord Macdonald at once imported a large
' quantity of meal, so as to supply the crofters with food during the
' autumn till the corn was reaped and was ready to send to the mills.
' Their own corn then kept them in food till spring, when the distribution of
' the food sent by the Destitution Committee in Glasgow began, and on
' the food thus obtained nearly the whole population of North Uist
' subsisted during the year 1847. The corn crops of 1847 were not good,
' and there were few potatoes, for few were planted, and those planted did
' not turn out well. Indeed, as the delegate A. Macaulay admits, the
' potatoes had been a failure in the Sollas district for a number of years.
' The year 1848 was thus passed very much as 1847 had been, and as pro-
' spects did not materially improve it began to be a serious question what
' the end of this state of matters was to be. This leads to the Sollas
' evictions, of which so much has been said. In judging of these proceed-
' ings, one ought not to contemplate them in the light of matters as they
' are to-day, but as they were during the effects of the famine that had
' come upon the crofters, and was still continuing with little prospect of
' improvement, particularly in the Sollas district, at the time the evictions
' took place. The crofters did not, and apparently could not pay their
' rents, for they were on an average nearly two years' rents in arrears;
' neither could they feed themselves and families, for so many of them
' were living on charity. Lord Macdonald had an undoubted right to his
' rents, but he could not get them. He had been in the habit of always
' feeding the crofters when an emergency arose, and recently before the
' the potato famine of 1846, gave them large supplies of meal almost
' every year, but he could not feed them in perpetuity, as seemed then to
' be the prospect, and this too when he got no rents. It will thus be
' seen that it was not on the grounds, on which it is often alleged pro-
' prietors evict crofters, that Lord Macdonald endeavoured to persuade the
' crofters of Sollas district to emigrate, and did at first succeed in getting
' them to agree to it. There was nearly a total failure to pay any rents,
' and an inability to supply themselves with food. So that, even had he
' handed over the land to themselves without exacting any rent for it, it was

' more than doubtful if they could have existed. It is further to be observed he did not propose to crowd the people into corners which would have cost him little, but at a very serious expense to himself to place them by emigration in a position that he had every reason to believe would have secured them a degree of comfort, wealth, and independence, they had no chance so far as could then be seen of ever attaining in their native island. In making these proposals I have little doubt he was fortified by the recorded opinions of men who had made the state of the Highlands and Islands one of special inquiry and consideration, under far less trying circumstances than then existed, and one of whom had been intrusted by Government to inquire into a previous though far less severe famine, and report upon the best remedies for preventing a recurrence. I need only refer to three of these gentlemen, viz., Mr Robert Graham of Redgorton, a commissioner sent by Government to the Highlands and Islands to inquire into the distress of 1837 following so close on that of 1836; Mr Robert C. Baird, writer in Glasgow, Honorary Secretary to the Glasgow Committee for affording assistance to the destitute Highlanders in 1836 and 1837; and Dr Norman Macleod of St Columba's, Glasgow, than whom no one was more attached to the Highlands and Highlanders, or did more for them when occasion occurred. Mr Graham made a report to the Government in 1837, and was afterwards examined in 1841 before a Committee of the House of Commons. In his report he recommended emigration as "the most expedient, the most efficient, and the most economical expenditure;" and in his evidence before the House of Commons in 1841, he stated his views on emigration even more strongly than in his report four years before. He states in one place—"It would be humanity to remove some people," then "it would be humanity to transport them to some other situation," and that "to give them five acres of land in a colony would be happiness to them." Mr Baird, who had also obtained a vast amount of information, urged emigration in the strongest language. He accuses the Highland proprietors of "false humanity" in not pushing it, and states the destitution that existed arose from a "false humanity allowing the people to remain." Both he and Mr Graham point out Mr MacNeill of Canna as the best model for other proprietors in the Highlands. Now, the first thing Mr MacNeill did in bringing his estate to the position so highly commended, was to remove by emigration 200 out of a total of 500 on his property. Dr Macleod, in his evidence before the House of Commons, speaks if possible more decidedly than these other gentlemen in favour of emigration as the only way of relieving distress in the Highlands and Islands. With such opinions before him, and under the distressing circumstances already detailed, it cannot be matter of surprise that Lord Macdonald at once resorted to emigration as the only mode of relief within his power and the best for all concerned. So, in March 1849, as is stated in the Rev. J. A. MacRae's evidence, Mr Cooper, his Lordship's commissioner, came to Sollas to make an offer to the people of sending them to Upper Canada on what were considered liberal terms, the Highland Destitution Committee also promising assistance. The people then agreed to emigrate on the terms proposed, but when Mr Cooper came in June to carry through the arrangement, the people refused to leave their crofts on any terms. There is no doubt that the refusal was not a spontaneous act on the part of the people, but was the result of influence brought to bear upon them from other quarters. I am very clearly of opinion that the determination to reject Lord Macdonald's offer was on the part of the people injudicious and wrong. They were surely under an obligation either to pay the rents of the crofts or quietly

INVERNESS.
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INVERNESS.

Charles Shaw.

INVER-
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INVERNESS.

Charles Shaw.

' to restore them to the owner when duly warned to leave them. By accepting the offer the crofters would have placed themselves in plenty, comfort, and independence, instead of living on charity and incurring debts they could not pay, with no prospect of bettering their condition at the time, the offer was made. That if they had gone to America at the time and even selected Cape Breton, which is said not to be the best colony to emigrate to, but is one to which many of their countrymen had previously gone to, they would speedily have attained a state of comfort and prosperity is clear not only from the letters of their countrymen who had gone before them to that island, but from the statements of other parties who have visited Cape Breton. I beg to refer specially to a paper in the *Celtic Magazine* of January 1880, by the editor Mr Alexander Mackenzie, now Dean of Guild, Inverness. In that article he says, that on going there he found our countrymen at the top of "every thing." He says he found his own friends in much better circumstances than he expected. He adds, as their position "is a fair illustration of that of many others," he goes on to describe it. He says their father emigrated having only a very few pounds in his possession, but in consequence of having been in the British Navy for five years, obtained a free grant of 200 acres, and being industrious they prospered. They drove Mr Mackenzie to North Sydney in a carriage and pair, while he says, if they had remained at Melvaig, they would never have got beyond a pair of creels. Mr Mackenzie delivered a lecture in Sydney, the Honourable Sheriff Ferguson, a native of Uist, presiding, probably one of those who emigrated about forty years ago. Mr Mackenzie then gives accounts of various individuals from our Western Islands, who obtained elevated positions in the colony, and accumulated a considerable amount of wealth, among others an M.P., whose father, a man of the name of Morrison, emigrated from Harris without a cent, and became a prosperous farmer. How in the face of such evidence men can be found to urge the natives to cling to these islands of ours with such miserable prospects before them, and so many difficulties to contend with, I am quite at a loss to understand. There was at the time the Sollas evictions took place a considerable sum of money in the hands of the Perthshire Destitution Committee. Somehow the members of the Free Church who had taken an interest in these Sollas people, ascertained the existence of this fund, and being of opinion, as many others then were, and unfortunately still seem to be, that the moss lands of these islands can be remuneratively improved, they applied to the Perthshire Committee to devote this money to the improvement of moss land in North Uist, and to employ the Sollas people in the work, being of opinion that when improved it would provide well for all of them. The Perthshire Committee came into their views, and one of their number, the late Lord Kinnaird, who was personally acquainted with Lord Macdonald, on the part of the committee, wrote his Lordship to ask if he would give them moss land for that purpose, and if so on what terms. Lord Macdonald answered that he would allow them to go over the whole estate of North Uist, and select such part of the moss land as seemed to them best suited for their purpose, and that he would give it to them at a nominal rent, or on their own terms. Afterwards Dr Aldcorn of Oban, on the part of the Free Church gentlemen, with a practical man of their own selection, went over all the moss land of North Uist, and ultimately Locheport Side and the hill of Langash were selected. A member of the Perthshire Committee and Dr Aldcorn came to North Uist to confer with the people and get them to go to the new colony. They came to my house on their arrival. Next day I drove them to Sollas, where they had appointed to meet the people. I

' left them there, and went on to Balranald, where they joined me in the evening. It seems Dr Aldcorn had some difficulty in getting the people to go into this moss land scheme, they evidently not having much confidence in its success, but at last they were persuaded to consent. I was asked to undertake a general superintendence of the work and of the colony; but I declined to do so, for the obvious reason that I had always given it as my opinion that Uist moss land could not be profitably improved, and that if it failed, as I felt confident it would, it might be said that my superintendence contributed to that result. I was then asked, as there was then no bank in the island, to act as a sort of banker by receiving the money from Perth, and then handing it over to the overseer of works. This I at once agreed to. The work of migration from Sollas was carried through in 1850, but not so early in the season as it should have been. It was only the townships of Sollas and Dunskeellar, and a small township at Lochmaddy, that were cleared. A selection of the crofters was made on the part of the proprietor, and those selected numbering more than half of those originally intended for emigration, with all the cottars, were settled in two townships of the Sollas district called Midquarter and Malaglete, where they still are. In Mackenzie's *History of Highland Clearances*, already referred to, there is an account of the attempted evictions in the Sollas district in 1849, apparently abridged from the *Inverness Courier*. Then occurs these words, "The following year the district was completely and mercilessly cleared of its remaining inhabitants, numbering 603." This last statement is quite erroneous. I have already stated what took place in what he calls the following year (1850), namely, a proportion of the crofters migrated to Locheport Side and Langash, as arranged under the auspices of the Perthshire Destitution Committee and by the advice of their Free Church friends, but the larger portion of the crofters of the Sollas district, and I think all the cottars in it settled down quietly in two of the Sollas townships, Midquarter and Malaglete, where they or their descendants still are. There is an asterisk after the words "603 souls," and a relative foot note referring to the *Inverness Courier* as an authority for the statement in the text. This also is quite misleading. The *Courier* is an excellent authority for what took place in 1849, when that paper had a representative on the spot, but it is no authority for what took place the following year, when the "603" are erroneously said to have been "mercilessly" removed, that paper not giving any account, so far as I can discover, of even the partial migration that took place. Lord Macdonald gave over such part of the people's stock as would have fallen to him for arrears to the Perth Committee, to assist in carrying on the improvement of the moss land. Operations began in the new colony in the winter of 1850, and a considerable quantity of ground was supposed to be ready for oat and potato seed in spring 1851. Seed of the finest quality was sent from Perth and put into the ground. At first the oat braid was beautiful. I never saw anything more promising, but it soon became evident that it only remained so while the strength of the seed remained. It then began to assume a sort of purple colour and to fade. In August not many stems remained, and I do not believe an ear was seen upon it. The potatoes were quite as unproductive. By this time, I believe, half of the money was expended. A new overseer was engaged, and operations were continued for another winter and spring, and a crop put down in spring 1852. Operations had been restricted, and they were confined to parts more likely to produce a crop, and there was some crop, but very inferior and quite inadequate for the support of any considerable number of the people. The people themselves were by this time satisfied the whole scheme was

INVERNESS.

INVERNESS.

Charles Shaw.

INVERNESS. ' a failure, and Sir John M'Neill, being at the time carrying on, with the
sanction of the Government, who were to provide a ship, an extensive
emigration from the Isle of Skye to Australia, a deputation from the
people came to me to ask me to apply to Sir John, to have them carried
away along with the Skye people. To this I consented, and Sir John
wrote me in reply that if I sent him a list of suitable families he hoped
he could get them taken. I then fixed a meeting with the people at
their own place. On going there I was glad to find before me Dr Duff,
the well-known Free Church Indian missionary, and Dr Mackintosh
Mackay, who had recently been moderator of the Free Church Assembly.
They had been looking at the crops, and had evidently formed a very
poor opinion of the prospects of the people. Dr Duff proposed we
should gather the people around us and explain matters. This was done.
I informed them that Sir John M'Neill had agreed to send to Australia
a considerable number of them, so far as their ages, &c., were suitable,
and I explained the terms generally. I did not urge them to go, but
told them I would come back next day when they had thought over it
for a night, and would then take down the names and ages of such as
were willing to go. Dr Duff, who unfortunately could not speak Gaelic,
addressed them briefly in English, and urged them very strongly to
accept the terms offered. Dr Mackay spoke to them in their own
language at greater length. He also advised them to accept the terms
offered, but not so strongly or decidedly as Dr Duff had done. I came
back next day and took down a list of names and ages, and sent the list
to Sir John. After this Mr Chant, a Government officer, who was
employed in the service, came to meet the people and make a selection.
I think the number considerably exceeded 200, including families from
other parts of North Uist. Ultimately the "Hercules" came to
Campbelton, Argyleshire, and a steamer was sent to Lochmaddy for
these people, and also to Harris, from which several families went. Soon
after reaching Campbelton, and after I think the "Hercules" had sailed
and was driven back, fever and small-pox broke out on board, and a good
many people died, among others the heads of two North Uist families,
whose orphan children were sent back to North Uist. Some years after
that, I succeeded in getting one of these orphans sent to Adelaide. He
is now rapidly accumulating wealth there, and remitted money to his
mother while she lived. The "Hercules" sailed at last, and reached
Adelaide in safety. The people have in general been doing well. Some
of those who resisted Mr Cooper's attempt to get them to go to Canada
and singled themselves out by the violence of their opposition, and again
when leaving Lochmaddy to join the "Hercules," spoke to me in no
very polite terms, as if I had some personal object in getting them
away, began a correspondence with me a few years after reaching
Australia, and sent through me money to their friends. So much had
their tempers changed, and their feelings towards me, that they put a
sum of money together, and remitted it to me, with a request that I
would purchase my wife a ring with it as a token of their gratitude to
me for all the trouble I had from first to last taken in their matters; and
in writing me they begged of me on no account to return the money, as
they would not accept of it. I felt gratified, after all the ill-feeling they
all had shown, that they at last appreciated my disinterested efforts to
improve their condition, though these efforts had not at first met their
approval but very much the contrary. Most of the Sollas people who
migrated to the moss crofts, but who did not leave in the "Hercules," are
still, or their families, on Lochport Side. One widow and her children
went to Cape Breton four or five years ago, her father, who is in good
circumstances there, having sent for her. I may mention, while on the

' subject of emigrants, that I have had frequent correspondence with some
' who went from South Uist and North Uist to Canada, Cape Breton,
' Australia, and the United States. I always found their letters written
' in the most genial and contented terms, and without exception all my
' correspondents seem to be doing well, and thankful they had left their former homes. After the migration of a portion of the crofters to the
' new colony at Lochport Side and Langash, and the settlement of the
' remainder on the two townships, matters did not improve in the islands,
' and in 1850 the crops were in general rather worse than in the previous
' year. The Destitution Committees formed in 1847, announced that
' their funds were about being exhausted, and that therefore they could
' not go on much longer to feed the people. This state of matters so
' deeply impressed me, that in September 1850 I addressed a letter to Mr
Fraser Tytler, then Sheriff of this county, which will be found in the
appendix to Sir John M'Neill's Report of 1851. It gives my view
of the state of my own jurisdiction as it then was. My letter was
in about three months after followed by communications much
to the same effect from Skye and other islands. In consequence of
these various communications, Sir John M'Neill was sent on his well-
known mission to the west coast and islands. Before Sir John made
his report, another step was initiated, which in its results so far has, I
think, done more for the good of the inhabitants of the outer islands
than anything that has hitherto been effected on their behalf since the
kelp trade gave way. I refer to the introduction of trading steamers to
these islands. At that time there were no steamers trading to the
Inverness-shire portion of the Long Island. There was in Glasgow a
firm, Thomson and MacConnell, that sent a weekly steamer to Portree,
arriving there every Saturday, and going on every alternate Saturday
to Stornoway, but resting at Portree every other Saturday. In this
year (1850), a few weeks after writing to Mr Fraser Tytler the letter
referred to before, I addressed an urgent letter to Messrs Thomson and
MacConnell, asking them to send their steamer to Lochmaddy on the
Saturday that she rested at Portree. To this letter I received no
answer till January 1852, and the answer did not come from Thomson
and MacConnell, but from David Hutcheson & Company, to whom the
former firm had made over the business. Hutcheson & Company, refer-
ring to my letter to their predecessors, agreed to send their steamer to
Lochmaddy. After some correspondence with them, I engaged an
agent for them, and had the whole matter arranged to their satisfaction,
and the trade was fairly started. At first a small cart or two would
have carried the steamer's cargo outward and inward, but matters soon
changed, though there was then no pier at Lochmaddy but a rock, that to
some extent answered the purpose of a pier, the trade increased amaz-
ingly. The crowds on the shore waiting it, were more like a fair than
a steamer's arrival. There were carts from North Uist and Benbecula,
boats from Harris and other islands. In the course of some years an-
other Company put on a steamer that came round by the west side of
Skye, and called at Lochmaddy and the principal harbours in the Long
Island of Inverness-shire once a week. When I left Lochmaddy, a little
more than two years ago, there were three steamers in the week trading
along the whole of my old jurisdiction, and doing a fair amount of
business. The advantages which the visits of these steamers have con-
ferred on these far-away islands it is not easy to overrate. They have
given an easy and rapid means of sending all their produce, cattle, sheep,
eggs, lobsters, whelks, &c., to all the markets in the kingdom. The
men can now get with ease, and at little expense, to the east coast
fishing, where they seldom went before, and also to the training ships.

INVER-
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INVERNESS.

Charles Shaw.

INVER-
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INVERNESS.

Charles Shaw. ' Men and women can, and do continually, go to the south for service, &c.;
 ' on the other hand, meal and flour, which they now stand so much in
 ' need of, they can get rapidly imported, and in fact a new world has
 ' been created in these distant islands. Another source for making
 ' money which, within recent years, young men from these islands have
 ' largely availed themselves of, is the militia service. There are rather
 ' more than 1000 men in the militia regiment, embodied from the
 ' counties of Banff, Elgin, Nairn, and Inverness. Of that number some-
 ' times as many as 700 are said to be natives of the three parishes of
 ' North and South Uist and Harris, and the number from these islands
 ' is, I am told, seldom less than 600. It will thus be seen that many
 ' of the crofters and their families have opportunities of making money
 ' now, which in the best days of the kelp manufacture they scarcely
 ' enjoyed, and if they contented themselves with the food and clothes
 ' they used in my first recollection, there would perhaps be more wealth
 ' in these islands than at any former period, particularly so long as cattle
 ' continue at present prices. Such, however, is the change in style of
 ' living and dress, and so considerable is the failure in all their crops, that
 ' with all their other advantages they do not seem to me to have all the rough
 ' and plenty they had long ago, or to be so far removed from poverty as
 ' then. They live now more luxuriously, but more from hand to mouth,
 ' and therefore the changes from what may appear to be plenty to poverty
 ' and want, are likely to be more rapid than formerly, when any par-
 ' ticular cause for such changes occur. I have no intention of adverting
 ' to much of what was stated to the Commissioners by the delegates,
 ' though a great deal of it, as reported in the *Scotsman*, is open to
 ' remark. There are some statements, however, so very incorrect that it
 ' would not be right to pass them over entirely. Some delegates who
 ' gave evidence at Lochboisdale, stated that at the time of the emigration
 ' which took place in 1851, more than one person was tied, forcibly
 ' carried on board the transports, and sent to America. I can only tell
 ' what came to my own knowledge in the course of an inquiry, and
 ' which perhaps may account partly, if not entirely, for what was told
 ' by the delegates. Sometime after the ship with the emigrants sailed,
 ' how long I cannot now remember, I received a letter from an M.P. in
 ' London, with whom I occasionally corresponded, in which he stated
 ' that he had heard that one emigrant had been tied and carried on board
 ' the transport at Lochboisdale; I had not heard of anything of the
 ' kind having taken place. After consultation with the Procurator-
 ' Fiscal and Inspector of Police, I sent the Inspector to Lochboisdale,
 ' and directed him to make a thorough inquiry, and to report. On his
 ' return he reported that a man and his wife had embarked, that the
 ' husband afterwards skulked ashore with the intention of getting rid of
 ' his wife in this way, and hid himself, that he was missed, looked for,
 ' found in hiding, then tied and carried back on board ship, and so was
 ' sent to America. My parliamentary friend thought the man was rightly
 ' served under the circumstances. I heard no more of the matter till I read
 ' the statements of the delegates in the *Scotsman*. In the evidence given
 ' before the Commissioners in Benbecula on 29th May, Ranald Macdonald,
 ' crofter, Aird, is reported to have said, "In the time of Clanranald a large
 ' extent of moorland was reclaimed by their forefathers, on the understand-
 ' ing that it should remain in the possession of the township. Most of that
 ' had been since added to Nunton. The people who were settled in the
 ' moorland after it was reclaimed were evicted, when the place was given
 ' to the tacksman." It is then reported that, in reply to Sir Kenneth
 ' Mackenzie, the delegate said, "It was a year or two before Colonel Gordon
 ' bought the estate that they were deprived of this reclaimed ground."

' I knew that this last statement was not correct, and therefore wrote to
' the delegate, with whom I had been acquainted all his life, to ask if this
' statement by him was correctly reported, and if so, how he had made a
' statement so manifestly erroneous. He answered in the following terms :
—“I understand that my statement to Sir Kenneth Mackenzie was mis-
understood, if I am alleged to have said it was a year or two before
Colonel Gordon bought the estate the settlers on the moorland were
evicted and the place given to the tacksman. Colonel Gordon had the
place of the settlers or crofters for years before it was added to the
tack of Nunton, a year or two probably or more ; I was not keeping
dates of it. The thing was, I did not rightly lift the question put by
Sir Kenneth, or on the other side they took it contrary to what I
meant at the time. I hope you will understand from what I said that
the year or two was contrary to what I meant, for the Gordons had the
place to themselves a while before it was added to the tack.” All
this means, though it does not come out so clearly as could be wished,
that it was after Colonel Gordon bought the estate, and not before, that
this improved moorland was taken from the township and added to the
tack of Nunton. Two delegates speak as to the evictions at Sollas, the
one John Morrison, the other Angus Macaulay. The facts as they took
place are, I think, correctly stated in the *Inverness Courier* of August
1849, reported by a person who was present whose evidence can be
relied on. The statements by Morrison are all greatly exaggerated or
entirely erroneous. It would occupy too much time and space to go
over them all. It is not possible to believe the people were, as is said
by this delegate, living in ease and plenty, and in a happy, prosperous
condition, when they had so often and so recently been visited by
famine, and were then and for the previous three years living chiefly on
charity doled out to them in small quantities by the Destitution Com-
mittee. I have in a former part of this paper stated the facts as to the
removal of the people to Locheport, and many of the hardships referred
to, if they really suffered from them, might have been avoided had they
left their holdings at Sollas early in the year. Morrison states that it
was the factor, the late James Macdonald, Balranald, who directed the
evictions. This is not the case. Mr Macdonald was not factor at the
time. He ceased to be so in 1848, the year before, and was not appointed
again till 1851. I have documents in my possession that will prove
this, though it is only of importance as showing the random and unre-
liable statements that are being put forth. He says he saw the soldiers
that were sent from Inverness about it. There was not one soldier sent
from Inverness about it. He says the place they were evicted from was
about as desirable a place to go back to as any they could get to. So far
from this being the case, the other delegate (Macaulay) admits that the
potatoes had been failing there for some years back ; that they had to
carry the sea-ware in boats five miles, or cart it three miles, it being ob-
served it was not carted on roads, but through sand too trying for their
horses ; besides, sea-ware was very scarce in that district, and its scarcity
was in a great measure the cause of destitution so often prevailing in all
these townships, and this being so unsuitable for crofters. This dele-
gate further says—“The inferiority of the soil they now lived on, and its
unsuitableness for human existence, was indescribable, notwithstanding
that they had laboured to improve it for thirty years. The crofts
would not yield them so much food on an average as would support
their families for two months of the year. The ground was of such a
nature that it could scarcely be improved,” &c. If this evidence be
good for anything, it proves beyond question that Uist moss land is not
capable of improvement, if this be the result of the expenditure of pro-

INVER-
NESS.

INVERNESS.

Charles Shaw.

INVERNESS. ' bably £1000 on this limited extent of ground, with the addition of the labour of forty men for thirty years. It further shows what an amount of nonsense is spoken about the improvement of waste land in the Highlands by men who really know nothing about the matter, and who will not listen to those who have had experience of it. I think the delegate is wrong in saying they got no assistance in building their new houses. I believe the Perthshire Committee paid for that as for other work, but they did not pay for the recently built houses or cottages noticed by the Commissioners. The other delegate, Angus Macaulay, who was born four years after the evictions, can only speak from hearsay, and his evidence is therefore of no great value as regards these evictions. He repeats the statement as to who was factor, which is not correct. He then says the repeated evictions carried out when Lord Macdonald was proprietor, was the cause of so many townships being overcrowded. I believe this statement is at the least an exaggeration, and one of which he can really know nothing. I am almost certain that scarcely one crofter was added to a township in North Uist since Whitsunday 1829, and till Lord Macdonald sold the estate, though I know that crofts that had in 1829 twocrofters on them, were afterwards reduced to one. Then the delegate mentions that Mr Cooper states in a pamphlet that Mr Macdonald telegraphed to Earl Grey for a regiment of soldiers. What Mr Cooper says in his pamphlet I really do not know, but what the delegate says is not correct. Sir George Grey and not Earl Grey was Home Secretary. Mr Macdonald neither telegraphed nor did anything else about soldiers or evictions. There was no telegraph in North Uist for more than twenty years after these evictions. There was no emigrant ship brought to Lochmaddy to take families to Australia. Most of what is stated by the delegate about this is incorrect; as also what he says about the rents, as to which I refer to in a former part of this paper. One delegate states, by way of complaint, that they only got 35s. per ton for manufacturing kelp, and that the proprietor got £21 for it. This statement is not correct. The very high price for kelp only continued for three or four years 1807-8-9, and perhaps 1810, but North Uist kelp never got the highest price. It was only the best quality of kelp got that, and North Uist kelp was not the best. The price came down after 1810, and the serious fall took place continually after 1817, till it was manufactured at a loss. With regard to the price paid by Lord Macdonald to the manufacturers, the delegate is not correct. The price paid to North Uist crofters was 35s. per ton for kelp made of three-year old sea-ware, and 42s. for two-year old. The question, however, is not what amount of profit the proprietor realised, but whether a fair wage was paid the manufacturer. I endeavoured to satisfy myself as to this at an early state of my connection with kelp manufacture, but had no small difficulty in doing so, because most of those employed were females and children over twelve years of age, and also because there was so much broken time occasioned by wet weather and the people going away now and again to hoe and weed potatoes and other work. On one occasion, however, I saw five men employed to make twelve tons at 35s. They were favoured by the weather, and so did the work in between four and five weeks' time. The amount due then came to £21, equivalent to a wage of nearly £1 a week to each man, which was rather more than double the wages paid at that time to other labourers in the island. Whether the land in these islands is exhausted by overcropping, as is alleged, is not a very easy question to solve. There seems no doubt that the corn which the land yields is not so productive in meal as it once was, but what the cause of this is I am unable to say. For some years back I have been hearing complaints to this effect from the crofters,

INVER-
NESS.—
INVERNESS.

Charles Shaw,

' I suspect the climate has a good deal to do with it. The farm of Balranald, in North Uist, is without doubt the best agricultural farm in that island, if not on the west coast. During the time of the late Mr Macdonald, besides feeding a large number of servants, it yielded a considerable quantity of bere which was sold. The present tenant tells me that, though he has another small arable farm in addition to what his father had, he never sells any bere, but has even to import annually from Glasgow the value of more than £100 of meal to feed his servants. He wrote me the other day, in answer to inquiries from me—"It is a well-ascertained fact, that no land in cultivation in these islands produces anything like the return of crop it did at one time. The best stacks grown in Macher in old land manured with sea-weed, from 7 to 9 bolls is rarely turned out, when in my first recollection stacks of the same size made an average of from 12 to 24 bolls. Tenants and others find it more profitable to give the corn to their cattle as it grows, and buy meal for their families. The miller of Dusary told me all he had of his year's grinding was 7½ bolls. This mill was not long ago rented at £56." A few years ago it was reduced to £30. All the miller has this year to meet this rent is 7½ bolls, and the other mills are somewhat alike. I may now shortly advert to my experience in Skye. At the time I was appointed factor for Lord Macdonald in 1838, the crofters in Skye were just recovering from the effects of the famine of 1836 and 1837, and during the three and a half years I remained in the office, I have no recollection of ever having heard from any of the crofters on the estate a complaint of the rents being too high or of the land being scarce. As to the rents they could not have been too high, as they were fixed by the late Mr Neil Maclean of Inverness, at a moderate rate about the year 1830, and the price of cattle and sheep had advanced at Whitsunday 1838. The lease on the largest farm on the estate came to an end while I was factor, and without difficulty I got it renewed at an advance on Mr Maclean's valuation of about 35 per cent. as well as a smaller advance on other farms, yet there was not a shilling added to the rents of the crofters, though valued at the same time and by the same valuator. As to scarcity of land, my opinion was at the time that the stock on the crofts was scarcer than the land, owing probably to the famine having compelled several of the crofters to encroach on their stock. In 1839 there was an emigration from Slate and Strath to Australia, and in 1840 and 1841 from Kilmuir, Snizort, and Portree to Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island. Lord Macdonald had nothing to do with these further than that he assisted such emigrants as were in need of help. There was no Brae or Benlee question in my time. My idea was that Benlee was a common grazing of which many parties had the use, but none an exclusive or unquestionable right to. The brae crofters had no doubt the lion's share of the benefit, but only I think, because they resided nearest to it. When North Uist and Kilmuir were sold, it appears to me it was the factor's duty to put Benlee on a different footing, so as to get rent for it. Whether the Brae tenants had then a right to any deduction of rent, for at most they could claim no more, seeing they had only a share of its use along with others, depended, I think, on whether Mr Maclean, in his valuation of 1830, had in fixing their rents calculated on the partial use they had of the hill. The fact of a decree of removing having been obtained against them in 1865, and of their taking a new set of their crofts without Benlee, at the rents then fixed, settled the question. When Benlee fell out of lease again, their having had a partial use of it seventeen years previously could give them no right, only an argument to support their application for it; but Lord Macdonald was surely entitled to consider whether their offer was

INVERNESS.—adequate, whether they had capital to stock it, or to take any other view that might occur to him on the matter. I cannot help thinking that a moderate amount of firmness ought to have obtained a settlement, and would no doubt have done so but for the interference of others who must have a say now-a-days in much that does not concern them, particularly if it pertains to the distribution of land. The practical question now is to determine what should or can be done to improve the condition of the crofters, and if possible place them above want. This is a matter which from my position and circumstances I have been led to consider more or less for more than half a century, and I have always arrived at the same conclusion. The first step seems to me to be to enlarge the present crofts to such an extent that each croft will support a family comfortably, and to give them leases of these enlarged crofts. But the crofter, in order to prosper, must be possessed of such an amount of capital as will start him in full stock and free of debt. To do otherwise, the crofter would be landed in misery and kept in that state. I am opposed generally to the breaking up of large farms, and converting them into crofters' holdings, though this might be done with advantage in a few exceptional cases. The cost of buildings involved by such a change would be enormous, for the old class of buildings will no longer do. There must be well-sized dwelling houses, with apartments more appropriate to modern civilisation, byres, stables, and kilns. Moreover, the land in the case of large farms now in pasture having been long out of cultivation, the proper working of it would at first be attended with no small difficulty and expense. Besides, I am inclined to think that the putting these large farms under crofters would only lead back to the old state of matters, the same ground of over-peopling and its attendant miseries would just be gone over again, aggravated by the number alternately to be provided for being greater than at present. There is an idea abroad that those places where old stances of houses are seen must necessarily have at one time been the abodes of a well-to-do and happy tenantry. I suspect this is a very mistaken idea. The tradition is that the occupiers were often very miserable for want of food. The late Dr John Macleod mentions this in his evidence before the House of Commons. I have myself been told in my younger days of the barbarous custom of bleeding cattle in summer having been often resorted to, to afford the people food, and also that many subsisted for weeks at a time on shell-fish alone. Looking to the fact that potatoes are now such an uncertain crop, and keeping in view the general impression that the land is not producing so much corn in the islands, and if the result of the Locheport experiment and the expenditure of £800 by Lord Macdonald on drains, be taken as samples of what would result in similar cases, the inducement to extend crofts is not great, but very much to the contrary. Without discussing the various views that are taken of this important question, I venture to say that in my opinion emigration to healthy thriving colonies of every family that cannot take up, or be provided with, so much land as will amply suffice for its support, and find no other adequate means of livelihood, is the only way to meet the present difficulty, and I believe it will meet it thoroughly. It may be said that the people will refuse to emigrate. I have no belief in this if the people be only left to themselves and fairly dealt with. In the early part of this century they actually rushed to America in hundreds, in the teeth of the wishes of the proprietors. I found in the factors office in Portree in the letter book of Captain Macdougal, then Lord Macdonald's factor copies of letters addressed to his Lordship's Edinburgh agents. By these letters it appears Captain Macdougal declined to try and prevent the people emigrating, as he had been asked to do by Lord Macdonald's commissioners being of opinion that whatever amount of

Charles Shaw.

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INVERNESS.

Charles Shaw.

emigration took place, more people would remain than the estate could support. Though Captain Macdougal had been writing now he could not, so far as my recollection serves me, have explained the existing state of matters more correctly than he did in these letters. Captain Macdougal died shortly after these letters were written, and was succeeded by another, who I believe, though unwillingly went into the commissioners, views of stopping the emigration. During my own life down to a period not very remote a stream of emigration more or less intense has been going on from the outer islands to America, and it was this stream of emigration that saved the island of Benbecula, in which I spent my younger days, from being in a worse state of congestion than any of the other islands. Indeed, I look on that island as in a great part of its past history showing more clearly the benefits of emigration than any other part of the Highlands and Islands with which I am acquainted. It is in a manner self-contained, and has no fishing in its neighbourhood. The people are not fishermen. It at one time produced more kelp than any island of its size in the Hebrides, and now that kelp manufacture may be said to have ceased, its inhabitants have nothing to depend upon but the produce of the soil. So far as I have heard of its history, it has always been occupied by the crofter class, excepting the Clanranald home farm of Nunton. There have never been any great changes in it, no clearances or conversion of crofter farms into tacksmen's, or the reverse, to any appreciable extent. There has been for a long time an attempt to convert moorland into arable with some partial success—the moorland producing an inferior potato, and still more inferior oats, and a slightly improved pasture. While this was going on there was a pretty regular and gradual emigration to Cape Breton, not always annually, but sometimes so, and never at a great interval of years. The population did after all increase, and sometimes press heavily on the means of subsistence, but the proprietor Clanranald always came forward with a supply of meal, and the occasional emigration helped to relieve the pressure, and kept the numbers within some bounds. There was no influence used for or against emigration; facilities were given to those who wished to emigrate, by relieving them of their crofts if they had any, even between terms, but nothing more. Providence opened the door, and the people, left to their own judgment, made use of it as an exit from what appeared to them either a present or coming evil. Emigration was the safety valve, and the people cheerfully availed themselves of it. The same, I am convinced, would have happened again had the people been let alone and been left to their own judgment, but the agitation about changes in the land laws, &c. has, I fear, quite upset them for the time. However unlikely things may look at present, I very much agree with Mr Kenneth Macdonald, one of the witnesses examined in Harris, that when education spreads they will take a different view of the case; and I believe it is only ignorance, and the advice of injudicious friends that will induce them to remain in their present precarious state, so nearly allied to poverty and want, and to delay their availing themselves of any opportunity offered them of attaining to the greater and more permanent wealth and independence which so many of their countrymen have already secured, and they or their descendants are now enjoying.

41435. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Were some of the Sollas people tried at Inverness?—Yes.

41435*. Were you present?—Yes, I was a witness.

41436. Who was the judge that tried them?—Lord Cockburn.

41437. Did you ever read Lord Cockburn's *Memorials*?—Yes.

41438. Did you ever read the chapter about the Sollas evictions?—I really forget, but I remember what he said at the trial a great deal better.

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Charles Shaw. *Courier.*

So far as I remember, he said he did not know whether to laud or to find fault with Lord Macdonald's proceedings—that there was no evidence before the Court to say one thing or another, and he had formed no opinion—so help him God. It is very well reported in the *Inverness Courier*.

41439. Perhaps you will refresh your memory again by looking at the *Memorials*?—I would rather refer to the *Courier*.

41440. What I am referring to is not what he said at Inverness, but his own journals?—I have the book.

41441. Now, you made reference to the name of Mr Brown, the factor for Clanranald, and who was so for a long time?—He was there from 1796 to 1811.

41442. The account you give of the Clanranald family is a very pleasant one?—Well, it is the one he always gave me, for it was himself who first suggested the idea, and I watched and found he was perfectly correct.

41443. And you yourself had a good deal to do with the estates in the Clanranald time?—Yes.

41444. Then these are exactly the old times the crofters would like to see back again?—Yes; but give them the kelp again, and I hope the old time will come back too.

41445. I don't think any of the delegates made any particular objection to their position in the time of the Clanranalds?—Well, this delegate that I refer to said that two years before Colonel Gordon bought the estate.

41446. But that is explained?—It is explained now; but if I had not taken it up, it would have gone down in history, I suppose, with the ill-doings of other factors.

41447. The most of your experience as a factor applies to a time more than forty years ago?—Yes; I ceased to be factor for Lord Macdonald in the year 1841.

41448. But we had very few complaints as to what occurred prior to 1841?—There were very few complaints when I was there. You could not expect that certainly.

41449. And there were none?—No.

41450. But we should like to have heard from you something of the doings at a later period than 1841?—I don't like to give an account of doings that I was not concerned with. I have refrained in this paper from saying anything I did not know of my own knowledge.

41451. You made some reference in your paper to what MacNeill of Canna did?—Yes. In a Committee before the House of Commons, Mr Graham of Redgorton, who was the commissioner sent to us in 1837, recommended MacNeill as a model whom all Highland proprietors should follow, and he turned off 200 out of 500 the first step he took.

41452. Is there a MacNeill of Canna now?—No.

41453. He has gone?—Yes.

41454. Along with the 200?—No; a long time afterwards.

41455. But considering the great credit given to this MacNeill of Canna, it appears that forty years afterwards there is no MacNeill of Canna?—The last of them was a fool, and you cannot help that. That has nothing to do with the turning out of the people. He was practically a fool; I don't say he was in an asylum.

41456. I must ask you as a man of great experience to re-consider a matter in your paper. In speaking about Sollas, you stated that the people were in arrear?—I was told so. That is one of the things I had no evidence of. I did not see the books, but it was stated at the time of the evictions. When Sheriff Colquhoun was there, carrying through the law, we were told they were about two years in arrear, and some of them four, and some were a year and a half.

41457. I was going to ask you more with reference to an observation you make in your own paper, and I think the purport of your observation was this, that usually when they were not able to pay they were bound to go?—Yes, I think I did make use of that observation. But I also took into view their prospects and the state of the country at the time. I did not take the mere fact of a man being a year or two in arrear, which may happen at any time, but here was the country in a state of destitution without the means of livelihood. What were they to do?

INVERNESS.

INVERNESS.

Charles Shaw.

41458. I am afraid your statement was rather broader than that?—It was not intended to be broader, because my intention was to look to the whole circumstances of the case. If I did not say it, I should have said, looking to the whole circumstances of the country,—and I think if you look at the paper, although it does not occur in that particular sentence, you will find in the sentences either before or after, that anybody reading it carefully will infer I looked at the state of the country at the time.

41459. I am glad to hear it?—I never would recommend eviction for the mere fact of arrear; but it was the desperate state of the country then that made the case so bad, so hopeless for Lord Macdonald.

41460. You don't mean then, if it is susceptible of such a meaning, that because a man might fall into arrear for a time, he must go if he did not pay?—No; but still the landlord has the right to make them go if he chooses to do it.

41461. Let me go a little further. Are there no men in this world engaged in commerce, who sometimes through misfortune are not able to pay their debts in full, and who go through the Bankruptcy Court?—Yes.

41462. Is it necessary in those cases that those men are compelled as a matter of course to emigrate and go abroad?—No, it is not. It may be, though, and I believe it very often happens, that they go abroad before their affairs are examined into.

41463. You surely would not say your countrymen are in the habit of leaving that, or your brethren in the islands?—My brethren in the islands are just like other people.

41464. Another thing you stated about Sollas was that some of the people in Sollas were not removed, but remained there?—They are there yet.

41465. Did any of those people that remained come to make a complaint to us? Did they send delegates?—I really forgot.

41466. I don't think they did?—I cannot remember. Yes, they did; Angus Macaulay was there.

41467. What complaint had he?—Oh, he had every complaint in the world. His evidence, as reported in the *Scotsman*, is most odious, so far as reflections went.

41468. But what I wanted to know was this, was there any real complaint brought before the Commission by the remaining inhabitants of Sollas as to their present condition?—I don't think there was, because they have had no reason to complain of Sir John Orde. He has been a most excellent proprietor, and kept the rental of the estate the same as it was fifty years ago, and has not added one penny to it.

41469. We find on the one hand that those who remained had no complaint of their present position, but we find that those who were compulsorily removed to Locheport had great complaints?—Yes; but who was to know it was to turn out as it did?

41470. But the people at Locheport have complained very much indeed?—Yes, very much indeed.

41471. We have found two facts,—that the people allowed to remain in Sollas were making no complaint, but those compelled to go to Loche-

INVER- port were complaining ; is it not a fair inference to say, that if the
NESS. people who were sent to Locheport had been allowed to remain in Sollas,
— they would be as contented as those who are there ?—I don't know ; but
INVERNESS. they would be ten times more contented if they emigrated.

Charles Shaw. 41472. But that is not an answer ?—Well, it is really a thing impossible to know. You must observe that Lord Macdonald made a selection. I don't know but he selected the men who had the means of working the land ; whereas it was the poor people that went to Locheport, and if they had remained at Sollas, they might have been twenty times worse off than they are.

41473. Who has Sollas at this moment ?—There are four townships, and the two townships from which the people went to Locheport are in the hands of a Skye man.

41474. Now, would it not be more pleasing to you as an isleman to see a lot of islemen in this island, instead of the Skyemen ?—Yes, if they were contented and not starved, as I have seen them.

41475. Is it not true that Sollas was a sort of garden in North Uist, and that the people were not only able to support themselves, but to export elsewhere ?—I never heard that. On the contrary, it was a wretched place, for they had five miles, as one of the delegates says, to bring sea-ware, and to carry it through heavy deep sand for three miles, and the potatoes had been failing for a period of years, whatever the cause of it was. No, no ; Sollas was never the garden of North Uist.

41476. You admitted in a kind of hesitating way that there was one man taken hold of and put on board whether he would or not ?—But I know nothing about it.

41477. But you heard it ?—I never heard of it at all. I got a letter from an M.P., in London to say he heard this, and I went immediately to the Procurator-Fiscal to consult what we were to do. It was difficult to deal with it, as the people were gone to America, but still I wanted to satisfy my friend, and this was the result.

41478. If you had known what was going to happen on board the 'Hercules,' where the small-pox broke out, would you have allowed a single man to put a foot on board ?—I don't think I would have interfered. It was none of my business. I was helping the people the best way I could.

41479. But my question is, Had you known of the results of the unfortunate breaking out of epidemic, would you have recommended a single man or woman to go on board ?—I could not prevent them. If the ship was to be lost on the way to Australia, how could I prevent it ? I have not the gift of prophecy.

41480. Is this the only case where epidemics have broken out in the case of vessels sent to take people to the colonies ?—I never heard of any others. There may have been, for all I know.

41481. You mention there are about 600 or 700 militiamen ?—Yes.

41482. And you think that is a most creditable thing to the men ?—Very creditable.

41483. But according to your own statement, if emigration is the only thing to put matters right, how many militiamen will you have ?—I don't know ; but I suppose there are only twenty-four from the whole of Skye, though the population is nearly double.

41484. Would the Inverness militia be worth anything numerically but for the men of the islands ?—Certainly not, but I do not expect that the men of the west, though emigration was carried out, would all go away. Surely we will keep the half of them. I would like as many as are comfortable to stay. I want to keep every human being that will be quite comfortable.

41485. You think, by drawing the line at half, that would be quite enough?—Oh, I don't mean to say that is the right thing. It was just a sort of hap-hazard way of stating it.

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41486. You have stated you read over the evidence carefully, and watched it as it went along?—I did.

INVERNESS.
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Charles Shaw.

41487. Can you say, or can you not, that the people have at this moment very great cause of complaint as to their position?—Well, I don't know. They have cause of complaint if this fact be true that the crops are scarce, but if the ground is yielding the crops it did yield before, they would have no serious cause of complaint, if they contented themselves with barley meal and potatoes and milk, and things of that kind.

41488. Do you think that the land in the Outer Hebrides is at all equally distributed among the population—I mean with regard to large farms and crofts?—Well, I think it is very much upon a par with the mainland. In North Uist there are 63,000 acres, and there are upwards of 4000 people. If you take the west coast, I think you will not find such a population.

41489. How much will the crofters have; will they have the half? —I don't know if they have. There is a great extent of what you call common, and they have their sheep there.

41490. I take the case of Barra as an illustration. There is a considerable population there?—About 2000.

41491. Is the best half of the island in the hands of one man?—Not the half of it; at least, he had not when I was there. I don't know what it is now.

41492. But he has the best portion of it?—Yes, decidedly, he has the best quality, but there is some, which is in the hands of another man, which is just as good though not so extensive.

41493. Do you know anything about the wealth of the people in any way?—Well, I hear there are considerable sums in the banks on deposit. I don't know whether to believe it or not. If it is true, the people must be much more wealthy than the general public give them credit for. I have heard since I came to Inverness of large sums on deposit receipt in a bank at Lochmaddy, but I don't know whether it is the truth or not. These things are like a snow-ball—always added to.

41494. If it be true that there are considerable deposits in the banks in the Hebrides, must they not have come there very much from what we call the crofting class, namely, the people paying rent under £30?—Decidedly. I am very much inclined to think, if there is much money there, it comes very much from the east coast fishing, because I hear of men coming home with £25 or £28 earned, others come without a shilling; but putting it all together, I rather incline to think that is the best source of money-making for them.

41495. And if there be any monies in the bank they must come from that source?—They must come from that source.

41496. You have been many many years a Sheriff; cannot you say something in favour of the character of your island brethren?—I have already said that they are just like other people.

41497. No better?—Certainly not. I will not flatter them by saying they are better than other people. I don't think there is any man who has sat on the judgment seat for forty years, but ought to know people very well. Some of them are very good, but others indifferent.

41498. Is the record of serious crime apparently trifling?—It is not so great now as when I went there at first. There was seldom a circuit at one time but there were one or two prisoners. It is the rarest thing now.

INVERNESS.

41499. Then there is an improvement?—There is an improvement—a decided improvement.

INVERNESS. 41500. What used to be the general nature of the offences? Was there any particular species of crime?—Theft and assaults, but the Charles Shaw. assaults were seldom of a magnitude that entitled them to be tried before the Sheriff and a jury, or the Justiciary Court.

41501. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—Did you observe reflections made upon Dr Macleod in the course of the evidence given in Uist?—Yes, and I was very much disgusted with them.

41502. Did you see a paper, given in from South Uist, in which the manner of his death was referred to, as if it had been a judgment?—Yes, and there was a horrible letter put into a paper.

41503. You knew Dr Macleod very well?—Very intimately.

41504. And the way he administered Lord Macdonald's estate?—Well, I don't know anything about Lord Macdonald's estate.

41505. But with regard to Uist, can you tell us?—I do not suppose there is any foundation at all for what was said. He was a most benevolent, kind-hearted man, a man who would take any amount of trouble to benefit another. I never saw a man more ready, being a doctor, to rise at twelve o'clock at night in that dreadful climate, and go here and there to trifling cases.

41506. But in the exercise of his duties as factor, in particular, was he not considered very lenient?—I cannot say as to that. I live at a considerable distance from South Uist, thirty or forty miles, and I cannot say anything as to the facts. I merely speak of the character of the man, who was quite the opposite of anything like what was alleged.

41507. *The Chairman.*—I would just ask you a single question about a custom which you allude to here, and about which we had some evidence recently; that is, the alleged custom of bleeding cattle in order to procure food?—I heard that long, long ago, but I cannot say one word about the truth of it.

41508. But you heard of it?—Yes.

41509. Was it reported that the blood of the cattle was mixed with meal?—No; I did not hear that part of the story at all. I remember an old man telling me that long ago they occasionally bled the cattle. I was rather disgusted, and did not even ask how it was cooked, if cooked it was.

41510. Was it reported to you that they did that on account of hunger, or because it was a delicacy?—On account of hunger, I understood. That was my understanding, and it was told to me as such,—that the scarcity used to be so great in some summers long ago that they used to bleed the cattle.

41511. Because it was argued to us that if they mixed the blood with meal, that proved they could not have been in want of food, because they had the meal?—Certainly, it was a very natural conclusion. I never heard of the meal.

41512. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—During all the long time you presided as Sheriff at Uist, did you find any change for the better in the character and habits of the people?—The only thing I can remark is that latterly I did not come so often to the Circuit Court here. When I was first appointed I was here almost every Circuit Court with one, two, three, or four prisoners sometimes, but latterly there were not so many of these heavy crimes. I think the quantity of criminal work was just about the same, only the crimes were less heinous.

41513. Perhaps the reason for that was, that the police were more efficient?—Perhaps they were made more efficient and more numerous.

[ADJOURNED.]

INVERNESS, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1883.

INVERNESS.

Present:—

INVERNESS.

Lord NAPIER and ETTRICK, K.T., *Chairman.*
Sir KENNETH S. MACKENZIE, Bart.
DONALD CAMERON, Esq. of Lochiel M.P.
C. FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Esq., M.P.
Sheriff NICOLSON, LL.D.
Professor MACLENNON, M.A.

JOHN MACDONALD, Merchant, Inverness (39)—examined.

41514. *The Chairman.*—You appear as a delegate from the association ?
—Yes.

John Macdonald.

41515. Have you a written statement ?—I have no written statement.
I was merely asked to corroborate the statement that was presented by the
first witness, Charles Mackay.

41516. And is there any branch of this question on which you wish to
express a personal independent opinion particularly ?—I am of opinion
generally, that if the crofters throughout the Highlands had more land and
security of tenure—that is to say, that they would be in no apprehension
of removal in their ordinary circumstances—they would produce far more
out of their crofts, and that they might perhaps devote their attention to
the production of various other things from their holdings.

41517. You think that they would not only produce more of what they
produce already, but that they would embark in other cultures ?—Yes.

41518. What other cultures do you think they might adopt ?—I might
draw your attention, for one instance, to the large quantities of eggs im-
ported into this country from other countries, and there is a very large
quantity of eggs sent from the Highlands to the southern markets besides
what is consumed at home. I think that even in this matter alone, the pro-
duction of eggs throughout the Highlands might be very much increased, so
much so indeed that I think an ordinary crofter with a small holding might
possibly pay his rent nearly from eggs alone. From calculations I have
been making, I do not give them as very accurate, but they are satisfactory
to my own mind, I believe that throughout the Highlands, taking the
mainland apart from the islands, perhaps upwards of £100,000 worth of
eggs is produced.

41519. I would like to know how you connect the increased production
of eggs particularly with security of tenure. I can perfectly understand
that the increased production of corn might be stimulated by security of
tenure,—a thing that requires a first outlay and a sustained expenditure,—
but surely the stock that produce eggs are more cheaply and rapidly reared
and of a more transitory nature than any other stock ?—I do not connect it
with security of tenure; I rather connect it with the increase of the
number of smaller holdings.

41520. That if there was more security there would be more small
holdings, and the small holdings would produce more small produce ?—Yes.

41521. And particularly poultry ?—Poultry and other things.

41522. If keeping poultry was more extensively practised on the small
holdings, how are the poultry to be fed ? Do you anticipate that food

INVERNESS. would have to be purchased for the poultry, or would the poultry be fed from the ordinary produce of the farm and leavings of the house?—Partly from the produce of the farm and partly from purchased articles.

John Macdonald. 41523. Have you any example of a small holder devoting himself particularly and profitably to poultry farming?—No, I don't know that it would do to devote himself particularly to it, except as an accompaniment to other things.

41524. They all have poultry already, I fancy?—Yes, I understand they have.

41525. Is there anything else in the way of small produce that you think might be raised upon small holdings, such as small fruits and better sorts of vegetables, and so on?—I may mention I had a communication from a firm in Ireland, who have devoted considerable attention to pork curing and pork rearing, and I have had inquiries about what the prospects would be of starting an industry like this in some part of the west coast and among the crofting population.

41526. But the people on the west coast, at least in the islands, generally have a repugnance to pigs?—I understand they have.

41527. Have they any repugnance to them here in the east?—Not so much.

41528. Do you know any case of small crofts or holdings about here where the farmer devotes himself to raising garden produce for the market and the town at all?—No, not in this locality; but I have heard it repeatedly said that the small holders might with considerable advantage devote considerable attention to the rearing of market produce.

41529. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Have you any personal experience of croft holding?—Not personal.

41530. Or have you any acquaintance among the crofters?—I have.

41531. Were you brought up in the country?—I was.

41532. In your opinion what is the proper size of a small holding?—I cannot say as to the acreage, but I know crofts where, say, two or three cows and a horse are kept, and where the family seem to be comfortable and contented, and where they rear respectable families.

41533. Are these crofts situated in positions where the tenants are able to give their labour for hire, or do they live entirely on the croft?—In cases which have come under my notice the members of the family, with perhaps a little outside assistance, are able to cultivate the croft.

41534. But are they able to do other work besides?—Yes.

41535. Then what size of croft do you think would be able to maintain a family without such outside labour?—I cannot say for that.

41536. You think it would be desirable to bring about an increase in the number of small holdings; in what way do you propose to bring that about?—I am of opinion that the extent of land at present under deer might with advantage to the country and to the people be cut up into small holdings, and I also think it would be for the interests of proprietors themselves and for the country that the land at present under large sheep farms should be cut up into small holdings.

41537. But how do you propose to bring this about?—I would think it would be quite a proper matter for the Legislature to interfere with the deer forests, and to restrict them at all events, or cut them up.

41538. Would you have the Legislature restrict the size of farms?—I cannot say personally that I would. I would not have them to interfere to that extent.

41539. Then how do you think you would induce proprietors to create small farms or crofts?—I have an opinion myself that it would be more for the interest of proprietors themselves to have a large number of smaller

well-to-do tenantry on sizes of crofts where they could be comfortable, than to have very large farms that are sometimes thrown upon their hands.

INVERNESS.

41540. Do you think that the proprietors themselves are coming to be of that opinion?—Well, I don't know many cases where they are, but I strongly suspect they must surely come to be.

INVERNESS.

John
Macdonald

41541. And in the natural course of events you think that the small holdings will increase?—Yes, I rather think so, but I would be inclined to have some indication from the Legislature that it would be necessary in the interests of the people.

41542. That is just the point I want to arrive at. How is the Legislature to indicate this?—Well, they have got over very great difficulties in the legislature of the country, and probably if you accept the principle I think they might get over that.

41543. Is there anything you wish to state in regard to the evidence you heard here yesterday?—I would like to say for myself, and many others who are associated with me in this matter, that I disapprove of the references that have been made by Dean of Guild Mackenzie to Dr Mackenzie's management of the estate of Gairloch during his time. I do not wish to contradict it in any way, because I am not a native of Gairloch or acquainted with the circumstances of the case, but I simply express my opinion, from Dr Mackenzie's well-known character in this community and throughout the country for many years, his great age, and his present state of health, that we cannot approve of the references made to him when he is not in a position to explain them personally. That is all I wish to say with reference to that matter.

41544. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—How long have you been in business in Inverness on your own account?—I have been in Inverness for twenty-five years, and in business for about seventeen years.

41545. Are you aware that it has been for a long period a complaint on the part of the inhabitants of Inverness, and the proprietors of property especially, that the poor rates have been higher in consequence of the number of people who have been evicted from country places, and settling in Inverness?—I have heard so repeatedly, and cases have come under my notice where parties who had some connection with land in the country have ultimately come to be paupers in the town of Inverness.

41546. If an examination of the roll were made, would it be found that a large number of the paupers were not natives of Inverness?—I believe it will be found so now, but if you examine the roll fifteen or twenty years ago you will find far more numerous cases in that connection.

41547. Has the consequence of that been that the attention of the intelligent public of Inverness has long been drawn to this particular point of the depopulation and evictions that have taken place in the Highlands?—That is so.

41548. So it is not a matter of yesterday with them?—No.

41549. In your business as a merchant do you consider that the establishment of a numerous and healthy crofting class would form a very good sound element for transacting business with?—I do certainly.

41550. Is not the existence of large farms, and to some extent absentee proprietors, prejudicial to commercial transactions?—Decidedly so.

41551. May I assume that nothing can be more sound commercially, to deal with a numerous class rather than with a few?—That is my experience.

41552. You were asked by Sir Kenneth Mackenzie about crofts, and what you would like to do. I presume what you are pointing to at present is simply to give the existing population of the Highlands substan-

INVERNESS. tial holdings; that is what you and your associates are pointing at?—Yes, to encourage them, rather than emigration.

INVERNESS. 41553. And do you fancy there is quite enough of land and to spare for all the people that are now in the Highlands?—Well, I do think so.

John Macdonald. 41554. *Mr Cameron.*—Have you ever compared the poor rates of Inverness with the poor rates of other large towns, so as to ascertain whether the increase is due to evictions from the neighbouring districts or to the natural gravitation from the country districts into towns?—No, I have not.

41555. Is it not the fact that the recent returns of the census show there has been of late years a tendency from all rural districts to gravitate into centres of industry, from one end of the country to the other?—Yes, there is, but I think it is particularly so in the Highlands.

41556. Then have you ever taken the trouble to compare the poor rates of Inverness, or its general circumstances, with other towns, so as to ascertain as a fact whether the tendency has been more or less in Inverness to gravitate to the town than it is in other parts of the country?—No, I have not ascertained that from comparison of the poor rates, but from various other sources I am perfectly satisfied that it is so,—from the opinions so freely expressed by those who ought to know something about the matter.

41557. What I mean is that you might on investigation ascertain that the proportion of people who have migrated to Inverness is pretty much the same as it has been to other large towns both in England and Scotland, neither greater nor less?—That may be so.

41558. But, so far as you are concerned, it is as yet an unascertained fact whether the proportion has been greater in Inverness than any other large towns?—Yes.

41559. *The Chairman.*—I would like to ask you a question which I might more properly have done before. In what degree do merchants and traders, persons in your position here, depend upon the custom of shooting tenants and tourists, and other external sources of consumption, and in what degree do they depend upon local demand—on the residents in the country? I mean, does the custom of strangers of all classes, both tenants and tourists, form a very great element in your trade?—Speaking for merchants generally throughout the town, I may say that we depend very largely upon the permanent rural population throughout the country. There are one or two individuals in the town who devote their attention to the supplying of shooting tenants, but I think this of itself is decreasing now—this department of trade—because I am informed by those merchants who do that sort of business that the shooting tenants coming from the south supply themselves very largely with what they require from large stores in London and other large places, and bring all the supplies with them, which they used twenty or thirty years ago to buy in Inverness, so we are perhaps less than ever dependent upon these people.

41560. You think that if the custom of the shooting tenants, and persons who hire places and lands for various purposes here, were struck out, it would make no material difference to the trade of the town?—I think it would be fully made up if there was substituted for it the custom arising from the people who would settle down upon the land that they have now.

41561. *Mr Cameron.*—What do you mean by settling down upon the land they occupy now, because the shooting tenants shoot over land already occupied by farmers, except in the case of deer forests?—I was referring to deer forests.

41562. I think the Chairman's question referred both to sporting tenants and tourists as well?—From the changes that are proposed I do not suppose for a moment that the tourist traffic in the Highlands would decrease. I think it would increase, because the country would be much

more open to them than it is now, because you have restrictions here and there that are rather a barrier to tourists.

41563. You make the statement you have just made, not as a personal one, I understand, but as so far representing the trading community of Inverness. You think that is their opinion as well as your own?—Yes, I do.

41564. To go a step further, do you think the tradesmen of Inverness have derived any benefit from all the shooting lodges that have been built?—Certainly there has been a great deal of benefit derived from those shooting lodges and their surroundings.

41565. I suppose a large proportion of the shooting lodges have been built and constructed in the various departments by tradesmen and work people employed by those tradesmen situated in Inverness?—I should think so.

41566. It must have given a good deal of employment to masons, carpenters, joiners, plumbers, and contractors?—It must have done so.

41567. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—To clear up this a little about the position of the merchants and shooting people, I presume, with regard to such things for instance as butcher meat, fresh meat, poultry, eggs, and so on, of course the shooting tenants do benefit the people in the country, and perhaps the people in the town?—Undoubtedly, in very many ways.

41568. What you refer to more are groceries, cloth, and things of that kind?—Exactly.

41569. Those are all brought here by the strangers?—Yes.

41570. *Mr Cameron.*—Shooting tenants do not buy their Highland tweeds in London rather than in Mr Macdougall's?—Yes, but they require more than Highland tweeds.

RODERICK MACLEAN, Factor, Ardross (54)—examined.

41571. *The Chairman.*—You wish to read a statement to us?—Yes, I wish to supplement a statement I made at Loch Alsh. ‘In giving my evidence at Loch Alsh on the 2nd August, I was asked how much of the £86,867 laid out by Sir Alexander on improvements for tenants on his west coast estates, was for the benefit of crofters paying under £30 of rent? While my examination was going on, the papers were put into the hands of an assistant, who unfortunately summed up one branch only, amounting to £6000 odds. The correct sum is, however, £22,139, 10s. 9d., of which £20,116, 16s. was laid out for 114 of the larger crofters, making an average of £176, 9s. 3d. for each, and £2022, 14s. 9d. for 188 crofters occupying smaller holdings, making an average of £10, 15s. 2d. for each. For this large amount expended Sir Alexander's return is merely nominal, since the rent roll shows an increase of only £187, 8s. 3d. on the rents of 114 large crofters, and a decrease of £38, 5s. 7d. on the rents of the 188 smaller crofters, thus making the nett increase only £149, 2s. 8d., equal to 13s. 6d. per cent. for the outlay of £22,139. These figures need no comment. They plainly show that Sir Alexander's desire is to benefit his people. I regret, however, to say that all of them do not show corresponding gratitude. In my former evidence I mentioned the system of division of property which Sir Alexander advocates and acts upon, and I take this opportunity of stating the success of this system on his estates in Easter Ross. Leaving out the estates of Balintraid, Delny, Obsdale, Culcairn, and Milleraig, though conspicuous by the great improvements made upon and additions to them, there is but little

INVERNESS.

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INVERNESS.

John
Macdonald.

Roderick
Maclean.

INVERNESS.

INVERNESS.

Roderick Maclean.

' change in the number of large farms and crofts, but on the rest of his estates in Easter Ross, purchased from the Duke of Sutherland in 1845, the change is remarkable. When he came into possession in 1845, the lands were occupied by twenty-six tenants, one tenant paying £935, one £409, one £150, one £68, six from £32, 10s. to £38, 12s., and sixteen crofters from £1 to £26. In a few years the whole was remodelled, all the improvable lands brought under cultivation, farmsteadings erected, roads made, and large portions judiciously planted; in a word, the whole district so beautified as to be the admiration of every visitor, and the lands occupied—besides the home farm—by forty-four tenants, of whom one pays £400, six from £110 to £230, sixteen from £30 to £68, thirteen from £10 to £18, and eight from £4 to £7. But what I wish to notice specially is the manner in which he dealt with the large farm, which paid a rent of £935. Considering it too large a holding in the possession of one person, in 1846 he bought up the remaining years of the lease, and without occupying your time in giving details of progress, I at once state that in a few years it was occupied by one tenant now paying £400, one £130, one £125, nine from £32 to £68, twelve £10 to £18, and six from £4 to £7, thirty in all, and comfortable in their respective positions. Six of the above tenants occupy one club farm, and two another.'

41572. How many holdings altogether?—Thirty. The extreme west portion of this large holding called Dibidale, he partially forested and partially kept in his own hands as a summer grazing for sheep, it being too subject to severe winter storms to be occupied by a tenant. In 1782 the last resident tenant was starved out, and a shepherd who herded there from 1838 to 1859 told me that the place was re-stocked thrice during the time the Duke was proprietor,—the severe winter having destroyed the sheep.

41573. *Mr Cameron.*—What do you mean by that?—They died out; the severe winter storms having destroyed the sheep.

41574. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—At Ardross?—Dibidale, at Ardross. The sheep all died out with the storms, and had to be three times re-stocked in twelve years.

41575. *Mr Cameron.*—Do you mean the whole stock was cleared away?—That is the shepherd's information—that he had to purchase hundreds, and put them on three times during the twelve years. I may say, to confirm it, that the gamekeeper who is there now, to my knowledge, within the last five or six years, during very severe winter storms, drove the deer that are there now from the low ground as quiet as a herd of sheep; they were so reduced by the winter storms—the snow perhaps four or five feet deep, and sometimes ten feet in some parts. And Sir Alexander, finding the portion in his own hands unprofitable, forested the whole in 1869. There is also an outlying portion of the estate situated to the north of Ardross named Amatuatua, which he has reclaimed, and on which he has erected new buildings twenty years ago, occupied by nine tenants as a club farm, paying rents from £13 to £25, and one paying £2. All Sir Alexander's crofters on his east coast estates, being industrious, are comfortable. It is arrangements similar to the above that Sir Alexander is desirous to carry out on his west coast estates. His property in Loch Carron he has got organised—where there are, one tenant paying £220, one £120, two in a club £60 each, nine in a club £25, 5s. each, nine in a club average of £14, 6s. each, eight individual holdings from £6 to £24, four from £1, 10s. to £3, and one a nominal rent of 5s.

41576. *The Chairman.*—On what farm was this?—Loch Carron.

41577. That is the subdivisions which you mention now?—They exist now.

41578. But were they in substitution of another distribution, or have they always been so?—No, they were not. He broke them down. He had no difficulty in carrying out his plan here, as at the time the estate came into his hands there was room for more occupants, and nine have been introduced at Attadale and Strathcarron station. On his estates in the parishes of Lochalsh, Kintail, and Glenshiel, there are twenty crofter townships, of whom only six are on a satisfactory footing. The other fourteen cannot be organised on account of the excessive number of occupants, for whom he has no land to keep them always employed. I attribute to intermittent labour, and to a certain extent climatic lassitude, the cause of the laziness of which the west coast Highlanders are accused. I have observed that away from home and among working people they become excellent workers, but on their return to their homes they become infected by the indolent surroundings, and especially during the winter months, inactivity is a matter of course with them. If however, taken in hand when young, and kept in regular employment even at their homes, better workmen, circumstances considered, could not be desired. Uneducated Highlanders have a strong attachment to localities, and hence their antipathy to emigration; in many instances they would rather suffer starvation than leave their homes even for a season's work, but the world knows what educated highlanders abroad are. Education therefore, with more zeal, is one of the principal requirements to elevate them from their present impoverished condition. It would be a great blessing to many of the poor women to have lady missionaries (though difficult to accomplish) sent among them to give them instruction in the training of their families and in domestic economy. As a result of improper training, one painfully experiences in business one-sided statements, probably unwittingly, given as facts, and I believe it is by influences such as the above they could best be got at to practise the duties belonging to their several relations and stations. The well-regulated families among them are easily distinguished and pleasant to deal with. Highlanders are naturally imitative, and are more apt to follow leaders either for good or for evil than to think for themselves. Present occurrences show how applicable to the majority of them is one of Locke's miscarriages in reasoning, viz.—'The first is of those who seldom reason at all, but do and think according to the example of others, whether parents, neighbours, ministers, or who else they are pleased to make choice of to have an implicit faith in, for the saving of themselves the pains and trouble of thinking and examining for themselves.' The knowledge of agriculture among the crofters is far behind the age. To remedy this evil it might be worth the consideration of proprietors to select energetic natives on their respective estates, whom they would get trained in the theory and practice of Highland farming, to be ground officers, who would have constant supervision over crofters till trained. On the west coast they have to contend with climatic changes which are not experienced on the east coast, so that the same practice is not applicable to both. Squatting is a great evil, and often a source of annoyance in the management of Highland property. No one should have a possession without paying rent, however small. Last Whitsunday an occurrence took place which put one of Sir Alexander's farmers in a fix. Not having a ploughman with a family, he allowed a labourer to occupy the house intended for his ploughman; but having engaged a married ploughman previous to Whitsunday last, the labourer was in due form summoned to remove, and another house in the neighbourhood offered to him, with materials free to repair it. He told me in presence of his minister that he would remove without having been summoned, but I observed with a shade of that obliquity above referred to, and when on

INVERNESS.

INVERNESS.

Roderick Maclean.

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INVERNESS.

Roderick
Maclean.

the term day the ploughman came, the squatter would not move, leaving the farmer to do what best he could with his servant. In many instances, if attempts he made to stir up the people, and better ways of management introduced, they are looked upon as innovations, and frequently go under the name of oppression, and in some instances, though they see rules introduced to be for their benefit, they can scarcely realise their position in making breaches upon them. I give an example. Last spring circulars were issued to all Sir Alexander's west coast tenants who have hill grazings, for their guidance in heather burning, with which all as far as I am aware complied, but on two farms on opposite sides of an inland loch fires occurred about two weeks after the last day allowed by law for heather burning. I believed then, and do so still, that both the farmers were innocent, and that the fires were lighted at the instigation of some one with evil intentions, but though I am on terms of intimate friendship with both, to show by example that favour would not extend to any one in an open breach of law, I instructed Sir Alexander's solicitor to write them. One, who is an educated gentleman and not a native, replied at once freeing himself and his servants, and regretting he could not discover the incendiary; the other, who is a decent honest man, but a native, never troubled himself to reply, even though I personally advised him to do so. The more I study the state of the Highlands the more I see of the wisdom of Sir Alexander's plan, which may be summed up in there being a judicious gradation of holdings, and no more people in a district than can earn their livelihood by their industry. On Sir Alexander's east coast estates no one thinks of coming to ask a piece of land. They have the common sense to see it fully occupied. They follow the example of the busy bee, when the hive is too full it swarms—the young people go away. In the valley in which Ardross Castle is situated the population was under 130 when the estate came into Sir Alexander's possession. It very soon became populous, but not beyond a manageable number. In the first class school he established there I saw 160 children present at an examination, and through the means of the sound education and industrious training they got, Ardross boys are now to be found in almost all parts of the world in positions of trust. Last July over a dozen young mechanics and labourers left for Queensland in high spirits. A number of youths who have been well educated in the Lochalsh district also have gone abroad, are a credit to their country, and send encouraging reports to their friends. If the same spirit could but be put into more, how great a benefit it would be to themselves, and to those they would leave behind.

41579. *Professor Mackinnon.*—I should like to ask about the splitting up of this large farm, where only one tenant occupied it some forty years ago, and now it is occupied by thirty; do you think that that practice could be followed with benefit to the proprietor in a considerable number of cases elsewhere?—No; it was a case where the place could be broken up, but there is no other large holding that could practically be broken up.

41580. I had not particularly in view Sir Alexander Matheson's property. Your knowledge of the country is very wide?—My knowledge does not extend beyond that under my own charge.

41581. It was no great loss to the proprietor in this particular case?—Well, he has not gained by it.

41582. I hope he has not lost much by it?—I was not prepared with figures, but I know that the return he has cannot be 1 per cent., because I do not think that the breaking up of large farms will in any way benefit the proprietor. It must be looked upon as the work of a philanthropist.

41583. In the event of its being found not to be a losing matter to a

proprietor, and otherwise practicable, you would think the policy in itself would be a wise one?—Yes, I would.

INVERNESS.
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INVERNESS.

41584. Carried on along with the other policy of consolidating the smaller holdings at the other end of the scale?—Yes.

Roderick
Maclean.

41585. That practically is the policy you are endeavouring to carry out?—Yes, in those that he has not got properly organised, because there are a good many there who cannot gain a living by the land, and, consequently, to make them comfortable, two or three holdings ought to be put together to make one comfortable.

41586. So you would increase the very small holdings, and where practicable you would break up the very large ones?—Yes, that is what I would like to see.

41587. When you spoke of keeping in the district only the number of people that could be maintained by their own industry there, had you in view the possibility of some of them going to the fishing, as they are doing from the west coast just now?—Yes.

41588. So that the number that could be maintained there by their own industry would be somewhat larger than the number that actually took their livelihood out of the land?—Yes; what I mean is, that those who would make their living by the land would, as far as possible, have no other employment but the land, and those who would make their living by fishing would have only as much land as might keep them at home and yield the grazing of a cow and a few sheep, and let their income be principally from labour either as fishermen or as artizans.

41589. The crofter should have a substantial croft and work it?—Yes.

41590. And the fisherman might have a small plot?—Yes.

41591. You alluded to a farm here in the upper grounds where the stock was destroyed by winter storms. There was a gentleman here yesterday afternoon who had very considerable experience in his own line of business, and who stated that cattle could live upon the highest ground of Ross-shire during the winter; is that your experience of Ross-shire?—No, they will not live there. That gentleman did not know Ross-shire; at least, he did not know a Ross-shire farm.

41592. With respect to the more general statements you have introduced into this paper at the end, I see you look to the education of the people as the great instrument for putting things upon a satisfactory footing in the future?—Yes.

41593. And you think that they will clear away voluntarily so as to leave just a sufficient number in the place to be maintained with comfort?—I have no doubt of that, because experience shows that an educated young man will not remain there. He will think for himself, and when he begins to think for himself he finds it is folly to remain at home, and that it is best for him to go abroad and support himself, and be a help to those who remain behind.

41594. Apart from the management of those estates with which you have to do yourself, do you think that a rearrangement of affairs upon them might not be carried out at the same time with such a movement as that?—Well, I cannot speak from facts, for I don't know them.

41595. Where you find upon a very large extent of land scarcely a holding between £4 to £600?—Well, I cannot answer directly, because I do not know them.

41596. But your own policy upon your own estate, and if practicable you would think it a wise policy upon other estates, would be a graduated system of holdings?—Of that I have no doubt, but I thought you referred to its being done upon other estates.

**INVER-
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INVERNESS.

Roderick
Maclean.

41597. No, I refer to the policy?—I have no doubt of that being the right one.

41598. The complaint of the people themselves all along has been that the actual fact was quite different,—that the holdings were exceedingly small and excessively large, and that they wanted to get larger holdings for themselves out of the very large ones that exist?—Well, if that could be done—if it were practicable—it would be a wise thing to do, but the question is, how can it be done? The proprietor would have to go to the cost of erecting buildings and making permanent roads. They could not improve the lands themselves. He would have to improve them for them, and it requires a large amount of capital to do so.

41599. You don't think it would be reasonable to expect other proprietors to do what your own proprietor is doing?—Yes, if they had the means to do it.

41600. But it could not be reasonably asked for as a general rule?—Oh, no.

41601. Do you think that with a better system of education the people would emigrate voluntarily?—I have no doubt of it, for I have seen it for thirty years.

41602. Of course, uneducated Highlanders have a strong attachment to localities. You do not mean the educated Highlanders have not that too?—Of course they have it, but not to the same extent.

41603. They have it with a reason?—Yes. What I mean by saying uneducated Highlanders have a strong attachment to localities is that they cannot realise what it is to leave either for their own benefit or the benefit of others; but I believe that every person has a strong attachment to the place of his birth.

41604. A great evil you mention here is squatting. That includes the subdivision of crofts?—No, I mean people sitting down without paying rents at all. We have 123 of them who pay no rents.

41605. The complaint of the people themselves has been all along that there would be no such thing if these bits of land were given to them?—I cannot say for any outside our own property; but when Sir Alexander Matheson bought the property he found squatters on it.

41606. What would be your remedy for dealing with those squatters?—To make them pay a rent, however small, even 1s. They would then be tenants, and would be manageable.

41607. Could you not do that just now?—If you do it just now, Mr Mackenzie, the Clach, would rise up against us, and a good many other people, and say we were oppressors.

41608. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—To the extent of 1s.?—To the extent of 1s. They would not pay, because, with the present agitation that has arisen in the Highlands, Highlanders I may say in many places have become quite unmanageable,—they are so difficult to deal with.

41609. *Professor Mackinnon.*—Their ignorance of agriculture is stated, and very properly stated, in your paper as a thing that should be attended to. Have you any plan in your own mind as to how that should be remedied?—Yes, I have been thinking of getting strangers in amongst them, but I know from the habits of the people and their mode of thinking that they would not suffer any strangers among them. To use a Gaelic word, the 'macharach' is looked upon as an oppressor among the native Highlanders. They hate him. The same feeling exists in those unbroken parts of the Highlands as it did 200 years ago. I may explain the best plan to get them trained is that proprietors should get some of the native people, intelligent men among the natives, educated to agriculture and farming as applicable to the Highlands, and the people would take instruction from them with much more ease than they would from a stranger.

41610. To send some of the most capable young men to the south or east for a year or two to learn the principles of agriculture, and then expect them to teach their friends when they come home?—Yes.

INVERNESS.
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41611. Have you known of anything of that kind being done anywhere?—I have had experience of it in Easter Ross, in the club farms there, by getting two or three men who knew how to manage club farms, and the whole is left in their hands; and wherever it is left in the hands of trained men they work admirably. We had experience two years ago of native people who were trained up in one of these club farms, brought up to the club farm without getting training outside. The farm was left in their hands for two years, and it was a loss to themselves—by being left in the hands of native people who were untrained.

INVERNESS.
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Roderick Maclean.

41612. I suppose the management of a sheep farm on the club system is found to be better than when it is separate and independent?—Yes.

41613. And when stock is in small quantities among crofters you would prefer that system?—Yes, they would all have an equal interest. The way Sir Alexander does with the arable land they occupy is that they rent it separately, and then the club is rented in common, and each pays a proportion of the grazings added to the rental of the low ground.

41614. I presume you would admit that all other people as well as Highlanders are educated by example more or less?—We are now speaking about the Highlanders.

41615. But Locke would not have had them particularly in view in his theory?—No, but I say he gives other miscarriages than those two, but they are so applicable to the present state of matters that I could not resist giving them.

41616. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Will you tell us something about the forest that was created in Easter Ross by Sir Alexander?—Yes; the extent of it is about 9000 acres.

41617. Is that the only one on the east coast estates?—The only one.

41618. It is called Dibidale?—Yes; I don't think it is so much as I have stated. I would rather not say the figures; I don't think it is 9000.

41619. You mention in your paper that a number of the people went away from the estate in high spirits. I suppose you were in high spirits too?—Well, among them was one of my own sons, and I felt in high spirits that he was so plucky as to go. He went away in June, and in the following July fourteen followed him to Queensland, and I was in high spirits to see him so plucky as to go, and my eldest son wants to follow him immediately.

41620. Is there not a deal of land still in the Highlands that might be profitably reclaimed?—Yes.

41621. Why should proprietors and others be so anxious to promote emigration when this reclamation can take place at home?—They can answer for themselves. I cannot answer for others.

41622. But you have just stated that you approve of emigration?—Yes.

41623. You think it is better for the people themselves, but you will not say it is better for those that are left behind?—It is better for both. It is better for those who remain behind, because they can have enough to live upon by their industry; and better for those who go away, because there is plenty room in the world outside their little home, and it will be far better for them to exert themselves for their own benefit abroad than at home.

41624. Do you want to stop further improvement and reclamation in the Highlands?—Certainly not.

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Roderick
Maclean.

41625. Who is to do it then?—The people who remain behind.

41626. Where are you to draw the line between those who remain behind and those who go away?—That depends on circumstances, but one thing unfortunately is that the good will go away and the bad remain behind.

41627. You have rather commented upon the character of the Highlander as distinguished from others?—I have done so because I have experience of it.

41628. You are a Highlander yourself, from your name?—Yes.

41629. Don't you think that character is to some extent, if not to a great extent, formed by surrounding elements?—Yes, I do.

41630. Have you heard it stated that some of the alleged weaknesses in Highland character have arisen very much from the way they have been treated, or think they have been treated?—I believe it is so.

41631. And you are willing to admit that that to some extent accounts for defects in their character?—Yes, because they are not elevated as they ought to be. They want elevation.

41632. Do you think it unnatural in any way that the poor crofter has a disinclination to leave his land—the place where he has been brought up? Is it unnatural in him to have such a feeling?—No, it is natural for him to have such a feeling.

41633. And the idea of clinging to one's native soil is by no means an objectionable feeling?—Well, it is objectionable in one way, because so long as he remains there he will be a burden to himself and to others, but if he had the moral power to go away he would be a benefit to himself and a relief to others. It is the raising of the moral nature, the elevating of the moral character, that would make them think for themselves.

41634. You say it is praiseworthy in the Highlander to be attached to his native place, but it would be of advantage for him to go abroad to better himself; do you contemplate that such people should ever return to their own country?—I do, because they would return to their own country independent and assist others, and remain at ease after their hard-earned labour—living upon their previous industry, and supporting others.

41635. You approve of their coming back?—Yes, coming back not a burden to their country.

41636. No, not a burden to their country; but you approve of their coming back?—Yes.

41637. How many in the crofting class with which we are more particularly connected do come back in independent circumstances? Has it come under your observation?—As far as I remember, three have come back to Ardross after making a competency. They came back from Australia.

41638. Do you think that a person evicted, to use the expression in its ordinary sense—evicted from his possession—must not feel very sore upon the point?—I have not a doubt of it.

41639. And that it will continue for a long period?—Yes, perhaps all his lifetime.

41640. And even longer?—Oh, perhaps not after his death; he would think no more about it.

41641. He might have descendants?—I don't know.

41642. Do you think that the descendants of the constable of Eilean-donan, who lost his head at Inverness about 400 years ago, and lost also his lands—do you think that they were pleased or satisfied until they again got possession?—I don't know the history.

41643. I just wish to ask this further question. In our examination

at Lochalsh, Sir Alexander made use of an expression—it might be hasty or otherwise—that although he would not remove them he would be very glad if half of his crofters went away. I am not putting it to you in your factorial capacity, but as an individual—do you approve of that statement? —I know there would be a very great benefit to the people themselves if half of them went away. They know it themselves too, but they don't think of moving. Two or three of them early this year spoke to me about going away if they got assistance, but when matters were coming to a point they would not go. Sir Alexander assisted a few privately, and they sent home very encouraging reports, and one thing I may tell, to show that they are getting on well abroad. There was one young man to whom he gave a loan of £100 two and a half years ago to take him to India, and I am glad to say he has returned the money. Another poor man, to whom he gave £20 about ten years ago went away, and he has returned the money.

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INVERNESS.Roderick
Maclean.

41644. I must follow that question up a little further. In the case of the person to whom he lent £100 to go abroad, would it not have been worth while to have given him £100 to try and make something at home? —He could not get anything to do at home.

41645. Why?—Because there was nothing for him. He was a lad of seventeen and a half, and had the pluck to go away at that age to India.

41646. Are you really prepared to say that the state of the Highlands is reduced to this, that there is no opening for a young man with a little ambition?—There is not an opening. You may see from the advertisements that there is not a single opening but perhaps twenty, thirty, or forty are applying for it, which shows that the number of people in need of employment is in excess of the available employment.

41647. Can the state of the country, therefore, be satisfactory?—No, it cannot be when such is the case.

41648. *The Chairman.*—You mentioned two large farms which had been broken up by Sir Alexander Matheson, one on the east coast, I understand, and the other on the west coast?—Yes.

41649. The east coast farm, which was tenanted by one occupier, has been broken up into thirty holdings. What is the aggregate rental of these holdings now compared with the original rent of £900?—I am sorry to say I did not refer to the valuation roll.

41650. But you can tell me about how much. Is it below or above?—It is slightly above, but not much.

41651. There has been a slight rise of aggregate rental?—Yes.

41652. But there has been a large outlay?—A very large outlay.

41653. Will you explain what the description of outlay has chiefly been on the part of the proprietor? Has it been in the construction of dwelling houses, or fencing, or draining, or what?—In the whole of these—improving the land, reclaiming it from nature, and building houses and making drains.

41654. First, with reference to the houses, did the proprietor construct the houses entirely, or did he afford materials and did the tenants do the work?—He constructed the houses entirely himself, and for their steadings he gave the materials. That is in the case of the small holdings.

41655. I speak of the small holdings. Then when he constructed the houses—are they stone and lime houses?—Stone and lime.

41656. With two chimneys?—Two chimneys, and some larger.

41657. Did the tenant contribute at all to the creation of the houses by carting materials?—Not a penny.

41658. Without saying a penny, did he do any work towards them?—Nothing.

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NESS. 41660. For a holding of, say, £15 annual value, what was the cost of these dwelling houses built by Sir Alexander?—When he built them labour was much cheaper than it is now, and probably some of these houses would cost about £90 on the west coast. A similar house now would cost £150 on the west coast.

Roderick Maclean. 41661. But I am speaking of an east coast farm entirely?—Well, on the east coast about £90.

41662. That would have been for a £15 croft?—Yes.

41663. Supposing Sir Alexander Matheson had unhappily not been able to undergo this prime cost of the houses, do you think that a worse house, but still, in the first instance, a tolerable house, could have been put up by the same class of tenants by co-operation between the proprietor and the tenant?—Yes, it could.

41664. So you think a poorer proprietor might in a less satisfactory manner get the thing done still cheaper?—Yes, he could, by the proprietor contributing a certain amount of assistance and the tenant doing the labour and perhaps contributing a sum towards the expense of the house.

41665. Are most of these smaller holdings separated by fencing from each other?—Yes.

41666. Are the fields in them separate from one another?—Yes, in the most of them. In the very small holdings paying from £4 to £7 there are only boundary fences made by the proprietor, and they make the subdivision fences themselves. They get wood, and make the subdivisions themselves.

41667. It is done with wooden fences?—Yes.

41668. Posts and rails?—Posts and wire.

41669. From Sir Alexander's own woods?—Yes, the posts are given free.

41670. Have you any idea what the aggregate expense has been upon that east country farm entailed by this process of conversion?—No, I could not mention the figures.

41671. What became of the old farm steading?—It is now still occupied on one of the farms.

41672. On one of the larger subdivisions?—Yes, the one that pays £400. There is one still paying £400.

41673. It is the farm house of the £400 lot?—Yes.

41674. Except with reference to the return for the money laid out, this social experiment has been a satisfactory one?—Very satisfactory, and the admiration of every one who goes to see it. There you find an example, if circumstances would permit, of what a Highland property not highly situated could be converted into.

41675. I would like to know what amount of capital, so to speak, on this east coast farm Sir Alexander Matheson has sacrificed for the good of his people?—I will send a statement of that to the Commission.

41676. On this particular farm?—Yes.

41677. At any rate, socially speaking, it has been a perfect success?—Yes.

41678. Where did you get the small tenants from; were they taken from overcrowded townships on the same property, or were they collected all around the country?—I may mention that the population was under 130 when he got the estate. He picked out a few.

41679. I think you said 130 for the valley?—That valley includes all his large farm, and there were no other occupants on the large farm except in this valley.

41680. But I said on the estate. Did Sir Alexander pick out the

tenants for this place from townships elsewhere on his own estate that were overcrowded, or did he just take them from the general mass?—A few from his own estate, because the crofters who were there at the time he bought the property outside this farm are there themselves still, or their descendants, and then he had to introduce picked men from other places. They were all picked, and that is what made it so successful.

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Roderick
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41681. Was this transaction in some degree instrumental towards the consolidation of small holdings on other parts of the estate?—No, the smaller holdings were first made for labourers, and for people who were not in very good circumstances, to make them more comfortable, and then in 1858 he tried the first experiment of a club farm. Till 1858 part of the grazing of this large farm was in his own hand, and in 1858 he broke it up into a club farm occupied by six tenants. That was his first experiment in club farms, and finding it so successful, though they were picked men and knew their work, he extended it to other parts of the property.

41682. My object was to ascertain whether the transaction of cutting up this large farm had been instrumental in reducing the number of small holdings on the estate?—No.

41683. Now, transport yourself for a moment to the west country farm. The same process has been going on on the Loch Carron farm. Speaking generally, has it been equally successful and equally satisfactory?—No.

41684. Not quite?—No, not equally satisfactory.

41685. But has it been tolerably satisfactory?—Yes, it has. The reason is that there are no people introduced there but the natives, and it is so difficult to stir them up to see what is for their own benefit. They will not take very good care of what the proprietor makes for them, but allow it in many cases to go wrong; and then when things go wrong, they call again upon the proprietor to rectify what they allowed to go wrong.

41686. The people have proved less skilful and more thriftless upon the west coast farm?—Yes.

41687. But with regard to the sacrifice of capital in proportion to the value of the farm, has the sacrifice of capital for a benevolent purpose been proportionally greater on the west coast farm than on the east coast?—Yes, fully a third greater.

41688. But perhaps the subject may have been less promising. The farm may have been less happily situated?—Such is the case, but I consider that in saying a third.

41689. Then you say that a benevolent proprietor must be expected to sacrifice one-third more on the west coast than on the east coast?—Yes, that is what I mean.

41690. *Mr Cameron.*—It is stated here that the average expenditure on the larger holdings on the west coast was £176 odds?—An average of £114.

41691. £114 on the crofts, but the average amount of money upon each was £176. What is the average rent of these crofts?—£30.

41692. Are these the larger crofts?—Yes.

41693. What I want to arrive at is, what the rental of these crofts now is, and what the interest on £176, the average sum expended on them, would amount to?—The rental is now £1108.

41694. Then it is about 10s. each?—Yes.

41695. Then the interest of the money spent upon the crofts at 5 per cent. would be about £9?—Yes.

41696. And the average rent is £10?—Yes.

41697. So that only leaves £1 for the land as it was?—Yes, and he was getting £931.

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41698. I don't care what he was getting. I am looking to the future, as an experiment, how it is likely to answer. In what state was this land before it was improved? Was it worth more than £1 for the whole holding?—Yes.

41699. It was not all waste land?—No, it was not all waste land. Before he expended the money the rental was about £9, barely £9, and now it is £10, so there is only £1 of increase.

41700. So he gets about £1 more than the interest of the money he expended on it?—Yes, leaving £1 to meet the old rent.

41701. You have described the process of building the houses; will you tell me what were the other improvements which Sir Alexander effected upon these west coast crofts?—It was not on the west coast crofts that he erected the buildings; it was on the east coast.

41702. Then what did he do about the houses on the west coast crofts?—He got the houses when the property was bought. The houses were there, except a few new ones that he built. In Loch Carron he built over a dozen new houses, and got that place organised.

41703. And how was the £20,116 expended upon the larger crofts?—In improving lands and building houses for about a dozen of them.

41704. It was in improvements effected upon existing crofts?—Yes.

41705. And no land was taken from larger farms in that case?—No.

41706. Did the improvement consist in draining?—Draining, trenching, ploughing, and fencing.

41707. Has Sir Alexander done anything on the west coast in the way of taking land from large farms and giving it to crofters?—Yes, there is one large farm he broke up.

41708. Which is that?—Sallachy. It was mentioned in my previous evidence.

41709. *The Chairman.*—The rent of this large farm on the east coast was £900, and now it is a very little more, not representing any material interest whatever on the outlay in improvement. But supposing this large farm which was then rented for £900 had been kept in its aggregate, undivided form, what do you think it would have let for at this moment? Under present circumstances, would there have been a decline in its rental or not?—No, I think the rent would be about the same, for sheep farms increased in value within the period since he bought the property, and now they are falling back again.

41710. You don't think they have fallen back to a greater degree than the amount of rental at the time the experiment began?—No, I think they are about the same.

41711. But in that case Sir Alexander sacrificed the rental of the farm which in the years of inflation he might have obtained?—Yes.

41712. Would that have been very considerable?—About one-fifth more.

41713. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—As the result of your observation and experience, do you think there is a decided difference in the character and habits of the west coast and east coast people of the county of Ross?—I do.

41714. Have you any definite information or theory on the subject?—Yes; there are two reasons. One is that they are quite a distinct race.

41715. In what respect?—They have not the same intermixture of Scandinavian and Saxon blood on the west coast as on the east coast.

41716. You think they are more Celtic on the west coast?—Yes. Another reason, and the principal one, is that they are kept so much to themselves,—they do not mix up with people on the east coast to gather

information. They do not associate except among themselves, and consequently they cannot acquire so much knowledge.

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41717. Is there also a considerable difference in the soil and climate?—A great deal.

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41718. The climate is warmer on the west coast?—Yes, and creates more lassitude, and consequently they cannot work so well. There is not so much animation about them.

Roderick Maclean.

41719. In that respect do you know of any particular difference of character between the West Ross-shire people and the Islanders?—I am not acquainted there.

41720. The same complaint is made against them, and yet there is undoubtedly a very large Scandinavian element in those Western Islands?—Well, I am not acquainted with them. I was only once in the Lewis.

[The witness subsequently put in the following supplement with reference to the farm at Ardross which, when Sir Alexander Matheson purchased the estate in 1845, was occupied by one tenant at a rent of £935, and now occupied by thirty tenants:—The expenditure by Sir Alexander in improving the lands and erecting buildings for the tenant is £21,753, and his rental from the thirty tenants is £1200 18 6
Deduct the original rent of £935 0 0
Less the value of grazing rent of Dibidale forest, 200 0 0
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equal to £2, 9s. 2d. per cent. on the outlay. Sir Alexander further expended £6476 on making a road to Dibidale forest and on erecting a lodge there. The rent he gets for Dibidale forest is £1000, or £800 more than the grazing value, which makes the increase of rent over the whole £1325, 18s. 6d., equal to £4, 0s. 10d. per cent. on the outlay.]

COLIN CHISHOLM, retired Custom-House Officer, Inverness (72)
—examined.

41721. *The Chairman.*—Do you appear as a delegate?—I do appear as a delegate, for the very best of reasons. There are no men left in my part of the country that had the courage to come and tell what their experience was in my time, and they told me to come on their behalf from Strathglass, to give the story about the glens there.

Colin Chisholm.

41722. Then will you make your statement to us:—‘I was born and brought up at Lietrie, Glencannich, county of Inverness. Glencannich is about fourteen miles in length, and will probably average about three miles in breadth. The whole of this glen, except one small farm rented by a widow and her son, is at present a deer forest. But in my early recollection there were thirty-three tenant farmers in easy circumstances residing in Glencannich. There were also twelve families of cottars in the said glen, making a total of forty-five families, all of whom I was personally acquainted with. The glen was divided into seven club farms and nine single farms. That these people were as comfortable as the generality of Highlanders were about the first five decades of the present century seems to admit of no doubt. They have educated their sons tolerably well. In my own time there were seventeen Glencannich men who held commissions in Her Majesty’s army. There were also in my time nine Glencannich men in holy orders; they were clergymen in the

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Chisholm.

Catholic Church. The following is a detailed list of the names of these twenty-six men, their rank, where they were born, and where twenty-three of their number died. Three of the clergymen are still living, and in active service:—A list of Glencannich men who held commissions in Her Majesty's army in my own time:—Colonel James Chisholm, born at Lietrie, died at Fasmakyle, Strathglass; Lieutenant Archibald Chisholm, born at Lietrie, died at Gambia, Africa; Major James MacLean, born at Carrie, died at Boulogne, France; Captain Rory Maclean, born at Carrie, died in United States, America; Ensign Duncan Maclean, born at Carrie, died at Isle of Wight; Ensign Colin MacRae, born at Carrie, died at Sierra Leone; Ensign Angus Macrae, born at Carrie, died at Sierra Leone; Colonel Alexander Chisholm, born at Mucrack, died at Alexandria, Canada; Colonel James Chisholm, born at Mucrack, died as Governor of Gold Coast, Africa; Captain Valentine Chisholm, born at Mucrack, died at Inverness; Lieutenant Angus Chisholm, born at Mucrack, died at Cape of Good Hope; Ensign John Chisholm, born at Mucrack, died at Comar, Strathglass; Lieutenant Christopher MacRae, born at Invercannich, died at Gambia, Africa; Lieutenant Theodore MacRae, born at Invercannich, died at Struy, Strathglass; Ensign Finlay MacRae, born at Invercannich, died at Gambia, Africa; Ensign William Macrae, born at Invercannich, died at Inverness; Lieutenant John James Chisholm, born at Invercannich, killed at Quatre Bras. List of Glencannich Catholic clergymen whom I remember:—Bishop William Fraser, born at Craskie, died at Halifax, Nova Scotia; Rev. William Fraser, born at Craskie, died at St Raphael, Upper Canada; Rev. Archibald Chisholm, born at Craskie, now priest at Laird; Rev. Duncan Mackenzie, born at Lietrie, died at Struy, Strathglass; Rev. Angus Mackenzie, born at Lietrie, died at Dingwall; Rev. Archibald Chisholm, born at Lietrie, died at Dalbeth; Very Rev. Hugh Chisholm, born at Lietrie, now dean of Paisley; Rev. James Chisholm, born at Lietrie, now priest at Barra; Rev. Finlay MacRae, born at Carrie, died at Cuilgaran, Strathglass. Other Strathglass military officers whom I remember were—Surgeon-General Stewart Chisholm, Royal Artillery, died at Inverness; Lieutenant Loudon Chisholm, 43d native infantry, East India Company's service, died in the Rangoon campaign; Captain Archibald MacRae Chisholm, now living at Glassburn, Strathglass; Major William Chisholm, East India Company's service, now living; Ensign Thomas Chisholm, East India Company's service, died at Lucknow; Lieutenant William Chisholm, Royal Artillery, killed at Corrygam, India; Major Archibald Chisholm, East India Company's service, died at Rugby; Lieutenant Colonel John Chisholm, East India Company's service, died at Cheltenham; Captain Donald Chisholm, 42nd Highlanders, uncle of the present Chisholm, died lately at Edinburgh. In my humble opinion, this list will show that they were abreast of their neighbours in social position and in general intelligence. However, the crude management of factors and former proprietors cleared out every one of the forty-five families whom I have seen formerly in Glencannich. The farm now occupied by the widow alluded to was not an exception. The factor on the estate for that time took possession, and added it to four other extensive farms and grazings he had in Glencannich. It was when the present proprietor came home from America and succeeded to the estate, that he restored her husband to the farm from which he had been evicted nineteen years previously. The same proprietor, the present Chisholm, brought other farmers back to his estate, and placed some of them in farms which were formerly occupied by their forefathers; and to his credit be it stated he assisted such of them as required assistance.

in placing stock on the holdings to which he restored them. I remember the time when a former proprietor of Strathglass requested his tenantry to meet him at Cannich Bridge Inn, to enter on arrangements for new leases of their holdings. The men gladly assembled at the appointed time and place, but the proprietor did not come to the meeting. Towards the afternoon, his factor came and stated that he had no orders to enter on any arrangements with them. I was present at the time, and heard the message delivered. The men were greatly disappointed, and justly surmised that some under-current was operating against their interest. In a few days after this fruitless meeting it transpired that the very best farms in Strathglass were let on lease to strangers. The native tenantry would have been too glad to give as much, if not more, rent for the land. They were not one penny piece in arrears at the time. They were anxious to keep their holdings, and I will prove that they were able to pay for them. This is the way I will prove it:—When the late humane Lord Lovat heard of the treatment of their own proprietor, he entered on negotiations with the only sheep farmer or flockmaster on his Lordship's estates, and arranged to take the sheep stock at valuation. His Lordship sent for the evicted tenants, and placed them in the farms and grazings vacated by the said flockmaster in Glenstrathfarrar. They took possession at the following Whitsunday. The stock was valued to them, and at the ensuing Martinmas every penny of the price of the stock was duly paid by the new tenants. This proves their ability to have held their own, had they been allowed to remain in their native district, Strathglass. Some fourteen years afterwards, the late Lord Lovat rearranged the largest arable farms on his estate, converted them into ordinary holdings, and every tenant he took to Glenstrathfarrar was taken down again from the glen and reinstalled in arable farms on his Lordship's estate. From that time till now Glenstrathfarrar is a deer forest.* I have stated from personal recollection that Glencannich was a nursery of military officers; on the statements of the most truthful men I ever saw, I may be permitted to relate that Glenstrathfarrar was also a nursery of brave soldiers. By their courage and prowess they distinguished themselves under their chief and natural leader General Fraser on the heights of Abraham, at the capture of the strong garrison of Quebec, &c. The odium of having cleared the brave native population out of Glenstrathfarrar rests with Archibald, youngest brother of General Fraser and son of Simon, Lord Lovat, who was beheaded on Tower Hill. As I spoke of the crude management of the former proprietors and factors of the estate of Chisholm, it will be necessary to explain how the tenantry on that estate could be in a position to take additional farms and stock them. The explanation simply is, that Alexander, the Chisholm, who died in 1793, left a widow, Elizabeth, daughter of Dr Wilson of Edinburgh. At the time they married he made a fair settlement on her in case of widowhood. He left for her the option of a certain sum of money annually or the rental accruing from a number of club farms. Through the unerring advice of her only child Mary, who married James Gooden, Esq., merchant of London, Mrs Chisholm made choice of the joint farms and kept them intact, and kept the tenantry on these farms in easy circumstances until the day of her death, which took place thirty-three years after the demise of the Chisholm, her husband. During the whole of that time, this kind, considerate, and excellent Edinburgh lady never turned a man out of a house or farm, nor did she ever deprive a man of an acre of land. It was the great good sense of this lady, and the sincere attachment of her daughter, Mrs Gooden of Tavistock Square, London, to her father's

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' tenantry, that enabled the men—when deprived of their old farms—to invest in larger and better farms on Lord Lovat's estate. I remember the time when there were eleven farmers and twelve cottars in the Davoch of Clachan. The grazings here are good, and the arable land is so fertile and productive that this Davoch of land used to be termed the granary of Strathglass. But it now is, and has been, for some years back added to the estate and deer forest of Guisachan, and rented from the Chisholm. I recollect a number of warm-hearted, hospitable tenants of small holdings on the estate of Guisachan. So recently as 1855, there were sixteen tenants and six cottars or dependants. They had sixty-two cows, twenty-four horses, and four hundred and twenty sheep among them. But the present proprietor of Guisachan, Lord Tweedmouth, turned every one of them out of their farms, and the land is now virtually in his own hands. In 1851, before his Lordship was elevated to the peerage, he rented Guisachan. In 1854 he bought it. What induced him to buy it was "simply the game." In order to place his motives beyond doubt, his Lordship added, "The scenery is very fine; but it was the game that induced me to purchase it." So said this peer of the realm in 1873, when he was interrogated before a committee of the House of Commons as to his treatment of the tenantry he received on the estate of Guisachan. If we look at his reasons and consider his actions, we shall be reluctantly compelled to conclude that his Lordship sees no harm in dispossessing and scattering a whole community of respectable Highland tenantry, and perchance replace them with wild beasts and wild birds. From my earliest recollection the half Davoch of Knockfin and the most of the glen of Affric were united as one large sheep farm in the hands of two brothers from the south of Scotland. Knockfin and South Affric are still one sheep farm, but North Affric is a deer forest for some years back. This forest, beginning about a mile above the bridge of Cannich and extending to Caoc-a-chuaille (the boundary between Strathglass and Kintail), is about twenty-four miles in length and about two miles in breadth. Intersected in this distance there are about two miles in length of grazing ground, with the average width of about two miles. This piece of hill grazing represents the good old system of letting a portion of strath and glen together. The arable farm of which this hill is the summer grazing is about ten miles from it. It was William the Chisholm, first husband of Lady Ramsay, and herself who cleared the people out of the half Davoch of Knockfin and the glen of Affric. These evictions took place about the beginning of the present century. The first large party of the evicted left Strathglass in 1801. The second party of them went away in 1803. They settled principally in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and in Cape Breton Island. They gave the name of their Highland home to their residences in their adopted country. In Cape Breton Island there is another county of Inverness. The said William and his wife Lady Ramsay left two sons. Both the sons succeeded—one after another, to the estate and chiefship of Chisholm. Between William, Lady Ramsay and their two sons, they had nearly squeezed the whole native population out of Strathglass. It was Alexander William, the eldest of the two sons of the Chisholm and Lady Ramsay, who turned the people out of Strathglass when they went to Glenstrathfarrar. By this cruel and injudicious act, and the surreptitious manner in which it was carried into effect, he deserved the contempt of all his neighbours, he incurred the anger of all the people he evicted, and lost the confidence of those who remained on his estate. I have now shown by whom and when the glens of Strathglass have been cleared of the native population. We alluded already to the motive for dispossessing the tenantry of Guisachan.

It was "simply the game." But the other glens in that district have been ruthlessly and unmercifully cleared to make room for sheep, and now that the furor for sheep is beginning to subside the mania for deer and deer forests seems to take its place. For instance, we read in the public prints that an American "Mr Winans, by the simple process of outbidding all competitors, has turned nearly 250,000 acres in the counties of Ross and Inverness into a deer forest." Some say 260,000 acres, or an area of about 400 square miles. My native place being in the central glen of this immense forest, I think I know the most of the ground tolerably well, and therefore I will make a few observations on it. In the first place, I have no hesitation in stating that some of the grazing lands in this extensive new forest will compare favourably with, if not excel, the best hill grazings in all Scotland. I have seen superior cattle and sheep reared in this glen. I have also seen some heavy and splendid oats, potatoes, and turnips raised on the dales and fields of this my native glen. And as already stated I remember the time when a number of happy families were comfortably located in Glencannich, and members of those families in positions of honour and trust serving their country in the four quarters of the globe. I go occasionally to the west coast, and wend my way through Glencannich. From the road I see the heavy crop of natural grass waving on the hill side and meadows, half tame deer browsing at ease among crumbled walls; empty but substantial houses, some slated and some thatched, still standing at intervals in the glen, their windows bolted and their doors locked up. All the cattle and sheep landed on the Lochalsh side of Kyleakin, and intended for the Muir of Ord and other eastern markets, are driven through Lochalsh and Glenelchag till they reach Duilig, a distance of about seventeen miles from Balamacara. Here the drover encounters a difficulty, namely, whether he will drive his cattle or sheep, as the case may be, along the old easy road through Coireach, or whether he will turn them up to the rough hills of Carn-na-breabaig. As Coireach is converted into what Mr Winans calls a sanctuary for deer, I believe that gentleman would rather see a drove pass through his drawing room than by the above route. The drover, wishing to avoid the displeasure of Mr Winans, turns his drove to the steep Bealach-of-Sgairtlaire, and drives his stock through the rough high hills of Carn-na-breabaig, Leacinn-na-guaille and Glassletter. Then through Glencannich, in which glen there are stations fenced with iron wire where droves of cattle or sheep are secured at night to prevent them from trespassing on forest grounds—there being no accommodation provided in the deer forests for the men in charge of these droves nor for any other men. This is tantalising, inasmuch as there are substantial houses at intervals in this forest. They were built by the hospitable tenantry of former days, but their doors are now closed, apparently in contempt of every sense of shame, humanity, and hospitality. My own worthy landlord Sir Alexander Matheson and my noble chief the Chisholm own every inch of the land through which every drove going by the said route must pass. From Balamacara Hotel, Lochalsh, to Cannich Bridge Inn, Strathglass, a distance of about forty miles, I believe neither drover nor traveller can buy one pennyworth of meat or drink. My great respect for my chief and for my landlord would suffer no diminution if they were to establish a few places of entertainment for man and beast on that road, about twenty miles of which are still in the hands of the sheep farmers and tenants of small holdings. If the proprietors have divested themselves of the power of opening some of the empty houses through this deer forest, they might arrange with these men. I have stated that Sir Alexander Matheson, Bart., M.P., is my landlord;

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' I would not wish for better. My holding under him is small ; that is my misfortune, not his fault. He granted what may turn out to be a long lease of this holding, viz., to the end of time. The conditions are simple. I bind myself to pay to Sir Alexander a moderate rent annually, and he, the good man, says in effect perform your promise, live, and be as happy as you can, improve your holding as much as you like, sell it when and where you like, keep it if it suits you best, and will it to your child or friend at last. Briefly stated, such are the terms on which I hold from Sir Alexander Matheson. As these terms are so reasonable and satisfactory to both of us, I sincerely wish Sir Alexander and all the landlords in town and country throughout the kingdom may see their way to grant similar leases or charters to all their tenants, large sheep farms and deer forests excepted. Large sheep farms have been mainly the cause of the unnatural depopulation of the Highlands, and deer forests, as their illegitimate offspring, are daily diminishing the means of subsistence in this kingdom. I have an instance. If any gentleman in this court wishes to defend the system I have so feebly attacked, and that he asks me questions, it will be a source of pleasure for me to answer him. If there be no such advocate here I will only add at present—farewell to the humanity, farewell to the liberty, and farewell to the loyalty basking in the atmosphere of such deer forests as the one here slightly described.

' *Bidh Alba mhòr 'n a frith fo bhéistean.*

' *Mur a dion a muintir fhéin i!*

41723. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—After the very long and exhaustive paper which you have given in, it is not necessary for me to put many questions, but I wish to put a few. You were long away from the country ?—Forty-one years.

41724. And it often happens that absence makes people more fond of their native country ?—It has been the case with me.

41725. The details you have given of the people who rose to importance both in the army and in the church prove to your own mind satisfactorily that the tenantry in Strathglass and Glencannich especially were in very prosperous circumstances ?—Just so.

41726. They were able to live comfortably, and were of value to their country ?—Of much value, I consider.

41727. Is Glencannich now, though it is a deer forest, very well adapted for the habitations of men ?—I told you I saw comfortable and happy families there, and I see no reason why there should not be so again.

41728. You are aware Glenstrathfarrar forms part of a very large forest ?—It forms the outer glen of a forest. The one I described was the inner glen.

41729. And at one time Glenstrathfarrar had a considerable population, some of whom you describe as having served in Canada ?—Yes.

41730. These men were removed in the time of Colonel Archibald Fraser of Lovat ?—Yes.

41731. And the present family of Lovat are not responsible in any way for the clearance of Glenstrathfarrar ?—I think Glenstrathfarrar was cleared before the father of the present Lord Lovat was born.

41732. Are there parts of Glenstrathfarrar capable of supporting men in comfort ?—Yes ; why not ? Large fields of arable land are laid waste there.

41733. Going back for a moment to Glenstrathfarrar and its early history, are you aware who the person was for whom Glenstrathfarrar was cleared by the old Lovat ?—Perfectly well. What is the good of mentioning their names ? They are dead, and in heaven before now.

41734. There is another forest on the other side of Glencannich called Guisachan; did you know a number of the tenants who were there at one time?—Yes.

INVERNESS.

41735. Do you recollect when the estate was sold?—In 1854.

INVERNESS.

41736. Are you aware, or do you recollect, seeing the advertisement of the sale of the estate?—I don't recollect them. I was in England at the time, but I was very sorry when I saw the account of its being sold.

Colin Chisholm.

41737. I will read to you an extract, and I want to know whether you can confirm it—an extract from the advertisement when the estate was for sale. 'The population on the estate is moderate in number, and of a 'respectable class.' Do you confirm that?—Quite so—every syllable of it.

41738. Have you any idea what the rental was in 1851?—I have not. They were very comfortable, and they were under the man, or rather the men, who sold it, for his grandfather tied him down for four or five years longer than the ordinary years of majority—I cannot tell why, but he may have had reasons. He was twenty-five before he was allowed to sell, and during that time the estate of Guisachan was actually under the trusteeship of Colonel John Chisholm, who died lately, and Colonel Kyle, Aberdeenshire.

41739. Do you know what the valuation of Guisachan is at this moment in the valuation roll?—£1334, 6s.

41740. Do you know that when it was sold the rental was something like £1000?—No, but I am confident there are plenty in Inverness that had an idea of it, for Colin Chisholm, solicitor, was the agent at the time.

41741. Supposing it was about £1000, then, since the estate was sold, there is a rise of about £300. Has there not been a very large sum expended by the present proprietor?—I hear that, but I know nothing of it. I never was on the estate since he bought it, except once I was there on a message from a party in America ten or twelve years ago.

41742. Supposing, however, my figures are correct, and that it has only risen £300 within the last thirty years, is that anything like a proportion of the value of other Highland estates?—I think if it were in the hands of the old tenantry, it would have risen much more than £300.

41743. Are you aware that every bit of the estate almost is in the hands of the proprietor?—Except a baker, a shoemaker, a blacksmith, a chaplain, and a grocer, that are valued at £24.

41744. Are you aware it is commonly stated that lands and houses in the proprietor's own possession are never charged so much as the actual rent that could be got for them?—I heard that, but rents and these things are not in my line. I look at things as I saw them at one time, and I meditate upon them as I now see them. That is my way of thinking.

41745. Do you know anything about Kintail?—I do know something about it. I have been there repeatedly, and in my boyhood I used to be back and forward.

41746. Have you been back there lately?—Yes, I have been there not long ago, some two years ago.

41747. Is that part of the country, Strathglass, Kintail, Glenshiel, and so on, practically one deer forest or forests?—I am sorry to say they are.

41748. Are you able to state what the effect upon the soil is of this conversion into a forest?—I hear men who know the country say that it is turning the country back to a state of nature entirely. I daresay I would go there if I were allowed to go through the forests, but you dare not go through one of them. If you pass off the bridle path you are in danger of being collared, and I don't know what after that. I will give you an instance of that.

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41749. We must not be too lengthy. I merely asked you the question whether, as far as you are aware, or have heard, the result of forming deer forests was to make the land go gradually back to being wild again?—Quite so—heather and wood growing instead of grass.

41750. Now, although a large rent may be got by the proprietor for the forest as a forest, is it in reality for the benefit of the country generally that such a thing should be going on as the persistent going back to a state of nature of the soil that had once been under cultivation, or sheep or cattle?—I consider it is very wrong.

41751. Do you consider it so wrong that the Legislature can very properly be asked to deal with the subject?—If you lose hope of the men now in possession, go to the Legislature. Try themselves first, and see what you can get out of them. If they are not able to manage their own affairs, go to the Legislature at once.

41752. You mentioned the name of a gentleman who is a tenant of very many forests; can you tell me what benefit there is in his occupation, if any, to the country generally?—I cannot tell you of any benefit whatsoever.

41753. Has there not been a loss of valuable subjects of consumption in the conversion into a forest?—I told you that I have seen cattle and sheep reared there that fetched some of the highest prices at Falkirk market, and how can it be otherwise than injurious to the country to have such masses of land thrown vacant that will not rear a cow or sheep for the benefit of the community at all?

41754. Do you know there is just now, upon the estate of Kintail, within Glenshiel parish, a great number of people who are in a state of misery, not having as much almost as would keep them in potatoes?—I believe that is the true state of their case.

41755. And on the shores of Loch Duich?—Yes.

41756. I presume, therefore, it is not unreasonable on your part, and the part of men who take an interest in their country, to be dissatisfied with such a state of matters?—I have grave doubts of the wisdom of being satisfied with it. I think it is a serious, a palpable, and an unpardonable state of things.

41757. Have you taken considerable interest in this question of your native Highlands since you returned to the north?—And long before that.

41758. And you have yourself written upon the subject?—Yes, published and spoken everywhere I could be heard and listened to against the system.

41759. *Mr Cameron.*—You are aware that this Commission has extended its labours to the Island of Skye and the Western Hebrides?—Yes.

41760. We have there found there are a number of large farms described by the witnesses we have heard as being not perhaps quite so good as, but only second to the farms you described in Gleucannich. We have also found in Skye a number of very poor small crofters, and these crofters have all expressed a wish to have a share of these large farms; and the Commissioners have addressed questions to these crofters and others with reference to ascertaining how some such disposal of the farms might be brought about. What I want you to tell me is whether on those large estates you have mentioned there exists a class of crofters who might be benefited by having a share of those large deer forests you have alluded to?—I believe every crofter and every one who wants land would be benefited by them—by having more land. The man that wants more land and is able to pay for it let him have it.

41761. But does there exist on these estates of the Chisholm, Sir

Alexander Matheson, and others, a class of crofters, poor men and others, who want more land, such as we found in Skye and the Western Hebrides?—With regard to the estate of the Chisholm, I can simply say this, that if you look at the state of the country now, beginning at the watershed of the Glen of Guisachan—the estate is about fifteen miles long—beginning at the watershed, and beginning again at the boundary of the Chisholm, the march between himself and Mackenzie of Kintail; again in Glencannich, and again between Matheson and Lord Lovat, you might as well say that a drag-net was drawn round the whole of these glens and the people brought down to the level of the strath, until they found a harbour on Lord Lovat's estate. With respect to Sir Alexander Matheson, he is an excellent landlord to me; but I cannot conceal from myself that I saw a great deal of what I considered real misery on his estate in other parts.

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41762. Then do I understand that, taking the two properties together, the properties which now consist of these enormous tracts of deer forest, there does or does not exist a class of poor crofters such as we find in Skye?—In Strathglass, from one end to the other, you will not find one crofter at all, they cleared them out so thoroughly.

41763. Then supposing it was proposed and found desirable to adopt your suggestion, and to repeople these glens with farms of moderate and various sizes, where would you suggest that the people should come from?—The people would suggest it themselves. Give them good terms, and you will soon have plenty people to suggest it.

41764. But I want to know to whom I am to offer these terms?—That is your business. Advertise the farms and offer your terms, and you will see people come and accept them.

41765. You mean I am to advertise so many farms in such and such a glen, at such and such a price, and let all the world come and choose?—I mean the people ought to have the chance of the land, but take your own way of giving it to them. A few landlords rent the Highlands; will they be able to rectify that? If not, let them go to the Legislature at once.

41766. But I must ask you to stick to the point. My point is this, that in Skye we find large farms suitable for crofters and poor crofters suitable for farms. But that does not exist in these places, and I ask you how you propose to repeople the glens—where are the people to come from, and by what process is the landlord to repeople glens when he has not got a poor crofter population upon his own estate?—Well, in the first place, I must tell you that I consider the landlord is the aggressor and the sinner that cleared the people out. I leave him to make amends, or to say he is not able to do it, and let the Legislature do it for him.

41767. But will you not help him? You have been working at this for forty years?—If he comes to ask my advice, I will give him my best advice.

41768. Well, how is Strathglass to be repeopled?—By simply offering the land on conditions that will be lasting, you will find plenty people to come and be offerers. They are not in Strathglass, and how can I tell you where they will come from.

41769. I think we understand one another. Your proposal is that the landlord should take the same steps to obtain small tenants for Strathglass as he does when he has a large farm in the market?—That would be the wise plan.

41770. About this Mr Winans. Mr Winans, I suppose, will not live for ever?—Well, I don't think the people wish him to live for ever.

41771. It is not within the bounds of human probability that another

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American will come and carry on things in such an extraordinary way as Mr Winans has done?—I don't know. In my early recollection we never expected such a man, and as long as you leave the laws of the land as they are, and the greed of landlords as it now is, you may have plenty of Americans, Frenchmen, Russians, and any other men.

41772. And you don't think that if Mr Winans is dead, or after he ceases to care about what he calls sport, the land he occupies is likely to be divided among other people; do you think it will be consolidated and kept as it is?—It is not at all likely that Great Britain will allow such masses of land to remain in possession of a man that does no good with them, and I do not think they would be left consolidated as they are.

41773. But supposing Great Britain took no steps in the matter, do you think a man would be found to take such a tract of country and treat it as Mr Winans has done?—I am not sure but there are plenty of them. There are other men without consciences in the world as well as Mr Winans.

41774. But does their want of conscience take the form that Mr Winans takes?—I don't know, but it is a very cruel one in our estimation here.

41775. *The Chairman.*—I want to ask you one or two questions about this great consolidation of deer forests in the hands of Mr Winans. Can you tell me whether the forests now consolidated in Mr Winans' hands were all forest before he took them, or has any portion of the land occupied by him as forest been cleared for him specially?—Part of the glens were formerly under deer, but there has been a vast deal of good grazings cleared for him.

41776. Cleared for Mr Winans?—For Mr Winans purposely.

41777. Who are the proprietors who have cleared their land and made it forest for Mr Winans personally?—Well, I wish you would not ask me that question; but I will answer it.

41778. Do answer it?—First and foremost, Mackenzie of Kintail; and then Sir Alexander Matheson.

41779. Anybody else?—There is a very small portion of the Chisholm's land cleared for him.

41780. Well, now, I have heard Mr Winans spoken of with some severity on account of his avidity in adding land to land for the purposes of a forest. But, in your opinion, if it is blameworthy at all to have forests, to make them, and to hold them, is the person who takes the land or the person who grants it more to blame? Is Mr Winans, the lessee, in your opinion, more to blame, or are the proprietors more to blame who accept his terms?—The proprietors are in the first place to blame, and he is to blame for straining the law to have every soul and every beast cleared off the land for him; so that the blame must be divided in his case between himself and the landlord.

41781. Who has the greatest share of moral obligation and duty towards the people of the land—the proprietor or the tenant?—The proprietor, by all means. He has the power of turning that land to the very best purposes for cultivation, or for grazing, or for feeding, and the landlord who deprives himself of all power over his land seems to me to be more guilty than the man who takes it. That is my view of it.

41782. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—I suppose you do not consider deer stalking a reprehensible pursuit, but the contrary?—Certainly not.

41783. I suppose you would not object to have facilities for pursuing that noble sport on a moderate scale?—Not the least.

41784. Mr Winans' style of doing the thing is very different?—Ach! I don't like his butchering style of killing game at all.

41785. What is his style?—Gathering the poor animals together and driving them before the muzzles of the gun.

INVERNESS.

41786. Does he not stalk them?—You might as well send an elephant after them to stalk them.

INVERNESS.

41787. Was there ever a sportsman of that kind known in Scotland before?—I have not heard of one before.

Colin Chisholm.

41788. Does he employ a large number of persons in this slaughtering business?—Too many, in the opinion of the men who travel round the ground—too many by half. You cannot go within half or quarter of a mile without meeting a watcher watching whether you go off the road. I was cautioned about going off the road a little distance to some good springs to take a drink of cold water; and to show you the humanity of such a system, I knew an instance of a Glasgow artist and naturalist who took lodgings for a few days at Cannich Inn, and by mere instinct or some other way he went up and took himself out of the sight of this public house, and when the man found himself in sight of a beautiful clump of heather he started a number of little flies, small and large, and the misfortune was that this great sportsman saw him from the hill. He sent a man down, brought him before him, and I don't know what he threatened to do for robbing him of his midges. The result was that when the Glasgow man got himself on the Queen's highway, there was a battle of very high words, and the people present thought it would end in heavy blows, and they were prepared to save lives on either side. The flies were dead; but the Glasgow man took every one of them to the road, and then he told Mr Winans that he was not pleased with him at all; and it was very nearly coming to the greatest battle we ever had in Strathglass for an age—the battle of the midges. That is an instance of the humanity and an instance of the hospitality of these glens owing to your great sportsman.

41789. The persons in Mr Winans' employment—keepers and gillies—I suppose, form the principal part of the population in that glen?—He must get them from other glens. We have no men in that country, and he gathers them from round Lochaber between the land of Lochiel and Sir Kenneth, wherever he can get them.

41790. Have the inhabitants, as far as there are any left, any complaint to make against these men for their behaviour?—I think not as a rule; and this much I must say for Mr Winans, that I believe he pays every one he employs remarkably well.

41791. Could any of the descendants of the people who inhabited these places before, the Macraes, the Chisholms, and Frasers,—be got, supposing they were to be peopled again?—I believe some of them would come from America, if there were fair conditions and leases similar to my lease from Sir Alexander Matheson, to the end of time.

41792. Most of them, I suppose, are in America?—Indeed they are, and in Australia.

41793. *Professor Mackinnon.*—When you were young in the glens yourself, were there deer in the country?—Plenty deer.

41794. Upon the high ground?—Upon the high ground, and on the low ground occasionally.

41795. The deer occupied the upper ground and occasionally the lower ground, but there was other stock all over?—Yes.

41796. And if the glens were to be repeopled again as you saw them, there would be still no objection to some deer occupying the upper ground yet?—Not a bit of it.

41797. And that would provide true sport?—That would be the true sport.

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41798. You don't see any difficulty, if the proprietors would so will it, why those places should not be peopled as they used to be?—No, I don't; and if there was a difficulty, let the proprietors who actually divested themselves of the men and sent them out of the country, send and get them back again.

41799. If they profited by the depopulation, they should lose a little by the repeopling?—By all means. They have the inheritance left by their fathers, good and bad, and let them mend what their fathers did wrong.

41800. If they do it voluntarily, well and good, and if not, you wish the Legislature to do it for them?—By all means.

THOMAS PURVES, Farmer, Rhyfail (61)—examined.

Thomas
Purves.

41801. *The Chairman.*—Have you got a statement to read?—I gave you a statement at Bettyhill. I think you may hold that statement as read.

41802. Will you state on what point you desire to be examined?—I was intending to criticise the evidence you had at Bettyhill, and some extraordinary statements you have received since at Helmsdale the other day.

41803. On what particular points with reference to the evidence at Helmsdale?—I would not have been here to-day, but I was absent the second day at Bettyhill. You asked if any large farmers were present. I could not be present, and I wrote a note stating I would be glad to meet the Commissioners anywhere else. As regards the doings in Sutherlandshire, I consider Sutherland has been the one county that has been more maligned and ill-used than any other; and nowhere was there more provision made for the people than in Sutherland. Now, I saw that day the great animus—not so much in what was said as in what was not said—against the proprietor and his agents in large towns, and I should like an opportunity of contradicting it.

41804. You desire to confirm the utility of the large tenants in the county?—Yes, and to show that they have not been in any way inimical to the interests of the small tenants.

41805. That the large farmers have not been in any way instrumental towards the eviction of the small tenants, assuming their eviction?—Decidedly not.

41806. And that they have not been inimical to the interests of the small tenants?—Yes.

41807. In what respect do you find the large farmers are useful to the small tenants?—In giving them labour and employing them. We have spent—my neighbours and I—several thousands of our own capital, besides tens of thousands of his Grace's. Perhaps you would allow me to express my opinion upon the evidence you received at Bettyhill. The first witness you had there was perhaps the most bold and unscrupulous of the clergy in our district.

41808. I should not desire the word ‘unscrupulous’ to be used as applied to a clergyman?—Well, I shall hold myself corrected. He said, amongst many things to which I object, that there was no labour to be got in the country. Now, the fact is that we cannot get labourers. I have drains on my own farm lying open for three years to a large extent, and I cannot get anybody to fill them. The Duke of Sutherland's factor has been trying to organise a staff of men for two or three years, and he

has failed. I have nearly £2000 of his Grace's money to spend at the present moment, and I cannot get labour to do it.

41809. Where is the farm to which you refer?—In Strathnaver itself.

41810. And a sum of money is available there for the drainage of land on your farm?—Yes, about £2000, and that party knew perfectly well that there were thousands of his Grace's money spent on the farm of Melness; thousands of money on the farm of Skelpick; thousands more on Sire; thousands on Bighouse; and thousands on my own farm; and yet he said there was no labour provided. I have the authority of the late Kenneth Murray of Geanies for saying that in one season, when distress was prevalent, the Duke made the Helmsdale railway at great expense to give labour to his own people, and no men but Sutherland men were employed on that line. The next witness was another clergyman, and he stated he had been only two or three years in the country; and he deliberately told you that there had been very little improvement, if any, upon the houses in the Sutherland districts until the Commissioners heard tell of it. You called him in question for that statement. Now, I have been twenty-five years in Sutherland, and before that on Mr Matheson's property in the West Highlands. I know the circumstances perfectly of Sutherland, Caithness, and Ross-shire, and I can speak to every property. The houses in Sutherland have been undergoing gradual improvement for the last thirty-five years at least. They first began to improve the houses by subdivisions inside; then substituting wood rafters for the old roofs which obtained; and then outside innovations began. Thatched roofs gave way to slated houses; and I may say that a comfort exists which I think is second to none in the Highlands or anywhere else. I shall refer to the evidence of the minister of my own parish by-and-by. In regard to the matter of bridges, you took some trouble to question the delegates on that point. Every delegate, I am certain, in that church that day knew perfectly well that the question of bridges had been virtually settled twelve months before, and not one of them had the honesty to tell you so. The Duke of Sutherland is to build those bridges at his own expense.

41811. You mean bridges where there are now ferries?—Yes,—to which your inquiries were particularly directed. The next is a simple matter, but it very clearly shows how the wind blows. You had an old man, there who is a pauper in our parish, and he gave you a great deal of evidence about the evictions in Strathnaver. This party told you, amongst other things, that when he lived on the ground I now occupy the Sellars were burning there, and he took his little brother on his back to fly away from these burnings. You could not know that he was living on the opposite side to that on which the burning was, and if he flew down to the river he flew down to the burning party and not away from them, which vitiated his whole evidence. He could not have been flying towards the river, unless he had been flying towards the burning which was said to have taken place.

41812. Might he not have been on the burning side?—No, he was on the side where the burning was not going on.

41813. However, I do not think it necessary to recur to the question of the evictions in Strathnaver, but we shall be very much interested to hear you upon the subject of improvements upon the sheep farms, and especially with reference to the difficulty of getting labour upon them. That is a practical question which will be interesting?—These recent improvements commenced some ten or twelve years ago, and I myself was the first who proposed them. The Duke of Sutherland agreed to give us money at a certain rate of interest to improve the country. I laid a statement before

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his commissioner, Mr Loch, showing the amount of money spent in wintering sheep in Sutherland and Caithness, which might be partly saved and partly spent at home, and that to meet the difficulty he might on each farm take in a certain amount of land and plant a certain amount of timber to give labour to his people and at the same time to help this difficulty of sheep wintering, because sheep farming was in a very prosperous state in those days, and we could not foresee that things were to become less prosperous. Rents were rising in the low country; people were beginning to keep their own stock and going into sheep breeding themselves, which always rendered the difficulty of wintering our sheep greater; and the more money we could save by raising turnips and provisions at home the more independent we would be of the low country farmers and the more money could be spent in the country and localised on home labour. The Duke of Sutherland, through his commissioner, at once agreed to this proposal; and I may just remark that no agricultural society or chamber of agriculture has ever asked the Government for any terms such as the Duke of Sutherland has granted to his tenants of his own free-will. We have money at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest. He makes the roads and houses free of expense. Of course, the tenants very properly perform the carriage, &c. He gives us lime also at the same rate of interest, which I don't think he ever charged.

41814. I wish to understand all that more particularly. The Duke of Sutherland provides the farmer with his dwelling houses and offices without any separate or distinct charge for interest on the outlay?—Nothing on the outlay.

41815. Well, he supplies lime to the farmer for his agricultural purposes at what percentage?—Two and a half per cent.

41816. Two and a half per cent. on the value of the lime, added to the rental during the lease?—Quite so.

41817. Then as to drainage?—He provides money for drainage and fencing and trenching, all at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The difficulty we have to contend with is the very poor soil when made, and the cost is three or four times the price of reclaiming land in any other country. I can show you the difficulty of making land in that country for crofters. The Duke of Sutherland has tried it and utterly failed in planting crofters. You can no more make crofters by Act of Parliament or artificial means than you can introduce steam mills to grind oatmeal.

41818. You say the Duke of Sutherland has tried to make crofters and absolutely failed?—When I say absolutely failed I speak in this way, that the land he has made, intending it for crofters, cannot be let.

41819. You mean he has set apart some portions of land for crofters' holdings, and has not succeeded in letting them?—Yes, I believe his whole intention in making these improvements, at Lairg especially, was to make provision for small crofters.

41820. I understood, in the area of improvement which we visited, that it was for the purpose, and a very good purpose no doubt, of making farms of about £150 a year?—And from that downward; but there is this other consideration. When the Duke of Sutherland and his managers found that they could not let these small farms which they had made at Lairg, it led them to make the farms larger, and to make the more recently made farms larger, on account of the difficulty of letting the small ones before.*

41821. Now, I would like to ask you more about these improvements. You have stated the very liberal terms on which the Duke of Sutherland affords assistance to his enlarged tenants for the purpose of improving their land in the way of the drainage and liming operations you mentioned. Is it for the purpose of breaking up the land and turning it into arable, or

* See Appendix A, LXIX.

is the subsoil trenched and the lime laid on the natural turf?—We first trench the land out of the natural moor at about £18 an acre. That is the contract price for 200 acres that I have been going in for.

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41822. Trenched by the hand?—Yes, by spade, and going about 2 feet or 22 inches deep. Then we pay about £7 per acre for fencing and for draining the whole land 18 feet apart. As to stones we fetched such a tremendous quantity that it has cost £7 to £10 an acre to cart them off.

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41823. Is the land put under regular rotation or sown out with grass?—It is put under regular rotation and kept sown.

41824. And that is the way in which the fields we saw in Strathnaver have been formed?—Quite so.

41825. You have no doubt seen the trenching or deep ploughing done by machinery?—Yes.

41826. Comparing the work done by those engines and the work done by hand trenching, which is most effectual?—Hand trenching, most decidedly. There is no comparison whatever, and I believe the cost is less. I am thoroughly sure of it.

41827. And when land is hand trenched, limed, fenced, and improved, in the district of Strathnaver, and turned into thoroughly good arable ground, what is a fair rental for it per acre? I understand it is difficult to put a separate rent upon arable ground?—I am sorry to say that financially the improvements in Sutherland are not a success. That is because the land is naturally so poor. Perhaps I can grow the heaviest crops on the land of Seisgill, and these crops cost as much as they are worth before they are made. I employ the best bones and manure in order to raise the fertility of the land and at the same time get crops out of it. I find it easier to grow good crop at great expense than to grow no crop at half expense; so we consequently go the great expense.

41828. When you got the improved land under grass is it of great use to you as a sheep farm?—Yes, tremendous use. I occupy two farms in Caithness, and I have my sheep to drive for about fifty miles. Now, having a certain quantity of land in Strathnaver attached to the sheep farm, I can draw down a score or two of lean sheep once a week, or when it is required, whereas if I had to drive them down to Caithness, fifty miles, it would destroy the sheep and be an enormous expenditure. Four days driving down and four days up means a loss of four months keep in condition.

41829. Have you got upon your farm in Strathnaver sufficient ground to save you from the expense or loss of driving off the sheep in winter?—I have got sufficient to save me a certain amount of expense, but not the fourth part of what I require for the purposes of the farm. I grow 150 acres of turnips in Sutherland and about 130 or 140 acres of turnips in Caithness, all of which are consumed by sheep and a certain quantity of cattle.

41830. But you spoke of the advantage these farms give in the employment of labour for the crofting population. Might the crofting population not have the same advantage at the same expenditure in draining their own ground as they have it?—Most decidedly; and I think it is a perfectly proved fact that they have much too little land. The thing is perfect nonsense. It wastes their energies and their time, and is a tremendous evil. What I hold is that a man should have as much land as would keep a family, and that the surplus population should be drawn off to the coast, and independent fishing villages made there the same as on the Aberdeen and the Morayshire coasts. There is no more industrious or better class of people in the whole of Scotland than the Aberdeen fishermen are. They have the best boats of their own, and plenty money saved, and our Highlanders are just as good people as they are—perfectly

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good labourers and perfectly good subjects in every way, but they have no outlet for their energies. The other day I could not get a horse to hire, I found thirty carts waiting for fish from the nearest railway station, and these fish are abused and destroyed in the carts. There is not a better coast in the whole of this country, but the people cannot give it more than one day in the month for the want of harbours.

41831. You say just now that your Highlanders are very good labourers and active people if employed, but you told us at the beginning of your statement that you had a large field of employment open to them and you could not get labour?—Labour is so plentiful, instead of being scarce, that they can get any amount of employment.

41832. It is not that they are idle, but that they have employment elsewhere and therefore do not go to you?—I did not say they were idle.

41833. The reason you do not get labour is that the people are employed elsewhere?—Employed elsewhere.

41834. Has it nothing to do with the terms of employment? When these draining operations are offered to the people, are they offered certain terms at so much per piece, or are the people employed on day's wages?—I have had them every way, at from 15s. to 18s. a week working on day's labour, and I have also contracted for each work. We employed a contractor, and he employed the people at a certain price, and he paid them the same wages that we were in the habit of doing.

41835. He employed them at day's wages?—Yes.

41836. Well is that the way you cut drains—on day's wages?—Yes.

41837. You don't do it at so much a rood?—Of course, I should like to contract for it rather than do it on day's wages, but the people have been so unaccustomed to that work that they will not take it at a price per chain as we do in Caithness; and, again, the difficulties of the ground are such that in that country you may get a piece of ground which is quite easily drained, and you may get into another place where boulders meet you, and every chain may cost more labour than half a dozen in another part of the country. So you cannot fix a price in that way.

41838. You say the people are too much restricted in the area of their crofts. Are there any places in Strathnaver or elsewhere in your vicinity to which some of the crofters might be transferred from overcrowded townships and settled with any prospect of doing work?—I have it on the best authority that this is what happened only last season in regard to the farm below me. There is not a more suitable farm in the whole Highlands for a club farm. There is a great extent of green land—at least a much greater extent compared with black land than there is anywhere else in the country—and this would be a very suitable place for small crofters. They applied to the Duke of Sutherland's factor for an addition to their holdings, but they could not get the addition to their holdings because the dwelling house was on the part which lay nearest their holdings; but they were offered the whole farm as a club farm if they could show a reasonable prospect of stocking it and paying the rent, and there was no answer to that offer.

41839. No answer from the tenants?—No answer.

41840. Have you any other statement you wish to make on the general question?—A good deal more statement than you have time to listen to. For instance, I should like to show you the state of the country and the causes of the evils which do obtain in the country. For instance, would you like to hear how destitution cases are got up in our country?

41841. Yes?—Well, this happened only the other day. I happen to have been a member of the Parochial Board of the parish for five years. The Free Church minister of the parish is also a member of the board. I may tell

you that our board is the most liberal board in Scotland. Mr Peterkin, of the Board of Supervision, has said that according to the rent and population we pay £100 more to paupers in our parish than any other parish with which he has to do. In the district in which I reside we pay a stated sum of £240 a year to our doctor, £40 from the Duke and £100 from each board, and we actually have never had any destitution in our parish. To prove it, in the month of March, when the crisis was at the highest in other places, we had just one extra case of application for relief at our board meeting. This was a case of a tailor, who was also a crofter, who applied for relief. He applied through the Free Church minister and urged his case as being a very necessitous one—that his family were starving, and that he was starving, and that he had been at his house that morning begging for meal, which he had got. Well, it was no case for the Parochial Board. The man was a crofter and a tradesman, and we would not put him on the board, but we subscribed as much money among ourselves as bought a boll of meal to stave off the case in the meantime. At next meeting of our board (I have the letter in my pocket) we were very much surprised—I could use stronger language—to receive a letter from Mr James Macdonald, W.S., Edinburgh, whose grandfather was the minister of the parish during the evictions and long afterwards. This letter enclosed another letter signed by this Free Church minister, saying that there were seventy-three cases of destitution in that parish, and the people were in danger of dying of starvation, and that the Parochial Board had refused to give relief to every one of them. Not one case of these seventy-three came before us.

41842. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—What was the name of the parish?—Farr. Of course the chairman of the board wrote to say there was no destitution and no necessity for any money being sent there. After all that, they got £50 from some society or other, and that will show the south country people how their money goes in the Highlands. These are facts.

41843. *Mr Cameron.*—Was no action taken by the members of the board?—I took action in this way, that I asked the party if it was true, and before a full meeting of the board we proved before his face the falsity of the statement, and all his excuse when pushed into a corner was that the tailor's case was a test case for the other seventy-three. Now there are no cases that come before a Parochial Board so that one case can be decided by another.

41844. Do you include the crofters of the neighbourhood of Bettyhill amongst those who are not in want of work, and who have, as you say, a superfluity of labour?—I include the whole parish.

41845. You are aware that in our evidence at Bettyhill several of the crofters' delegates complained they were unable to maintain their families owing to the smallness of their crofts, and when asked whether there was any work going on in that neighbourhood they in many cases replied there was little or no work?—That is not so. This work which I speak of had been lying undone several years simply for want of labour. The factor promised and repromised me to organise a staff of men, and he told me the day before yesterday that he could not get them.

41846. Have you heard similar complaints from other farmers in your neighbourhood?—Yes. The difficulty of getting labour is the same. If I want men even for harvest work or hay cutting, I have to go to a neighbouring parish to get them. I had to do so this year. I required some men last week to drive stock, and I could not get them.

41847. How far is your farm from the neighbourhood of the crofters?—About eight miles. There is accommodation provided for them by me, and they do not require to go back to their houses.

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41848. What other farmers are there in your neighbourhood who are similarly situated as regards labour in the parish?—There is Sire, and there has been a large amount of work on the farm of Skelpick; but, in fact, every farm has more or less work to do, and plenty of it.

41849. You mentioned a case in which the Duke of Sutherland had reclaimed land, and wished to convert it into small sized farms, and that it was a failure. Do you consider that any portions of your farm, for instance, could be converted into crofter's holdings?—Plenty of it, but not to pay any rent—I mean not to pay the rent which I pay or a sporting rent.

41850. Not to pay the proportion for the portion taken away from your farm?—Well, there has been tremendous discussion going on about crofters paying larger rents than the large tenants. If you allow me to explain, I think I can put it plain before you. I may say, to begin with, that my sympathies are totally with the people. I believe in the greatest good for the greatest number, and my opinions on the land question are pretty advanced. I am to state the truth as far as I know it, without bias and without regard to either side, and I shall put you in possession of the facts of this question of crofters' rents *versus* large tenants' rents. The crofters of Farr, I say, have far too little land to keep their families, and I shall be very glad to see them have more. And I may say the Duke of Sutherland is quite as anxious as anybody to enlarge their holdings on very much the same terms as he gives us, and there is a scheme in prospect for this purpose. But, in the meantime, they have each on an average in that district four and a half acres of arable land and sixty-eight acres of hill pasture, and the average rental of the whole is £2, 18s. Of course, when they calculate the rent of their land, comparing it with the large farms, they forget that I have only one acre of green land to 200. I have 30,000 acres of land, about the fortieth part of the whole county, and on my hill grazing of 30,000 acres there is not over 150 acres of green land. The factor makes it 125; I make it 150 to be sure I am not understating it; that is, one acre of green land to 200 acres of black land. Now, it is easy to make the rental of the crofters to be higher than hill grazings when you take four and a half acres of arable to sixty-eight of pasture put against one acre of green land to 200 acres of pasture. You had the most extraordinary statement the other night at Helmsdale that I ever saw in print—60,000 acres of arable land in two parishes. Now, you will be rather surprised when I state that the old evicted tenants in Sutherland did not leave over 6000 acres of green land altogether in the whole county.

41851. How do you make that out?—Of course, I am not speaking to a question of one hundred acres or so, but still I will give you the basis of my argument, and you can give it the credit it is worth. I occupy 30,000 acres of land, which is a fortieth part of the acreage of the whole county, which is about 1,200,000 acres. I have 150 acres of green land on that 30,000. Forty times 150 is 6000. Now Strathnaver has ever been reckoned the finest strath in the county, and the strath on which there have been most evictions, and in which there has been most green land compared with the other land; but when I multiply the 150 in my own holding by 40 it makes 6000 acres of green land, which was the quantity left by the small tenants.

41852. To interrupt you for a moment. The basis on which you make the calculation is that there is 150 acres of green land on your own farm. Of course, that you have ascertained to be accurately the fact?—That is rather above the mark than below. On my neighbour's farm, which has more green land than mine, I cannot exactly say the total extent of it, but he has 250 acres of green land on a stretch of about twenty miles of

strath. Then there is another farm. Three of us occupy the whole of Strathnaver, *minus* the small farm now in the Duke's own hands and the small farm which I mentioned as offered to tenants and now let to a crofter's son. Of course, you have heard our friends, public agitators, who have been crying about the thousands of acres of land cleared in Strathnaver, and so on. There has not been 6000 acres of old cultivated land altogether from time immemorial.

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41853. But now I should like to ask you a question as to the quality of the land. It has been stated frequently that the quality of the land occupied by the crofters is very inferior to that occupied by the large farmers?—No. It is inferior now. If you put the crofters back to the green land which we occupy, the *débris* of eighty years' grass gradually being left unconsumed has added to the quality of the soil. The crofters' lands, unfortunately for them, have been wrought for fifty years back—potatoes and corn, and corn and potatoes—so as to be exhausted. The land may have been better at first, but now it is quite inferior to these straths.

41854. But with regard to the hill pasture, to which I was more particularly alluding, is the quality of the land occupied by the crofters not inferior to the land occupied by you?—It is inferior. The more you go into Sutherland the better the land becomes.

41855. So your land is better?—It is better sheep land.

41856. And for cattle too?—No, I do not say it is better for cattle, because what makes good sheep pasture is not fit for cattle at all.

41857. I remember asking a question of the minister at Bettyhill—I think it was Mr Mackay—who seemed to understand the question rather more than one might expect from a gentleman of his profession. I asked him some questions about the possibility of converting those sheep farms back again partly into crofters' holdings, and he told me he had had a conversation with a large farmer, whose name I cannot remember, and the large farmer had told him there would be no difficulty in reconverting a portion of those large sheep farms in Sutherland to their original occupation. And then I remember asking him whether he meant that he was to take the low parts of the strath and leave the high grounds to the farmer—which of course would be a very unprofitable arrangement to the farmer—and he said, no, that this farmer had intended that strips should be taken from the bottom of the hill up to the top, giving a fair proportion of low green land and also grazing land, and in that way it would not interfere with the use of the remaining portion of the land by a large farmer. Can you tell me anything about that?—Well, that is theory. We have the greatest difficulty just now in dividing the hill farms even in the way we work them—that is, getting a certain proportion of ewe land to a certain extent of wedder land. The small tenants can perfectly well do with the strath and a pretty large proportion of hill pasture, but when you come to a stretch of land eight or ten miles wide it becomes quite impossible for them to work it, because if I was to plough up in my holding in Strathnaver even ten acres of green land, it would destroy the hill pasture for sheep. We have so little green land to the extent of black land that actually one acre is missed.

41858. And, as I understand you, it would be to the detriment not only of the proprietor and of the farmer who occupied the remaining portion, but to the crofter himself—that he could not work land in that way, because if he was to plough up the green land he would not have enough wintering for his stock that occupied the upper land of the up and down strip?—And that he could not make a proper use of the hill ground without the green land below. What could be done is this. We do not

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get above half the use of the land we occupy. Food is utterly wasted, because the extent is even too great for us to occupy.

41859. Will you explain that a little more? I thought that was the great advantage of pasturing sheep over cattle?—We have thousands of acres of one kind of grass which the sheep never touch unless it is turned —there is so much of it as compared with the green. If we had ten times the extent of green land that we have the sheep would eat the green land and eat this land along with it, and we could keep more stock; but we can only keep a certain amount of stock which can eat green land, and then the hill land is lost because we have no green land.

41860. You mean that if the land in Sutherland was better land you could keep more stock?—The whole recent improvements in my opinion have been a gross mistake.

41861. You mean in Kinbrace?—Yes. I am merely illustrating the one place by the other. The proper way to improve Sutherland would be to make fifty or one hundred acres of green land in any place where you can make 5000 acres of black land available. There are places on all the hill farms in Sutherland here and there where, by making fifty acres of green land you could make 5000 or 10,000 acres of black land worth double the money. When you make 2000 acres in one place it is all in one place, and you cannot get the full extent of good off the black land.

41862. Now, to come back to the matter of whether the crofters could be given this land with profit to themselves, I quite understand your point that the crofter, if he turned up the green land, would have no wintering for his stock, but supposing that instead of keeping a stock of sheep as you do he kept either a stock of cattle, or part cattle and part sheep, the sheep would then be diminished in numbers, and they might winter on that portion of the green land which he left unploughed, while the cattle might be wintered on the corn and the hay or straw grown on the land he turned up?—Yes, but there is this difficulty, that you have to keep your cattle on the green land in summer, and if you eat up the green land with these cattle you starve the sheep in winter. I would not keep a single cattle beast even upon the green land I have on any terms.

41863. Would not the cattle graze on the hill in summer?—No, they would not. Sutherland is not a place where the grass is knee deep. It is deer heather and heathery moss. It is a purely sheep country and nothing else. The way to make the crofters better is to get harbours made along the coast. There is not a harbour at present where a steamer could land between Thurso and Loch Inver, and not even piers. There are one or two very safe places for harbour accommodation, and you should make two places where a steamer could land, and make piers at the fishing villages for the people to run their boats in when they are fishing, and then draw down the half of the crofting population to these fishing centres and give the land which you take from them to the others, and employ all the spare labour in trenching it more where it can be done. That is the only solution of the difficulty. Sutherland was never intended for a large population.

41864. But in former times there was a considerable population?—And what was the consequence? If it had not been for the policy that was pursued, and so much talked about, it would have been much worse. Just allow me to give you one illustration of this position. It is evidence which cannot be controverted, and which is worth the evidence of a dozen parties who talk of what they know nothing about, such as Professor Blackie, Dean of Guild Mackenzie, and others of that calibre. I got this from Mr Mackenzie, the old minister of Farr, who was present during the evictions, and it was given to me not directly—it was a conversation which

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I overheard. I was put into a close place with him and four or five other Free Church ministers, and it was about the first time I was going to Sutherland. They did not know me, and I did not know them, and they were discussing the new tenancies. Half the country had been let at that time to new tenants, of whom I was one, and they were discussing the circumstances of the country getting worse, and the green land getting waste, and that the people would be so revenged at last upon Sellar, Purves, & Company, and so on. Of course, I was very much interested in the conversation and took a full note of it. A delegate whom you had before you, a minister, held up his hands and declared that he had no hesitation in saying that the tears were streaming down his face the first time he came down Strathnaver, on seeing the desolations which had there taken place. Old Mr Mackenzie looked at him and said—‘Well, I was present at the time. No man can charge me with being in favour of the evictions. They were cruelly and harshly done, but I have lived to learn, and my opinions now are very much changed upon that subject. Before the potato famine came on, I was of opinion that the evictions were a gross mistake and a cruel evil to the people, but since then I have changed my mind, and I know that had something not been done with the population of Strathnaver at that time they would have died of starvation worse than in Ireland.’ I have often afterwards spoken to that man and had that evidence given, and, to make it stronger, before Sir John M'Neill's Commission, this Mr Mackenzie gave the very strongest evidence against the evictions. Mr James Loch, the Duke's then commissioner, wrote to Mr Mackenzie to prepare the people for the evictions. He wrote back saying he would do nothing of the kind. He was perfectly opposed to it, and would do nothing of the kind. Mr Loch wrote saying—‘Do not put the people against these evictions, for I am determined to do it, and I alone am responsible for doing it.’ Of course, it may be said there is nothing but my word for this, but I declare on oath it is true. I heard this old man who was present at the time state all this.

41865. Who was Mr Mackenzie?—The old minister of Farr. He died many years ago. He was one of those muscular Christians whom we find getting scarcer.

41866. To hark back once more to Strathnaver. As I understand you, you do not agree with what the Rev. Mr Mackay told me, and what he stated was substantiated by a conversation with a farmer—that part of the large farms in Strathnaver could be profitably used by crofters, owing, as you say, to the peculiar quality of the grass in Sutherland, which is more suitable for sheep than cattle, and to the loss which would be sustained if the green land were broken up into tillage!—Not profitably. Speaking of profitable occupation at the present time, the Duke of Sutherland is paying more rates on account of these crofters than he is getting in from them. The rates all arise from the crofting population. There has been only one case in twenty-five years of a pauper coming off a hill farm on to the rates. The paupers all arise from the crofting population. That is not their fault by any means; but still the fact remains, and if you fill the straths again with these people, in twenty or thirty years you would have the whole paupers of the country to keep, and no rents from sportsmen to keep them with.

41867. But it has been stated to us that the reason the rates are so high is because the crofters are so poor, and if they were better off the rates would be diminished?—I hold the crofters are well off in Sutherland now, and I hold, if you put them back to the straths, you destroy them as fishermen, and must give them large quantities of land to keep them comfortable.

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Thomas Purves.

41868. Still, if men do not like the sea, you cannot make them like it? —But they do like the sea. There is as good a class of men on that coast as in any part of the Highlands, and men perfectly willing to fish and perfectly willing to work when they get the opportunity. But they really have not the opportunity. It is a most intolerable grievance, the want of harbours.

41869. Where?—All along the Duke of Sutherland's property—the north-west coast; and this is a grievance which must be remedied either by the proprietor or by Government. The people cannot live without getting the benefit of the sea.

41870. Are there any other large farms in Sutherland, where the grass is not of the peculiar character which you describe, which would be more suitable for crofters?—It is the same all over Sutherland. There is no difference. You have more grass on ten acres in Skye than upon fifty in Sutherland, but we have ten times the quantity.

41871. How is it that the sheep runs in Sutherland are certainly higher rented than they are in Skye?—Because sheep land is better.

41872. That means the grass is better?—No. In Skye you have one sheep to one and a half acres. In Sutherland you require eight acres, and the thinner you run them the better you make them. Don't overstock the ground. You must keep the stock so low that they can get a bite of green along with the hill grazing.

41873. But I have always understood that the reason why sheep runs are high rented is that there is a particular grass that comes out early in the spring which puts them in condition?—Yes, that is so; but we do not get the use of that grass more than once in three or four years, because it is so far out. In some parts of the country you get it near the green ground, but in Sutherland I have to drive my sheep out for five miles to it, and the first storm drives them in again.

41874. But surely your deaths are not so heavy in Sutherland as in Skye?—More in some respects than in Skye. We have as many sheep drowned in Sutherland as you have dying in Skye. You can easily understand it where half the country is sloughs and quagmires.

41875. I am afraid we did not get to these parts. We only saw the beauties of Sutherland?—No, you did not see the worst of it.

41876. The estate officials rather gave us to understand that the Duke of Sutherland did intend, so far as he could, to make experiments in the direction of increasing the crofter population. Do you know what parts of the county he intended to make experiments in?—I don't believe he could. He might make small tenants.

41877. I mean small tenants?—Well, small tenants are quite right. One great evil in Sutherland is that we have no intermediate farms. We start from £4 up to £150 or £200. Now, no country is in a safe state where that is so. There should be farms from £10 up to £50 and £100. There is no doubt in the world that our large sheep farms are quite unmanageable and unwieldy, and the Duke would be pursuing a wise policy—though it is against my interest—by giving a tenant a hirsle of sheep. Let that be made a farm, and so on, or divide that perhaps into two farms.

41878. But that was not what Sir Arnold Kemball indicated. He indicated a return on a small scale, to begin with, to see how it answered, to a system of still smaller farms than that, and if that is the Duke's intention there must be some locality where he means to try it?—I have yet to find it. I do not believe in it. Anybody going through the county must see that the county was never intended by Providence for cultivation by a large population. It is a grazing county from beginning to end, and

INVERNESS.

INVERNESS.

Thomas Purvea.

cannot be made otherwise. The only way you can do justice to the crofting population is simply to make them fishermen, and make every acre on the sea coast available, and give these small tenants, say, ten acres of arable land and as much hill land as they can use. Then I would insist upon getting a good class of boats, and having a good breed of sheep, and making the ground officers, with assistance if they required it, take charge of the accounts, dividing the profits periodically. At present every man does what is right in his own eyes. A man having a right to put on fifty sheep may put on only ten. Another having a right to put on ten puts on fifty, and the ground is sometimes overstocked, and sometimes there are too few. Every man goes out after his own sheep and the sheep are disturbed, and there is no good done.

41879. Then you think that crofters as crofters are badly off?—No, I don't. Their rents are low, and there is no poverty—I mean destitution—among them. You will have poor people always, but still there are no hardships such as you find in Skye.

41880. Supposing you have a crofting farm of one hundred crofters, who you say are pretty well off under the rents they pay; if you were to move half of these crofters to an adjoining place of the same quality, surely there is every reason to believe that those fifty who were moved would be as well off as the fifty who were left or the one hundred who were there originally?—They might, but where are you going to end it?

41881. The end would be when each had got enough so that they could all occupy profitably and bring up their families?—Yes, but I tell you the Duke is paying more poor rate than he gets, and if he goes on extending it he will be a pauper himself before long.

41882. You think the amount they pay is so small in proportion to the rent he gets from the large farmers that it could not be carried out?—That is so, and where are they to get the stock?

41883. Of course that is a difficulty, and a difficulty which the people see, but I am asking you whether it should not be done supposing the stock could be got. You do not advocate putting crofters upon sheep farms?—I advocate it so far, that I say for myself that I will give the Duke of Sutherland up his land to-morrow if he gives me valuation for my stock and lets me out of it; and I have my neighbours on both sides of me authorising me to make the same statement. We would be much the gainers by going out just now. If we hold on for three or four years we may lose thousands of pounds by the difference in the value of stock. So we are no obstacle in the way.

41884. I do not say you are; but if I wished to ask a question about the stocking by crofters I should not ask it of you, but of those who advocated the system. What I ask you is whether the thing could be done provided the stock were found?—There is nothing in the world impossible. I could divide my farm into a great many farms, and put crofters on them perfectly well, but they could not pay the rents. The fact is this, that the shooting rents in our country are equal in value to the grazing rents. Whenever you put on crofters, this as shooting ground is useless. That means doubling the grazing rents.

41885. Why are the shootings to be useless?—Because the small tenants are eternally upon the ground, and no game will lie upon ground well stocked with cattle, and on which people are going at every hour of every day.

41886. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—One of your statements to-day has been that the crofters in Sutherland are rather well off?—Comparatively well off.

41887. You have also stated that they will not be right in Sutherland

INVER-
NESS.

INVERNESS.

Thomas
Purves.

without getting harbours. How do you reconcile those two things?—They do not need to be reconciled.

41888. There is no necessity for harbours if the people are well off?—I said nothing of the kind. There is a great necessity for harbours.

41889. For whom?—For the crofters and for the fishing population.

41890. The present fishing population?—The present fishing population and the population to be made fishers.

41891. Are you a native of Sutherland?—No; I am a native of Berwickshire or Caithness, either of the two you like.

41892. How many farms have you got?—Three—three too many at present, and for the last seven years.

41893. Did you begin with one?—I may say I did.

41894. And you have added till you have three?—I have, unfortunately.

41895. Are you surprised that a crofter who is rather scrimped in his ground would like to get an addition to his ground?—I am not surprised; and I would be only to glad if he got it. I am no enemy to the crofter.

41896. He would only be doing what you have done yourself?—And what I would like to see him doing. But I would like to see how he is to get it.

41897. Could not he and his class do it very well by getting two out of your three?—Well, he can come down to Caithness, and ask the proprietor for one, and he can ask the Duke of Sutherland for the other.

41898. Are you speaking for yourself?—I am speaking for the whole of the north of Scotland.

41899. Are you a delegate?—No.

41900. And you appear here, taking an interest in the question, to represent yourself?—I appear here because Lord Napier at Bettyhill asked if there were any large farmers present, and on the account of the great animus I saw displayed by the Free Church clergymen against large farmers and against the Duke of Sutherland's management throughout, to which I can speak very well.

41901. I am afraid you have a little animus against the Free Church yourself?—I have a very great animus, for I say the Free Church teaching and the Free Church clergy are the cause of half the evils that afflict Sutherland.

41902. Did you read what a gentleman in Skye said about the Free Church?—I did.

41903. You do not approve of what he said?—I approve of more, but not in the way he said it.

41904. Two or three times in your statement you seemed to like to come back to the question of the burnings,—to which I am not going to revert at any length. But take the case of the old man who narrated a story which on the face of it, had to my mind all the appearance of truth,—that he carried a brother down the very day the smoke and the burnings were going on. Have you any right to disbelieve it, as you do not know?—I have a perfect right to disbelieve it, from my knowledge of the ground where he lived and where the burnings took place. He lives upon the Sellar side of the strath just now, and there is no doubt of the fact. Don't come here, and try to make me out a liar.

41905. The old man tells a fact there that occurred to himself at a certain period of his life. You did not see the circumstances he relates, and perhaps you were not born. What right have you to contradict that man now on the point of going to the grave?—I have given you my authority.

41906. You draw an inference that he was wrong?—I do not draw an

inference; I state a fact. I say the man lived on the one side of the river and the burnings were on the other side, and he said he took his brother on his back to fly through the river, and if his story is true he was flying towards the burnings, and that fact showed that the statement was worthless, and the man is not much more worthy himself.

INVERNESS.

INVERNESS.

Thomas Purves.

41907. Will you go the length of saying there never was any burning?—No, I will not.

41908. You stated you had a difficulty in finding labour. May I ask why you and others find difficulty in getting labour?—Because the Duke of Sutherland has spent so much money in giving employment that every man who wants employment can get employment in half a dozen different places. I have lost more stock than I care to mention through sheep falling into these open drains during the last three years, and I cannot get men to fill them.

41909. I think you stated you were eight miles from any human habitation?—I said nothing of the kind.

41910. I have marked down that you stated your place was eight miles from crofters?—I did not say from human habitation.

41911. Do you expect, or is it reasonable you could expect, that at any moment you want labour people will come eight miles?—I have plenty accommodation for labourers, and I never asked a man to come without giving him accommodation.

41912. And food?—I have had as many as sixty or seventy men working for months on my own ground.

41913. And you give them shelter and food?—I give them food also when they are in my own employment; and I always keep plenty food about me. I have never less than 1500 bolls of meal lying about the place, and they are quite welcome to it.

41914. Do you think it is right to expect respectable people to come and live in that way in large droves, which is apparently the way it would be done there, in bothies, if other respectable employment is to be had?—Is it right for west coast fishermen to go to the east coast sea-fishing and live for weeks out of their own houses?

41915. Well, I understand they object to it very much?—I never heard of it.

41916. They would rather stay at home on their own crofts?—There is nothing to hinder their staying at home, but if I can give a man 18s. a week and accommodation, I do not think he is very hard up to leave home. He should be very glad to get it.

41917. You stated it is impossible to make crofters by Act of Parliament?—Quite so.

41918. It is possible to dispossess crofters by Act of Parliament?—I have never heard of it.

41919. That is one thing you don't know?—I did not say I don't know it.

41920. Will you again state a little more distinctly that the object of the Duke of Sutherland in his old reclamations was for the purpose of encouraging crofters and crofts?—Yes, I have heard the Duke say so himself.

41921. Can you point out among those early reclamations any place where buildings have been erected?—What do you mean by old reclamations?

41922. The earlier reclamations?—Yes, go to Lairg and you will find plenty of cottages lying empty for want of tenants, which the Duke made for crofters. He cannot get a rent for the land which will pay the interest of the money spent on the houses.

41923. What rent was he asking?—He was asking a rent that would not pay interest on the money spent on the house.

**INVER-
NESS.**

INVERNESS.

**Thomas
Purves**

41924. What was it?—I am not the Duke of Sutherland fortunately.

41925. Surely you know that?—Say £10 to £20 crofts.

41926. Do you mean to say there are crofts about Lairg with houses upon them, and little farms, and that no tenants were got for them?—Yes, I do. I am speaking of the time when the reclamations were made. Perhaps since I was there the Duke may have turned these places into large farms, and made labourers' houses of these houses.

41927. Take the case of Kinbrace. Was there any attempt in these reclamations originally to make places for crofters?—That was the whole intention of the whole matter.

41928. Where were the buildings at Kinbrace that were intended for crofters?—When the Duke found he could not succeed at Lairg he altered his system at Kinbrace. I was there at a large meeting he called of his tenants and others, and he distinctly said that was his object; and more than that; I saw him take letters from his pocket which he had received from Canada and other parts—and he laid them before us—from people who wished to get back to the soil possessed by their forefathers, and he expressed himself as very wishful that it should occur; and a very nice thing to do. I for one told him it was impossible to do it.

41929. As you sit in your fine farm at Strathnaver, do you ever look with regret at the former state of matters?—I see nothing to regret, and never did. What was the former state of matters? In Mr Sellar's recently published book, and in Mr James Loch's work, written after his examination before the House of Commons on these subjects, he showed that the value of the timber of these very comfortable old buildings was 6s. What would the value of the timber in the houses of Sutherland be now? You speak about the good old times. I was in the house of a person well known to Sir Kenneth Mackenzie, a Mr Cameron, a very worthy old Highlander, who made some money by farming, and is now living on his own land; and I said—‘Let me hear some cases of things in ‘the good old times;’ and among other things he told me this of a district which produced the best Highlanders in the Highlands—the most respectable people there are to this day—that in his father's time, and they had been there for four hundred years on that land, there was just one linen shirt in the district, and when anybody went from home he got the use of that shirt, and it was washed occasionally for the use of others. There is nothing like that now. Why, in the parish where I come from there is £3000 spent on tobacco and drink every year, and £3000 would have bought up the whole implements of the tenant, stock, lock, and barrel, three years ago. I have excise statistics in my pocket to prove that.

41930. You have stated that you and the other large tenants received the houses upon your farms free of all cost?—We did the carriage, which amounted to one-third of the whole, but still these are very liberal terms on his Grace's part, because in Caithness we have to build the houses ourselves.

41931. Then he gives you two-thirds of the buildings?—He gives the whole, but we pay the carriage, the cost of which is one-third above the Duke's outlay.

41932. And whatever money requires to be expended on the farm is only charged $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.?—No more.

41933. Is a similar treatment as to houses and fences acted upon with regard to the small tenants and crofters?—There has been a great deal of money spent on crofters in improving their holdings, and especially their houses, but you see the same thing does not obtain on these crofts and upon hill ground where you have to make 200 acres perhaps at one spot; and more than that, the small tenant is not in a position in many instances

to do it. Every acre which the Duke makes at an expense of £40 costs me £12 to bring into cultivation. Take a crofter that has three or four acres of land. It does not, in the first place, require draining; it is generally dry land. You saw specimens of it at Bettyhill, and coming along the road. It does not require much draining. He can do nothing after that but employ more population in trenching out more land and adding to their crofts.

INVERNESS.
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INVERNESS.
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Thomas Purves.

41934. What do you mean by the objection you stated to Lochiel that the land, if under small tenants, would destroy the game? You said the small tenants would be eternally on the ground; what do you mean by that?—I mean, when each man has ten or twelve sheep, on the hill, and twenty or thirty people after them. Each man has his own sheep, and is daily out among them. They take their cattle into the house at night, and right out to the hill grazing through the day, and every day is the same process, and they are sometimes after their cattle and sometimes after their sheep. My own impression is, though I don't know much about game, that game are easily disturbed.

41935. Don't you lease game?—I do, and re-lease it.

41936. And I have no doubt re-lease it beneficially to yourself?—Well, that is my business.

41937. Would you have any objection to the small tenants getting that power as well as you?—No, not the slightest; and I tell you I will give them my farm to-morrow if they give me value for the stock; and perhaps they would have to give the Duke just a very little security for his rents.

41938. Would you have made the same statement a few years ago when prices were very low?—I would not have been so ready to do it, and it has cost me £6000 or £7000.

41939. Then I suppose you do not take undue credit when you make the offer at very high prices?—No, because I think, if we knew our business, we would retire and leave it immediately. I think every one is acting upon that, and there is not a farm that goes out of lease that is relet, and they are going out like doves out of their windows.

41940. Now, you tell the crofters that they should be content, but they are not content?—Because agitators come among them, and the Free Church clergy have disturbed their minds and rendered them discontented, and this Commission is going to make matters worse.

41941. They are discontented, and sheep farmers are discontented, and what is to become of the country in these circumstances?—The millennium. That will make us all right, and I am looking forward to it.

41942. Can you not suggest anything more practical than looking forward to the millennium?—I have suggested a great deal; and, more than that, if the Education Act is worked properly in the Highlands, and the compulsory clause put into effect, a generation will see the country clear of the surplus population without any trouble. The great thing is to arrange for the present difficulty and get the thing tided over, because the Education Act will clear the country of the surplus population in twenty years, because no young man will stay in the country after being educated.

41943. Will an educated Lowlander stay in the country after that period?—If he has a large sheep farm at a cheap rent. You will understand I am not in favour of emigration. I am not opposed to migration, but I am opposed to emigration. I look upon that as the greatest evil that could befall any country and any people.

41944. But there may be migrations and migrations, and I am afraid the migrations, so far as Sutherland crofters are concerned, have been to

INVER-
NESS.

INVERNESS.

Thomas
Purves.

migrate them to the shores and make them fishermen whether they like it or not?—No, you were never more mistaken in your life.

41945. Where would you migrate them to?—Allow me to state something to you. The Enclosure Commissioners for England and Wales published a few years ago their report, which showed that out of 20,000,000 acres of land under cultivation in England and Wales there were only 3,000,000 acres drained. Supposing 5,000,000 acres of that land did not require drainage, it leaves 12,000,000 to drain in England and Wales, which, at the lowest possible price of £10 or £12 per acre, would need £120,000,000 of money which could be spent on British land, and, but for our unfortunate system of land laws, would be spent. Now, I say that 1000 Highlanders sent down to the points where these drainage works could be undertaken and carried out are as comfortable and as valuable in a national point of view as if they remained in the Highlands; and if we can grow wool and mutton in the Highlands to keep these people comfortable there, I think migration is a very good solution of the difficulty. I oppose emigration, because I think it would be as absurd as for a breed of horses or short-horn cattle to be shipped off gratis to America or the colonies. I think human beings are of much more value than sheep and cattle; and every man and woman raised in this country costs the country £500 before he or she is twenty-one, and every person we send out of this country to another is a dead loss to ourselves and adding already to the intense competition against us.

41946. *Professor Mackinnon.*—You stated that the average acreage of a crofter in the parish of Farr was about four and a half arable, and that the outside of the acreage that was under cultivation in Strathnaver long ago was 600?—It could not be more than that.

41947. The general impression is very much the other way?—Yes, that is just the difficulty which I see. I know it so thoroughly that when I saw this statement made at Helmsdale I saw the thing was absurd.

41948. You are quite of opinion that in the whole of that long strath there were not more than 600 acres under cultivation?—That does not include the whole green land, because there are burns up through the country naturally green. There must be spots through the interior of the country which are naturally green. The water overflowing makes them so. I do not count that, but I count the old cultivated land.

41949. I must say my impression was somewhat different. Was the ground measured by the estate officials?—It was, and to show how I could not believe it, I may say that there was near my house twenty-five acres of green land, and I thought it was double the extent.

41950. Then you are convinced that the clearing of that glen long ago was absolutely an advantage to the people who were there?—I will not go so far as that, but the people were in perfect misery in those days. There is no use talking about the good old times. They were under middlemen—people who leased the land and sublet it to those people—and there were perhaps 300 or 400 people in Strathnaver at the most populous time. If there was 600 acres the middlemen seized the best of it and kept it, and how much was left for the people?

41951. I understood you to say you quite approved of the policy of removing the people?—I did, because if it had not been done they would have starved.

41952. Suppose the policy had been different. Suppose half of them had been removed and the other half left?—How then could the proprietor get his rent out of them? As regards the soil, it is a very curious thing that in Sutherland there was scarcely one native who stood up against the south country invasion. Now, in Caithness, where I was born, there were

hundreds and hundreds of south country men who came in spending capital for ever, and there was not one of them buried in the county except my father. Now, the subsoil was clay, and the people bowled the south country men over and sent them away wiser men. In Sutherland, when the southern invasion came in, the natives went down like nine pins, and it was simply because the whole bottom is gravel.

INVERNESS.
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INVERNESS.
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Thomas Purves.

41953. So the real distinction is between gravel and clay?—No, but I say that wherever you find gravel you find superstition, belief in the clergy, and a high state of morality. Wherever you find clay you find the opposite. In Caithness we have clay, but no gravel. In Sutherland illegitimacy is 5 or 6 per cent., while down in Kirkcudbright, for instance, it is 14 per cent. Whenever the land gets better they will not receive truth at second hand without seeking it for themselves, and there is more intelligence, and their morality is not so high. You have heard a great deal about the morality of the Highlands. The clergy have nothing to do with it. It is the soil that does it. It is as certain as possible. Take a geological map of Scotland and you find it perfectly defined, and I defy any man to get over it.

41954. I suppose you did not inquire whether there was anything in the nature of things that would establish a relationship between gravel and religious belief?—We have proof. We had total disruption in the Highlands.

41955. You did not extend your inquiry beyond Scotland?—No.

41956. Because it is a question that would admit of a wide range?—I am only giving it as a theory.

41957. Supposing, however, apart from the question of belief in the clergy, that that strath was only partially cleared, and that such arrangements were made as you would wish to see now made—and, so far as I can see, that is a regular system of graduated farms—do you think the present state of affairs in Sutherland would be now what they are?—No, and I give you this reason against it. The Duke of Sutherland required to hold out great inducements to men to come from the south who understood sheep, and he could not get men to come without the largest inducement, and no man would take land from the crofting population if there was a crofting population among them.

41958. I thought this large holder in Sutherland was not a man from the Borders, but the Duke's own factor?—He was a man who understood sheep farming, and in the same category with the man from the Borders.

41959. But the Duke did not require to go to the Borders for filling up this place?—When I speak of the Borders I mean strangers.

41960. This tenant was in the country, and the Duke's own factor?—He came from Morayshire as factor.

41961. But now, at all events, you would wish to see a regular system of graduated farms, from the small farm to the big one, throughout that country?—Yes.

41962. And you think it quite possible?—There is nothing impossible. How it would work and pay the proprietor I cannot say, because you cannot know until you prove it, but I know it would be better for the country in the long run and better for the people.

41963. At the present moment, however, when farmers are clearing away wherever they get the chance, it would be a fair time to try?—I know in Sutherland there is a great opportunity. There is a great deal of land falling into the proprietor's hands, and I know there is no man who is really more anxious to make things right than the Duke of Sutherland is.

41964. And there would be no place in Sutherland more suited than

INVER-
NESS.

INVERNESS.

Thomas
Purves.

Strathnaver?—I do not say that. Sutherland is much the same all over. There is not much difference. You really cannot make a distinction. You have heard a great deal about fixity of tenure among tenants. Now, the question should arise here—this four and a half acres which the tenants have—who made it? The tenants made it, and I daresay they got no compensation for it, and they have equal right to it. But then in Sutherland we have all fixity of tenure, not legal or written but really by custom. The Duke never does put out a tenant if he can possibly avoid it. He has not paid the tenants compensation for these improvements, but if he allows them to sit there at a nominal rent all along really he is compensating them by fixity of tenure. If a man expends £15 for improvement of land and the Duke pays £15 for improving it, he will charge £15, and if he leaves him with it and pays nothing it is just the same.

41965. With respect to the expenditure upon crofters' lands and upon large farms, are you aware, relatively to the rents they pay, upon which there is the greatest amount of expenditure in that district?—There never was any expenditure on hill farms till recently. There never was a shilling spent upon them by the proprietor, and there did not need, except perhaps for houses.

41966. But you are not able to say what the amount of expenditure would be relatively to the rent upon large farms and small crofts in that district?—I think you have all that stated in the documents the factor laid before you.

41967. I think you stated that if there was not the policy pursued that was pursued in the past—that is to say, an absolute clearing of the whole of that glen—the parish in which you are would be as bad as Lewis?—I think so.

41968. What is the difference between the parish in which you live and Lewis?—In the parish in which I live the poor rate is 10d. per pound, and in some parts of Lewis it is 5s. In Lochs, I think, the poor rate is 10s. per pound. Property is of very little value there. In twenty years it will be far less if it goes on. In Sutherland the difficulty was met and overcome in proper time. The difficulty in Lewis is the squatting population. The squatters who have no land settle down among the crofters.

41969. In Lewis there is the small crofter at £4 and under, and the large farmer at £200 and over, and there is exactly that in your county?—I believe in the Lewis the greatest mistake Sir James ever committed was that he employed some great improvers. What he should have done was to have few or no large farms. He should have gone in for making a fishing population all round.

41970. What is the difference between the actual state of society and kind of people we find in the two places at the present moment,—the people may be poorer in Lewis, but is it not the case that the population of the two places is divided into two classes, crofters and cottars, of £4 and under, and farmers of £200 and over?—I think so.

41971. Only there are more of the poorer class in Lewis than in Sutherland?—Yes.

41972. But you stated that in Sutherland they were very well off; indeed as well off as people almost anywhere?—I do not say that; I say as well off as crofters anywhere.

41973. You say at the same time the Duke pays as much for poor rates as he takes from them for their rents?—Poor and school rates.

41974. And that the poor are all out of the crofting population. Now, can that be a satisfactory state of matters?—It is as satisfactory as it is possible to make it, and you would make it far more unsatisfactory.

41975. Do you not think it would be made more satisfactory by having

the whole county under big crofters?—How can you have the whole county under big crofters? I tell you they have never been able to work the sheep trade, and never will be able to make it pay.

INVERNESS.

41976. Well, under small farms?—No, because you cannot get green ground in the straths without destroying the value of the hill ground.

INVERNESS.

41977. I thought you said your own farm could be easily split up into so many small farms?—Perfectly well.

Thomas Purves.

41978. What would be the yearly rent of such a farm?—I paid about £1200—not so much now—about £400 or £500.

41979. What would you split it up into?—Anything you like, if you go down to the lowest strata.

41980. Would you make some £80?—Yes, I would.

41981. Some £20 to £50?—Well, if you go in for any quantity of hill grazing you must go in for £50 or £60. You could have no hill stock unless you did.

41982. Suppose you had your own hill farm treated as we had a farm of Sir Alexander Matheson's, where there was one man before and there are thirty now—suppose all these big farms of Sutherland had thirty tenants instead of one, and that the crofters were reduced by the same number—would you expect the poor rates to be the same as now?—Much higher.

41983. And that all the poor would still come out of the crofters?—By gravitation they would come out of these people.

41984. We came upon a parish in Orkney where the conditions were somewhat similar—crofts of £20, some owning their own land and some having it rented; but the great bulk were about £30, and there were no paupers?—That is about the most fertile country in Scotland and the least subject to storms. It is the finest climate for grazing in the north, and the finest land. You have that ridge of fine land which goes down through Scotland to the Lothian

41985. But my point was this, that here was a class of tenants of £20, £30, and £40, that produced no paupers?—And I will give you the reason for that. One acre in Orkney is worth twenty, or ten at any rate, in Sutherland. Now, these people have the fishing as well.

41986. These people do not fish?—Well, they have the finest land in the country.

41987. Now, when you find over the mainland of Scotland—you have them in Caithness and in the Highlands occasionally—crofters of £20, £30, and £40, do you find these have actually among their relatives many paupers?—Not a £25 tenant—not a crofter. That is a good-sized farm.

41988. Suppose the policy of the past in Sutherland had been not the absolute clearing of the glen but the thinning of it, or supposing the policy of the future would be to spread them again, and make the future population of the place crofters and small farmers at £25 or £30, would you still believe these would be the breeders of paupers?—Where would you draw the line in the crofter population?

41989. At £10?—They will breed up again, and the old state of things will go on again.

41990. Is that the case, where you find them as they are in Orkney and Caithness and in the South Highlands? There they clear away voluntarily. They say themselves that they will not clear away out of the places where they are poorest and worst off?—It is the Church again. Every man in the Highlands is worth 5s. or 10s. to the minister, and as long as the clergy are paid by the people their object is to keep the people there and stop education. Whenever the people clear out their vocation is done, and there is no more need for them.

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41991. Don't you think Sutherland will keep its present population, differently arranged, well off?—I say they are well off now. Any one can see that Sutherland was never made for a big population.

41992. After all the evidence, which no doubt you have read, you still say the population of the north and west of Sutherland are well off?—How can they be but well off with the Duke spending a million of money among them, and when they have the sea beside them? Talk of the Sutherland crofters being ill off compared with Skye and Lewis; there is no comparison whatever.

41993. Well, they might be ill off, and a still lower depth?—There is no depth there. I assure you the people are comfortable. Of course, we all wish to see them better off, but as crofters I think it is a wrong system to have men located upon less land than will keep a family. I wish to make crofters crofters and fishermen fishermen.

41994. Take Sutherland, and your own parish; don't you think that a considerably greater proportion of the area of the parish might be put under such men as you wish to see there than there is just now?—I have no objections. Of course, I am simply giving my opinion.

41995. I am merely asking what would be a wise policy to pursue. Don't you think you could add to them, and say that a considerable portion of the area that is now under extensive sheep tracts could be apportioned out among them as small tenants or big crofters?—I do not believe it could be done. It could be done perhaps to keep the people, but the land could not pay a rent to the proprietor. If you mean Government to buy the stock, you may force it that way. But that is like hand-loom weaving; it must come gradually.

41996. Is not sheep farming in Sutherland a drug in the market?—It is; but what is the cause of it? When the great inflation of wool and sheep took place during the American war—when wool rose to three times its value and sheep were very high—we gave the whole profit back to the proprietor in the shape of excessive rents.

41997. Then, in that case, when you say it would not pay the proprietor, you require only to say it would not pay as much as you are paying to him at present, but as much as you would wish to pay in the future?—But then you do away with the proprietors. They need all they have to live upon, and if you reduced the rents to a minimum you would soon have them off the face of the earth. They would be the worst off crofters on the property.

41998. So, though it is large crofters and small farmers that you would like to see, you think it impracticable to get them?—I think it is impracticable. The fact is that Sutherland could not be wrought much differently than it is—that is, with men having 500 sheep up to 1000—but when you come down to the small tenants it is a very difficult question.

41999. Suppose you got Sutherland apportioned out into pieces with 500 sheep to every man, would it not be near about its present population?—I daresay it would; but then, look again at this. Up at Kinbrace corn will not ripen. You have fifteen or twenty miles not worth 3d. or 4d. per acre. How are you to do in a country like that?

42000. You don't think you could break up the big farms and increase the small crofts?—You cannot break up the large farms to make the present crofters' possessions larger.

42001. Or some of them?—Well, if you could make them into £50 farms I have no objection, but less than £50 would not do.

42002. But suppose it was £50, would not Sutherland have about its present population?—I suppose it might.

42003. And would you prefer such a state of things to exist rather than the present?—You are asking me a very queer question for a man making his living the opposite way. As I said ten years ago in another public inquiry, I am perfectly prepared to submit to any change of circumstances for the benefit of the people. I have spent a vast deal of money among them in labour, and I am prepared to do more in the same way, and would like to see them better off in every way.

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INVERNESS.
Thomas Purves.

42004. I put the question merely as matter of judgment on your part, having such wide experience?—If I was a proprietor I would not attempt to restock the country with small crofts.

42005. Then what you would do would be to clear them away to the sea-shore from where they are, and make harbours for them?—Well, they are on the coast already.

42006. But you would put them at the harbours?—What I propose is this, that if these harbours were made by Government they might give these harbours and make it a proviso that the proprietor should give those people houses in fee simple or on long lease, and give them a bit of garden ground, and make them perfectly independent of the crofting.

42007. And what would you do with the ground they have just now?—Give it to the nearest neighbour.

42008. Do you think that would improve their condition?—Certainly it would. They would have double the land.

42009. Then would you not advocate an extension of that system beyond the present area of the crofting population?—I would make every one of these crofters left from the fishing population small farmers.

42010. And would you expect their condition materially to improve?—Most decidedly.

42011. And would you not advocate also that the area of the small farming class should be increased beyond the present crofting area?—I would give them as much land as possible.

42012. Right up through the whole country?—Let them go as far as they like.

42013. *The Chairman.*—What are the names of the places where you would have harbours made on the north-west coast?—The other day, when the committee were fixing sites for these bridges, we fixed the site of a bridge close to the house at Bighouse, and the reason of fixing it there was that it was convenient to a natural harbour quite within a quarter of a mile of it. It would be a simple matter to make a road from this road to the harbour. That was one reason why we fixed it there, and it was at the suggestion of the Duke of Sutherland's factor, which shows they have it in their minds to erect harbours. That is one place.

42014. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—That is at the mouth of Halladale?—Yes. Then there is another splendid situation for a harbour opposite Tongue; and there is another place where vessels can lie on the beach just now—that is Tarrasdale. Then you have Loch Armadale, which is a very sheltered bay at present, and where a harbour could be made. I may mention one thing more. There has been a great deal said about tyranny, and persecution, and so on, on the part of the officials towards the small tenants. Now, I had a pretty long controversy with Mr Mackay of Hereford, in the public prints last spring, and every letter he wrote he charged the Duke and his officials with tyranny and oppression of every kind. It was not my province, but as I was in the discussion I offered to send an honest lawyer to investigate the cases if he gave me from two to six cases, and oblige myself to hold the information secret, as his reason for not giving the cases publicity was a fear that the Duke or his factor might turn the people out for giving information. I gave him the

INVERNESS. challenge, and asked him to produce two cases or any number up to six on these conditions, and what I got in answer was unlimited personal abuse. Now, in the Tongue district there are between 600 and 700 crofts, all managed by one factor and two ground officers, and the grievances you heard at Bettyhill were the worst cases they could bring forward, no doubt, as showing mismanagement, and there has not been one eviction in that district for twenty years.

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Rev. JOHN M'TAVISH, Free Church Minister, Inverness (67)—examined.

Rev. John M'Tavish.

42015. *The Chairman.*—Do you appear as a delegate?—No.

42016. As a general representative?—Yes.

42017. Will you have the goodness to read your statement?—My design in appearing before you is not to specify particular cases of grievance, but to state in a general way the effects produced by, and under the present land laws, and which I in common with many others have long and sadly deplored, and to indicate the only apparent remedy. I am not influenced by any feeling of opposition to landlords as a class or to any individuals, but I object to the present land laws—(1) Because they tend to the accumulation of property in few hands. (2) Because they are dividing the occupants of land into autocrats and serfs. (3) Because under them our people may be, and in many cases are crushed, some driven to foreign shores, others into our towns to swell the mass of poverty and increase the number of the discontented, and (I fear I may say) of the dangerous classes which may, under a sense of wrong and oppression, become dangerous to the peace and wellbeing of society. (4) Because under these laws the productive power of our country is in many cases actually diminished, and thus our wealth as a nation, and we are becoming more dependent on other countries for our supply of food. (5) Because under these laws our strength as a nation is reduced, and the disposition of our people to defend its shores and its institutions is lessened. I am not opposed to landlordism, though maintaining that the Crown should never have given to the chiefs the property which belonged to their clan or tribe. That has been done, and the question now is, how far, and in what way, the wrong done can be redressed, and the evils which have flowed from it can be remedied. The only remedy I can see is to give the people back the land on fair terms. That it be valued by competent parties appointed for the purpose, and not by the proprietors as is often done now. That the people be secured in possession of their holdings, as long as they pay their legal rents; and that when they do remove, compensation be given them for all their improvements. There is no necessity for their emigration. No man can go over Scotland with his eyes open and not see that in the Highlands at least there is waste land that is capable of tillage, which once supported a comfortable peasantry now returning to its original condition. Emigration is therefore not needed. And besides, it will not cure the evils under which the people groan. It would, I doubt not, benefit those who may emigrate to do so, at all events if our present land laws are maintained. Colonial government gives lands in some cases for nothing. They wish their land occupied. Our country looks on while our land is being made desolate, as if the great thing to be aimed at is the increase of rent rolls, and the reduction of the population. The first step in this process is to remove people to make room for sheep, and next to remove these to make room for deer.

' By each of these changes the community loses. It loses the people as producers and consumers, and the supply of food is lessened. The only parties who gain are the proprietary and a few shepherds and gamekeepers, and the shopkeepers who supply the lodges during the sporting season. All the benefit that the community reaps from the deer forests is the value of the deer killed as food ; the rents paid, and other expenses beyond that value, do no more to increase the national wealth than the payment of gambling debts ; the money passes from hand to hand, but without any increase or even any equivalent. The money circulated by sportsmen in the Highlands is, I may say, spent for non-productive ends, and a portion of it in a form fitted to deteriorate recipients. What we need is not a race of serfs or gillies, but of men able to bear a share in our national burdens, and aid in national defence. Here I may mention that there is a growing feeling in all our colonies, and in the United States, against land monopolies, because these are adverse to settlement ; and in Prince Edward Island some years ago, the Government arranged for breaking down some large estates, and making the tenants proprietors, and causing the unoccupied lands to be sold. The dread of a peasant proprietary is, as the Commissioners know, a bugbear. It is assumed by many that the people will not improve the land should they get it. But who have made a large part of the improvements in the past, both in this country and in our colonies ? And why should they not improve now if only the opportunity be given them ? The Lord settled a peasant proprietor in Canaan, and had his laws been observed what must have continued, and surely He understood political economy. Since writing these lines I turned to look at what Von Stein did for Prussia. Smiles, after stating that he held that the true strength of a kingdom was not to be found in the aristocracy but in the whole nation, quotes him thus—"To lift up a people it is necessary to give liberty, independence, and property to its oppressed classes, and extend the protection of the law to all alike. Let us emancipate the peasant, for free labour alone sustains a nation effectually. Restore to the peasant the possession of the land he tills, for the independent proprietor alone is brave in defending hearth and home. Free the citizen from monopoly and the tutelage of the bureaucracy, for freedom in workshop and town-hall has given to the ancient burghs of Germany the proud position he held. Teach the laudowning nobles that the legitimate rank of the aristocracy can be maintained only by disinterested service in county and the state, but is undermined by exemption from taxes and other unwarrantable privileges. The bureaucracy, instead of confining itself to pedantic book knowledge, and esteeming red tape and salary above everything else, should study the people, live with the people, and adapt its measures to the living realities of the times." I have nothing more to add further than this, that I have seen the same class of people in North America. I was among them. I have gone through from Nova Scotia nearly to Lake Winnipeg. I lived twenty-three years amongst them, and I may remark that the early settlers entered at far greater disadvantages than they would have if you put them down on any piece of cultivatable land in Scotland that I know of. They did not even know how to handle an axe, and had to take everything out of the forest ; and yet they have done well, and if our present land laws are to be maintained I would recommend every one to go there. I should be sorry to see it, because I think we have not an over-population now, though there may be cases in some particular districts. The witness who preceded me told you he could not get men to work. There is evidence, I think, that in that part of the country at all events the population is not

INVERNESS.

INVERNESS.

Rev. John M'Tavish.

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INVERNESS.

Rev. John
McTavish.

in excess. I do not wish to occupy your time at any length, and I have drawn up this paper just because I wished to delay you as little as possible, but I am fully convinced that the country will never be satisfied until there are very great changes made. It is said this has been the result of agitators. I think I am fully as old as the witness who preceded me, and I know fully as much, and perhaps more, of the people, and I know the feeling has existed from my boyhood, and has been only growing in intensity ; and I do not believe that as education advances you will find the people more easily quieted. They understand their power, and as they understand their power you will find the necessity of giving them what has been hitherto withheld. The political changes which I certainly desire to see I fear under the present system. I fear giving the people, even the poor people, a vote, because I know in many cases they dare not vote according to their convictions. They feel afraid. There are estates I know where they would be perfectly free. I know that some of our aristocracy would be above taking advantage of their circumstances, but, looking at what I know is the sort of feeling, if it be an evil to influence anybody with anything in the shape of money, I am afraid you will have the same operation unless you give fixity of tenure.

42018. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Speaking of Canada and the north-west, in your twenty-three years' experience was there ever a period of scarcity ?—No, not of actual scarcity. I have known periods when the price of land rose and fell very materially, during the American war, and there have been some places and some seasons when provisions were comparatively scarce, but nothing like a famine.

42019. You mention in your paper that the land in the Highlands once supported a comfortable peasantry ; is it not the case that there were frequently years of scarcity in old times in the Highlands ?—I believe so.

42020. Do you think the land in Canada or the climate of Canada is better situated for agriculture than ours in the Highlands, especially the West Highlands ?—To a large extent it is, and in the north-west there is an extent of territory to which our country is as nothing.

42021. It is with reference to the comfort of the people I put the question regarding the possibility of scarcity arising. Don't you think there is less likelihood of scarcity arising in Canada than of scarcity among the repopulated Highlands ?—I don't know. When I look into the history of the past, I find that the finest lands are sometimes visited with scarcity. Egypt has been visited with famines, and Palestine, and Rome, and I do not know you are ever secure. I think that depends not on the soil, but I think the question of famine may sometimes depend upon their religion, and this is a matter which is in the Lord's hand, and which we cannot count upon.

42022. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—How old were you before you left the country to go to Canada ?—I have only been back six years. I was about thirty-six years when I went.

42023. You were a clergyman in this country before you went ?—Yes, I was a settled minister.

42024. Where were you officiating ?—I was in Ballachulish.

42025. Are you acquainted with any other part of Scotland ? Were you there all the time ?—No ; I have walked nearly the whole way from the Mull of Cantyre to Inverness.

42026. What part of Scotland do you belong to originally ?—I am a native of Jura, but was brought up principally in Islay.

42027. And this matter about the condition of the crofting population in the Highlands has occupied your attention for a long period ?—For a long period.

42028. And you have taken a somewhat active part of recent years in this town in connection with the matter?—Yes.

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42029. Have you been present during a good deal of the discussions that took place to-day and yesterday?—I heard part of yesterday's evidence.

INVERNESS.

42030. And you have no doubt been watching the proceedings of the Commission in other localities?—Yes.

Rev. John
M'Tavish.

42031. Do you consider, generally speaking, that the complaints of the crofting population as to want of room and high rents are in the main correct?—I have no doubt; I am sure of it.

42032. And, on the other hand, do you believe there is in this country sufficient land for the present crofting population to live in comfort?—I am quite satisfied of that.

42033. And while not at all objecting to voluntary emigration, you at the same time state, from your knowledge of the hardships that emigrants have to encounter in foreign lands, that it might be as well for them to remain at home if opportunities were given to them to improve their condition?—I may answer in reference to that, that the difficulties which emigrants are liable to now are not what they were liable to at that early time. At the same time, I am satisfied the people might be comfortable at home, and that it would be a national benefit to us to retain them. We could have them as producers, we could have them for the defence of the country; and I can tell the Commissioners that the feeling which used to exist in my early days is dying out. People do not care for the defence of the country now as they did in those times.

42034. You mean that in the humbler classes there is not that patriotic feeling which formerly prevailed?—Yes, they tell me that frequently.

42035. Did you hear the whole of the statement of the last witness?—I heard a portion of it.

42036. *The Chairman.*—You spoke about emigration as compared with migration—settlement abroad as compared with settlement in this country. You stated that emigrants were subjected in former times to very great hardships on their first settlement, and might be still subjected to hardships, though not so great?—Yes.

42037. Do you not think that the labouring classes would be prepared to submit to very great hardships with the prospect of becoming eventually the free proprietors of the soil on which they live?—Certainly.

42038. In fact, that perhaps they would be inclined, with that prospect, to submit to greater hardships abroad than they would be in this country if the prospect was to become tenants on the lands of others even on favourable terms?—I have no doubt of it, unless you give them permanent security—permanent holdings.

42039. Do you mean by permanent holdings property in fee simple, or do you mean tenure of the land of others on very favourable terms?—I mean a tenure of it, but a tenure that could not be broken as long as the people paid their rents. I don't know but there might be a revaluation after a term of years, but that they could not be removed.

42040. Don't you think there is something in human nature which would lead men to prefer becoming absolute proprietors to being tenants, on terms however favourable?—I have no doubt there is.

42041. There is also the prospect of families. Don't you think there is very great encouragement to emigration compared with migration in the unbounded security the poor have for comfort and prosperity in the next generation?—Certainly.

42042. So there are really advantages belonging to emigration which do not belong to migration?—Yes. My contention, however, is that it is not for the advantage of the country to stimulate emigration. I would

INVERNESS. be perfectly willing that people should go if they pleased, and I believe in a large number of instances they would benefit themselves, but I would not stimulate them.

INVERNESS. 42043. Coming to the economical side of the question, you say it would be very desirable to establish people in our own country as producers or consumers. Granted ; but are you not prepared to admit that there may be cases in which our countrymen by emigrating to our territories abroad may become much more happy, both producers and consumers, and producers and consumers to a far greater extent than if they remained in this country ?—I admit that, but not necessarily to our advantage in this country.

42044. Not necessarily to our advantage in this country in as far as our colonies abroad consume commodities taken from all countries and export their commodities to all countries ; but still up to the present time has it not been proved that the markets created by emigration have been chiefly conducive to the prosperity of the mother country ?—No doubt of that, but I look at it in this aspect. You cannot secure the allegiance of these colonies. Times of difficulty may arise ; you are cut off from your supplies ; and I would like to be as little dependent upon foreign lands in these circumstances as possible.

42045. I don't wish to under-rate the value of allegiance and of common nationality, but still whether they belong to us or to our Crown and country, should not they still remain consumers and producers who may be of great value to our industry ?—No doubt of that.

42046. Then you do admit that emigration may be of great value to the people, and has recommendations which migration has not ?—I have never denied that.

42047. Then I would like to know on what ground you would place migration in this country. I suppose that you don't contemplate the transfer for instance of Highland people here to the great centres of industry as labourers—either factory labourers or agricultural labourers ?—No.

42048. You perhaps think that the migration of the Highlanders to the southern markets of labour would be accompanied by hardships and even in some degree by social degradation, which you would not like to see them incur ?—I am satisfied as to that.

42049. You think that even in their present depressed state there are some features in their social position which are superior to the position of mere labourers whether in town or country ?—Yes.

42050. That is, whenever they possess some share of the soil ?—Quite so. There is a degree of independence in even these circumstances. A large proportion in our towns now are sunk very low, just from having no trade. They go in there as mere labourers and are thrown among the common mass, and they are very often sunk very low even in the scale of morals ; and I don't think that morals depend upon whether it is clay or any other kind of soil.

42051. You think, then, the Highland crofter is a great loser materially and socially by becoming a member of the labouring classes in another part of the country ?—I do.

42052. Well, he is to be settled upon land in his own country or land in the Highlands—because really there is hardly any opening for his settlement elsewhere, and he must be settled in the Highlands, for the most part on uncultivated land, to bring it under cultivation ; on what terms do you think the proprietors ought to give uncultivated lands to the crofting class ?—Well, there is a large proportion of uncultivated land that I think is very little worth to anybody just now. There is a con-

siderable portion of land extending mostly on the east side of Loch Lochy, from Fort William up to the centre of Loch Lochy, and some on the other side too. It is mainly on the east side, and I think a good deal might be done with that ; and there are stretches of land in other places in the same condition.

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INVERNESS.

Rev. John
M'Tavish.

42053. Do you think there are, at moderate elevations and under favourable climate, considerable stretches of land in this country where crofts could be established ?—I think so. There is a considerable portion in the island of Islay—land once under cultivation, and now lying waste as far as cultivation is concerned. You will find the houses there now where I knew a very plentiful tenantry, and there is scarcely one remaining. The whole of that large district is nearly laid waste.

42054. What process of recultivation do you advocate ? Do you advocate that the land should be given to the people for a term of years at a low or nominal rent under certain stipulated conditions ?—Yes.

42055. Well, at the end of the period for which it is given, and when the land has to be revalued and regranted or released in any form, by whom do you think the increased value of the land should be assessed ?—I think it should be assessed by independent parties—neither by the landlord nor by the tenant.

42056. Do you contemplate the nomination of Government valuators, or do you think that the common usage in the country might obtain, that valuators might be appointed on either side with the power of choosing an umpire ?—I would rather see valuators appointed by the Crown.

42057. Do you think Commissioners appointed by the Crown would be as likely to judge correctly of the variations of soil, climate, and so on in the different districts, as persons selected in the country itself ?—I think they should be parties acquainted with the country. I don't think you could apply any general valuators for the whole of Scotland ; it must be for the Highlands alone.

42058. Valuators appointed in the county itself ?—Yes.

42059. In each district ?—Yes.

42060. And then, supposing land reclaimed under a first lease, do you think that at the end of the first lease the land should be valued by these disinterested parties, and that the value of the improvements should be reimbursed to the tenant, or do you think it should be left free to him to make a new lease for instance on favourable terms, and in that way to reimburse himself ?—I don't know which would be the better plan. I think it would be a much better plan if he had security for continuance, on a revaluation by competent parties, that he would not be dispossessed as long as he paid the rent that competent parties assessed him at.

42061. And if he chose to go away ?—If he chose to go away, let his claim be valued, the proprietor having the first claim to the valuation ; and if he would not pay it, let it be sold in the market.

42062. Do you think that during the currency of this first lease the occupier ought to have the power of alienating the occupancy—that he ought to have the power of selling his improvements and his occupancy, or do you think he should only be allowed to deal with the proprietor ?—I think he should be allowed to deal only with the proprietor in the first instance, and that he should not be allowed to sell without the proprietor having the first offer.

42063. Do you think that if the tenure of the land was placed very much under the control of the tenant, without any control on the part of the proprietor, there would be still a very great danger in the Highlands of the subdivision of these new holdings ?—I don't think there would, but I don't think that need be left exactly in that form. My impression is that

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INVERNESS.

Rev. John
M'Tavish.

the more independent you make the people, and the more they are enabled to rise, the less disposed they are to divide; and I know in America there is no tendency in that direction, and as education advances there will be less tendency.

42064. In America, that is because the younger members always swarm off?—Yes, because they are educated.

42065. And in this country they will swarm off to the colonies because the area is very limited?—Yes.

42066. Some witnesses have said there should be an area of holding below which there should not be subdivision; have you ever considered that question?—No, I have not.

42067. But supposing you are asked an opinion about it, what is the lowest agricultural unit which should be permitted?—That is a question I am not prepared to answer.

42068. What do you think of the question of the division of the agricultural industry from the fishing industry? Do you think we should aim at the separation of the fishermen from the land and their settlement in fishing communities dependent on that industry, or do you think the two industries could flourish together?—I think they could flourish together, and I think it would be a grievous hardship to compel people who are now crofters, and perhaps have never practised the fishing, to become fishermen always. I would just like to see some of the large farmers put in the same position. To set men who have never made a business of it to take their living from the ocean would be a piece of cruelty, and we have had too much of that in the past.

42069. I think there is now no question of transporting whole communities from the interior to the shore, but you have a shore population more or less versed in fishing, and the question is whether the fishing element is to be separated from the agricultural one, and the fishermen brought down to the neighbourhood of ports and there settled as fishermen pure and simple, while the small crofts they occupied before should be added to the crofts of those left behind them?—My impression is that if permanent holdings are given near these fishing stations, that is a question that will settle itself. If they find the fishing profitable they will live by it; but the great evil, I think, throughout a great part of our Highlands is the difficulty of getting permanent holdings for houses or for anything else.

42070. Do the fishing people on the east coast generally hold feus?—I don't know.

42071. Or are they living as cottars?—Well, a good many of them are building houses. They must have feus. It is so in Fraserburgh.

42072. But they are in a town or near a town?—Yes; but if you are to gather them near harbours, you are virtually making towns.

42073. But considering the precarious nature of the resort of fish, do you think it would be prudent to encourage the concentration of population in places of that sort?—I don't know if it would. If the opportunity was given them for them to try it, they would draw to those points themselves if they had proper harbours, and people could get feus and have their houses so that they could not be removed from them. I think, in many instances, it would be the tendency to draw to these places and settle there.

42074. With reference to the question of deer forests, do you think there is any part of the country which is more advantageously and profitably occupied by deer for purposes of sport, or do you think it ought all to be rendered available, and necessarily available, for agricultural industry?—I think it ought to be all rendered available.

42075. You don't think there are any portions very rugged and remote in the country which have been occupied from time immemorial more or less for sporting purposes?—I would set no portions apart, but I would not set about to exterminate the deer. At the same time, I think there is no portion of the country so rugged, as far as I can discover, which if it can support deer could not support sheep.

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Rev. John M'Tavish.

42076. You speak as one acquainted with all parts of the Highlands; have you gone over all the north?—No, but I have had intercourse with people over all the north. I am told that wherever deer can thrive sheep can thrive.

42077. Do you think that the law ought to interfere to such a degree as to regulate the appropriation and enjoyment of property, to prevent the exclusive occupation of land for sporting purposes?—I think so. The same principle is recognised when land is taken for railways and objects of general benefit. If it interferes with the benefit of the community, it ought to be prevented.

42078. But in taking land for railways and other purposes of that sort, very large compensation is allotted to proprietors?—Well, I would not take the land from any proprietor without compensation.

42079. You would not take land, but it is here a question of taking the enjoyment and appropriation of land from the proprietor. Do you mean, if you forbid a proprietor appropriating his land wholly to the purposes of sport, you would compensate him?—I would much rather do that than see things as they are.

42080. *Mr Cameron.*—Has it ever occurred to you that deer forests on these high grounds fetch much higher rents than sheep farms?—Yes, I believe so.

42081. I suppose you will also admit that the crofter, so long as he is not there, does not care very much whether it is sheep or deer?—I suppose not.

42082. Then does not the deer forest benefit the croft to this extent, that by increasing the rental of the parish it reduces so far the amount of taxes which the crofter has to pay?—Yes, it benefits him to that extent.

42083. Your argument is the very common one that on economical grounds it is an evil, but as to the crofters, if they think at all about it, they should rather think deer forests beneficial?—Well, some of them, we find, are not beneficial when the process is first to clear out the land for sheep, and then the next step is to clear the land for deer. I have myself seen the deer, when travelling along the coast of Skye, close to the poor peoples' patches of potatoes, and I thought I would try to disturb them, and I went up to the fence and rattled on my hat, but they just stood and looked at me. The people were not allowed to keep a dog to keep the deer off.

42084. Of course, that is damage done to arable ground, which is a separate matter; but I was talking of the difference between high ground being occupied by deer and high ground being occupied by sheep, and so far as that is concerned, is that not a benefit to the crofter so far as it reduces his rates?—Yes, I admit that freely so far as the rates are concerned.

42085. Have you ever found any objection on the part of crofters to deer forests among themselves?—I have not been in contact with them about that.

42086. There was one remark you made; you class gillies and serfs together; why do you do that?—The reason is this, that a large portion of our population under our present laws are very much serfs; they are

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Rev. John
M' Tavish.

hardly in many respects free men, and the gillies I think are largely injured by their employment; I think it is not employment that tends in any way to advantage them.

42087. Are not the gillies taken very much from the crofter class?—It may be so, but I think it is not a benefit to them.

42088. Well, they are only occupied two months of the year as gillies?—I don't know.

42089. If they are occupied two months as gillies and ten months as crofters, do you mean they are serfs for two months and free men for ten?—No, I mean that the crofter population are so much serfs—that they are so much kept in—that they lose to a certain extent their independence.

42090. The whole population?—Yes.

42091. You don't mean to say that gillies alone are serfs?—Oh no; that is not what I mean.

42092. In regard to the valuation of crofts, would you also have crofts actually in existence valued by Government valuers, or did you only refer to new crofts?—I would have the whole valued.

42093. Don't you think it might be in some cases disadvantageous to the crofter?—It might be, but I only advocate what is fair and just.

42094. *The Chairman.*—You point to a revaluation of the whole of the small tenancies in the country?—Yes.

42095. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—I forgot to ask you with regard to your remedies. The first and most important remedy you mention is to give the people back the land on fair terms: I suppose you mean to legislate for that purpose?—Yes.

42096. In what way would you propose to legislate to give the land back to the people?—I don't know if I would be prepared to answer that question. I think the Government ought to take steps to secure that the people should have their lands revalued.

42097. Yes, those in possession of lands; but this is the case of lands not in possession of the people that you wish to be given back to them. You wish that those who are tenants at will should have proper security?—Yes.

42098. But as to those who have no land at all, or not a sufficient quantity, you wish it to be given to them?—I would tax the waste lands very heavily, and make it an advantage to give them back.

42099. Do you call large sheep farms waste lands?—In so far as they are unfit for agricultural purposes.

42100. Then you would have a commission employed to find out what lands are unfit for agricultural purposes, and tax them heavily?—Yes; to the extent of their value.

42101. *The Chairman.*—We have heard, especially on the west coast, that one of the greatest complaints of the people is that there is a deficiency of common pasture and one of their greatest desires is to get sheep pasture. Well, surely you would not look upon sheep pasture appropriated to the service of the crofters as waste lands?—No, I would not look upon sheep pasture necessarily as waste land at all; but it is land which ought to be appropriated to other purposes, and one of the things I would like to see is something in the shape of a club farm.

42102. If it is not waste land in the hands of crofters, it is not waste land in the hands of sheep farmers?—No, not the land that will not admit of being tilled.

42103. Then we shall suppose that a portion is recovered from a large farmer and given back to the crofting community; would you tax the land given back to the crofting community, and which might be tilled, if they did not till it?—Yes, I would tax it all.

42104. In fact, you would not leave any liberty too small or great to judge whether their land ought to be pasture or whether arable?—There is a certain amount that requires to be pastured from time to time at all events.

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42105. But you would not leave that to the judgment of the occupier, whether great or small; you think the Government should settle it all?—I think the Government should settle it.

Rev. John
McTavish.

[ADJOURNED.]

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INVERNESS, SATURDAY, 13 OCTOBER, 1883.

Present:—

Lord NAPIER and ETTRICK, K.T., *Chairman.*
Sir KENNETH S. MACKENZIE, Bart.
DONALD CAMERON, Esq. of Lochiel, M.P.
C. FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Esq., M. P.
Sheriff NICOLSON, LL.D.
Professor MACKINNON, M.A.

DUNCAN MACDONALD, Butcher, Inverness (52)—examined.

42106. *The Chairman.*—Are you a farmer?—I am an arable farmer. Duncan Macdonald.

42107. Do you appear as a delegate in any degree?—No.

42108. You appear to make an independent statement of opinion?—Yes. ‘I desire to speak on the injurious influence of the existing system of deer forests in the Scottish Highlands. In the first place, the system is grossly injurious to the interests of the nation at large. It necessitates the laying and the keeping waste of extensive and valuable tracts of good land, and is thus locking up land particularly suited for the production of corn, turnips, potatoes, and for the rearing of sheep and cattle. If this land were in occupancy as farms in moderately sized holdings—in holdings that could be worked by heads of families independently of hired labour—it would certainly be rendered more productive than it is at present. I am perfectly well aware that, under no circumstances, could the land of this country support the population, even supposing that all the available soil was put under tillage. Yet, I am of opinion that if ground capable of cultivation, and now waste under deer and sheep, was reclaimed and cultivated, some of the millions of money now sent abroad to purchase food could be retained in this country. Our national expenditure on the purchase of foreign articles of food could, in other words, be greatly lessened. If land be turned into waste which is capable of producing green crops and corn, sheep or cattle, in proportion to the extent and the value of that land is the yearly loss to the nation. In the second place, the existing system of deer forests threatens to injure very seriously the agricultural interests of the Highlands. During the past forty years or more, the Highland sheep farmers were in the habit of sending their young sheep

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Duncan
Macdonald.

' stock into the lowlands to be kept and fed during the winter. The sheep thus sent from the hills to the lowlands used up the lowland turnips, and the Highland sheep farmer paid to the lowland arable farmer a certain rent for his surplus grass and turnips. This custom was the source of a constant and a steady revenue in the lowlands; and it promised fair to be continued. The lowland farmer depended upon the letting of his wintering as a means of meeting a great part of his rent, or, in other words, as a means of disposing profitably of the grass and turnips over and above what his stock, means, or premises could enable him to keep. Within the last two or three years, however, in consequence of the extent of sheep ground cleared for deer in Inverness and in Ross, the demand by sheep farmers for lowland wintering has greatly lessened, and is lessening. I have personal knowledge of cases in which lowland wintering could not be let within the last year or two at nearly the same figure as that at which they could be let formerly. And the only reason for this remarkable fall in the value of the lowland winterings is the scarcity of sheep stock in the Highlands, because of the continued process of clearing sheep lands for deer. But the system of deer foresting is at the present moment injuring Highland agriculture, in another and equally important direction. With the present insecurity and the desire of landlords to draw immediately large rentals by turning lands either under deer or into large sheep runs, the tendency of the able-bodied men is to remove from the Highlands, the reason being that in the Highlands they enjoy neither home nor comfort, and have no security for the labour which they might be able to put into the soil. Every one knows that the existence of a deer forest is incompatible with the existence on that land of a population of human beings. Whenever a piece of land has been cleared for deer, there was found to be no room for people on the land so cleared, except, perhaps, in remote and barren corners, and even there with a grudge. This is one of the reasons for the depopulating process at present going on. The following description of the county of Inverness, in the *Highland Sportsman*, illustrates thus:— "This great county, the largest in Scotland, and the second largest in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, is 92 miles long and 52 wide, embracing an area of 2,723,501 acres, or about 4255 square miles, being rather more than one-half the extent of Wales, and about one-seventh of that of Scotland. The population, however, is insignificant, being only 90,546, according to the census of 1881, of which rather more than one-fifth was resident in the county town. This gives an average of 21 to the square mile, or, deducting the population of the county town, 17 to the square mile. It is therefore, one of the most thinly populated districts in the world." Besides all this, the best, the most skilful, and the most energetic of farmers are leaving the country with their capital, and this state of things bids fair to leave in Scotland only a secondary class of men and an undue proportion of paupers. The craze that formerly existed on the part of the rich classes in towns to have farms has now entirely ceased; and, therefore, the loss of labour caused by the removal from the Highlands of the best men of the country, and the loss of capital caused by the removal of the most energetic of the farmers cannot be made up from the towns. Every able agricultural hand that leaves Scotland who might be employed with advantage in Scotland, and every penny of agricultural capital that leaves Scotland which might be employed here with advantage, are losses which the town population cannot supply. On this account, the agricultural outlook is, in my opinion, very unsatisfactory, and to no class more so than to the proprietors. I will give an instance. The man who, fifteen years ago,

' would predict that in the year 1883 sheep farms in the Highlands would
' be without demand, and absolutely tenantless for lack of offerers, would
' be laughed at. But the fact remains that, from various causes, sheep
' farms that have recently fallen out of lease could not be let to practical
' farmers. Many, in this district, although offered during many months
' for let, have had to be taken over by the proprietors, or let to sports-
' men. What will be the result should the turn of events prove the same
' during the next ten years as regards deer forests ? The result will be disas-
' trous to the landed interests. For, if the system of things now existing be
' allowed to continue, there will be no labour or capital in the country to
' cultivate the land that would demand cultivation, should the demand for
' deer forests lessen as has done the demand for sheep farms. The existing
' system of deer forests hence threatens very seriously more interests
' than those of the common people. As I have said, during the last few
' years sheep farms that have fallen out of lease have failed to obtain
' tenants. They have had to be taken over by the landlords or to be let
' to sportsmen. This is one of the results of the depopulating policy
' which has been going on in the Highlands during the past seventy-five
' years. That policy has been one of clearing small farmers off the richer
' lands, and of combining their holdings into one vast sheep run. Land-
' lords have now found out that in adopting this policy they committed a
' great mistake. To stock many of these great sheep runs requires as
' much as from £15,000 to £20,000. From various causes, there is no
' capital among practical farmers in the Highlands to meet those vast re-
' quirements—or those who have capital will not invest it to such an extent
' in an enterprise so precarious as Highland sheep farming has of late
' years turned out to be. Had the land been subdivided into small hold-
' ings, it would have been more profitable. I would recommend the
' breaking up of those great sheep runs into smaller holdings, and
' thus to encourage the residence on the soil of a population of
' smaller farmers. A system of moderately sized holdings might preclude
' the possibility of landlords being driven to turn good land into deer
' forests by inability to let the land as sheep or mixed cattle and sheep
' farms. Statements have been made on the west coast to the effect that
' the larger farmers pay a rent more per acre than do the small crofters.
' Assuming the truth of this, I desire to point out that the explanation is
' simple. Throughout the whole Highlands, the large sheep farmers
' possess the very cream of the land. The small crofters possess the very
' meanest of the land—they are, generally speaking, congested on rock and
' moss. If you take the whole acreage occupied by hundreds of these small
' crofters, and divided by the sum of their individual rentals, you may,
' perhaps, find that they pay a smaller sum per acre than does the large
' farmer; but considering the relative value of respective holdings, the poor
' crofter unquestionably pays the higher rent. I know that the crofters
' who pay from £8 to £15 put as much into the pockets of the landlords
' for their lands as do the large sheep farmers. The system of deer
' forests tends to deteriorate the quality of the land in the Highlands.
' I am of opinion that hill grazings under the pasture of sheep
' and deer are deteriorating in quality, and that much more
' rapidly, under deer than under sheep. This may be proved
' thus:—If you remove sheep from a grazing in the neighbour-
' hood of a deer forest which has been from twenty to thirty years in the
' occupancy of deer, you will find that in the course of five or six weeks
' after the sheep have been cleared off, the deer will remove to the once
' sheep covered land, and occupy it exclusively. I have paid considerable
' attention to this subject of the deterioration of hill pastures under the

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' exclusive occupancy of sheep and deer. And, besides, I have received information on this subject from people whose ability and veracity I can guarantee, but whose names, for obvious reasons, I cannot give in public. One of whom I designate "A" says—"My uncle was tenant of the farm I now hold for forty years before me. I have been tenant for thirty-two or thirty-three years. I have the same boundaries as had my uncle. My uncle never sent hoggs or any other stock to wintering. But the farm at that time kept more sheep than it will do now by 400 head. Not only did the farm keep 400 head of sheep more than than it does now, but, with my smaller stock, I am compelled to send the whole of my hoggs to the lowlands for wintering. From my own observation, the ground is going back. At the time of my entry, the farm could keep more sheep than it can do to-day, and the deterioration of the soil has been more marked within the past ten years. I am now falling back on the old system of putting cattle on the land in summer, as I am of opinion that this is the only way of bringing the soil back to its former standard of fertility." "B" says—"On one large sheep farm here the ewe hirsel fifty years ago numbered 2000 head with their lambs. In 1883 the hirsel on the same land numbered only 1000 head. The land cannot carry more. On another holding here the ewe hirsel fifty years ago numbered 1400 head. In 1883 all this land was under wedders, and the soil had so deteriorated that it is not suitable for ewes. The keeping capacity is now only about 1100 head. The ewe hoggs were wintered at home fifty years ago. Now, however, the hoggs (wedder) must be wintered in the low country. The extent of land is the same now as it was fifty years ago. On another farm in this district there was a mixed ewe and wedder stock of 1800 wintered at home. To-day, however, this same land can maintain only 1500 head, and that only during summer. The hoggs have to be sent away for wintering. There are farms in the district, the soil of which has deteriorated to an even greater extent than that of the above." At the time the hills were cleared of cattle and horses to be put exclusively under deer, there is evidence that the pastures were vastly richer than they are now. I am of opinion that the change from mixed farming to exclusive sheep farming accounts for this. Ground grazed by cattle receive back in the shape of manure a full equivalent for what is taken out of it. Sheep, while grazing, return to the soil very little, and deer still less. It is well known that in the cultivation of white crops or cereals that if you do not restore an equivalent for what the white crop takes out of the land, the soil will become of less value. The same applies to grazing, but the deteriorating process takes the longer to tell. My opinion is that on grazings certain natural ingredients required for the growth of young stock—for the formation of bone—become exhausted. Unless an equivalent be returned to the soil, such as could be returned by cattle grazing, the damage must be permanent. A system of mixed farming, a system of rearing on the land a mixed stock of cattle, sheep, and horses would arrest this backward progress, and might in course of time restore the land to its original fertility. Hence it is absolutely necessary that there should be a mixed system of farming, and this can be best secured by the breaking up of the present enormous sheep farms and deer forests, and letting the land out in moderately-sized holdings to a population who could live on the soil. As regards the sporting interests of the Highlands, I am old enough to recollect the time when an exclusive system of grazing and shooting combined formed the sporting system of the Highlands of Scotland. That system may be carried on with little damage to the grazing tenant, and with little possibility

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INVERNESS.

Duncan
Macdonald.

of ill-feeling between the sporting tenant and the farmer. Half a dozen or more grouse shootings could be established in the space occupied by one deer forest, and these half-dozen shooting lodges would, from a commercial point of view, be of far more benefit to the district than the solitary lodge which is the centre of the one deer forest. I am in favour not only of maintaining the existing lodges attached to grouse shootings and fishings, but of increasing them to the utmost capacity of the country. And, further, the rent that would be derived from grouse shootings and grazings combined, cannot in any quarter of the country fall far short, if indeed it do fall short, of the one rent which may be derived for the land let exclusively as a deer forest. I name the district of Strathnairn as a fair example of a district where sport exists side by side with numerous farms. Shooting and grazing are there carried on on the same land, and the rents derivable from the soil are as large, if not larger, than could possibly be received had Strathnairn been parcelled out in deer forests. In Strathnairn the shooting lodges are very numerous, and each occupant is commercially and socially of as much advantage to the neighbourhood as could possibly be the one occupant of the one solitary deer forest lodge. I am of opinion, therefore, that sporting in the Highlands should be encouraged. But it should be a system under which grouse shooting and fishing may be carried on side by side with grazing, so long as no elements are introduced to create a conflict between the two interests. But sporting ruins the country the moment the system is made one of clearing off the population of a whole region in order to place it exclusively under deer. With this system deer would still be in the country, for red deer were never extinct in the corries in the Highlands, although not so tame as at present in some places.'

42109. *Mr Cameron.*—Might I take the liberty of asking you first, how far the system of deer forests, which constitutes the principal subject of this paper, affects you yourself in your trade as a butcher. Does it affect you favourably—the system of sportsmen coming to this country and holding deer forests, or does it affect you unfavourably?—It affects me favourably so far as they will buy from me, but unfavourably so far as I may be required to pay from 10s. to 15s. over the net value of stock.

42110. Will you explain how the system of deer forests compels you to pay 10s. or 15s. over the net value of stock?—By decreasing the number of stock available for the consumption of turnips and grass in the Lowlands.

42111. Have you ever made any calculation as to what extent the number has been decreased by deer forests?—No.

42112. Don't you think that the quantity of sheep which could be raised or fed in the present deer forests must form a very infinitesimal number compared with the sheep reared throughout the United Kingdom?—I am perfectly well aware of that, if you take the United Kingdom, but in the North Isles it is very considerable indeed, and the want of it is felt.

42113. But in these days of railways from one end of the country to the other, the void created in one part of the country is immediately supplied from another part of the country, where the article exists in superfluity?—It is quite true that cattle and sheep may exist in superfluity in another part, but you are aware of the severe restrictions now in force to exclude them from this country. Therefore the void cannot be made up so easily as it might otherwise have been.

42114. But surely we may hope these restrictions are only temporary?—And the deer forests too.

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Macdonald.

42115. As you give that for a reason why the void cannot be filled up, I suppose you admit if there were no restrictions the void could be filled up by sheep brought from other places?—May I ask from where?

42116. From the rest of the United Kingdom, wherever sheep are bred?—It appears to me that they are exceedingly anxious to get hold of the balance of ours. If they are so plentiful in other parts of the country, why are they so anxious to carry off ours?

42117. Why should they not buy them wherever they can get them? But you have never made any calculation as to the number of sheep that have been displaced in the Highlands by deer forests, as compared with the rest of the country?—I have looked into it, but I did not follow it out. I said already I don't dispute that the amount may be very small for the United Kingdom, but it is very large for us.

42118. Suppose that deer forests, for some reason ceased to exist altogether, and the number of sheep increased in the Highlands to the extent that the price would be reduced, would not the Glasgow butcher at once find that out, and would he not buy the sheep here in such quantities that the price would be at once equalised?—I would not object to that; if all could be supplied, the more the better.

42119. What I point to is that in these days of railway communication prices must be equalised by the surplus being conveyed about from one part of the country to the other?—Nothing more reasonable.

42120. Then, if the number of sheep displaced by deer is infinitesimal compared with the number over the whole of the United Kingdom, it would make very little difference in the supply of animal food either to yourself as a butcher or to the community?—The difference would not be very great over the whole kingdom, but here, if we do not get stock near hand at reasonable prices, what are we to do with our grass and roots?

42121. You stated there was a difficulty on the part of the farmers in the Lowlands in finding sheep to consume their turnips?—I stated they are exceedingly anxious to get the remainder of our sheep.

42122. Now, the demand, you say, by sheep farmers for Lowland wintering has greatly lessened during the last two or three years. Have you had that on the authority of sheep farmers?—I have it on better authority; I have it on the authority of the Lowland farmers.

42123. Surely no authority could be better than the authority of the parties who had to pay for the wintering; they must know whether the price is increasing or decreasing?—Well, I pay as much for wintering as perhaps any one in the north at the present moment, and I can speak from personal knowledge.

42124. Going back to fifteen or twenty years ago, before the system of deer forests was carried to the extent to which it is now, what was the price paid per week per hogg for wintering on turnips?—I have no great experience of hoggs; it is aged wethers that I know about.

42125. But surely the class of sheep which the sheep farmers winter most are hoggs?—I was informed that at one time they paid as high as 10s. per head for them.

42126. As long as fifteen or twenty years ago?—No, ten or twelve years ago.

42127. Is it not a fact that fifteen or twenty years ago the Highland sheep farmer used to get his hoggs very often wintered for 1½d. or 2d. a week?—No.

42128. Are you sure of that? What used it to be?—3d. or 4d.

42129. Have you not heard it stated by sheep farmers all over the Highlands that one of the principal reasons why they are not able

to carry on their farms to such profit, is that the price of wintering their sheep has increased very greatly of late years?—That is perfectly true in some years, I know.

42130. But you stated quite the contrary?—Yes, within the last two years, observe.

42131. I suppose in the last two years there happened to be a particularly good turnip crop?—Not this last year certainly; I should rather say, under the average.

42132. Surely last year's turnip crop turned out remarkably well?—Fairly an average, I should say.

42133. I suppose you are not what is called a Protectionist?—No.

42134. You are a Free Trader?—Yes.

42135. You don't think the British farmer should be protected by any artificial restrictions against the introduction of foreign sheep or foreign cattle?—No.

42136. Then why do you wish the Lowland farmers in the south who grow turnips to be artificially protected against the Highland sheep farmer?—I don't wish him to be protected artificially.

42137. You wish deer forests to be abolished, in order that the Lowland sheep farmer may get a higher price for his turnips?—Not particularly that, but I glanced at it in passing as one of the injurious effects of the system. I don't care so much for them myself. I am a buyer.

42138. And a seller too?—Yes.

42139. Now, in the beginning of your paper, you state that the system of deer forests 'necessitates the laying and the keeping waste' of extensive and valuable tracts of good land, and is thus locking up 'land particularly suited for the production of corn, turnips, potatoes, and for the rearing of sheep and cattle.' Do you mean seriously to say that in the deer forests which are situated in the higher pastoral ground, what used to be waddler farms, are particularly suited for the growing of corn, turnips, and potatoes?—And under sheep. The real land under deer that could be reclaimed would not be so large, and I take in the land under sheep as capable of cultivation. I maintain that is a very large area.

42140. I don't understand your explanation of this paragraph, which is perfectly clear—that the system 'necessitates the laying and keeping waste of extensive and valuable tracts of good land, and is thus locking up land particularly suited for the production of corn, turnips, potatoes, and for the rearing of sheep and cattle.' That surely means, if it has any meaning at all, that deer forests contain valuable tracts of land which are suited for corn, turnips, and potatoes, and for rearing sheep and cattle?—Deer forests and land capable of cultivation under sheep as well; both are included.

42141. Both are included, and I am taking the deer forests, and asking you whether deer forest alone is suitable for producing corn and potatoes?—Combined with land under sheep.

42142. Does the particular land now used for deer forests contain ground suitable for the production of corn, turnips, and potatoes?—Under sheep, yes.

42143. Will you mention any deer forest you are acquainted with that could raise corn, turnips, and potatoes?—Yes, Fort-Augustus; there is plenty of reclaimable land thereabout.

42144. That could raise corn?—Yes.

42145. Deer forest?—Yes.

42146. But I suppose most of the deer forests, you will admit, do lie

INVERNESS.

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Duncan Macdonald.

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in the upper region of Ross-shire and Inverness-shire, where neither corn nor cereal crops will grow?—Corn and cereal crops will grow in any glen in Scotland under 700 feet above sea-level, and there are numerous river sides and haughs that could be occupied as small farms. I know hardly any glen at such an altitude but could raise all these.

42147. Have you any idea what proportion of each forest would be capable of raising these?—I should say all that can be reclaimed with advantage would raise these crops.

42148. But what proportion in each forest?—I am not aware.

42149. That makes a considerable difference, because there might be 20,000 acres, and there might only be half an acre, but that would be hardly worth talking of?—Yes, but one in five would make a thousand.

42150. Do you think there are many forests in Ross-shire and Inverness-shire where the proportion of arable land is one to five?—No, I would not say that.

42151. You will not admit there is any forest where there is no arable ground or land capable of being made arable?—It is quite possible, but I don't know any.

42152. Have you ever thought of the cost of reclaiming these small patches in the uplands of the higher hills of Ross-shire, and whether the cost of production would not be so great as to destroy the profit either of the individual who did it or the nation at large?—Yes, if you are going to reclaim it with steam engines and that sort of thing. My idea is that the land should be reclaimed by families. A man with three, four, or five strong sons about him would soon reclaim all that was worth being reclaimed, if he was permitted to do so.

42153. Do you think, if the crofters had given them the choice to-morrow of taking land in their neighbourhood—whatever they liked to get—supposing they had the option of taking land to cultivate with their families, at a fair rent, do you think they would immediately go to the forests and choose land there, or would they naturally get lands nearer home that are under sheep?—I would fancy they would choose the best land.

42154. That is the land under sheep which is nearest their homes?—Wherever they got good land. I suppose there is no difficulty in finding willing hands to reclaim it.

42155. But would they be most likely to take the sheep farms first, or would they go to the deer forests first?—They would not be particular. Give them a good bit of land anywhere, and you will find plenty for it.

42156. But which would they be most likely to take?—I don't know. I have no doubt, if you offer them fair, good land, they will be ready to take it.

42157. And where will they find it—in the sheep farms or forests?—They will find it in both.

42158. You will not say which?—No.

42159. You are very severe upon deer forests. Supposing you were a proprietor, and you admit sheep farms are almost unlettable at this moment—suppose you were the proprietor of a farm with a stock of 5000 sheep, and the farmer cleared out to realise the high price he could get for his stock, what would you do with that?—It is a very serious matter, but you are forgetting entirely that you have brought it upon yourself.

42160. I am asking you, as a witness who stated very strongly that deer forests are a wrong system, what, under present circumstances, could be done with some of these high lands that are thrown on the hands of the proprietor, which he cannot, by your own admission, get an

offer for as a sheep farm, and which are totally unsuited for crofters. I asked you what you would do with such land, as proprietor?—I suppose under the circumstances I would do the best I could.

INVERNESS.

42161. If you got an offer for it as a deer forest would you let it as a deer forest, or let it lie idle?—I will not say I would do that, but I think it is time to consider now whether the thing is on right lines or a right basis at the present moment.

INVERNESS.

Duncan Macdonald.

42162. Do you consider it a wicked thing for me, as a proprietor, if, having a sheep run that I can do nothing with, and a gentleman offers to take it as a forest, I let it as a forest? Do you consider it a wrong thing to do?—I consider that under certain circumstances a man should do the best he can for himself, but at the same time we must consider, are they on right lines or wrong lines entirely, down till now?

42163. There was a gentleman examined here, the Rev. Mr MacTavish who holds very extreme views on the land question. He was here yesterday, and he admitted that a deer forest, provided the deer did not injure the arable ground of the crofter, was not a detriment to the crofter, but was an advantage to him,—that it was more advantageous to the crofter that the land should be held as a deer forest than as a sheep farm, because the deer forest would turn in a higher rent, and the crofter was to that extent relieved from rates and taxes. I suppose you will agree with Mr MacTavish about that?—No, I do not quite understand that deer forests returning larger rentals really relieve the crofters from taxation.

42164. Yes, because if a sheep farm returns £500 and the same ground as a deer forest lets for £1000, by that means the rates and taxes on the remaining ratepayers are diminished?—Yes, but what do you say as to the grouse shooting? If you can have £500 for the grazing, you have the grouse to fall back upon.

42165. But suppose there are no grouse on the forest?—Where is that forest?

42166. Leaving Mr MacTavish and the rates and taxes out of the question, do you consider that the high land occupied as a deer forest is any disadvantage to the crofters, putting aside any damage done to their arable ground, which can be prevented by fencing? Do you consider it has the slightest injurious effect upon the neighbouring township of crofters, that a forest should be made five miles away from them on the high land?—Well, no, if you keep them four or five miles away from them, but what if they come down to eat their corn?

42167. I said that was a separate question which is to be decided by a deer fence round their arable ground. Putting that out of the question for a moment, what possible harm does the deer forest do to the crofters?—It excludes land from useful occupancy.

42168. But not useful occupancy by a crofter. You see I am still going upon this imaginary (I am sorry to say it is not imaginary) case of a large sheep farm falling into the proprietor's hands, and I want to ask you whether you think it wrong that he should turn it into a deer forest, and I am putting it to you whether his doing so would have any injurious effect upon the crofters in a neighbouring township. If it has not any injurious effect, why do you think it wrong to turn it into a deer forest?—I have strong views on that question. What are the deer really worth from a national point of view? What do they produce to the common stock of the country?

42169. Then you will not give me any reason why it is wrong?—I have given you my reason—that I consider, for the land occupied, they contribute very little to the common stock of the kingdom. That is one of the main reasons.

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Macdonald.

42170. But then in this particular case what would you do with it?—I allow you to do the best you can under the circumstances, but mend your ways in the future, and don't have your farms so large again. Divide them into smaller holdings. For a farm of 20,000 acres you will have only two or three offers at the best. If it were divided into farms of 500 or 1000 acres, you would have fifteen or twenty offerers. A farm of 20,000 acres requires £20,000 of capital, and you can only get one or two to offer, whereas you can get fifteen or twenty offers for a farm of 1000 acres.

42171. I still ask you what you would do under particular circumstances, and you say—Do the best you can. What is the best way? Am I to leave it absolutely unoccupied by sheep, or deer, or crofters?—Oh, no; make the best you can in the meantime; but mend matters as soon as you can. I would not ask anybody to sacrifice money for an idea like that.

42172. I have just to ask you one question about something that was said by one of your colleagues in the flesher trade. Mr Elliot stated, when under examination, that if land was divided into smaller holdings, the necessity for what he calls middlemen and dealers would be done away with to a great extent; do you agree with that view?—No, I do not agree with it at all. It is impossible to do away with middlemen altogether.

42173. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—You complain that there has been a decrease in the price paid for the wintering of stock in the lowland part of the country?—I do not complain at all. I simply point out that it is one of the consequences of deer forests. I state it as a fact, and can prove it.

42174. And you say it is a consequence of deer foresting?—Certainly.

42175. Is it principally due to deer foresting, do you think?—Wholly, in my opinion.

42176. Fifteen or twenty years ago, were there many sheep wintered in Aberdeenshire from the Highlands and this part of the country?—I should say not.

42177. Are you aware whether many are now sent down there?—A great number.

42178. Has that not had a tendency to reduce the price of wintering here?—Yes.

42179. I suppose you read the local papers?—Yes.

42180. Do you remember, at the beginning of this year, that the sheep farmers of the north had considerable difficulty in getting their sheep back from Aberdeenshire owing to certain rules made by the local authority under the Contagious Diseases Act?—Yes.

42181. Do you remember seeing imputations on members of the local authority as to the reasons which induced them to make these rules so stringent?—To prevent the spread of foot-and-mouth disease.

42182. Was it not said that the members of the local authority belonged to the low country class of farmers, and it was to punish the hill farmers for going down to the cheap wintering in Aberdeen?—I am not aware.

42183. You did not see that in the papers?—I have no recollection of it.

42184. But you are aware they do go for cheap winterings to Aberdeenshire?—Yes.

42185. And that has been a considerable cause of reducing the price of wintering here—it has had an effect in reducing the price of wintering here?—It had an effect in keeping them from going higher.

42186. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—I believe you are a native of Glenmoriston?—Yes.

42187. That is a large glen from one end to the other?—Yes, a large and beautiful glen.

INVERNESS.

42188. Are there any forests in it now?—Yes.

INVERNESS.

42189. How many? Are there one or two?—There are two or three.

Duncan Macdonald.

42190. Do you recollect the time when there was no forest?—I do.

42191. How far back does your memory carry you?—For forty-six or forty-seven years.

42192. And there were no forests then?—Not one.

42193. Was the proprietor of Glenmorriston in olden times a man of very considerable importance in the country?—Yes, and yet.

42194. Had he a patronymic of his own in Gaelic?—Yes, Mac-Phadrig.

42195. Did he use to come out independently to the field with his men?—I am not aware, unless he went in with the laird of Grant.

42196. Take the battle of Culloden, and 1715. Did the laird of Glenmorriston not go out with his men in favour of the Stuarts?—Yes.

42197. While the chief did not come out with the Stuarts?—Yes.

42198. And he had a very respectable following in those days?—Yes, he had a very nice company, I am told.

42199. Has the population of the glen not fallen back very much in your days?—I should say it has.

42200. Were there not at one time what might be called gentlemen farmers in the glen?—Yes.

42201. Are there such people now?—Very few, if any.

42202. In fact, may it be said that as far as population is concerned, the glen has been dwindling away for many years?—Quite true.

42203. You were asked by Lochiel whether you could point to any case where lands now under forest were capable of cultivation; may I ask whether or not within the bounds of the forests of Glenmorriston there is not a good deal of land that was once under cultivation by tenants and crofters?—There is some such land undoubtedly.

42204. Was there a time, so far as you have heard, in old times, when there were no sheep farmers in any part of Glenmorriston?—They had sheep in smaller numbers.

42205. But no big sheep farm?—It was all carried into effect in the time of my father. I know it is the case.

42206. Have you ever heard of a Gaelic piece of poetry, addressed to the Glenmorriston of the day, pointing out the miseries that would occur by the introduction of sheep?—Which of them? There are several.

42207. ‘S’ole a rinn u, Mhic-Phadrig’?—No, I have not heard of it.

42208. I put it generally. Have you heard old people and others repeating Gaelic verses condemnatory of the system of large sheep farms in Glenmorriston and those upper glens?—Yes, I have heard some such songs.

42209. And you have now lived to see the mischiefs that have occurred, first from large sheep farming and now from foresting?—Yes.

42210. In the old times, did the people in Glenmorriston find it necessary to take wintering at all?—Not at all. It was necessary for the lowlanders here to send their cattle west to them. That was the system that obtained one hundred years ago and more.

42211. So, while the large sheep farmers in Glenmorriston and such glens are obliged to pay large sums for wintering now, in old times it was the people of the glens that got large sums for summering?—Yes, summering cattle from Inverness and Nairn shires. I think I can show that.

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Macdonald.

42212. In your younger days were the people of Glenmorriston fairly comfortable in their circumstances? Were they a happy and contented people?—There is really very little change in the crofter population since I was born in Glenmorriston. They are much about the same as they were then.

42213. Do you occasionally pay a visit to the Glen still?—I have not been there for twenty years, but my brothers go there occasionally, and I have the whole history of what is going on.

42214. Have you heard there is at this moment a very great scarcity of milk in the Glen among the poor, and even of potato ground?—No, I have not heard that, and I am very sorry to hear it now.

42215. In your neighbourhood have there been forests constituted within your own memory?—All within my memory, the whole of them.

42216. In the statement you have read you have particularly dwelt upon the prejudicial effects of deer as regards pasturing?—Yes.

42217. Have you paid particular attention to that subject for some years?—Yes, I have.

42218. And you are perfectly satisfied in your own mind that what you have stated, which is corroborated by the cases of these two farmers A and B, is correct?—Yes. I have not been much in the hills myself for the last twenty-five years, but I am still in the sheep line, and some years ago I began to make inquiry of prominent men what was the cause of the inferiority of the sheep now, compared with what they were twenty years ago.

42219. And you have paid particular attention to that matter?—I have, and prosecuted inquiries in every direction. I am quite satisfied that the ground and the sheep are in very unhealthy order at the present moment, and if it is of any consequence that I should name one of my informants I can do so.

42220. Certainly?—It is Donald Macintyre, Mains of Flowerburn, and tacksman of the sheep farm of Laggan; and Finlay Macdonald, Kintail, authorises me to declare to this Commission to-day, that since he went to Kintail thirty-two years ago, the keeping capacity of his farm is down one-third exactly. He impressed upon me to state that before the Commission, and he is prepared to stand by it and substantiate it.

42221. And is this prejudicial system going on from year to year?—Yes, Mr Donald Macintyre declares that within the last ten years the deterioration is more pronounced.

42222. *Mr Cameron.*—You are referring to sheep farms now?—Yes.

42223. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Do you consider the time has come to face the question boldly and do something to prevent the country becoming a wilderness again?—Yes; I am particularly anxious to give an indication to the Commission in this direction, for if it is proven, and I think it is easy to prove, that the ground is being ruined—if that will not rouse proprietors to a sense of their own interest, I don't know what will. And I should like if I could bring it home to them that the ground is in very unhealthy order, and getting worse from year to year.

42224. In regard to the deer forests, I think you stated here, that though the rent from a forest may be larger, and is larger, than the rent for an agricultural subject, yet the production of the deer forest is of very little value to the country generally?—Very little value indeed.

42225. To whom is it of value; who benefits?—Except those who get the rent, I am not aware of any other, and those who may acquire health in the pursuit of the deer.

42226. But I am speaking of the carcass of the deer; is it of any perceptible value as an article of food?—Not at all, in my opinion.

42227. Is it sold generally?—Yes, it is sold. INVERNESS.
42228. By whom?—By game-dealers here and elsewhere. INVERNESS.
42229. Where do they get it from?—I don't know. They have plenty of it. INVERNESS.
42230. Can you state that venison now is a matter of sale by the tenants of deer forests?—I don't know. If you want venison, there is plenty exposed for sale. Duncan Macdonald.
42231. You don't know where the dealers get it, but they have it?—They have it in plenty. I don't know where they get it.
42232. Have you any idea what the price is?—It is supposed to be from 6d. to 1s.
42233. *The Chairman.*—With reference to the alleged deterioration of the soil and its diminished power of supporting stock, you mentioned the case of a farm which used to winter its young sheep and which used to keep a full stock. It cannot now keep as numerous a stock and it cannot winter its young sheep. With reference to that, I should like to know what is the nature of the stock on that farm?—Cheviot sheep.
42234. A pure Cheviot stock?—Yes.
42235. With reference to the inability of the young sheep to stand the winter as they formerly did, may it not be in part at least that there has been deterioration in the hardy quality of the Cheviot stock? Have the Cheviot stock not been bred heavier, and softer, and tenderer, than they formerly were?—They take rams from the south undoubtedly, but of course the climate will affect them.
42236. I do not say you are deficient in a desire to give a direct answer, but I have observed in your examination generally, that you do not give very direct answers, and I would like if possible to get a direct answer. Do you think the Cheviot stock in the Highlands is more delicate than it used to be? We complain in the south very generally that it is?—I am not aware, but it is quite possible.
42237. Well, for one reason or another the Cheviot stock kept upon a farm is not so numerous and not so hardy as it was. I don't know whether in the district you are acquainted with there are many black-faced stock kept?—They keep blackfaced stock on the higher grounds, the worst ground, and Cheviot on the lower ground.
42238. Sometimes you find on the same farm both a blackfaced hirsel and a Cheviot hirsel?—Yes.
42239. Are the blackfaced stock as heavy in number on the ground as they used to be?—I am informed not.
42240. Can you give me an example of a farm where it is said a black-faced stock cannot be fed in the same number as formerly?—I am afraid I cannot give that, for I did not separate the inquiry. I did not pay attention to that.
42241. With reference to the deterioration of grasses and pasture under sheep alone, of one kind or another,—the general pasture of a farm,—do you think there is a deterioration all over the area of a farm, or do you think that this deterioration, if it exists, is upon those portions of the ground called green ground, which was in old times under arable cultivation?—I should think so. That is my opinion—that it is more so upon that.
42242. Then that could be rectified by restoring cultivation to those portions?—Yes. I may remark that the old Highlanders were very wise in their day. They had a very good system of going to sheilings with the cattle, and another good system of folding them here for a week and folding them there for another. The rains came and diffused fertility in

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all directions. They shifted their quarters, and that had a great tendency to keep the pastures in a sound, healthy condition.

42243. Well, for the restoration of the quality of the pasture, your remedy would be a re-cultivation of certain grounds, and re-adoption of certain methods of pasturage, and putting cattle on the ground?—As many cattle as winter fodder can be raised for in the low glens—the more the better.

42244. Could not that reformation of culture be practised by the large farmer on the present areas as well as, or nearly as well as, by dividing the large farms into smaller farms?—Yes, but in such large areas how are they going to provide for their cattle in winter? If you plant a moderate sized holding here, with houses and byres, a certain amount of winter fodder is provided and raised in the place; and in the absence of that I do not see how the large farmers could do it unless they go in for cultivation, which they are not likely to do.

42245. I do not want to discourage your idea of breaking up the farms and making moderately-sized farms, but could not the large farmer, if he found it profitable, or was bound in his lease to do it,—could he not break up the same amount of arable ground that the small farmers could? Could he do alone as much as they did separately, or do you think there is something in the separate cultivation by small farmers which would induce and enable them to do more?—I think so, and the fact is that the large farmers are not fond of breaking up ground at all. Their tendency is to put what is under plough now under grass. That has been their practice and tendency for a long time back. It is a matter of expenditure, and I don't think they have any will or aptitude in the other direction.

42246. And yet we heard yesterday the evidence of a large farmer in Sutherland who was bringing a large extent of ground under cultivation, with the encouragement of the Duke of Sutherland?—I am very glad to hear it.

42247. Will you say there is really in deer forests a certain quantity of ground susceptible of arable cultivation? Have you yourself walked over large areas of deer forests in different parts of the country?—Not since they became deer forests, but I have walked over a good deal of the ground before it was turned into deer forests.

42248. I think you put the elevation of 700 feet as the limit of cultivation?—Yes, or thereabout—600 or 700 feet.

42249. Is there a good deal of land of less elevation than 600 or 700 feet under deer exclusively?—I should say there is a good deal below from 700 to 800 feet,—no doubt of it.

42250. I would rather you did not shift the limit to 800?—Well, take 700. I put it this way. If you travel by the Caledonian Canal to Fort William you will see many a deer forest right and left, and I do not think any of them at the commencement are anything like the limit I have given.

42251. You think there is a good deal under 700?—Yes.

42252. And on such an area you think there is a considerable proportion of ground upon such a slope or in such a position that it is susceptible of cultivation?—I am sure of it.

42253. Do you think that a person walking over ground within that boundary line of elevation would find the ruins of old houses, and the traces of old cultivation to any considerable extent?—Innumerable traces, and traces of their existence formerly.

42254. Well, about the deterioration of pasture by deer. You have spoken of the deterioration of pasture by sheep alone, and you proved

that by giving examples of farms which carry a smaller stock and cannot feed the stock in winter; have you any evidence at all of the deterioration of pasture by the exclusive use of deer? Do you know any case of land that was exclusively under deer, and which has been restored to sheep?—Well, I don't believe that there is any sane man at the present moment with a knowledge of the business, and money in his pocket, who would risk sheep on deer land. I am of opinion, and it is the general opinion, that the mortality among sheep would be excessive for a long time till the grass was again reduced to order.

42255. Do you know any example of the experiment having been tried?—No, I can only give it as the general opinion of practical farmers in the north of Scotland.

42256. I have heard of a person who bought sheep for wintering upon ground exclusively occupied by deer at other seasons of the year, and did not find any bad consequences for it?—But how long was the ground in that occupancy?

42257. I cannot say. You say you have not recently walked over land occupied as forest?—No, I have not.

42258. Then I am afraid I cannot ask you to give a personal opinion on the subject of the forests. What I want to know is, whether there is to the eye of a judge a manifest deterioration in the quality of the grass, and whether there is a tendency in the original forest to spring up in the ground where it is occupied by deer more than where it is occupied by cattle or sheep?—Well, it is quite possible that the natural process of restoration may begin.

42259. But you have not walked over the ground?—No, but I rely on the evidence of people on whom I have the utmost reliance.

42260. Well, taking the people whom you consulted on the subject, in what respect did they discover the deterioration of the pasture by the occupancy of deer alone?—I think I proved that in my paper, and it is the most natural proof I can give to your Lordship. ‘If you remove sheep from a grazing in the neighbourhood of a deer forest, which has been from twenty to thirty years in the occupancy of deer, you will find that in the course of five or six weeks after the sheep have been cleared off, the deer will remove to the once sheep-covered land, and occupy it exclusively.’ I hold that to be a natural and conclusive test, that the deer know the better and sweeter soil.

42261. May that not be the difference of elevation—that the deer will come down from the loftier places, and also because at the lower elevation they are more likely to find green ground?—Well, I think if you will clear a space of ground here that has been occupied by sheep, at any elevation, the deer will soon find it out, and in fact it is matter of complaint that when a space is recently cleared of sheep it carries away the deer.

42262. *Mr Cameron.*—Did I understand you to say, in answer to Lord Napier, that blackfaced stock were of late years diminishing in the country?—I did not separate the inquiry.

42263. Have not farmers discovered that Cheviot sheep are not so well adapted to this country, now the price of wool has fallen, and are they not substituting blackfaced to a great extent?—Yes; but my opinion is that as long as the ground was in good heart and fertility, Cheviots thrived, but when the ground is exhausted Cheviots are dying off, and as black-faced are hardier they replace the Cheviots.

42264. But as matter of fact, don't you admit that sheep farmers are changing their stock to a great extent from Cheviot to blackfaced?—I am aware there is a tendency in that direction.

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42265. Then can you suggest any other mode of improving the pasture on sheep farms beyond that of putting people on them? Would you say cattle were a great improvement?—Yes.

42266. Is there any other way of improving the sheep pastures so as to restore them to their former fertility?—Not without tremendous expense, which no one would care to face.

42267. Putting lime on it?—Lime and phosphate.

42268. But you think cattle the best remedy?—I think it is easy to prove that they are the only remedy.

GEORGE MALCOLM, Banker and Factor, Invergarry, and Manager of two Sheep Farms, Glengarry (45)—examined.

George
Malcolm.

42269. *The Chairman.*—Do you wish to make a statement?—Some time ago, I sent in a statement to the Secretary. That statement is as follows:—‘The two following tables give statistics of acreage, rental, population, sheep and cattle, &c., in those counties which are usually known as the Highlands of Scotland, and which more particularly form the area of the present Government inquiry into the crofting system, &c. These are arranged into Group I. A separate Group—II.—supplies the same information for seven additional counties in which sheep of the same breeds as are alone reared in the Highlands are somewhat extensively distributed, and in which also are to be found a certain number of deer forests. Table III. gives a list of the deer-forests in Scotland so far as known to the writer, with statistics of annual value, acreage, and sheep-keeping capacity of the same, framed from the best information at his command. In the pages which follow, some remarks are offered on the subjects embraced by these tables, and on other points of the inquiry now being prosecuted by the Commissioners. (See Tables I. and II.) *Population.*—An examination of the following figures shows, as regards the counties in Group I.—viz., Argyll, Inverness, Ross and Cromarty, Sutherland, and Caithness—that there has, in the fifty years from 1831 to 1881, been a total decrease of population of 22,933, or about 7 per cent. It will further be seen that about two-thirds of this decrease occurred during the period from 1831 to 1861, which was mainly the period during which large sheep-farms were formed. During the succeeding twenty years, from 1861 to 1881, the decrease of population in these five counties was only 8044; and during the ten years from 1871 to 1881, the decrease was only 1254. As by far the larger number of deer forests have been formed within the past twenty years—a large proportion of them having been formed within the last ten years—it is clear that no depopulation of these counties can, as is sometimes alleged, be due to the formation of deer-forests. In point of fact, there has been very little diminution of population within the past fifty years; and such as there has been, is amply accounted for by the emigration which took place—greatly, as is now generally admitted, to the benefit alike of those who went and those who remained—about the time when sheep farming on a scale beyond the means of the poorer class of tenants was established, and by migration to the cities and centres of manufactures in other parts of the country, which in the ordinary course of things is constantly going on from these counties, where no industrial employments—except fishing and agriculture, so precariously and unsuccessfully pursued—are as yet available to the people. To this latter cause the slight diminution of population during the last twenty years is undoubtedly wholly due; and

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George
Malcolm.

TABLE I.

County.	Acreage.	Population.				Rental.			1882.		
		1831.	1841.	1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1872-73.	1882-83.	Sleep.	Cattle.
Argyll .	2,056,400	103,973	97,371	89,298	79,724	75,678	76,468	2864	£ 430,151	£ 515,351	999,732
Inverness .	2,616,498	94,797	97,789	96,500	88,261	88,016	90,454	1867	361,846	432,277	686,307
Ross and Cromarty .	2,603,065	74,820	78,685	82,707	81,406	80,955	78,547	2043	281,306	319,481	345,578
Sutherland .	1,297,846	25,518	24,782	25,783	25,246	24,317	23,370	433	71,494	97,809	214,534
Caithness .	438,878	34,529	36,343	38,709	41,111	39,992	38,665	1030	136,885	159,278	88,372
	8,412,687	330,637	321,980	333,007	315,748	305,958	307,704	8237	1,281,684	1,524,196	2,334,523
									189,088	2,377,530	188,690

TABLE II.

COUNTY.	ACREAGE.	POPULATION.						No. of Owners in 1872-73.	RENTAL.	
		1831.	1841.	1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.		1872-73.	1882-83.
Aberdeen . .	1,251,451	177,657	192,387	212,032	221,569	244,603	267,990	7472	£ 1,118,849	£ 1,329,546
Banff . .	410,110	48,337	49,679	54,171	59,215	62,023	62,736	4025	227,025	241,624
Elgin . .	304,606	34,498	35,012	38,959	43,322	43,128	43,788	2564	203,705	229,748
Forfar . .	560,087	139,606	170,453	191,264	204,425	237,567	266,360	9843	1,243,109	1,330,039
Nairn . .	114,400	9,354	9,217	9,956	10,065	10,225	10,455	537	41,767	36,995
Perth . .	1,617,808	142,166	187,457	138,660	133,500	127,768	129,007	7643	1,048,427	1,117,710
Orkney . .	240,476	28,847	30,507	31,455	32,395	31,274	32,044	1308	62,536	69,950
Shetland . .	352,876	29,392	30,553	31,078	31,670	31,608	29,705	549	33,559	42,441
	4,851,814	609,857	655,270	707,575	736,161	783,198	842,085	33,441	3,978,977	4,398,053

a comparison of the population in 1881 with the population in 1871, gives strong countenance to the inference that, had it not been for the operation of this migratory current (which, however, few people will think otherwise than beneficial to those concerned), there would at the last census have been brought out a sensible increase of population. It may be noticed, that in the county of Inverness, which is considered the county of deer forests *par excellence*, the population has increased during the ten years from 1871 to 1881 by 2439, or nearly 3 per cent.—and this during the period when the number of deer forests has been considerably augmented. Turning to Group II., it will be seen that during the same period of fifty years there has been a very large increase of population—no less than 232,228, or 38 per cent.—with the exception (1) of the county of Perth, which, from 1831 to 1871, shows a decrease of 14,398, or about 10 per cent. (but in the remaining decade from 1871 to 1881 exhibits a small increase of 1239); and (2) fractional reductions in the county of Nairn from 1831 to 1841; and in the counties of Elgin, and Orkney and Shetland, from 1861 to 1871, the progress of increase of the population has throughout this group been uniform and continuous. It is interesting to note how similar the cases of the counties of Perth and Inverness are. Both are large counties, much more noted for their pastoral and agricultural, and shooting and fishing interests, than for their arts or manufactures, and are consequently found producing similar results on the population—very different from those counties containing teeming centres of industrial occupations, which attract thereto thousands of the population of those counties which are not so favoured. It has been stated above that there has been little or no decrease of population in the Highland counties during the past fifty years. But in point of fact, when the *whole* of the northern counties are considered, it will be seen that there has been no diminution at all, but quite the reverse; and if we consider by themselves the ten counties of Aberdeen, Argyll, Banff, Bute, Caithness, Forfar, Inverness, Perth, Ross and Cromarty, and Sutherland, in which counties alone the deer forests and large Highland sheep farms are placed, it will be found that during the past fifty years the population has increased by 23·3 per cent., which seems strangely to be always forgotten by those persons who are constantly referring to depopulation of the Highlands, arising from evictions and the formation of great sheep farms and deer forests. There has been really no depopulation. From the earliest times in which we have reliable record, the numbers of the people in the Highlands seem to have been steadily advancing. The following are the census returns of the population of the counties in Table I. given above, for the three earlier decennial periods of the present century:—

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County.	1801.	1811.	1821.
Argyll,	71,859	85,585	97,316
Inverness,	74,292	78,356	90,157
Ross and Cromarty,	55,343	60,853	68,828
Sutherland,	23,117	23,629	23,840
Caithness,	22,609	23,419	30,238
	247,220	271,842	310,379

Sheep Farming.—Of all the interests which concern the Highlands, it must be evident to all who have any knowledge of that part of the country, the most important is sheep farming. In the five counties forming the fore-

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going Table I., which are more particularly called "The Highlands," sheep are, according to the latest official returns, eight times more numerous than human beings; sheep are in the ratio of 1 for $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres; while for each man, woman, and child, there are 27 acres. While there are notices of sheep, even the domesticated sheep, as old as history, in our own country little or nothing was known of the distribution or management of sheep before the Norman Conquest, and very little even then. Sheep were brought much more into prominence in Scotland by the introduction of turnips as a field crop in the last century; but as regards sheep in the Highlands, we really have very imperfect information down to the middle of the eighteenth century. Whence came the blackfaced breed of sheep, which at a not well-ascertained date supplanted the breed of wild or aboriginal sheep of the Highlands, or what was its origin, is involved in much obscurity. Little that is reliable was known about it till the middle of the eighteenth century; but for many years—down to the earlier years of the present century—blackfaced sheep and black cattle, or the Highland breed of horned cattle, were the only kinds of farm stocks to be met with in the Highlands, except a limited number of ponies of the small breed still to be found there, and some goats. But early in the present century it was found that there were many parts of the Highlands in which the Cheviot breed of sheep could be successfully bred and cultivated; and the introduction of this breed of sheep marked the period when sheep farming rose to be by far the most important agricultural interest of the Highlands. Men of capital, as well as of special knowledge of this breed of sheep, were attracted from the Lowland and Border districts to the Highlands, where opportunities of acquiring extensive sheep walks at very moderate rents were to be had. Then it was that the system of occupying and farming lands in the Highlands underwent a very extensive change. Large holdings—in some cases enormously large (over 50,000 acres)—were created, and in the creation of these many small holdings and crofts were effaced. Whether this was a wholly advantageous change, or whether it was a change carried to excess, will be afterwards referred to; but its effect then, and for many years afterwards, was unquestionably very profitable alike to the proprietor and to the occupier of the soil. In those days "foreign competition" had practically no existence for the sheep farmer. The idea of importing mutton, dead or alive, from America or any of our colonies, would have been considered the height of improbability; and the importations of foreign and colonial wool—which now have reached the enormous quantity of 488,985,057 lbs. (1882)—were then of small importance to the Highland farmer. If he never rejoiced in prices for his wool at all approaching those which ruled during the palmy years from 1863 to 1873, the demand at least was steady, and the price never greatly fluctuated; nor was the market ever paralysed, as it sometimes now is, by excessive importations, by the operations of speculators, or the vagaries of fashion in woollen fabrics. Further prosperity to sheep farming in the Highlands was attained when the system of turnip-hogging—or the practice of sending the hoggs or yearling sheep to be wintered in the Lowland districts—was introduced. This system is now almost universally followed; and until the charge imposed by the Lowland farmers for the wintering of these young sheep became excessive, it materially added to the gains of the hill farmers, enabling them, as it practically did, to increase their flocks by about one-third at a comparatively small cost. Up to the year 1866, when prices of both carcass and wool, especially the former, were very high, the occupation of sheep-farming in the Highlands, for at least a generation previously, had been attended with not a little prosperity, and many modest fortunes had been made in

it; but from that date to the present time, the condition of sheep farming in the Highlands has by no means been so prosperous. There has been a gradual decline in the value of wool, which now stands at prices rather lower than those of twenty-three years ago, and less than half the prices of 1872, coupled with a very indifferent demand for it. Prices of sheep have varied a good deal, but they have never been very low, and in the last year or two have ruled very high, culminating this year in prices which, if not in the open market, at least in the transfers of stocks from outgoing to incoming occupiers, have never been equalled. Yet in the face of this it is found that sheep farming tenants in the north—and especially those of south country origin—are manifesting a very decided desire to escape from their business; and in the present year, of all the farms which fell out of lease, and were reoffered to be let, scarcely one has found a tenant. Excellent and most desirable holdings, which eight or ten years ago would have produced an embarrassment of offers, have been utterly without tenders for them; and in many cases no inquiries even have been made about them, although it was well known that landlords were prepared to make large reductions of rent. Proprietors of these farms have, in consequence of this, been obliged to assume the serious responsibility of taking over the stocks upon them, and farming them themselves; and so far as this operation has yet proceeded, the prices awarded to outgoing tenants for their stocks have been beyond precedent high. The causes which have in so short a time led to this curious but most serious pass in the business of the letting of pastoral land in the Highlands, well deserve a little further consideration; but before entering upon these, it may be well to give the following tables of average prices of the two breeds of sheep and the two corresponding kinds of wool which are raised in the Highlands for the past twenty-three years:—

'Sheep.'

Year.	Cheviot Wedders.	Cheviot Ewes.	Cheviot Lambs.	Blackface Wedders.	Blackface Ewes.	Blackface Lambs.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1860	1 12 0	1 2 6	0 15 0	1 4 0	0 13 0	0 12 0
1861	1 11 6	1 2 0	0 12 6	1 5 0	0 17 0	0 10 0
1862	1 12 6	1 2 6	0 13 0	1 2 0	0 15 6	0 9 0
1863	1 11 6	1 4 0	0 13 6	1 5 0	0 14 6	0 10 0
1864	1 16 0	1 6 0	0 16 0	1 7 6	0 17 0	0 12 0
1865	1 18 6	1 8 0	0 17 0	1 4 0	1 0 0	0 13 6
1866	2 3 6	1 15 0	1 0 6	1 12 0	1 8 0	0 18 0
1867	1 13 6	1 2 0	0 14 0	1 5 0	0 18 0	0 10 6
1868	1 11 0	0 18 6	0 10 0	1 3 0	0 12 0	0 10 0
1869	1 13 0	0 19 0	0 11 0	1 5 0	0 12 6	0 8 0
1870	1 19 6	1 3 0	0 13 6	1 9 6	0 17 6	0 11 6
1871	2 4 6	1 7 6	0 17 0	1 10 0	0 18 0	0 14 0
1872	2 10 6	1 16 0	0 19 0	1 19 0	1 5 0	0 15 6
1873	2 6 6	1 13 6	0 18 6	1 13 6	1 2 0	0 11 6
1874	1 19 0	1 8 6	0 14 6	1 10 0	0 16 6	0 10 6
1875	2 0 6	1 7 6	0 18 6	1 12 0	0 18 0	0 13 6
1876	2 6 0	1 6 6	0 19 0	1 15 0	1 1 6	0 16 6
1877	2 6 0	1 11 0	0 19 6	1 17 0	1 1 6	0 18 0
1878	2 4 0	1 9 0	0 18 0	1 13 0	1 0 0	0 17 0
1879	1 19 0	1 8 0	0 17 0	1 10 0	1 0 0	0 15 6
1880	1 17 0	1 5 0	0 16 0	1 11 6	0 19 6	0 13 6
1881	1 18 0	1 11 6	0 17 0	1 14 6	0 19 0	0 12 6
1882	2 6 0	1 15 0	0 18 0	1 19 6	1 4 0	0 15 6
1883	2 11 6	2 0 0	1 0 0	2 4 0	1 9 0	0 16 6

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‘Wool.

Prices the highest of their respective classes, and for stone of 24 lb.

George Malcolm.	Year.	Cheviot Laid.	Cheviot White.	Blackfaced Laid.	Blackfaced White.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
	1860	0 19 0	1 17 0	0 12 0	1 0 0
	1861	1 1 0	1 15 0	0 13 0	0 19 0
	1862	1 0 0	1 15 0	0 17 0	1 5 0
	1863	1 10 0	2 0 0	0 18 0	1 5 0
	1864 ¹	1 15 0	2 10 6	1 2 0	1 11 0
	1865	1 12 0	2 4 6	1 1 0	1 7 0
	1866 ²	1 9 0	1 14 0	0 19 0	1 7 0
	1867 ³	1 3 0	1 15 0	0 17 0	1 2 0
	1868	1 2 0	1 10 0	0 10 0	0 15 0
	1869	1 2 0	1 7 0	0 11 0	0 15 0
	1870 ⁴	1 2 0	1 5 6	0 11 0	0 15 0
	1871 ⁴	1 3 0	1 12 6	1 1 0	1 11 0
	1872	1 14 0	2 4 0	1 2 0	1 13 0
	1873	1 6 0	1 15 0	0 19 0	1 7 0
	1874	1 5 0	1 14 0	0 14 0	1 1 0
	1875	1 4 0	1 15 0	0 16 0	1 1 0
	1876 ⁵	1 4 0	1 12 0	0 15 0	1 0 0
	1877 ⁶	1 3 0	1 9 0	0 13 0	0 18 0
	1878 ⁷	0 19 0	1 9 6	0 11 0	0 17 0
	1879 ⁷	0 14 0	1 3 0	0 8 0	0 12 0
	1880	1 2 0	1 11 0	0 12 0	0 17 0
	1881	0 16 0	1 8 6	0 11 0	0 14 0
	1882	0 15 0	1 7 0	0 9 6	0 14 0
	1883	0 13 0	1 5 0	0 9 0	0 12 6

¹ Cotton famine.² Austro-Prussian war.³ American tariff raised.⁴ Franco-Prussian war.⁵ Eastern difficulty.⁶ Russo-Turkish war.⁷ Bank failures.

A glance at the foregoing figures shows that while the prices of sheep have during the last two or three years been rising, and have at the present time reached a point very satisfactory to sellers, the prices of wool, on the other hand, have during the same period steadily declined until they have reached very low rates, especially in the case of laid Cheviot wool, which is, in fact, all but unsaleable. There may be other and minor reasons for this, but there are two great causes of it—viz. (1) for the enhanced prices of sheep, the diminished and diminishing number of sheep in the United Kingdom; and (2) for the lowered price of wool, the enormously increased importations of foreign and colonial wool, and the highly protective American tariff on wools and woollen goods. The decrease of sheep—which since 1879 has been nearly 4,000,000, and within the last two years 2,299,282—is sufficiently accounted for by the decimation of many stocks in England by fluke or liver disease, by the preparation of animals for the butcher at an earlier age than formerly was done, and by the occurrence of several adverse winters and lambing seasons; while the tremendously enlarged importation of unmanufactured wool—amounting, according to the latest returns, to nearly 500,000,000 lbs.—is doubtless due in great measure to the effect of free trade upon a greatly augmented population, and to the fact that our colonial cousins, having carefully studied the wants of the British market, have succeeded in producing

just the kinds of wool best adapted to the prevailing fashions in woollen fabrics of late years, especially a kind of cross-bred wool, which has rivalled, and to a great extent supplanted, our home-grown Cheviot wool, which it closely resembles, and upon which the Scotch sheep farmer formerly greatly relied. It is frequently remarked in these times that the sheep farmer would be in a better position were he to obtain 3s. or 4s. more per stone for his wool, even if he should receive 6s. to 8s. less per head for his sheep than at present is going; and there is no doubt some truth in this, seeing that the revenue from wool applies always to the whole flock of the farm, while that from the carcasses in any one year is derived only from sheep which have arrived at maturity, or at that age when in ordinary course they are sent off the hill farms. If this would be a benefit to the tenant, it certainly would also be to the interest of the landlord; for an excessively high rate of prices for the animal, coupled with a very low rate of prices for the fleece, is an abnormal conjunction which undoubtedly contributes not a little to the congestion of unlet farms at the present time? But if this is seen and felt in the ordinary transactions of buying and selling, it much more sharply operates, upon the landlord especially, in the cases of farms falling out of lease, and where the stocks have to be exchanged from the outgoing to the incoming occupier at a valuation. From the earliest times of systematic sheep farming in the Highlands down to the present date, this transaction has been effected between the parties by the nomination by each of a man of skill to value the sheep, and the appointment of a third man or oversman to determine any differences between the views of these two. For many years this mode of valuation worked very well, and in theory no fault can be found with it: it seems to be the most equitable course that honest people could adopt for the purpose required. But in course of time, and notably within the past fifteen or sixteen years, there have been, unfortunately, many valuations struck where it has been most difficult to say that only a simple desire to make an award agreeing with the current value of the stock has been at work. In some cases—not very many—the awards have been too low; but in far more numerous cases the awards have been manifestly greatly in excess of what they ought to have been, and great injustice and loss have in consequence been inflicted both on tenants and proprietors, but chiefly the latter. It is held that a good healthy working stock, already on the farm, and acclimatised to it, is more valuable than the same stock would be in the open market; and, within a reasonable limit, this is true, and no one objects to it. But, besides and beyond this, considerations are given effect to, and expedients resorted to, to increase both the number and the price of the stock to be valued, which are by no means fair or legitimate, and which, having been carried to great excess of late, are unquestionably at the present time inflicting great injury to the interests of sheep farming in the Highlands. It is unnecessary to enter here in detail into these objectionable features of sheep valuations, some of which may, however, be briefly enumerated,—such as (1) the practice, now all but universal, of mulcting a landlord of 2s. or 3s., or perhaps more, for each sheep, than a tenant would be required to pay; (2) the bringing on to the farm of a number of sheep—sometimes from a sixth to a fourth of the whole stock—shortly before the valuation, from any source they can be found, and palming these off as, and to be valued at the same rate as, the ordinary stock of the farm; (3) the finessing and attempts at overreaching in the appointment of the oversman in the valuation; (4) the wide divergency between the prices asked in the first instance on the one hand, and offered on the other hand,—which no practical judge of sheep could conscientiously or seriously

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support, and which is avowedly designed 'to leave room' for the overseer fixing on prices which may be either higher or lower, according to his bent, than the true value. To such an extent have these improprieties been carried in recent years, that, as already said, while every tenant of a farm whose lease has come to an end of late has, as may be imagined, determined to give up his farm, and take advantage of the prevailing exorbitant valuations of stock; on the other hand, deterred as they are by these valuations, no incoming tenants for these farms can be found, and landlords have had to stand in the gap, at very great personal sacrifices in some instances. Happening to have in my possession some reliable records of sheep valuations in the counties of Inverness, Ross, Argyll, and Sutherland, some of which refer to two, and in one or two cases to three instances of valuation, by the same method, of the sheep stocks of the same farms, I have compared the prices obtained, as far back as 1854, with the prices given at various dates since and down to the present date, and find such instances of advance as follow: four of 20 per cent., two of 25 per cent., one of 16 per cent., and one of quite recent date, amounting to no less than 97 per cent., upon a lease of nineteen years. The valuations of the present year are sure to show a very startling advance upon the prices fixed at the last entry to the farms in question.* In many cases the subsequent sale of the sheep has, notwithstanding the utmost skill and care in management and marketing, led to very great loss, owing to the enormous discrepancy between current value in the open market and the valuation prices, which often reached to 10s. a-head, and in not a few cases amounted to far more, even over 20s. a-head. There have been many complaints of late about this unsatisfactory practice of valuing sheep at fictitious rates, and different suggestions have been made to remedy it; but the difficulties of abolishing a system so long in use, and, moreover, so equitable in principle if honestly worked out, are greater than may at first sight be thought. As far back as 1871, I brought the matter under the notice of the Inland Revenue authorities, in order to determine whether the practice of valuing sheep stocks by unlicensed and unsworn valuator was, in their view, quite regular and legal. The reply was, that while the practice was certainly irregular, they were not prepared to say it was illegal so long as it was confined to a solitary, neighbourly, and friendly act by one farmer towards another; but that if any one undertook such duties frequently or regularly, and derived a profit therefrom, or whether they were profitable to him or not, his doings would certainly come under the operation of the Stamp Acts. Seeing that these duties are now so frequently exercised by unlicensed individuals who are well known in their respective districts, it does seem that it should be incumbent on them to qualify themselves as regular and legally constituted appraisers. Some of the evil and injustice attending the present mode of valuing sheep stocks would probably be obviated by employing *only one* licensed valuator, judicially appointed by the sheriff of the bounds on the application of the parties concerned, it being competent to the parties to suggest a valuator to the sheriff if they are agreed upon *one*. The use of *only one* valuator would, I think, be a decided improvement on the present system of employing *three* men. He would

* Since this was written, several sheep valuations for 1883 have been fixed. In one of these cases there has been an advance on prices of the stock, in seven years, of 21 per cent.; in another case an advance, in five years, of 30 per cent.; and in a third case an advance, in five years, of 60 per cent.—and this in the face of a general fall in sheep farm rents of from 25 to 30 per cent. These farms failed to let, even at such a reduction, and have been taken into the proprietor's own hands.

feel more responsibility when acting alone than when officiating as the oversman of two others; there would be no wide and wild views of practically partisan men for him to reconcile or get over somehow; and the result would no doubt be a just award in nearly every case. The judicial valuator would, of course, receive from the parties employing him a reasonable remuneration for his labours—equally apportioned on the parties, and regulated in amount by a fixed percentage on the number of sheep (not the value thereto) transferred from the one party to the other; and this also would be a material guarantee of substantial justice being done in the awards—for if any valuator acquired a reputation for unfair dealing, he would soon cease to be employed. In support of this view, it may not be out of place to mention that the employment of one valuator instead of three seems in other quarters to be rapidly making way. At both of the national agricultural shows of this year—the Royal of England, and the Highland and Agricultural of Scotland—the practice of *single judging*, as it is called, was tried with the most gratifying results. In no case in which this experiment was applied was there the slightest demur to the awards given; while in the only class in which any fault was found with the judges' awards at the Highland and Agricultural show, the old system of *triple judging* had been adhered to. This is a matter which has just had additional importance lent to it by the passing, in last session of Parliament, of the Agricultural Holdings Acts, in which provision is expressly made for valuing agricultural improvements by each party appointing an arbiter, and those two arbiters appointing an oversman, precisely the system practised in the valuation of sheep stocks in the Highlands, which has been brought into so much disrepute of late. Some anxiety is felt lest, in the valuation of improvements and other subjects on arable holdings, a door may thereby be opened for the same abuses as have crept into the valuations of sheep stocks. The unparalleled and unjustifiable rates at which sheep are now valued, is no doubt the immediate and great cause of the practical deadlock in the letting of sheep farms which now obtains. But there are other elements at work, of which two only will here be noticed—(1) The greatly increased cost of wintering sheep in the low countries. When the practice of wintering sheep away from the farm was first resorted to—without which now it is considered impossible to get along successfully—the necessary food and shelter for the young sheep sent to winter quarters were procurable at a very cheap rate—2s. to 3s. a-head at most; but gradually winterings rose to 4s. or 5s. a-head, and of late years it has not been possible to winter a hogg well under 7s. to 9s. or 10s.—which is a very crippling expense, necessitating a high price being got for the sheep when mature, to enable any profit to accrue. Undoubtedly very important advantages have been derived by the low country farmers who have been in a position to let the winter pasture of their holdings in this way. In the course of his business, the writer has been made aware, from indubitable evidence, of numerous cases where, from this source alone, from 50 to 80 per cent. of the whole rent of the farm has been obtained, and in several instances he has found that rents have been altogether paid from sheep winterings. (2) A good deal has been said in certain quarters about a diminished capacity of some grazings to keep sheep. It is alleged that not only do these grazings rear a smaller number of sheep than they did, say, thirty to forty years ago, but that those now reared on the grazings in question are inferior in size and substance to, and carry a lighter and perhaps coarser coat of wool, than the sheep of the earlier period. In accounting for this alleged diminution of the carrying or sustaining power of certain sheep walks, some assert that it is the simple result of overstocking in the past;

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while others say (what amounts to much the same thing) that it arises from the fact that the raising of a sheep upon land of limited fertility—as all our hill ground is—involves, according to the only system of sheep farming pursued in the Highlands at all events, the extraction from the land of ingredients of a productive character far in excess of any fertilising or restorative applications to the land,—which are simply nothing more than the sheep's own droppings,—and that this continuous and excessive abstraction from the soil of phosphorus, potash, nitrogen, &c., in building up the frame and fleece of our sheep, without any compensatory applications to the land, is bound in time to produce a distinctly deteriorating and exhausting effect upon pastures. In this way many practical men account for the admittedly increased and increasing prevalence of fog or moss over hundreds of thousands of acres of hill ground in the Highlands. I am not sure, however, that this theory satisfactorily accounts for the general prevalence of moss in pastures; because it is found sometimes in excess overrunning private lawns and other places upon which no sheep or stock of any kind are allowed to graze. But whatever the real reason may be, I think there is a degree of truth—which is not unlikely to obtain much more notice ere long—in the allegation that in many places in the Highlands, chiefly on the thinner grounds, in high and inland situations, there are real and unmistakable indications of a lowered or deteriorated capability of sheep raising. If this is the case, it suggests various economical questions of a very interesting kind, which may well come within the scope of the present Government inquiry into the rural affairs of the Highlands and Islands—though, as far as known to me, complaints of this kind have emanated from the east side of the sheep farming districts, and not much from the west.* These remarks upon the past and present condition of sheep farming in the Highlands naturally suggest the query, What, in the circumstances, is the best course for landlords and tenants alike to follow with regard both to the present and the future of sheep farming? If by reason of the unremunerative prices of wool, the excessive cost of winterings, the deteriorated capabilities of the grazings, and the extravagantly high valuations of stocks, the old tenants are forsaking their holdings and no new tenants can be found for them, is there any other use to which these lands can be put, for a time at least, which will be more profitable to either tenants or landlords? Before the days of the general introduction and practice of sheep farming in the Highlands, the breeding and rearing of Highland cattle was almost the only use to which the grazings were put; but in the present day, when other breeds of cattle, more profitable to the breeder and grazier, have so extensively supplanted the Highland breed, and when still enough of the latter are raised apparently to satisfy all the demand there is for them, no one will seriously advocate a general return to the cattle system of pastoral farming. But there remains the question of afforesting the land, about which a few remarks will now be made. *Deer Forests.*—It has in recent years not been uncommon to meet with the most sweeping condemnation of deer forests, but rarely has any attempt been made by the authors of such attacks to approach the subject dispassionately, or to try to consider *both* sides of the matter *impartially*. There has been nothing but unreasoning denunciation, by men whose position and pursuits have precluded them from acquiring that know-

* Since writing these observations upon the deterioration of mountain pastures, I have read with interest a paper in the last volume of the *Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society*, in which this important subject is fully and very intelligently discussed by a writer of long practical experience of mountain sheep farming, and whose facts and conclusions fully confirm the foregoing observations.

ledge requisite to a fair consideration of the subject of deer forests. The wildest statements both as to the extent and the working of Highland forests have been indulged in, which were certain to miss their mark from sheer extravagance of language, apart from other considerations. According to these persons, landlords in afforesting portions of their estates have had no other object in view, and no more pressing necessity laid upon them, than a desire to be ever increasing their rent rolls. The system is a most deplorable economical vice and public loss; it depopulates the districts concerned, and demoralises all who are employed on these forests, and so on. But when the facts are looked into and carefully weighed, without preconceived opinions in either scale, it will be admitted by reasonable men that quite enough can be advanced in favour of a certain extent of ground being utilised as forest as, to say the least, to attach a good deal of discredit to the opposite statements above alluded to. As to the economical side of the matter, or what is sometimes called the 'public wrong' of substituting deer for sheep, it has been shown above that there are reasons of a forcible kind which have, it may be said, *obliged* proprietors to let portions of their estates for this purpose. Influences are now at work so affecting the profitable management of sheep farms as not only to have very largely reduced the rents of these farms, but to have rendered many of them for the present altogether unlettable. In these circumstances, would it be otherwise than grossly unjust further to embarrass the owners of these lands by placing unreasonable restrictions on their letting their lands advantageously in any other way which may be open to them, and which is not obviously immoral or inimical to the State? No one would dream of applying such a restriction to urban property—whether lands or houses—or, indeed, to any other of our agricultural or mercantile interests. If there be foundation for the statements that a very widespread and well-marked deterioration of mountain pastures is going on from the constant and severe depasturage of heavy stocks of sheep, without any compensatory return of fertilising substances to the lands in question, then there is furnished by this fact a sound economical reason for resorting, for a time at least, to a different system of occupation of these lands, in order that they may recover their fertility. It has been shown that it will not remunerate in the present day either landlords or tenants to return to the old system of cattle-raising which probably never yielded over one-third the rents obtained in the best days of sheep farming. It would seem then quite justifiable, on economical as well as personal grounds, to devote these deteriorated lands at least to a period of use as deer forests. It is hardly necessary to mention that both deer and cattle crop much higher than sheep; and for reasons which need not here be particularised, much greater benefit is imparted to the pastures from their droppings. Lands depastured by deer and cattle do not therefore become deteriorated from excessive and incessant cropping in the manner in which it is feared is the case with regard to many sheep walks. A very frequent objection to deer forests is, that they necessitate, or at least lead to, depopulation of the districts afforested; but with regard to all the forests which have been created, in recent years at all events, no statement could be more inaccurate than this. This has already been shown by reference to Tables I. and II. (See pp. 2823 and 2824) in these notes which exhibit the official statistics of population of the counties concerned at each census for the last fifty years. And what is true of the counties would be found true of the separate sections of these counties called deer forests, I have no doubt, were it practicable to obtain returns of the fixed population on the forests at present as compared with the fixed population which was on them when they were occupied as sheep farms. On all the

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forests personally known to me this is so. The fact that no depopulation is traceable to the formation of deer forests, is too well known indeed, to all who have any practical knowledge of the matter, to require discussion. If any depopulation took place at all within that period, in the sense of removal of the people out of the Highlands entirely,—which is by no means supported by official statistics,—it must be attributed in part to the most ordinary natural influences, and in part to the formation of extensive sheep walks, thirty, forty, or fifty years ago. Parallel with incorrect assertions in regard to the number of people living on deer forests as compared with sheep farms, is the statement that such employments as deer forests afford have a demoralising effect on the employés, that they lead to indolent and often to drinking habits during the greater portion of the year when the men are not actively employed. These statements, which refer mainly to the gillies employed on forests, seem to imply that this class of men are retained the whole year round; but there is hardly an instance of this being done. The men who are employed as gillies are generally taken from the ordinary crofter population of the neighbourhood, and are engaged as a rule for not longer than two months. In many cases the crofters' horses are also engaged; and such employment is a source of great benefit to these crofters, and one which they would be the last persons to desire they should be deprived of. It is certainly untrue of these men that their moral character is in any way lowered by their relations with deer forests, and I believe it to be equally untrue of all the other employés of forests whether permanent or occasional. No distinct and reliable proof of these assertions of insobriety, &c., has ever been given. It may be right here to mention the usual custom as to gillies' pay and allowances. The usual daily wage of a gillie may be stated at 3s. for himself, and 3s. besides for his pony, if he has one. His pony is grazed in the forest while employed there, and he has himself a free bed, and fuel for cooking, &c., and generally, though not in every case, a lunch or dinner consisting of bread and meat, and one glass of whisky. Gillies seldom or never get more to eat or drink than this from their employers; and while in some cases employers allow nothing at all beyond the money wage, others, instead of providing lunch as above mentioned, make an allowance of 1s. per day in lieu thereof—a practice which is finding increasing favour both with employer and employed year by year, and gives a substantial increase to the gillie's wages, for he is able to provide dinner for himself for far less than a shilling. With regard to the very important question whether sheep farming or deer forestering employs the greater amount of labour, and consequently pays the greater sum in wages, or whether farming or forestering is the means of bringing into and circulating in the districts concerned the larger amount of money, it cannot, I think, be doubted, whatever it may be open to say about the general or economical side of the question of deer *versus* sheep, that the local benefits—the advantages to the Highlands alone—are out of sight in favour of the forests. At the present time—as it has been in the past—it is too frequently the case that the grazing tenant is non-resident, and has his domicile and all his domestic interests far away. He visits his Highland farm only once or twice a year; and after he has paid his rent, and his shepherds their wages, and settled the few and trifling local bills the farm has incurred, he carries away the whole remaining proceeds of the farm, which are thus lost to the Highlands at all events. On the other hand, the occupant of a deer forest lives continuously in the district for at least two or three months in the autumn, and possibly he may make another visit at an earlier period of the year. He has the lodge and other buildings, which are often

extensive, to keep up for the whole year; and in repairs, alterations, and additions to the buildings, in fencing, road and path making, in the purchase and conveyance of supplies and stores, and in various other ways, he necessarily expends every year a large sum of money, three-fourths of which at least—taking one year with another—goes into the pockets of local tradesmen, mechanics, and labourers. The following figures may more clearly bring out this point:—

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The foregoing figures purpose to show the comparative ordinary annual expenditure of sheep farms with grouse shootings and deer forests. The rents and taxes are in each case stated at the same figures; but as it is generally the case that ground let as deer forest commands more rent than the same ground let as sheep farm and general shooting does, and consequently contributes a larger proportion of the rates of the district, it follows that not only landlords, but likewise the general body of ratepayers, are more benefited by forests than by farms. It is very frequently the case, moreover, that large sums are expended by lessees of deer forests in improving and enlarging the accommodation of the lodges and other buildings, in the erection of fences, and in the formation of new roads and paths for the improvement of the shooting, and in various other ways. Not only do the local tradesmen and contractors, and the working men of the districts, directly participate in the benefits accruing from the carrying out of these works, but in many instances the works are a permanent benefit to all the surrounding neighbourhood. Several instances of this have come within my personal experience. In one case there has been, during the past seventeen years, an ordinary expenditure, including rents and rates, of £28,250 0 0 And special expenditure on improvements of . 29,091 0 0

657-341 0 0

£57,341 0 0

INVERNESS.	In another case the ordinary expenditure, including rents and taxes, has been for the past ten years	£68,353 0 0
INVERNESS.	And the special expenditure on improvements	31,655 0 0
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	In a third case the ordinary expenditure, including rates and taxes, has been for the same period	£19,016 0 0
	And the special expenditure on improvements	3,702 0 0
		£22,718 0 0
	And in a fourth case, where the tenant was non-resident but lived on an adjoining forest, there has been in three years an ordinary expenditure of,	£5590 0 0
	And a special expenditure on fences, paths, &c., in three years of	1428 0 0
		£7018 0 0

All the details of the above expenditure are in my possession; and these cases are but types of what has been done in very many other deer-forests, from which great benefit has been derived by the local interests concerned. One word may here be said as to the taxation of deer forests and shootings generally. As the law now stands, shootings in the personal occupation of their owner are not subject to taxation, except to the extent of their value as grazing subjects; but the large rents obtained in almost every Highland parish for those shootings which are let, very materially lighten the public burdens to every ratepayer. In the three parishes with which I am more immediately concerned—which are all parishes containing shootings, both let and unlet—the rates recovered from the shooting rents are to the whole rates of the parish, in one case 19 per cent., in another 24 per cent., and in the third 8 per cent. These percentages, it may be added, do not include the values of other sporting subjects, such as salmon fishings, the value of which, in the first of these parishes, is equal to about 11 per cent. of the whole rental of the parish, and contributes to the rates in that proportion,—making 30 per cent. in all for that parish as to the contribution of shootings and fishings to the rates. It is easy to see that this must greatly lighten the burden of taxation to every ratepayer of that parish. But it may be asked, What bearing has all this removal of sheep, and substitution of deer, upon the food-supply of the country? The creation of deer forests may be of solid, and undoubted advantage to all your purely local interests; but that is after all, but a limited benefit:—what is the general effect of the system of deer-foresting on the general well-being of the nation? Much has both been said and written about this in recent years; but not a little, it is feared, has been said and written by people who have been imperfectly informed of their subject, and who have consequently arrived at very erroneous conclusions, or more probably ventured on very ill-considered guesses concerning it. Minute inquiry was made into this matter by the Parliamentary Committee on the Game Laws, which sat in 1872-73. It was then conclusively shown, on the evidence of various witnesses—who were not all, by any means, the most favourably disposed towards deer forests—that all the mutton which could possibly be raised from all the deer forests in the Highlands then in existence, could not in reality affect the total volume of meat-supply, and consequently its price, by more than the merest fraction. Shortly stated, the facts established by that inquiry and unanimously reported by the Committee (p. 11), were, that whereas,

there were then, according to the latest official returns, 28,397,589 sheep in Great Britain, there had only been 400,000, according to the highest estimate given in evidence, displaced by deer forests, or 1·4 per cent. Since the date of that inquiry, no doubt some additional ground has been afforested; but these additions to forests may be taken as not of such extent or consideration as to vitiate or disturb to any practical degree the facts then established by the inquiry of 1872-73. (See Tables III. and IV., and pp. 2839 to 2843) I have already stated that during the past four years—from 1879 to 1882—there has been a decrease of nearly 4,000,000 sheep in Great Britain.

In 1879 the number stood at	28,157,080
In 1882 the number stood at	24,319,768
	Decrease
	3,837,312
In Scotland alone, however, the number of sheep in 1879 stood at	6,838,098
In 1882 the number stood at	6,853,860
	Increase
	15,762

These figures certainly afford no corroboration of the assertion sometimes made that Scotland is being largely deprived of sheep by the creation of deer forests, for it will be seen that the whole decrease of sheep above brought out has arisen in England and Wales, and that there has actually been a small increase of sheep in Scotland during the last four years. Looking next at the ten counties above mentioned, in which deer forests alone exist, and making the comparison between 1872, when the Game Laws Inquiry took place, and when it was stated that the number of deer forests then in existence was between sixty and seventy, and the latest return in 1882, when the number of deer forests is ascertained to be 98, the following are the result:—

	1872.	1882.
Aberdeen	128,308	128,984
Argyll	1,039,627	1,017,679
Banff	45,683	49,236
Bute	41,999	41,557
Caithness	101,458	90,522
Forfar	116,109	122,740
Inverness	788,001	703,954
Perth	673,778	684,920
Ross and Cromarty	360,188	352,148
Sutherland	229,654	213,227
	3,524,805	3,404,967

Difference, 119,838,—equal to 3·4 per cent, or 1·75 per cent. of whole sheep in Scotland, 1882; or 49 per cent. of whole sheep in Great Britain, 1882. I have endeavoured to prepare a table of all the deer-forests now in existence, in the counties of Aberdeen, Argyll, Banff, Bute, Caithness, Forfar, Inverness, Perth, Ross and Cromarty, and Sutherland, which are the only counties in which deer forests are met with. In many cases the forests are in the actual possession of their owners, and never have been let; and in such cases the shooting values are nowhere stated (only the grazing values), and have consequently to be estimated. Without an addition for shooting value to the grazing value, in such cases the published rental would be misleading; and this I have endeavoured to supply, from authoritative sources, as far as practicable.

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TABLE III.

COUNTY.	FOREST.	OWNER.	OCCUPIER.	Actual mated cladin Shoo Fishin
I. ABERDEEN.	Ballochbuie (Balmoral)	The Queen	The Queen	
	Glenmuick	J. T. Mackenzie	Proprietor	
	Glentanuar	Marquis of Huntly	W. C. Brooks, M.P. . . .	
	Invercauld	Colonel Farquharson	Proprietor	
	5 Mar	Earl of Fife	Proprietor	
II. ARGYLL.*	Ardtornish	J. Valentine Smith	Proprietor	
	Blackmount	Earl of Breadalbane	Earl of Dudley	
	Conaglen	Earl of Morton	Proprietor	
	Dalness	Dugald Stuart	Walter Evans	
	Gulvain	Lochiel, M.P. . . .	Lochiel, M.P., and R. A. French Brewster, M.P. . . .	
	6 Jura	Campbell of Jura	Henry Evans	
III. BANFF.	Glenfiddich	Duke of Richmond and Gordon	Proprietor	
	2 Glenavon	Do. . . .	Lord R. Grosvenor, M.P. . . .	
IV. BUTE.	1 Arran	Duke of Hamilton	Proprietor	
V. CAITHNESS.	1 Langwell	Duke of Portland	Proprietor	

* Since the above was printed it has been ascertained that the Island of Scarba is also a Deer Forest, about 4000 acres; rent, £20

VI. FORFAR.	Backnagairn* . . .	J. T. Mackenzie . . .	Proprietor . . .
	Caanlochan . . .	Earl of Airlie . . .	J. Clifton Brown . . .
	Glencally . . .	Sir J. G. S. Kinloch, Bart. . .	Proprietor . . .
	Glendoll . . .	Duncan Macpherson . . .	Proprietor . . .
4	Invermark . . .	Earl of Dalhousie . . .	Sir R. B. Harvey, Bt., M.P. . .
VII. INVERNESS.	Abernethy . . .	Earl of Seafield . . .	Reprs. of Earl of Stamford . . .
	Achnacarry . . .	Lochiel, M.P. . .	Proprietor . . .
	Affaric . . .	The Chisholm . . .	Lord Tweedmouth . . .
	Amhuinnnsuidh (Harris) . . .	Representatives of late Sir E. H. Scott, Bart. . .	Proprietors . . .
	Ardverkie . . .	Sir J. W. Ramsden, Bart., M.P. . .	Proprietor . . .
	Arisaig . . .	Mrs Nicholson . . .	Lord Kilcoursie . . .
	Balmacaan . . .	Earl of Seafield . . .	Sir Henry Allsopp, Bt. . .
	Benalder . . .	Sir J. W. Ramsden, Bart., M.P. . .	Lord Manners . . .
	Ceanacroc . . .	Grant Trustees . . .	Sir H. B. Meux, Bart. . .
	Corryhoillie . . .	Lord Abinger . . .	Proprietor . . .
	Craskie, Fasnakyke, and Glencannich . . .	The Chisholm . . .	W. L. Winans . . .
	Gaick ..	Sir G. M'P. Grant, Bt., M.P. . .	John Hargreaves . . .
	Guisachan and Glasha . . .	Lord Tweedmouth . . .	Proprietor . . .
	Glendoe . . .	Lord Lovat . . .	G. H. Thomson . . .
	Glenfeshie and Invereshie . . .	Sir G. M'P. Grant, Bt., M.P. . .	Sir Charles Mordaunt, Bt., and A. P. H. Lonsdale . . .
	Glengarry . . .	E. Ellice's Trustees . . .	Mrs Ellice . . .
	Glen Kingie . . .	Lochiel, M.P. . .	Sir M. A. Bass, Bt., M.P. . .
	Glenmore . . .	Duke of Richmond & Gordon . . .	Reprs. of Earl Stamford . . .
	Glenstrathfarar . . .	Lord Lovat . . .	W. L. Winans . . .

* Included with Glenmuick, Aberdeenshire.

COUNTY.	FOREST.	OWNER.	OCCUPIER.	Actual measured cladding Shad Fishing
	Glen Quoich . . . Invermoriston . . . Kinloch and Benevreich . . . Kinrara and part of Glenfeshie . . . Kinveachy . . . Knoydart . . . Luskentyre . . . Macdonald (Skye) . . . Morar . . . Portclair and Auchterawe . . . Rothiemurchus . . . Urechany . . .	E. Ellice's Trustees . . . Grant Trustees . . . Mrs Cameron Campbell and Lochiel, M.P. The Mackintosh, and Sir G. M'P. Grant, Bt., M.P. Earl of Seafield . . . John Baird . . . Dowager Countess of Dunmore . . . Lord Macdonald . . . Lord Lovat . . . Do. Sir J. P. Grant . . . Lord Lovat . . .	Sir M. A. Bass, Bt., M.P. A. Denistoun . . . A. F. Listlethwayte . . . Reprs. of late Earl of Stamford . . . Sir Greville Smythe, Bart. Proprietor . . . Earl of Dunmore . . . Mr Kettlewell . . . Proprietor . . . F. T. Rufford . . . Sir C. Lampson, Bart. Proprietor . . .	
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VIII. PERTH.	Athol . . . Glenartney . . . Glenbruar . . . Fealar . . .	Duke of Athole . . . Baroness Willoughby d'Eresby . . . Duke of Athole . . . Do.	Proprietor . . . Lord Aveland . . . W. O. Dalgleish . . . Messrs Cunningham & Merry . . . Proprietor . . .	
5	Rannoch . . .	Sir R. Menzies, Bart. . .		

IX. ROSS AND
CROMARTY.

Achnault	Charles M'Kenzie of Kilcoy	Mr Bignold
Achnasheen	Do	Colonel Brown
Achnashellach, Coulin, &c.	Lord Wimborne	Proprietor
Aline	Lady Matheson of Lewis	W. H. Brancker
Alladale	Sir C. W. A. Ross, Bart.	William Weir
Amat	George Ross	Robert Loder
Applecross	Lord Middleton	J. A. Platt
Attadale	Sir A. Matheson, Bart., M.P.	Major Cresswell
Ben Damph and Torridon	Duncan Darroch	Proprietor
Ben Wyvis	Colin G. Ross	Edward Ross and James Eckersley
Braemore	John Fowler	Proprietor
Clunie	J. E. B. Baillie	J. Spender Clay
Corryhallie	G. F. Gillanders	F. T. and W. Shoolbred
Coulmore	Duchess of Sutherland	Unlet in 1883
Deanich	Sir C. W. A. Ross, Bart.	J. C. Williams
Diebdale	Sir A. Matheson, Bart., M.P.	Robert Loder
Dundonnell	H. Mackenzie	Major Platt
Fannich	Do	Lord Ormathwaite
Flowerdale	Sir Kenneth S. Mackenzie, Bt.	S. W. Clowes
Glassletter, &c.	The Chisholm	W. L. Winans
Glencalvie	Charles Robertson	R. Loder
Glenshieldaig	C. J. Murray, M.P.	Proprietor
Glomach	Sir A. Matheson, Bart., M.P.	W. L. Winans
Inchbae, &c.	D. H. C. R. Davidson	Colonel Leyland
Inverlael	Sir A. G. R. Mackenzie, Bart.	A. H. Tennant
Kildermorie	R. C. M. Ferguson	J. S. Clay
Killilan and Corryeach	Sir A. Matheson, Bart., M.P.	W. L. Winans
Kinlochewe	Sir Kenneth S. Mackenzie, Bt.	A. H. Browne
Kinlochluichart	Lady Ashburton	Proprietrix
Kintail (Morvich)	J. T. M'Kenzie	W. L. Winans

COUNTY.	FOREST.	OWNER.	OCCUPIER.	Actual mate- rials cludin- Shoot- Fisht-
X. SUTHERLAND.	Letterewe and Fisherfield	P. Liot Bankes . . .	C. Perkins . . .	
	Monar . . .	John Stirling . . .	Proprietor . . .	
	Morsgail . . .	Lady Matheson of Lews . . .	H. H. Jones . . .	
	Park . . .	Do. . .	Unlet in 1883 . . .	
	Patt and Riochan . . .	Sir A. Matheson, Bart, M.P. . .	Lord Lovat—sublet to Mr Winans . . .	
	Rhidorroch . . .	Duchess of Sutherland . . .	Captain Starkey . . .	
	Shieldaig of Gairloch . . .	Sir Kenneth S. Mackenzie, Bt. . .	John Beatson and Lord Bristol . . .	
	Strathconon . . .	A. J. Balfour, M.P. . .	E. C. Guinness . . .	
	Strathvaich . . .	Sir A. G. R. Mackenzie, Bart., and Mackenzie of Ord . . .	Frank Morrison . . .	
	Ben Armin . . .	Duke of Sutherland . . .	H. Chaplin, M.P. . .	
4	Dunrobin . . .	Do. . .	Proprietor . . .	
	Glen Canisp . . .	Do. . .	Lord Cloncurry . . .	
	Reay . . .	Do. . .	Duke of Westminister . . .	

Notes (1) For estimate of proportion of above rental applicable to grazings alone, and proportion representing shootings, fishting, &c.

(2) Portions of the acreage above stated are under plantations fenced from deer as well as sheep and cattle.

TABLE IV.

The foregoing TABLE of DEER FORESTS brings out the following results when contrasted with the whole of the Counties concerned.

COUNTY.	No. of Forests.	Rental of Forests.	Rental of whole County (1882).	Area of Forests.	Area of whole County.
Aberdeen	5	£11,789 0 0	£1,118,849 0 0	155,350	1,251,451
Argyll	6	9,730 0 0	515,851 0 0	149,900	2,056,400
Banff	2	2,500 0 0	241,624 0 0	30,000	410,110
Bute	1	200 0 0	119,321 0 0	1,100	138,972
Caithness	1	4,000 0 0	159,278 0 0	51,100	438,878
Forfar	4	5,650 0 0	1,330,039 0 0	43,160	560,087
Inverness	31	51,065 0 0	432,277 0 0	630,331	2,616,498
Perth	5	8,500 0 0	1,117,710 0 0	87,900	1,617,808
Ross and Cromarty	39	45,628 0 0	319,481 0 0	719,305	2,003,065
Sutherland	4	4,480 0 0	97,809 0 0	139,680	1,297,846
	98	£143,542 0 0	£5,451,739 0 0	2,006,926	12,391,115

Percentage 2·7

Percentage 16·2

Note.—The number of sheep 'displaced by forests' is as above,

Deduct one-third, which would not in reality be maintained by the forests, being bred, and having to be wintered elsewhere.

Net number of sheep which the forests might maintain,

Requiring $2\frac{1}{2}$ years after return from 'wintering' to mature, but say 2 years, and deduct one-half,

Leaving as annual produce of sheep from these forests (equal to 6,158,130 lbs. mutton)

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In considering the rental of forests, shown by the preceding table, it must not be forgotten that the amount includes not only the grazing but also the shooting and fishing values. The value of the shootings and fishings, and of the mansions and lodges, and accessories and amenities thereof, which exist only in connection with the shootings and fishings, may be stated at about three-fifths of the whole, or £86,125, leaving £57,417 as the annual value of the grazings occupied as deer forests. What may be the cultivated or arable acreage of land pertaining to these forests, it is hardly possible to ascertain accurately, but it certainly cannot exceed one-thousandth part of the pastoral or uncultivated ground. Of the pasture or hill ground of these forests it will, I think, be a liberal estimate to place two-fifths to the credit of good or valuable pasture, and not an excessive estimate to place the remaining three-fifths to rock, bog, and other rough and waste ground, from which neither sheep nor any other kind of stock could derive much sustenance or shelter. In considering the number of sheep and cattle which these forests are estimated to be able to hold, it must be kept in mind that at least one-third—consisting of the lambs or yearling sheep—would be bred elsewhere, and would have to be 'wintered' off the forest ground for six months of each year; and that in some situations—e.g., the northern slopes of the Grampians—no sheep stock could be kept at all during winter. Looking further at these figures, what do they exhibit as the annual yield of mutton, which these forests might produce? Such lands are, as a general rule, adapted for wedder sheep alone; and, according to the system of sheep farming pursued in the Highlands, wedders are sold off the farm when three years old. We have thus 111,967 sheep as the annual produce or cast of these forests, representing probably about 6,158,130 lbs. of mutton. According to the latest official returns, there were in the United Kingdom 27,448,220 sheep; and if the same rule as to age when marketed be applied to them—though, in fact, sheep other than those reared in the Highlands generally come from one year to eighteen months sooner to the butcher—an annual produce of 9,149,406 sheep is arrived at, representing about 548,964,360 lbs. of mutton; and adding to this 21,262,854 lbs. of mutton imported in last year, we have a total consumption of mutton in the United Kingdom of 570,227,224 lbs. for 1882, in relation to which the quantity of mutton brought out above as the producing capacity of these forests is as 1·08 to 100. But in considering fully this question—viz., the supposed loss of food to the nation involved by these forests—regard must not alone be had to mutton, but to the whole meat-supply of the nation; and the following table will demonstrate how utterly inappreciable is the ratio of the amount of meat capable of being raised in these forests to the nation's consumption of meat. In this table no account has been taken of the importations of live animals for food, of which there were last year 343,699 cattle, 1,124,391 sheep, these being reckoned as incorporated with the returns of live stock within the United Kingdom. This was probably not universally the case, but it may be granted for the present purpose:—

1882	Total Quantity.	Total Quantity consumed.	Weight per Head.	Total Weight consumed.
	No.	No.	lb.	lb.
Cattle in United Kingdom	9,832,417	3,277,472	600	1,966,483,200
Sheep in do.	27,448,220	9,149,406	60	548,964,360
Pigs in do.	3,956,495	3,956,495	80	316,519,600
DEAD MEAT IMPORTED.				
Beef	692,383	...	...	77,546,896
Mutton	189,847	...	...	21,262,864
Tinned or preserved . . .	560,581	...	...	62,785,072
Bacon and ham . . .	2,904,400	...	...	325,292,800
				3,318,854,792

Equal to 1,481,631 tons, or 93 lbs. per annum per head of the population (35,631,290) at last census. Comparing with this the possible output of mutton from the grazings comprising the forests enumerated in Table III, it will be seen that the proportion is as 186 to 100—an utterly inappreciable ratio. Even if we take the whole output of meat (beef, mutton, and pork) from the whole of the counties of Aberdeen, Argyll, Banff, Bute, Caithness, Forfar, Inverness, Perth, Ross and Cromarty, and Sutherland, in which the deer forests are situated, calculated on the same bases as in the above table—

	lb.
Beef	101,745,600
Mutton	56,887,970
Pork	3,885,600
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	162,519,170

—the result is only 4·9 per cent of the national meat consumption. Looking in the same light at the proportion which the wool grown in these counties bears to the whole trade in wool of the United Kingdom, it will be seen to be still less important than the proportions of the meat trade. In 1882 the importations of wool and manufactured woollen goods reached the following enormous dimensions :—

	lb.
Raw wools	488,985,057
Yarns	13,764,056
Manufactured	5,982,449
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	508,731,562

Adding to this, home-grown wool as under :—

Number of sheep of all ages	27,448,220
Less sheep under 1 year old	9,908,905
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	17,539,315
And allowing 5 lbs. wool for each sheep	5

The whole woollen trade of the country in 1882 appears to have comprised no less than 596,428,137

In the ten counties already mentioned the number of sheep of all ages was—

In 1882	3,404,967
Less sheep under 1 year old	1,005,236
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	2,399,731
	5

Yield in wool, lb. 11,998,656

or only about 2 per cent. of the whole woollen industry of the United Kingdom ; and when this comparison is restricted to the produce of wool from the sheep stock of the districts used as deer forests, the percentage falls to the almost infinitesimal figure of '028. The main object of the foregoing calculations is to exhibit truly the relation in which the capabilities of the deer forests to produce human food stands to the whole wants of the British population as regards animal food. I have been most anxious not to underestimate that relation ; and with that view I have left out of account several considerations which I shall do no more than mention here, but which render it certain that the meat-producing capacity of the forests has not been understated. (1) In calculating the total food-supply of the nation, I have assumed that neither sheep nor cattle are brought to the fat market till they are three years old, being the

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age when sheep from the forests are sold ; but in point of fact, as is well known, most of the sheep and cattle of the Lowland districts are brought to the butcher at a much earlier age. (2) I have applied a very moderate average weight to the sheep and cattle of the Lowlands. (3) I have excluded from the account all importations of live sheep and cattle, having assumed these as incorporated in the returns of live stock of the United Kingdom, though doubtless very many were not so incorporated, but were slaughtered and consumed immediately after debarkation. (4) I have treated the whole of the ground comprised in Table III. as entirely cleared of sheep, while it is certain that some of it still carries a partial stock of sheep. And (5) I have not stated *per contra* of the mutton which the forests might yield, the venison which they do now yield. From the best sources available, I have estimated the latter to be—

	lb.
4650 stags at 12 stone,	781,200
4555 hinds at 7 stone,	446,390
	<hr/> 1,227,590

or about 20 per cent. of the mutton which the forests are estimated to produce. It is true that only a very small proportion of this venison finds its way to the open markets, it being nearly all given away in presents ; but it is nevertheless indisputably true that, in one form or another, it is all utilised as human food, and a full half of it is bestowed on people—the crofters, shepherds, keepers, and cottars of the districts—who are not in circumstances to purchase except at rare intervals, mutton or beef for their families.

Crofts.—It is greatly to be regretted that during the period of agitation on the subject of the crofting system in the Highlands which preceded the appointment of the Royal Commission, and during the period the Commission has already sat, statements have been made respecting the private character of many proprietors and factors—past and present—of Highland property, and their relations with the crofters, which are obviously intemperate, and, in fact, known to well-informed and impartial persons to be notoriously untrue. If there was one condition of things more characteristic of the Highlands than another, it was the kindly relations in which proprietors and tenants stood towards each other till a very recent date ; and it is altogether preposterous to attribute the sudden, but still very partial, interruption of these relations to anything of the character of a natural growth of discontent fostered by acts of oppression on the part of the landlords. The causes of the present agitation are not to be looked for in this direction, but have, I believe, a deeper meaning and a firmer root. The people have in some parts been seduced from their loyalty to their landlords, and have been schooled into beliefs, and inflamed into making demands, of the most pernicious nature, if viewed only with reference to the future of crofting and to a continuance of the present system of things. These beliefs and demands, together with the uninstructed and unscrupulous men who have so far seduced the crofters into such devious and dangerous paths, will in time be fully weighed and be found wanting, and will pass away. But may it not be, that some wholesome root of enlightenment may remain, which, gradually spreading over the Highlands, may open the eyes of Highlanders generally to the fact that there are other and better ambitions than a Highland croft can present, even if it should be enlarged at the expense of their neighbours, and that they are likely to become better men and women, more prosperous in a material sense, and enjoying more of the

consideration of the world, in other spheres than in that of a constant and too often hopeless struggle with insurmountable natural impediments at home? There are not a few people having knowledge of the Highlands who are inclined to believe that some such enlightening and blessed result as this may be the issue of the present agitation and inquiry; and he cannot be regarded as the true friend of the crofters, or a wise humanitarian, who will not rejoice if it should be so. In saying this, it is not necessary to question that the possession of a croft in the Highlands is not without its desirabilities. There are charms, no doubt, in its freedom from incessant toil, in the variety of its occupations according to the different seasons, and in the material comforts which it sometimes affords as compared with what may be obtained for the expenditure of a similar sum in rent in a crowded town. But after making ample allowances for exceptional cases of this kind, it is too evident to every unprejudiced person that the system which obtains in the western seaboard and islands is one that it is most undesirable should be perpetuated with all its squalid misery, its tendency to indolence, its chronic poverty, cheerless prospects, and predisposition to disease. It is necessary, in making these remarks, to distinguish somewhat between crofters who live in crowded communities along the seaboard—who are in fact not crofters, but cottars or lottars, who are understood to depend more on the sea than the soil for subsistence—and the genuine crofters to be found all over the northern counties, each upon his own lot, and not huddled together in mutual discomfort. When the latter kind of holdings are not too numerous or individually too small, and when subdivision or dual occupancy is firmly prohibited and prevented, and when the occupants are required, and by every means encouraged, to treat and cultivate their lands with the same regard to good farming as their neighbours in the more extensive holdings do, there is not only nothing to be said against such a system, but it will generally be admitted by all who are practically concerned with the management of estates, that a certain admixture of this class of tenants is a decided advantage. I have not found it impossible in my experience to prevent subdivision of crofts, and have been fairly successful in inducing crofters to emulate the systems of cultivation of the larger tenants; but I cannot but recognise that there is, in cases where the crofters of an estate are numbered by hundreds, very great difficulty in stemming the tendency to subdivision, with all its accompaniments of over-population, want of room and sufficient occupation, and consequent acquirement of habits of indolence by the young, and the ever-present want or semi-starvation. In such cases all effort to cultivate the land in an advanced or approved manner is soon abandoned, and the pressure on the bare necessities of life becomes painfully real. Much has been said in recent years to the effect that the application of considerable tracts of land in the Highlands to the purposes of deer forests leads to an unjustifiable loss of food to the nation. It has been elsewhere shown in these notes that this is not the case to any appreciable extent; but those who press this view should remember to what lengths it will carry them. If a comparison be made of farming under large holdings, or holdings of both large and moderate extent, with the results of farming by crofts, the conclusions, with scarcely an exception, will be found indisputably in favour of the former. Generally, the stock and crops of the crofter are quite obviously very inferior to those of the larger farmer, with his command of capital and superior methods of cultivation and management of stock,—from which it follows that the devotion of good cultivateable land to crofts, instead of too remunerative, highly cultivated farms, is in principle as much, and in degree probably more, an economical mistake than deer forests can possibly be considered.

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And if this be so, it would surely in no way mend matters to devote *more* land to such an unproductive system of crofting than is occupied already in this way. Even if the necessary capital could be found by the crofters for greatly extended holdings—which seems impossible—and the landlords were able and willing to provide the capital which would be requisite on their part for the inauguration of such a change—which is equally improbable—it is only too likely that such an extension of crofts would simply be found, ere many years were gone, to be an extension and an exaggeration of the serious evils which are now entwined with the system. The truth really is—and it is as well known to all unprejudiced practical men as that two and two make four—that so variable is the climate in the West Highlands, so heavy the rainfall, and so late the harvests, that profitable arable farming is an impossibility there, and no wise man who can do better will attempt it. Any proposal, therefore, to coerce proprietors into taking such a step, would not only be spoliation of their properties, seeing that higher rents are obtainable relatively for large farms and farms of moderate dimensions than for crofts, and that rents of larger farms are to some extent affected adversely by the proximity of unfenced, ill-managed crofts; it would also, all too probably, be a grave economical mistake. It will not be here out of place to state that even in the upland districts of the southern counties, where the chances of successful cultivation are certainly superior to the Highland districts, the growing of corn is being largely abandoned in favour of laying these lands to permanent grass. This is clearly shown by reference to the agricultural returns for the past ten years. Thus it will be found that in the counties of Bute, Dumfries, Lanark, Peebles, Roxburgh, and Selkirk, the area of permanent pasture, exclusive of heath or mountain land, has, from 1872 to 1882, increased from 212,510 acres to 279,137 acres, or fully 31 per cent. But in addition to the personal advantages which a general return to crofter occupation of the land would, we are told, secure for the crofters and their families, we are also informed that such a system would be the mainstay of the British army. It would form an unfailing nursery for recruits of the very best material, as the Highlands were said to be in former days, but now are very much the reverse. There are one or two considerations bearing on the view that the Highlands do not now contribute their proper quota of recruits for the British army, which may be briefly adverted to. First, it is indisputable that there is at the present time a much more numerous population in the Highlands than there was in those palmy days of the British army, when it was pervaded and invigorated, we are told, so largely by the Highland element. From this it follows that there must be more men in the Highlands available, or at least eligible, for the British army or navy service now than there were then, and that it is not because Highlanders are not in existence if Highlanders do not now enter numerously into our army or navy. But second, Has it ever been quite clearly established that your Highlander, at any period of his history, has ever been a lover, not to say an enthusiastic lover, of military service? He has been credited very often, no doubt,—mostly by his own compatriots—with a consuming military ardour, and a devouring delight in military “glory;” but while it is quite true that during the wars of the Low Countries and the Spanish Peninsula, as well as in the East, before the Peace of 1815, certain of our regiments were largely composed of Highlanders, and it is equally true that these Highlanders acquired a reputation for steadiness and valour and success in action second to none, it nevertheless remains doubtful whether even then there existed among Highlanders an enthusiastic

devotion to military service in the British army. There are certain circumstances, well enough known to people who have studied the social condition of the Highlands in those days, which rather point to the contrary as the fact, or at least somewhat weaken the evidences of that ardent love of militaryism which has been attributed to Highlanders. There was the bond of clanship, and the still stronger tie of kinship in those days, which no doubt impelled many a young Highlander, without the slightest love of military glory, or the remotest thought about the justice or the reverse of the cause he was to fight for, to follow his chief, or the brother or son or other kinsman of his chief, into one or other of the Highland regiments. There was also another reason,—not quite so natural or creditable,—for so many Highlanders being then found in the army. In the days of British military need, and when officers were almost as much in request as the rank and file, it was, it appears, customary to bestow a commission on the younger sons of those Highland families who could raise and bring with them a certain company or number of recruits; and it is asserted,—men still surviving being able to speak to this,—that the means taken to obtain the necessary number of recruits to secure an ensigncy for some younger son of the chief, or cadet of his family, were not always those of soft persuasion on the one side, or calm voluntary resolve on the other. It has, in fact, been roundly asserted that the “recruits” were made forthcoming willy-nilly, and that the means adopted to that end rather resembled the tactics of the notorious pressgang than a legitimate successful appeal to the patriotism and “inborn military ardour” of the Highlander. However this may be, it is at any rate not the case that Highlanders do not now enlist in the British army because there are no Highlanders to do so; it is rather that they are *not* by disposition a fighting race in the military sense, and very much prefer the freedom, along with the discomforts and miseries, of their present homes, to the constraints and doubtful advantages of the life of a soldier. Pity it is that they still cling to their present situation, rather than to the useful position and greater comforts and advantages which they and their families might derive from making common cause with the rest of the world in the business of life. How, then, are the difficulties of the situation—this hopeless congestion of population under conditions of great poverty and pinched existence, bordering at times on starvation—to be removed or mitigated? There has been no want of suggestions, especially of late, which were to be infallible remedies, but which, when examined in the light of practicability, have been clearly seen to be very unfitted to the end in view. They have not stood the test of common sense. Nearly every one of these has strangely failed to attain to any insight into the reality of the sore, or has proposed to apply some heroic remedy or other which has failed to commend itself to the experience or sagacity of men most likely to be best informed about this question. We have had, for example, as an important element in nearly every one of these suggestions for the improvement of the crofter population, the proposition that the pressure of overcrowding which now subsists should not be relieved by reducing, but by increasing the population. True, the population is to be distributed over a wider area; but it has not by any means been established that such a course would prove even a temporary preventive of the positive want of the necessities of life, from which the crofters at recurring intervals so severely suffer; while nothing is more certain than that, after the lapse of a few years, the same evils of overcrowding, and the same fruitless attempts to force from the soil more than the soil in such situations is capable of yielding, would be resorted to. These are defects inherent in the present system

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which some philanthropic but uninstructed persons would nevertheless seek to prolong; and so long as it is blindly left out of view that you cannot maintain in comfort, or in even the decencies of life, on an unkindly soil, in an unfavoured and baffling climate, more than a given population—which nature never fails to define, though man may for a time dispute the point with her—so long will such a mistake be made, with the painful results with which we are so familiar in the Western Highlands. When from any cause whatsoever there exists in any district a surplusage of population which cannot be usefully employed in the industries of that district, and when especially this dearth of useful employment is clearly seen to arise from insurmountable physical and natural causes, it surely must be best for the individual, as well as for the nation, that such surplus population should be transferred to a situation where, under fitter and more kindly conditions, it *may* be usefully employed. One would think that this is self-evident, and that those who counsel a contrary course incur to themselves grave responsibility. It seems not wisdom or kindness, but positive injury and cruelty, to urge or advise your crofter to stick to the sterility of his northern soil, and its rewardless toils, if he may do better in another situation. All who have thought about this problem are agreed that it is impossible that the present condition of the crofter population in the Western Highlands can be maintained as it is, and all are agreed that no relief which does not take the shape of a permanent thinning or partial dispersal of these communities can be effective or enduring; but all are not agreed as to the best means of reducing the congestion of population, and ameliorating the evils which are entailed by it. The proposal to attain this object by disposing of the people over a wider area within their own Highlands, has been seen above to be open to various grave objections, and little faith is put in it by those best qualified to know. By some it has been urged that the best solution of this question is to be found in a systematic cultivation of the valuable fisheries of the west coast of Scotland. They would practically have this as the sole source of livelihood of the west coast as it is of the east coast fishermen. There is no doubt much to be said in favour of this. That there are many rich and as yet untouched fishing-grounds in the Hebridean seas is beyond question; but as these—saving herrings in some seasons—lie pretty far to seaward, and as the crofter fisherman of the west has as yet neither the training nor the means needful for offshore deep-sea fishing—which requires no little enterprise and courage, as well as capital—it does not seem likely that the crofter-fishing population of the west—who are none of them able to command the requisite capital for such an equipment, and are further hampered by the absence in the north-west of suitable harbours—will for many years, at all events, be able to emulate their brethren of the east coast in the pursuit of offshore fishing. The utilisation of these undoubtedly valuable fisheries will be a work of time, not unlikely to be first undertaken by the hardy, enterprising, and well-equipped men from the east and south coasts, rather than by the native fishermen of the west, and dependent in some measure on the facilities for rapid conveyance of the fish which may be provided. While, therefore, it may be hoped that greater attention to the gains to be reaped from their seas will in time have its influence in the amelioration of the condition of the people of the west coasts, it is in vain to look to this for immediate benefit. There remains to be considered the alternative of removal of a portion, perhaps the greater portion, of the people of the poorer and more over-crowded districts to situations out of the Highlands, where they can find, in a more genial climate and amid more kindly surroundings,

abundance of productive employments and an altogether better life. This may be either in our own land, or in other lands which are sought by Scotsmen, or in both. In the former case, the operation must be left to the natural growth of higher desires of life in the people themselves, though much may be done in a judicious way by their natural leaders to enlighten them to a sense of the dulness and hopelessness of their present lot, and awaken them to the apprehension and appreciation of the better and wider field which is open to them all. In the latter case, however, to which many reflecting people look with most hope, it would seem that something more systematic, more effective, than waiting for the movement of the waters is necessary. Why is it that hitherto all recommendation of emigration as a relief of distress in the Highlands has fallen flat; and in the present day, when distress and discouragement at home, and prosperity and brightness abroad, combine to specially commend it, it seems to be less favourably received than ever? It can hardly be—that advocates of such a monstrous thing are not awanting—that Highlanders may do better by remaining in their present position, preferring misery to comfort, poverty to plenty, debt to independence, sickness to health, and ever-present and ever-felt depression and want to general well-being and well-doing. The contrary of this is clearly proved, if disproof of such an absurd proposition were required, by the fact that very few cases of Highlanders having made this exchange, and desiring afterwards to return to their former state, are met with. They value their enfranchisement too highly to be tempted to renounce it at the call of a puerile sentiment of patriotism, or for any other reason; and thus, among those who so thoughtlessly preach the gospel of what is called “repopulation of the Highlands by Highlanders,” no instructed or emancipated Highlander is ever found. The preachers are men who, professing to know much of the Highland race, know in reality very little of them—men with a hobby, whose hobby is in this case not so harmless as hobbies usually are, and who are cruelly trying to ride theirs over the lives and fortunes of their unfortunate clients. That no systematic scheme of emigration has hitherto successfully recommended itself to Highlanders would rather seem to be due to ignorance, and the distrust which arises from ignorance, of the thing recommended, than from any positive or articulate objection to change. They know the worst at home, but they know not how they would fare abroad: kinsmen and friends, home and the religion of their fathers, they have here beside them, but they dimly suppose they would not have these, in the same sense or degree at least, in another land; and thus they think it better to hold to the present rather than adventure their future in a foreign land. Thus it seems to be an indispensable preliminary to the successful working of any proposals for emigration on an extensive scale from the Highlands to such countries as Canada and the United States of America, or Australia or New Zealand, that the people should be systematically and faithfully instructed in the advantages they are likely to derive from such a step. To this end the course most likely to be successful would be to despatch certain of the leaders and more trusted advisers of the people—for example, some of the more intelligent and observant pastors of the Free Church of Scotland in the Highlands—possessing the full confidence and respect of the crofter class, as pioneers to the proposed fields of emigration, there to be engaged for some considerable time, and not hurriedly or superficially, in acquiring all the information possible concerning the districts proposed to be occupied by their fellow-countrymen. On the return of these pioneers or confidential agents, with, it may be assumed, hopeful intelligence for the people, there would be

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some likelihood of considerable numbers of the people acting on the advice then given,—all the more, if these their ministers of religion patriotically determined, as very probably some of them would, to make common cause with their people, and accompany them to the land of their adoption, and, so to speak, start together in the world afresh under far brighter conditions than those they had quitted at home. Instances of the happiest results of cases like this in the past are not wanting. At the present time, some of the most prosperous communities in Canada are direct descendants of bands of emigrants of a former generation from districts in the Highlands which were then in circumstances closely resembling those now being inquired into; and true it is that not one of the ancestors of these communities, who were the original settlers, ever expressed a desire to return to the miserable homes and surroundings they had left in the Highlands of Scotland. There is, of course, inseparable from every proposal of this sort, the serious question of ways and means. Not only would preliminary inquiries and costs of the voyage have to be met, but it would not be prudent to withdraw all help to the emigrants at that point. Under a well-devised scheme, some further aid in stocking their allotments and carrying on the labour thereof till at least a first crop had been reaped, would be a necessary supplement to the undertaking. Upon whom should the expense of all this fall? Certainly the proprietors of the soil from which the people were going would be justly expected to do their part, as proprietors in the past have done in similar circumstances. But more than this would be necessary; both the home and colonial Governments concerned might reasonably be looked to for financial aid in such cases. The Government of the country in which the settlements were made might, in granting allotments, and in supporting the colonists for a limited period, till they could maintain themselves, fittingly do their part; the Government at home might reasonably provide means of transport; and the landlords at home might be expected to bear preliminary expenses, and provide a modest outfit for the emigrants. There would not be wanting objectors to the granting of State aid for such a purpose. But of late years we have been made familiar with the doctrine of expediency—in the passing of the Irish Land and Arrears Acts, for example; and that it is sometimes prudent to legislate on grounds of expediency alone for exceptional and pressing cases, few people are now prepared altogether to deny. What would a grant-in-aid from the State for such a purpose as emigration from the Highlands be, in reality, but a certain measure of relief of clamant distress? For such relief we are not without precedents in the Highlands of Scotland as well as elsewhere in the United Kingdom, in the preceding as well as in the present generation. Until some comprehensive, liberal, and prudently executed plan of emigration has been devised and successfully carried out, there really seems small hope of improvement in the condition of these crofters. Supposing such a removal to have been happily effected, one word may be said as to the future of those who would remain, for of course no district would be likely to be entirely denuded of population. Some, it might be hoped, would find their account and a comfortable livelihood in the pursuit of fishing, under improved circumstances and with improved appliances; and to the more industrious of those who remained by the land, would be given in larger holdings the lots of those who went away. Leases of moderate duration, with stringent prohibition of subdivision of the holdings, and binding stipulations as to draining and good cultivation generally, might be granted. There should on no account be any transactions passing between the outgoing and incoming tenants of the nature of payment for tenant-right, or for clearing off

arrears of rent due by the away-going tenant, or for any other consideration than the purchase of stock, crop, or implements. What is called *fee-farm* (*tenure*) (distinguishing by this term absolute ownership in the crofter from his mere irremovability from the soil conjoined with nominal ownership in the present proprietors)* would be a gross mistake if applied to Highland crofts. It would infallibly prove to be a direct premium on indolence, and the foe of all enterprise and push in the great majority of cases.'

42270. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—In this very elaborate paper you have divided the subjects you treat of into certain divisions of Scotland?—I have.

42271. I think, I also observe you include the counties of Aberdeen, Banff, Elgin, Nairn, Perth, and Forfar, *inter alia?*—Yes, the counties in which deer forests are situated.

42272. But we have limited ourselves in the meantime to what may be called, properly speaking, the Highland districts, and the above are not included?—They are in a separate group.

42273. With regard to the question of population, you bring out that the population of the district, including the counties I have mentioned, has very considerably increased?—Yes.

42274. But if you take away Forfar, in which there is a large manufacturing population, and Aberdeen, I am afraid you will not find there is that increase of population?—Probably not.

42275. Taking the county of Inverness, there is an increase, I believe, within the last ten years of something between 1000 and 2000 over the whole county?—Yes, there is an increase of 2439.

42276. According to the census returns, the town of Inverness is included?—Yes.

42277. Are you aware what was the increase in the last ten years in the town of Inverness alone?—No, I cannot state it at this moment.

42278. Suppose it is 5000 and upwards, it will be found, if you take the 2439 over the county, that the whole of the rural part of the county, apart from Inverness, must have decreased?—I am aware there is a decrease, if you take the rural population only.

42279. And this is not common to the Highlands, though it may to a greater proportion than in the Lowlands?—It is found in larger proportion in the rural parts of the Lowlands where there are no manufactories.

42280. Even more than the rural parts of the Highlands?—Yes.

42281. I will confine my questions to the matter of deer forests, on which you have entered very largely. How long have you been acquainted with the Highlands?—Twenty-three years.

42282. From what part of Scotland have you come?—I came from Edinburgh to the Highlands, but I belong to Fifeshire.

42283. But you have been twenty-three years in the north?—Yes, connected with the management of estates all that time.

42284. On the estate with which you are more immediately connected, the estate of Invergarry, what is the total acreage of the estate?—Close on 100,000 acres.

42285. How much of that is under forest?—Less than half.

42286. I suppose it is not very long since the first afforesting began?—It was before my time that Glenquoich was afforested, but there was an interval during which it was restored with sheep, and I should like to refer to that, as the last witness was questioned as to the effect of restoring sheep to forests.

42287. How much was put back under sheep during the interval you speak of?—About 15,000 acres—the east of Glenquoich, which was for a

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* This clause added on revision.

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long time in deer forest, and in the hands of the late Mr Ellice. It was replaced with sheep in 1865, and was kept under sheep for four or five years. During that time the sheep that were raised there were the best that were ever known to go out of that district, showing that the pasture of a forest being left for a time under deer does not deteriorate.

42288. If it turned out so successful, why did it go back to forest?—Mr Ellice did not restore it to forest. He only gave his consent. It was the sheep farmer that, for reasons of his own, for some inducement held out to him, gave up his lease in favour of the deer forest tenant.

42289. He was bought out, in fact?—I suppose so.

42290. Are there many forests in your neighbourhood that were formed within your own recollection, or were they formed before your time?—There has been only one on our estate formed in my time, and I don't recollect any others in our immediate neighbourhood having been formed of late.

42291. Were there people once living upon the land that is now occupied as a forest?—People living along the fringe of the forest, along the bottom lands, but that was before my time—thirty or forty years ago—and before the deer forest was formed.

42292. Was there not a very considerable population at one time on the estates of Glengarry and Glenquoich?—I believe there was.

42293. And traces of them remain to some extent yet?—Well, there are a few traces of the old cottages. They appeared to be shepherds' cottages, as far as I remember.

42294. How long have the Ellice family been proprietors of the Glengarry estate?—About twenty-three years, and of the Glenquoich estate between forty and fifty years.

42295. I suppose no parties have been removed during their time or yours for the purpose of afforesting?—Not one.

42296. The Ellice family have always taken a very close interest in the poor people on the estate?—Yes.

42297. Now, has there not been a forest formed near you at Inchnacardoch?—Yes, I forgot that one. That has been made in addition to the one on our own property.

42298. That is on the land belonging to Lord Lovat, between you and what formerly was called Port-Clair?—Yes, the farm of Auchterawe.

42299. There is another forest called Glendoe?—Yes.

42300. In fact, it may be said that in your neighbourhood foresting has been very much practised of late years?—I think you have named all the forests that have been made in our neighbourhood. I may be permitted to refer to a statement made at the sitting of the Commission at Glen Shiel. The minister of Kintail stated that you might walk from near Invergarry House to near the sea at Knoydart on forest ground. That statement was quite inaccurate. You may walk on one side of Glengarry for fourteen miles without touching deer forest. In fact, on that side of the Glengarry estate there is no forest at all, and on the other side of the estate there is only forest for about four miles. That is the Glengarry estate. Then there is Glenquoich forest further up.

42301. Has the population increased or decreased during the Ellice dynasty?—It has slightly increased.

42302. Have you people of the class of crofters, which we have defined at £30 and under,—have you many of that class?—Yes, we have between thirty and forty. There are only sixty odd tenants on the estate altogether.

42303. In what position are these crofters; are they in a fairly comfortable position?—Yes, they are remarkably comfortable, I think.

They live principally in two communities with separate arable lots, but with the hill behind them in common.

42304. Do you mean as a club farm or merely as common pasture?—A club farm.

42305. Managed by one herd?—Yes, they manage it among themselves, and they have remained in that condition from time immemorial. It has just descended from father to son.

42306. What are the names of these townships?—Mandally and Balmaglaster.

42307. What extent of arable land may these crofters have?—From four to six acres each.

42308. What will be the arable rent per acre, including the hill pasture?—One of them pays about £15 in all, but he has more arable acreage. None of the rest exceed £10.

42309. Can you put it per acre?—I cannot do it very well, because I do not know the extent of the hill acreage they have, but they have from four to eight acres of arable ground. I can state the stock they keep.

42310. Take a man who has got from four to six acres of arable land and a share of the hill, what may his stock and his rent be?—He has, say, three cows and their followers, a horse, and from twenty to thirty sheep.

42311. What will his rent be?—None of those rents exceed £10.

42312. Have you any difficulty in dealing with these people?—None whatever.

42313. If they want anything reasonable to be done, I suppose it is done for them?—Yes, if it is within reason.

42314. Are their buildings in fairly good condition?—Yes.

42315. Do you find any indications on the part of those people of a desire for an increase of holdings?—No, none has ever been asked.

42316. And in any recent changes may I take it for granted that no hill grazing or arable land has been taken from those people?—Not an inch.

42317. You have in your paper gone very much into the question of deer forests as showing that these are very advantageous. I am quite prepared to admit they are very advantageous so far as rent is concerned, but let me ask one or two questions as to how it affects the community generally. Do you approve of carrying the system of foresting still further?—I don't think it is possible to carry it much further, for I don't think there is much more land in the Highlands to be taken up by deer forest—I mean, that is suitable for deer forest.

42318. Don't you see in the Highlands still remaining a few large farms for which there do not seem to be offerers?—Plenty.

42319. What are you going to do with them?—If a better use cannot be made of them, I think the proprietor would be quite justified in letting them as deer forests.

42320. That would rather imply that a better use could be made of them?—I do not admit that.

42321. You have heard the evidence of the previous witness?—I heard the most of it.

42322. You heard him state he was not aware that the produce of the forest was of any perceptible value to the community as a product; is that correct, in your opinion, or is it not?—I may say this, that it bears a very small proportion indeed to the mutton supply of the country, if that is what you mean.

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42323. And it is not the fact, I suppose—at least, I am not aware of it—that venison is generally sold by the lessees of deer forests?—No, quite the reverse. I know of no one who does sell it.

42324. So whatever venison may be got here is more from the favour and kindness of the lessees of the forest in giving it away?—Yes, it is given to the people in the district, and sent away as presents to friends of the lessee.

42325. Does your observation extend much beyond your own estate, or are you kept very much at home through the nature of your occupation as a banker?—I am pretty much from home, and I have had to do with deer forests pretty extensively, especially of late years.

42326. With regard to the demand that is now so generally expressed by small tenants and crofters for an increase of land over the Highlands generally, are you aware there is such a demand?—No, I am not aware there is of my own knowledge.

42327. Do you know Glen-Urquhart pretty well?—No, I know the Balmacaan district, but not the upper part.

42328. But you know it is a very populous glen, with a number of small holdings upon it?—Yes.

42329. A fertile glen?—Yes.

42330. I suppose almost the opposite in appearance and cultivation from Glengarry?—Yes, so far as arable ground is concerned.

42331. Have you ever heard that the people in Glen-Urquhart are very comfortable and happy?—I have heard they are very comfortable, and they look it.

42332. In your paper that you have given in to the Commissioners, you go very much into the question of sheep valuations, and so on. You complain of that, and I will only refer to it for a moment. You complain that the system of sheep valuations has become what may almost be called a scandal?—Yes, I think that the prices have been fixed at much too high rates of late.

42333. Has that scandal of high prices and high valuations not arisen out of the system of large farms?—Not entirely, because it applies to small sheep farms as well as large.

42334. Do you think it necessary now-a-days, when there is such a thing as fencing all over the country, that it should be imperative on the incoming tenant to take the stock at all, or the whole stock?—I don't think it is right to make it compulsory, but as matter of fact it is of great advantage to the incoming tenant to get stock on the ground.

42335. The whole of it?—Yes.

42336. Even at the high valuation?—No; I think that part is wrong, but it might be rectified. It is an excrescence which has grown up on the system.

42337. Do you think the Highlands, taking them all over, are over-peopled at this moment?—No, I do not see they are, except the particular districts where they are congested.

42338. Then where they are congested would you be in favour of emigration or migration?—I think both might be applied with advantage. I would rather see migration, but I think that would perhaps not entirely meet the case.

42339. I presume you are in favour of emigration to some extent. I suppose you mean voluntary emigration?—Of course.

42340. Suppose it were necessary to get assistance from Government for emigration or migration, which would you recommend as the more preferable way of applying Government assistance or relief?—In that case emigration, if the Government were to assist.

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42341. Why?—Because I think it would be rather a risky thing to commence to pay for migration in this country, and because so much assistance would not be required in that case. I mean the people themselves would be able to migrate, whereas in a great many instances they are not able to emigrate, and I see no other means of accomplishing it, but by their getting help either from the Government or some other source.

42342. Neither migration nor emigration is necessary on your estate?—No, we have only the population we require, and no more.

42343. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—You have given a table of all the deer forests in Scotland?—I have.

42344. What means did you take to ensure its being accurate?—I knew many of them personally, and I applied to others for information, but I may mention that in lodging the paper I stated to the Secretary, that I should like to reserve power to correct the figures if I found it necessary afterwards. It was with great difficulty that information could be got with reference to some of the places, owing to their not being let.

42345. What number of forests are there in Scotland?—I make out ninety-eight in all Scotland.

42346. Are these entirely in the Highlands?—Entirely in the ten counties which are dealt with in the paper—Aberdeen, Argyll, Banff, Bute, Caithness, Inverness, Forfar, Perth, Ross and Cromarty, and Sutherland.

42347. Forfar is not now a Highland county in the same sense as the rest?—No, but there are four deer forests in it.

42348. What number of acres is there altogether?—In the ninety-eight forests, I make 2,006,926 acres.

42349. How much is that in proportion to the general acreage?—It stands in the relation of 16·2 per cent. of the whole acreage of the counties concerned.

42350. And what percentage of the rest is arable, and what under pasture?—I found it impossible to ascertain that, but I believe that the land under cultivation in the forests cannot be more than one-thousandth part of the whole acreage under forest.

42351. And what is the rental paid for all these forests?—I make it out to be £143,542, but that includes value of grazings as well as value of shootings. The shooting, &c., value I make £86,125, and the grazing value £57,417.

42352. Is that a much larger rental per acre than the rental of the rest of the land?—As respects the shootings the rental is higher than the usual rent of shootings. I may state that that rental is 2·7 per cent. of the whole rental of those ten counties.

42353. What is the number of persons in whose hands these forests are?—I suppose just the same number as the number of forests,—ninety-eight. In one or two cases there are joint tenants, but very few.

42354. But there is one person in particular who has about a dozen forests?—Yes; well, the total number of tenants will be rather less than the total number of forests.

42355. Do you think that the occupation of these forests by their tenants and their gamekeepers and gillies is as useful to the country as if they were under sheep?—Quite as much, in so far as the circulation of money is concerned, and even as regards population. There are rather more people on the forests than there would be on them as sheep farms, and the amount of money circulated is infinitely more as forests than as sheep farms.

42356. And, speaking of them as a class, are the men who are employed

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upon deer forests as useful and good members of the community as shepherds?—Quite as much so. I know of no people more respectable than the keepers and gillies in forests. As far as my own personal knowledge goes, the gillies are drawn from the crofter class themselves, and the crofters would really be the last people to wish for the abolition of forests, so far as they are personally concerned, because they derive a great deal of pecuniary benefit from them.

42357. We have had the opinion given us to-day that land occupied by deer is less productive than that occupied by sheep—that the pasture is deteriorated more by deer than by sheep; what is your opinion?—I quite disagree with that. The complaint really is that deer forests are more apt to grow wild, as it is called, that the grass gets too luxuriant, instead of deteriorating under sheep.

42358. *Professor Mackinnon.*—You stated that the population of the northern counties has not diminished to speak of, if you take a range of fifty years; but, of course, that is to be qualified by the other statement that the rural population has very materially diminished?—Yes, it has to a certain extent.

42359. Although perhaps not more than in the southern counties!—No, not quite so much.

42360. And that the depopulation, so far as it exists, is not to be attributed to deer forests?—No, not in any degree.

42361. The reason of that being that deer forests were only made out of sheep farms which were previously cleared?—Quite so.

42362. When it is said then, that the people have been removed to make room for sheep and deer, it is simply an inaccurate expression?—Well, it is not accurate to say they have been removed for the purpose of making deer forests.

42363. Is it not merely an inaccurate phrase? Deer are there where people were?—That is the case.

42364. Have you any reason to suppose that if it had been people instead of sheep that were there, the forests would not have been made all the same?—I don't believe they would to the same extent.

42365. To a certain extent, people have been removed for the sake of deer?—I don't know of any cases myself.

42366. In your statement also, I find that the depopulation is said to be due to the emigration that took place, greatly, it is stated, to the benefit of those who went and those who remained. I think it is generally admitted that those who went away are better than if they had remained, but the people who remain say themselves they are if anything rather worse off?—Well, I have never heard any one say that. I have heard many of that class say to me it was a good thing for those who went away, and that they themselves were the better of it, seeing they had more room.

42367. To what extent has your experience of that class of people gone?—Well, on several estates,—on our own estate and on several others.

42368. How many have you got on your own estate of that class of tenants?—Some hundreds altogether.

42369. How many families?—About sixty to eighty families of that class.

42370. Holding land?—Yes, more or less holding land.

42371. And how many are there whose portions have been enlarged because of emigration?—I cannot state that, because it was before my time considerably.

42372. So you have no actual figures to dispute the statement of the people themselves, that they have been by emigration rather confined than

otherwise?—As far as my experience of the people goes, the opposite statement has been made to me.

42373. But you don't know of your own knowledge to what extent the holdings of the people have been enlarged by giving them the holdings of the people that went away?—No, I have only the general statement to make.

42374. Where the population is very thick in the Western Islands you have no personal knowledge?—No personal knowledge.

42375. But within the district you yourself know, the crofting class has not diminished within your time?—No, not at all.

42376. But it diminished before your time?—Well, the number of people diminished,—the number of people who held crofts diminished,—but the extent of land held under crofts did not diminish, as far as I know.

42377. You don't know any land just now under sheep farms or deer forests that were under small tenants formerly?—Nothing, but what is occupied by the shepherds. I am speaking of our own estate. I know nothing but what the shepherds held. There were, no doubt, a few small tenants on the estates, but I cannot tell to what extent they held arable ground.

42378. This statement, then, that emigration is generally admitted to be for the benefit of those who remain as well as those who went, you would confine to your own estate?—No, I mean it to apply to the whole districts concerned, because, as far as I personally know and as far as I have heard, it applies to all the districts. It may be incorrect, but it is according to my information.

42379. Your information is that the crofts of those that remain have been increased through the emigration that took place?—Yes.

42380. That is in the district with which you are acquainted?—Yes.

42381. In the other districts with which you are not acquainted, the statement was made that while the area was not increased, a remnant of those who did not go away was thrown in upon the existing population, so that the latter end was worse than the first?—I have heard statements to that effect, but it is not consistent with my knowledge.

42382. It is not the case in the districts you know?—No.

42383. But of course you cannot speak as to the districts you don't know?—No, except what I have heard from well-informed people.

42384. I see you notice the introduction of sheep into the country, and you say that little or nothing was known of sheep before the Norman Conquest; how do you know that?—I have read it. It is only from book knowledge that one can ascertain that.

42385. Are you aware that in the first book written in this country, so far as we have books now, there are sheep spoken of?—You won't go far in the Bible without meeting with mention of sheep, but I still say as matter of fact, that sheep were very little known in this country before the Conquest.

42386. In the life of St Columba, to which I allude, not to the Bible, written some hundreds of years before the Norman Conquest, a countryman of mine going across to Iona to steal the Saint's seals, was prevented from stealing the seals, and got a present of wethers?—I am not prepared to deny that sheep existed before the Norman Conquest. I only say they were not an important industry till then.

42387. Does this not prove the fact of sheep being of importance in Iona?—It proves there were sheep there, but I do not take your statement to be that they were a very important interest in those days.

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42388. Of course, we all know that as a great industry in this country sheep are of late importation?—Yes.

42389. It commenced when?—Systematic sheep farming was not practised in the Highlands, I suppose, till about the middle or beginning of last century.

42390. In your own district or country the system was rather unpopular among the people when it commenced?—Yes, I have heard that.

42391. I suppose there is a sufficient amount of literature to that effect?—Yes, I believe it was not liked at all till they recognised the advantages of it.

42392. Do you think the people have recognised the advantages of it,—the population of the country?—Yes.

42393. In what respect?—They found that sheep farming was much more profitable than cattle farming which was practised formerly.

42394. So you would not like to agree with what Mr Macdonald, a previous witness said?—Certainly not, because it was found that the value of land in those days, or the rent derived from cattle farming, never stood higher than as about one to three compared with the rent derived from sheep farming, when sheep farming was in its best days.

42395. But, now, that things are taking a change, would you agree that it might be advantageous to have a little more cattle breeding?—No, not to a great extent, because I believe it is the experience of all large sheep farmers that you cannot, with advantage, have a large cattle stock along with a large sheep stock, for this reason, that cattle going on the lower ground so foul it, that when the sheep come down to those lower grounds in the winter, they are sure to have a great deal of braxy, and the deaths from that cause more than counterbalance any advantage from the keeping of cattle.

42396. I suppose the people attribute the disappearance of that disease very much to the separation of the cattle from the sheep?—Yes, it is less than it was formerly on that account.

42397. So that, even in its present comparatively unmarketable state, sheep farming is preferable to cattle rearing?—Yes, if tenants could be found to go on with it.

42398. But how can you propose to carry it on without tenants?—Well, at the present time there are a great many sheep farms unlet. That I attribute to the extravagant prices given for sheep at valuations. The fact is, any sheep tenant who has a chance of going out just now, whether at the end of the lease or otherwise, is sure to take advantage of it, because of the extravagant prices given for sheep, and that very reason deters new tenants from coming forward to take sheep farms. They are lying upon their oars at present, and I hold that to be a justification for proprietors letting, at the present time at any rate, those sheep farms as deer forests, seeing they cannot let them as anything else at present.

42399. Has not the size of the farm something to do with it?—Of course; the evil of these extreme prices arises in an exaggerated form when a farm is a very large one.

42400. Might not another remedy be found, and an arrangement made by which the proprietor might not in all cases be obliged to take over the stock?—I don't think that would be an advantage to the succeeding occupier of the farm. It is a decided advantage to him to have a stock upon the ground ready to go on with, and which has been acclimatised to the ground.

42401. What I am looking to is this, that your remedy for this un-

fortunate state of things,—tenants clearing out and the very high price of stock,—the only remedy you seem to have is to afforest the place?—That is the only present remedy I can see.

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42402. Would you look to that as being the only permanent remedy for the future,—to be afforested or disafforested according to the price of stock?—No, I look forward to the time when sheep farming may revive. The depression among sheep farmers is due to the very low price of wool, and the wool of the sheep forms a most important item to the tenant.

42403. But even after the revival of sheep farming, might not exactly the same state of things occur that prevails just now, and you could not always be afforesting and disafforesting according to the price of stock?—Of course it might arise again.

42404. Don't you think a remedy might be found in giving tenants the liberty to agree among themselves about the stock, and not always obliging the proprietor to take the stock, and thus almost forcing him to afforest the land?—Yes, if you got tenants to agree among themselves, the one to give up and the other to take the stock at the end of the lease, that would be the best plan.

42405. At present the proprietor is bound to take the stock?—Not in all cases.

42406. Would you prefer that rule to the present almost forced practice of afforesting?—Yes, I would prefer that the one tenant should give up and the other take the sheep stock voluntarily, and, if that were done, of course there would not be the same necessity for afforesting. The present difficulty is to get tenants to do that. I cannot get incoming or succeeding tenants at present to do it.

42407. Don't you think the very size of the farms has increased the difficulty?—It has exaggerated the difficulty as regards the taking over of sheep stocks.

42408. Apart from all other economical considerations with respect to the population, would not that even point to the advisability of reducing the size of these farms?—Yes, I admit there are too many extra large sheep farms at present. It would be better if there were more of a moderate size.

42409. But, as between sheep and deer, so far as the population of the place is concerned, you don't see it matters very much whether the place is under the one or the other; but for a crofter population it is rather an advantage to have deer than sheep?—Yes, as regards the people, I think there is very little difference. For one thing, there are more people required for deer forests than for sheep farms.

42410. And do you think that the crofter population in the neighbourhood of the deer forest is greater than on a sheep farm?—Yes.

42411. That is from your personal knowledge in your own district?—Yes, because they derive more employment and benefit from the deer forest than from a farm.

42412. The sportsman is more liberal than the farmer?—Yes, and he has more to do.

42413. I am assuming, of course, that the arable land is thoroughly fenced?—Yes.

42414. Do you think it is better to be a gillie than a shepherd?—Well, if he is living at home with his father it is a great boon to him to be employed as a gillie for two or three months. He gets almost no employment from the sheep farm.

42415. There was a statement made here as to the effect upon the general character by being employed for two or three months at a very

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George
Malcolm.

high wage in an occupation that involves more or less going about,—not hard steady hand work,—and that had a tendency to induce comparative idleness for the other eight or nine months, partly from the nature of the occupation, and partly from the wage received. Has your experience been sufficiently long or varied, to enable you to say whether that is a fair representation of the effect of gillie employment?—I think it is very inaccurate. So far as my experience has gone, the gillies are as respectable a class of men as any other. In fact, so far as I have personal knowledge, the gillies almost entirely consist of crofters, and many of them are married steady-going men, and just as respectable as any other class.

42416. As matter of theory, to an outsider who does not know, the statement made has certainly a very plausible look, but you put your observation, as it were, to make the statement the other way?—I have never seen or heard anything to support it.

42417. Have you seen a good number employed when they were very young, such as eighteen and twenty?—No, there are very few, I think, employed at that age.

42418. Supposing they were employed at that age, would you see anything from the nature of the employment itself, or the exceptionally high wage received, that would rather have a doubtful tendency upon the life of a young man for steady employment afterwards at a lower wage?—No, I don't see why it should. I know what takes place on a deer forest during the season, and I know of nothing that goes on to lower the character of a man, be he gillie or anything else. The usual wage for a gillie is 3s. a day, and if he has a pony, which he may have, he gets 6s. He gets nothing beyond that, except lunch on the hill, and some deer forest tenants allow a glass of whisky besides, but I am glad to say that that custom is being very much departed from, and many proprietors and tenants of deer forests are allowing gillies 1s. a day extra, and allowing them to provide their own lunch for it.

42419. Supposing a young lad of eighteen were employed at that wage for three or four months of the year, and afterwards, from a change of circumstances in the place, he was bound to take employment as a shepherd or ploughman after twenty-five years of age, do you think his previous experience would be of service to him for steady plodding occupation, without lunch, or scouring the hill, or anything else?—I don't see why it should prejudicially affect him as such.

42420. The previous training is quite as good as though he were trained to that particular work?—Of course, if he were trained to some other occupation, the three months during which he was at another occupation would be lost to him, but it would not materially affect him in any other way.

42421. You don't see anything in the occupation itself that would be prejudicial to his after life?—Not at all.

42422. *The Chairman.*—You spoke of the sheep industry generally, as a thing of recent introduction into the Highlands. I perfectly understand that sheep farms in the hands of capitalists must be so, but surely the possession of sheep among the original small tenants of the country must have been a thing almost universal. How were the Highlanders fed, and how did they get their clothes?—Of course they had what are called the aboriginal sheep in those days, which are nearly extinct now; but they were held in very small numbers, and on the introduction of the blackfaced sheep which came before the Cheviots, the aboriginal sheep were found to be so unprofitable that they naturally disappeared. I do not mean to say there were no sheep in the Highlands.

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George
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I only mean to say that when blackfaced sheep were introduced, systematic farming was introduced.

42423. And the clothing in the Highlands has always been woollen?—
So far as I know it has.

42424. Does history point to any period when the art of weaving was unknown in the Highlands?—I cannot say when it was introduced into the Highlands.

42425. But you don't know whether since the introduction of weaving the Highlanders ever imported wool for their own clothes?—No.

42426. Then they produced sheep enough to dress the whole country? At least they did not export any?—Yes, that was always the case.

42427. Our time is so limited that I cannot ask you any questions upon the general question of deer forests, but there are two statements I should like to ask you a question or two about. At the end of the statement you say, 'The number of deer forests is not now likely to be much increased. There is not much more suitable land, and there are not many more people pecuniarily able to have deer forests.' Now, that is a very important question for us, because, as you must be aware, the idea that there might be in future a large expansion of deer forests at the expense, as it were of lower and more productive grounds, would, if entertained, produce a great share of public discontent. Why do you say that there is not much more suitable land? What do you understand by suitable land?—I mean the highest land in the Highlands, because every one acquainted with deer forests knows that deer can only be found at their best if you have high, rocky, and to a certain extent, waste ground. You may have deer coming upon low ground, which may be called ground suitable for farmers or for crofters; but you will not get the deer to come there soon enough to be in what may be called first rate condition. They come too late to be shot. You must have a large extent of high and rough ground, full of corries, before you can have a good deer forest.

42428. The red deer prevailed at one time over the lowland hills, and is not unknown, even in England now. They don't seem to deteriorate by pasturing on low ground?—But they are out of season. When they come down to the low ground in the Highlands they are not fit to be shot.

42429. I understand that for a manly sportsman, an area of ground including a large amount of elevated and precipitous hills might be a much better deer forest,—better for his sporting exercises,—but still might there not be large tracts on the borders of the highest ground between the Highlands and Lowlands, which if cleared of sheep, might afford a very good area for the pasturing of deer, and a sufficient amount of manly exercise for the sportsman?—There is still some ground that might be devoted to that purpose, no doubt.

42430. And the ground to be devoted to that purpose in future would rather be, in an economic sense, better ground than has been devoted to it in the past?—Yes, probably it would, seeing it would include a larger proportion of low ground.

42431. It would include a larger share of arable and possible arable than the present forests?—Yes.

42432. Why have you got the impression that there are few persons left pecuniarily able to take forest? Granted that forests might possibly be formed, why do you think there are not in the centres of industry, in England and elsewhere, people who would be disposed to take a forest?—Because the demand for forests has really slackened of late considerably.

42433. Supposing there were smaller forests at moderate rents,—I

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George
Malcolm.

don't mean moderate relatively to the value of the ground for other purposes, but I mean small deer forests, the rent of which would not be very high,—say £400 or £500 a year,—do you think a good number of areas of ground might not still be let at rentals of that sort?—Well, a forest of that size, corresponding to a rental of £400 or £500, would be really of very little use for sport. The deer would be too confined, and a sportsman going out to such a small area would immediately drive off the deer, and two or three days' sport would do it unless the forests were fenced, and in that case, the forests being so small, the deer would very soon deteriorate, and not be worth the while of any one to go after them; so I think very small deer forests are practically unworkable.

42434. You stated that there are still cases in which farms on being vacated by the sheep tenant may or must be let by the proprietor as deer forests. With a view to the nature and area of the ground which may in future be offered as deer forests, if such is the case, I would like you to state your opinion generally as to whether it would be safe or desirable for proprietors to treat this question entirely in an economic point of view with reference to their own interests,—that is to say with reference to getting a good rental,—or whether it is not desirable to treat the question in some degree with reference to the food supply of the country and with reference to the moral and political effect on the minds of the people?—Well, I think all three considerations ought to be taken into account, but I am not prepared to say that if a proprietor cannot let his sheep farm, and if practically it cannot be let as crofts, he is not quite justified in an economic sense as well as on other accounts in letting it as a deer forest.

42435. You have intimated an alternative which I have not heard before, that it might be desirable for proprietors to try whether it could be let out as crofts?—Well, I don't think it is feasible with regard to nearly the whole of the deer forests at any rate.

42436. But you think it would be desirable, from what you state, that an effort in that direction should be made?—I was only putting the hypothetical case,—that if he could not let the farm as a farm or as crofts, he was justified in letting it as a deer forest.

42437. *Mr Cameron.*—I think I understood you to mean, with reference to the future chances of letting additional ground as deer forests, that if you let the lower and what might be called in an economic sense the better portions of the land as deer forest, without surrounding them with fencing, the deer at the proper time for shooting would go away to the high ground, and the sportsman would be paying rent for very little result?—Quite so. That is experienced at present by the occupants of low ground forests. They cannot get a deer at the proper time to shoot, and they come back in winter when they are not fit to be shot.

42438. So, in point of fact, the proprietor of a low ground estate would be wintering and affording shelter to animals which would afford his neighbour on the higher ground sport?—Quite so.

42439. I should like to know whether you have verified the figures you have given, or consider them tolerably accurate, as to the number of sheep which would be available in the market, supposing all the present deer forests were turned into farms?—I have, and in order not to understate the number, I have given effect to certain considerations.

42440. As I understand it, the number of sheep you make out as displaced by deer forests is 335,900?—Yes.

42441. You deduct one-third as neither being bred nor wintered in forests?—Yes.

42442. Leaving 223,934?—Yes.

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42443. These are sheep bred upon ground at present under sheep farms, and that would be put upon the deer forests if again stocked with sheep?—Yes.

42444. Of those 223,934 you assume that one-half are three-year-old widders, and are those alone that could go to market?—Yes.

42445. And that leaves as the annual produce, on ground now occupied by forests, 111,967?—Yes.

42446. Have you compared that at all with the number of sheep that are raised in Great Britain?—I have compared it with the number as taken from the agricultural returns of last year.

42447. You have taken these tables from the agricultural returns?—Yes.

42448. And I see by those tables that the number of sheep in the United Kingdom in 1882 was 27,448,220?—Yes.

42449. And the number consumed during the year was 9,149,406?—Yes, that is assuming them to go to the butcher at three years, just as our Highland widdler sheep do; but in point of fact the low country sheep are slaughtered when they are perhaps two years old, and some of them at eighteen months; but I have not taken that into account, which would, of course, still more diminish the proportion of mutton coming off the deer forests to the whole meat supply of the kingdom.

42450. So, if your figures are accurate, whereas there were 9,149,406 sheep consumed that were bred in the United Kingdom, the number of sheep that could be consumed in one year from the deer forests as at present existing is 111,967?—That seems to be the case.

42451. And that is, of course, irrespective of all the mutton imported into the country, and the beef bred in the country and imported?—Yes. I have given that in the same table, and wrought out the relation of the numbers.

42452. In regard to the cost of wintering, the previous witness did not seem to say much from his own knowledge, but he stated he thought that fifteen or twenty years ago the price of wintering hoggs on turnips was 3d. or $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. each per week, and that it has not been raised since?—I think it could then be got cheaper than that, and now it is very much higher than what he stated—3d. or $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. each per week.

42453. What is your opinion of the relative cost of wintering hoggs on turnips fifteen or twenty years ago?—I think it is about three times the cost now compared with what it was then. I have had experience of it.

42454. I believe you managed two large sheep farms?—Yes, for a long time.

42455. Then Mr Macdonald stated that the grouse in the deer forest might yield a good deal of income; is that your experience?—No, I never heard of anybody who took the grouse into account in taking a deer forest.

42456. What I mean is, if they chose to take grouse into account, whether the ground occupied by deer forest does not consist more of long and green grass than of heather?—Yes, it is mostly all green ground and rocky, and some moss no doubt, but there is very little sound heather in forests as compared with sheep farms.

42457. There are exceptions,—for instance, Glenmorriston,—there might be very good grouse shooting on the forests there?—On the forests that have got low ground of course there is.

42458. And Glenmorriston no doubt is an exception. Good grouse shooting can be obtained in the forest there?—Yes, the forest that runs down to Loch Ness has good ground on it for grouse.

42459. Then, taking the forests all over, would you say that the rent

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George
Malcolm.

could be obtained from grouse and sheep would be equal to the rent given for the deer forest as it is?—No, larger rents are got for the ground as deer forest than as sheep farm and grouse combined.

42460. About the altitude of deer forests, did you hear Mr Macdonald's evidence on that point? He gave 700 feet as the highest altitude at which ground could be profitably utilised by crofters, and he stated that a considerable proportion of the deer forests in the Highlands was under that altitude?—I think there must be very little indeed so low as 700 feet. I know that the ground on our estate, and on all the forests I am acquainted with, runs, much of it, up to between 3000 and 4000 feet, and that high ground is really the best ground for deer foresting.

42461. In a reply which you gave to Mr Fraser-Mackintosh upon the subject of migration or emigration, I understood you to say you would not recommend the advance of public money for purposes of migration, but you would do so for emigration where it was desirable?—Yes.

42462. If it were found feasible to transfer the crofters from some of the very overcrowded holdings on land occupied either as deer forests or sheep farms, and if, in order to render that feasible, it were found necessary for the proprietor to go to considerable expense in building houses and reclaiming land, would you not think that Parliament might advance money as it did formerly during the potato famine, at a low rate of interest?—If it were put in this way—as an exceptional case for relief from clamant distress, I would not object to it, but if it were done merely to assist the proprietors in removing the people I do think it would be a risky thing to initiate. There would be other interests wanting the same thing done for them; but if it were done to relieve distress, I do think the Government would be justified in helping them.

42463. If it were done to bring about a healthier state of matters in the congested districts, and if it were found that the land could be profitably used by crofters, and that the only difficulty was the want of money on the part of the proprietors to reclaim these lands or build houses, would that not be a case where Parliament might be asked to advance money at a low rate of interest to enable those benefits to be carried through?—Quite so. I thought you meant advancing money merely for the purpose of removing the people from the north to cities.

42464. No, I mean removing them from overcrowded crofts to sheep farms or deer forests?—If that were determined on, it would be merely a question of advancing money as the Government has been doing all along under the *Lauds Improvement scheme*.

42465. But I don't know if the *Lands Improvement Commissioners* would lend money at the low rate of interest I contemplate?—It would depend on the rate of interest. I don't see anything wrong in Government doing that.

42466. *Sheriff Nicolson*.—You close your paper with the remark that 'what is called fixity of tenure would be a gross mistake if applied to Highland crofts,' and that it 'would infallibly prove to be a direct premium on indolence, and the foe of all enterprise and push in the great majority of cases';—what do you understand by the words (fixity of tenure)?—I understand it to mean a state of matters in which a tenant could not under any circumstances be removed from the land.

42467. Then do you form that opinion as to its proving a direct

premium on indolence from experience, or is it a theory?—Well, not from any personal experience, but from what has been experienced of it in other countries, and from knowledge of the effect that such a state of matters has upon the people generally.

42468. Have you seen the experiment tried anywhere on the property with which you are connected?—No.

42469. Then you cannot speak of it from practical knowledge?—No, I state it as my opinion.

42470. What is the ground of your opinion?—The ground of my opinion is that if you give people the opportunity of sitting still, without any spur to them to improve themselves, a certain class of people are very likely to take advantage of that and not help themselves.

42471. Is it no stimulus to a man, and does it not make him take more interest in the land and work it better, if he has the assurance that he will not be disturbed there while he does his duty?—It will have that effect on some people, I admit; but with a great many people, perhaps the majority, it would never have that effect.

42472. Then, of course, the possession of the land as proprietor would have a still worse effect, and make him still more indolent?—No, if the land belonged to himself, I think it might have a stimulating effect to do something for it.

42473. Then if it were possible that these people should become themselves proprietors of the land, that would have an inspiring effect upon them, and it would be worth their while to make the best of the land?—Yes, for a person takes an interest in what is his own absolute property more than if he had only a partial interest in it.

42474. Is it correct then to say that fixity of tenure would necessarily lead to indolence?—It is only my own opinion that it would be a mischief in the Highlands,—in present circumstances at all events. It would be better to grant leases.

42475. Is that not fixity to some extent?—No, I don't consider it fixity.

42476. Is it not fixity beyond a year?—It is fixity for a term of years.

42477. Would not a long lease be fixity of tenure so far?—I mean a lease of not more than nineteen years.

42478. Do you think the character of the Highland crofters is such that it is better for themselves that they should be tenants at will, and in a position to be evicted yearly on forty days' notice?—No, I don't say that. I think, on the whole, it would be better to give them leases, and to give them encouragement to improve their places under leases.

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ANGUS MACLENNAN, Sub-Factor, South Uist (40)—examined.

42479. *The Chairman.*—You desire to read a paper?—Yes. ‘*Extent.*’—These estates, consisting of the islands of South Uist, Benbecula, and Barra, and several small islands, contain 108,560 acres exclusive of foreshore, occupied as under:—By proprietrix and tacksmen, 71,535 acres; by crofters, 37,025 acres; total, 108,560 acres. Lady Cathcart

Angus
MacLennan.

INVERNESS.	' has been proprietrix for over five years. <i>Rental.</i> —The yearly rental per valuation roll is about	£8600
INVERNESS.	' And the taxes are—	
Angus MacLennan.	' Stipends,	£365
	' Property and income tax,	200
	' Land tax,	43
	' County rates,	120
	' Poor and school rates,	1000
		1728

' Leaving available balance of £6872
Tacksmen.—The tacksmen on the estate occupy about 71,535 acres, for which they pay a rent of £4139 sterling, being equal to about 1s. 2d. per acre. The following are the acreages and rentals on the different islands:—

	Acreage.	Rents.	Rents per acre.
' Benbecula farms,	5,477	£525	1s. 11d.
' South Uist farms,	51,344	2390	11d.
' Barra farms,	14,714	1224	1s. 8d.
' Nunton farm, Benbecula, is let at 2s. per acre; Eoligarry farm, Barra, at 1s. 9½d.; The Glebe farm, Barra, at 6s. 4d.; Allasdale farm, Barra, at 1s. 3½d.; Rulios farm, Barra, at 1s. 5d.; Vatersay farm, Barra, at 3s. 5d.			
' Nunton, when last let, gave an increase in rent of 16 per cent.; Ormicleat, 85 per cent.; Bornish, 80 per cent.; Vatersay, 23 per cent.; Kilbride, 25 per cent.; Milton, 16½ per cent. A "sounding" of the tacksmen's stock was taken this year, when it was found that a tacksman kept about £10 worth of stock for every pound of rent he paid. Their stock were valued as follows:—Horses £12, the crofters' horses being valued at at £6; cattle £12, crofter's cattle £7, 5s.; sheep £1, crofters' sheep 13s.			
' On the basis of the above valuations, a tacksman and a crofter keep the same value of stock per pound of rent. There are little or no arrears due by the several tacksmen on the estate. <i>Crofters.</i> —There are upwards of 970 crofters on the property, occupying about 37,025 acres, for which a rent is paid of £4030, or 2s. 2d. per acre.			

	Acreage.	Rent.	Rate per acre.
' Benbecula crofts,	11,637	£1219	2s. 1d.
' South Uist,	17,912	2134	2s. 4d.
' Barra,	7,476	677	1s. 9d.

' It may be noted that Mingulay crofters pay 9d. per acre, and are nine years in arrears; Bernera crofters pay 11d., and are five years in arrears; Eriskay crofters pay 1s. 7d., and are seven years in arrears. Taking an average each tenant has about 38 acres of land (including his share of the commony) for which he pays a rent of about £4 or £4, 5s. *Crofters' Arrears.*—The crofters' arrears, when Lady Cathcart came into possession five years ago, amounted to £8690. Since then, arrears have been struck off, amounting to over £200. The arrears are now over £10,700, that is an annual loss of over £400 in arrears of rents. The crofters generally pay their rents by *cash* or by *labour*, the *largest* share being by *labour*. During the past five years a sum of over £10,900 has been placed to the credit of the crofters' rental accounts for labour, viz.:—

' In 1878,	£2,442	For kelp manufacture,	£3,590
,, 1879,	2,948		
,, 1880,	2,182		
,, 1881,	1,455		
,, 1882,	1,873		
			£10,900

' In all, £10,900

The crofters rents as already stated, are £4030, less annual arrears £400, leaving £3630, which is paid by labour £2200, by cash £1430, = £3630. It is thus found that—1. The average rent charged upon a crofter is 2s. 2d. per acre; 2. The average rent paid by a crofter is 1s. 11d. per acre; 3. This payment is made by—estate labour credited 1s. 2d.; cash 9d.—in all, 1s. 11d. per acre. On the whole property the arrears are equal to fully over $2\frac{1}{2}$ years' rents. The following shows the comparative arrears on the estate of Benbecula in 1862 and 1882:—Tenants under £3 rent were two years in arrears in 1862 and five years arrears in 1882; tenants under £5 rent were $1\frac{1}{2}$ year in arrears in 1862 and $2\frac{1}{2}$ years in arrears in 1882; tenants under £10 rent were $1\frac{1}{2}$ year in arrears in 1862 and $1\frac{1}{2}$ year in arrears in 1882; tenants over £10 were $\frac{1}{2}$ year in arrears in 1862 and $\frac{1}{2}$ year in arrears in 1882. On the estate of Benbecula the arrears in 1862 were £1510. In 1882 they amounted to £2423, with the same rents. This increase of £910 arrears took place almost entirely on the various tenants under £5 of yearly rent, and more especially under £3 of annual rent. The rental of the estates in 1862 was £7500, and in 1882 it was about £8600, being an increase of £1100. The following statement shows that this increase arises almost entirely on the rents of the tacks-men's holdings, hotels, and fishing stations, only a small proportion of the increase falling to the crofters:—

	Rents, 1862.	Rents, 1882.	Increase, 1882.	Decrease, 1882.
Benbecula—				
Nunton, . . .	£350 0 0	£405 0 0	£55 0 0	...
The Hill, . . .	45 0 0	50 0 0	5 0 0	...
South Uist—				
Drimore, . . .	115 0 0	122 0 0	7 0 0	...
Grogary, . . .	60 0 0	52 10 0	...	7 10 0
Dremisdale, . . .	270 0 0	282 10 0	12 10 0	...
Ormiclate, . . .	220 0 0	408 0 0	188 0 0	...
Bornish, . . .	86 0 0	155 0 0	69 0 0	...
Milton, . . .	500 0 0	582 10 0	82 10 0	...
Kilbride, . . .	160 0 0	200 0 0	40 0 0	...
Barra—				
Bayherivah, . . .	40 0 0	70 0 0	30 0 0	...
Rulios, . . .	19 0 0	19 0 0	...	...
Bouchernish, . . .	30 0 0	25 10 0	...	4 10 0
Vatersay, . . .	350 0 0	430 0 0	80 0 0	...
	£2245 0 0	£2802 0 0	£569 0 0	£12 0 0
		2245 0 0	12 0 0	
Net increase on Tacks, . . .		£557 0 0		
Increase on House rents, . . .			£557 0 0	
Hotels, inns, &c., . . .			70 0 0	
Fishing revenue and piers, . . .			120 0 0	
Crofters' rents, . . .			258 0 0	
			105 0 0	
Total increase, . . .			£1100 0 0	

The increase of crofters' rents in twenty years is thus only a little over £100, but the extent of land occupied by the crofters in 1882 is greater than the extent occupied by them in 1862. *Cottars*.—There are upwards of 400 cottars on the Long Island property of Lady Cathcart. They pay

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Angus MacLennan.

INVERNESS. ' neither rates nor burdens of any kind, but keep a valuable stock of horses, cattle, and sheep. On the estate of South Uist alone 205 cottars

INVERNESS. ' keep the following stock :—92 horses; 140 cattle, above one year; 84

Angus ' cattle, under one year; 518 sheep; 46 swine,—being valued at £2556,

MacLennan. ' as large a stock as would be kept by a tacksman paying upwards of

' £250 rent. *Emigration*.—In spring last seven families emigrated from

' Benbecula to Manitoba. They emigrated on the following conditions :—

' 1. Their effects were taken over by Lady Gordon Cathcart at valuation;

' 2. They got an advance of £100 each; 3. They got 160 acres of

' free land on their arrival. The sum advanced by Lady Cathcart

' amounted to £1500, for seven families, as follows :—

' Houses,	£116	9	1
' Furniture and implements,	158	2	1
' Stock and crop,	406	4	7
' Permanent improvements,	29	12	7
' Manure and unexhausted manure,	36	6	0
' Timber,	17	11	6
	764	5	10
' Advances,	700	0	0
	£1464	5	10

' Each crofter (who emigrated) had therefore a capital of about £110

' sterling. Most of the emigrants' effects have already been realised by

' Lady Cathcart, but owing to many of the effects having been highly

' valued it is expected there will be a loss on the transaction of nearly

' £100 sterling. Most of the crofts vacated by these emigrants were

' added to neighbouring crofters' holdings. *Craigstrom and Lelstrom*.—

' A sheep farm of 1100 acres was offered to twenty-five crofters in spring

' as a club farm, at a rent of £2 each. The Liniclate, Torlum, and

' Greminish crofters wanted it as an addition to their commony. The

' objection to the club farm was caused by (1.) Want of capital among

' the tenants; (2.) Rent said to be too high. Since then (May 1883),

' an offer of the old rent has been received from one of the crofters, but

' has not yet been accepted. *Improvements*.—Between 1839 and 1865 a

' sum of £32,000 was expended by the proprietor. Between 1865 and

' 1877 a sum of £5000 was expended, and during the past five

' years Lady Cathcart has expended upwards of £27,000 = £64,000.

' There has thus been a sum of £64,000 expended by the Gordon

' family on estate improvements and repairs.

' *Statement of Permanent Improvements* executed at the expense of Lady

' Gordon Cathcart on her Long Island Estates during the five years

' ending 1882 :—

' Harbours—						
' Lochboisdale,	£3050					
' Lochskipport,	1950					
' Castlebay,	2000					
	£7,000					

' Hotels—						
' Lochboisdale,	2300					
' Castlebay,	1500					
' Gramsdale,	820					
' Northbay,	90					
' Carnan,	100					
	4,810					

Carry forward, £11,810

Houses—	Brought forward,	£11,810	INVER-
‘ House for doctor,	£750		NESS.
‘ ‘ ground officer,	260		—
	—	1,010	INVERNESS.
Farms, &c.—			
‘ Ormicleat,	400		Angus
‘ Kilbride,	20		MacLennan.
‘ Redbank croft,	100		
	—	520	
Roads—			
‘ Lochskipport road,	1780		
‘ Township roads,	1890		
	—	3,670	
‘ Drainage, &c.—			
‘ Benbecula drains and ditches,	860		
‘ Grogary drains,	200		
‘ Floodgates,	940		
‘ Sandbanks and embankments,	1040		
	—	3,040	
Cottages—			
‘ South Uist, 8,	1200		
‘ Barra, 4,	600		
	—	1,800	
‘ Fencing,	510		
‘ Benbecula school,	145		
‘ Askernish, Grogary, and Nunton houses,	1,060		
‘ Church repairs,	30		
‘ Brickwork,	930		
‘ Land reclamation, &c,	1,200		
‘ General works,	1,450		
	—		
Total, £27,175			

‘ *Lochboisdale Hotel* was built in 1879, at a cost of £2300. The rent is £40 a year, being equivalent to an interest of $1\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. on Lady Cathcart's outlay. Additions have been made this year which will cost over £500. *Castlebay Hotel* cost £1500 in 1879. Present rent is £102, 10s., former rent was £27. Interest on outlay is 5 per cent. *Gramsdale Inn* cost £820 in 1879. Rent is £7, 10s., being interest of 1 per cent on outlay. *Lochboisdale Pier* was erected in 1879, at a cost of £3050. After paying harbour officials' wages there is a net free income of about £60. Interest on outlay is about 2 per cent. *Castlebay Pier* was built in 1880, at a cost of £2000. After paying harbour officials, there is a net free return of £45, being equal to $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on outlay. *Lochskipport Pier* was built in 1879 at a cost of £1950. Was erected as a convenient port for the north district of South Uist, and for Grogary House. The revenue is *nil*. *Torlum School*.—This school was built about fifteen years ago, at an expense of £600. An addition was made in 1876, which cost about £180. During the past five years about £145 has been expended on improvements and repairs in connection with the school, and over and above this its management, including payment of teacher and assistant, costs over £150 annually. *Telegraph*.—The extension of the telegraph from Lochmaddy to Lochboisdale was executed in 1880, and has already cost the proprietor £246, 9s. 2d. *Encouragement to Fishing Industry*.—Lady Cathcart has advanced the following loans to fishermen:—1. £30, which

INVERNESS. ' has been repaid, after some trouble ; 2. £100 repaid, with interest ; 3. £600 (to three crews) still outstanding. *Readjustment of Crofts.*—The expense of resurveying, and reallotting the crofts on the estates, including work in connection with the granting of leases, will be very heavy. It has already cost Lady Cathcart upwards of £650. *Lochkipport Road* was formed in 1877 and 1878. It cost about £1780 sterling, and is about five miles in length. The whole expense consisted of charges for cartages and labour, both of which were executed by tenants and others on the estate. *Benbecula Brickwork* was built in 1879, for the manufacture of bricks and drain pipes, at a cost of about £350 sterling. It gives employment to a few men. Since its erection Lady Cathcart has paid about £800 sterling for labour in connection with the work. *Fencing and Planting.*—During the past five years, a sum of £510 sterling has been expended on fencing. Most of the fencing was erected in Benbecula, about Liniclate macheir, Nunton Road, and Dunganachy. (The fencing about Dr Black's house, including garden, wall, &c., cost about £100 sterling.) The experiment of planting was tried, but with small apparent success. It cost upwards of £850 sterling, including fencing around the plantations. *Home-Spun Cloth Industry.*—This industry has been carried on simply to give employment to the people. It does not pay, on the contrary it is a source of loss on the estate. A large quantity of cloth is at present on hand, and cannot be disposed of. *Stocking Industry.*—This industry is in the same position as the home-spun cloth. Thousands of pairs of socks (cost 1s. 6d.) and stockings (cost 4s.) are on hand, and cannot be disposed of. There will be a loss to the estate on this industry.'

42480. *Professor Mackinnon.*—From your own knowledge of the country, which would you say, acre for acre, take it all over, is the more valuable ground,—the ground in the hands of the crofters or the ground in the hands of the big farmers?—Well, they are much the same, take it all in all.

42481. Which pay the bigger rent?—Well, they are nearly equal.

42482. By the acreage the crofter pays the bigger rent?—It is something like 2s.

42483. It is 1s. 2d. for the large tenants and for the smaller tenants about 2s. Then you would say that, acre for acre, there is more of the crofters' ground arable than of the larger farms?—Yes.

42484. The number of crofters is 970; can you tell me what is the number of large farmers—deducting professional men, such as clergymen and doctors?—Eight separate tenants.

42485. You state there are 400 cottars in addition to these 970 crofters?—Yes.

42486. And I suppose the cottars are upon the crofters' ground and not upon the big farmers' ground?—Yes.

42487. And they are, of course, a serious burden upon the crofters?—Yes.

42488. In the statement you read of the money expended for the last five years, during Lady Gordon Cathcart's time, you give a total of £27,000; does that come up to about the rental of the estates during that time?—It is over it.

42489. So there is actually expended upon the property more than its annual income?—Yes, a good deal more.

42490. That is hardly a thing you could expect to be done every year?—No.

42491. In the very large sum given for drainage have you any idea of the amount expended upon the big and small holdings relatively?—No.

**Angus
MacLennan.**

It was done before my time, and I cannot speak of that. I think the most of it is on the crofters' ground. What has been done this summer has been entirely on the crofters' ground.

42492. Of course, the large sum upon piers and hotels is more of a general kind?—Yes.

42493. Now, seven families, you say, emigrated last year upon what would appear to be very liberal terms on the part of the proprietrix; are the same prospects held out to those who have applied for going away this year?—No, it could scarcely be expected that the same prospect could be offered by any proprietor to a number of people. I have no doubt, some assistance will be given.

42494. I understand Lady Gordon Cathcart's agent and commissioner are just now over in Canada seeing about the people?—Yes.

42495. And there has been a very encouraging letter from the people?—Yes.

42496. Have they come under any obligation to repay any of that money given to them?—Yes, I believe they have.

42497. When they can conveniently do so?—Yes.

42498. Their effects were taken over by Lady Gordon Cathcart, but fortunately that has been realised by the incoming tenant?—Yes.

42499. Who got the land they left?—It was given to the neighbouring crofters.

42500. There were no new holdings made?—No.

42501. And I suppose that is the policy meant to be carried out in so far as it can be carried out?—Yes.

42502. But the crofts are admittedly too small?—Yes.

42503. In addition to enlarging the holdings in that way, are you aware whether there is any actual enlargement of them by taking from the surface of the large farms, or whether there is any intention to do so?—I am not aware there is any intention to do so.

42504. But as opportunities offer, to consolidate the smaller crofts?—Precisely.

42505. At the present moment, upon these estates, as upon most we have visited, there is a very great and wide gulf between the small tenant and the large farmer?—Yes.

42506. And so far as you know the policy on this estate is to endeavour to bridge over that gulf?—Yes.

42507. Not by enlarging the crofting area, but by consolidating it?—Yes.

42508. Will you give an opinion of your own upon that point?—In my opinion that is their only salvation.

42509. Are you prepared to give an opinion whether it would be a wise policy, in addition to any consolidation you can make by removal of the people, that there should also be some increase of the area of these comparatively small holdings?—Well, there are so many people that really it is only putting off the evil day; and so far as my experience goes there is no salvation for these people except by emigration.

42510. Admitting there are upon the estates a greater number of people than could be maintained there permanently in comfort, do you think some of those large farms in the hands of those people, instead of having an average rent of £300 or £400, might with advantage be broken up into holdings of £50 and £100?—That might be done, if there were a chance of doing it.

42511. As a matter of wise policy?—Yes.

42512. Do you think from your knowledge of the means of the people, that there are many or even a few of them who would be able to take such

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INVERNESS. a holding, supposing they got it?—There may be a few, but very few, I believe.

INVERNESS. 42513. Of course, there could be only a few such holdings?—Yes.

Angus MacLennan. 42514. So that if there were such holdings on the property it is possible you might get tenants on the property for them?—You might get a few of them.

42515. And you also admit that if it were practicable that would be a very desirable class of holdings to have?—No doubt.

42516. About this reclaimed ground, which was done at very large expense, is it still in the hands of the proprietrix?—Yes, at present.

42517. Do you know anything about the ultimate intention with regard to it?—It is intended to be given out as lots to crofters.

42518. What size of lots?—Perhaps from six to fifteen acres.

42519. So far as you have been able to form a general idea of the place since you went there, what minimum rent of a croft, as crofts go in that place, do you think would maintain a family in comparative comfort, with hard work and industry?—From £10 to £30 crofts, I would say.

42520. You would not like to put a crofter upon a holding of less than £10 in that place, where I suppose the rents are not very high?—No.

42521. Do you think that a holding of £10, as rents go on the property, could maintain a family that would work and be industrious?—It could scarcely maintain them without fishing.

42522. But with the adjunct of fishing it would?—Yes.

42523. And it is crofts from that size up to £30 or so, that you are endeavouring to establish?—Yes. I may mention that I think, if some people were leaving these islands, a Free Church minister or priest should go along with them. That would encourage some of them to leave,—if they got a clergyman of their own denomination. I know that from a number of the people.

42524. You think they would be more easily induced to go, if the clergymen would go along with them?—Yes.

42525. Do you find that, even on the favourable terms that have been offered, there is a reluctance to go?—Well, some of them are willing to go, but others appear to have a reluctance to go.

42526. So far as you are aware, the policy of the proprietrix just now to improve the condition of the people who remain on the estate is mainly to be carried out by the emigration of some?—Yes.

42527. And not by the enlargement of the area of small holdings upon the estate?—Quite so.

42528. *The Chairman.*—You said that this ground which Lady Gordon Cathcart has taken in herself was to be appropriated to small holdings?—Yes, by and by.

42529. Was that ground taken out of the common pasture or out of the arable?—Entirely out of the common pasture, except two fields which were taken out of some crofts.

42530. I observe, in one of the letters from people who have gone abroad, the writer said that the thing they missed most in their new settlement in Manitoba was the want of a clergyman and a church?—I believe that.

42531. Is there any intention, do you know, on the part of the Free Church to send out a missionary?—I have not heard anything of that, but I think they should do it.

42532. You think that would be an encouragement to the people to go?—I am sure of it.

42533. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You have not been very long in South Uist?—Not very long.

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42534. How long is it since you went?—About seven months.

42535. You were formerly under-factor for Baillie of Dochfour, at Kingussie?—Yes.

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42536. You were there during our late visit to South Uist?—Yes.

42537. And, if I mistake not, Mr Macdonald, the principal commissioner spoke at considerable length at each of the three places we visited?—Yes.

42538. Do you recollect I asked him, in consequence of the time he occupied, rather to the disadvantage of the local people, to come to Inverness, where I might cross-examine him?—I did not take notice of that.

42539. But he is not here?—He is not home from America yet.

42540. In point of fact, he was not cross-examined?—I think he will be at the Edinburgh meeting.

42541. With regard to the money that was laid out on the improvements in South Uist, was it all given to people belonging to the estate?—Most of it was.

42542. Were there not a good number of people imported from a distance?—There was a contractor imported who gave work to the local people in building hotels.

42543. Were tradesmen brought from the east coast to build, while native masons and joiners got no work given to them?—Not since I went there—not to my knowledge. They were all local tradesmen that were employed.

42544. Could this have occurred before you went?—It might have occurred; I cannot speak to that.

42545. Although those improvements were intended for the benefit of the estate?—Surely.

42546. Can you answer this question, whether the wages, or some of the wages that were given to the people at those improvements were kept back for the purpose of paying off their arrears, or whether they were paid down their full money week by week?—Some of it may have been kept off for rent; but I think most of the arrears are standing still all over the property.

42547. Do you recollect that Mr Macdonald made a public statement that anything which was stated before the Commissioners would not prejudice directly or indirectly the delegate giving evidence?—Yes.

42548. Are you aware that that has been acted upon?—Yes, I am aware it has been acted upon.

42549. Are you aware of cases or a case where a person has lost the favour of the proprietrix in consequence of giving evidence?—No, I am not aware of it.

42550. Do you believe there is such a case?—I don't believe there is such a thing.

42551. You never heard it before?—I never heard there was anything of the kind, because since I went there we have never changed anything. Everything has gone on the same as before.

42552. The proprietrix has been in the habit of coming for the last few years to visit the estate?—Yes.

42553. Supposing, then, in previous years she was in the habit of showing some attention or kindness to a person, and that person gave evidence to us, and this year the favour of the proprietrix has been entirely withdrawn from that individual; are you aware of such a case?—Well, there was nothing done in that way. We got a staff of game-

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keepers into the island, and the fishing has been stopped from everybody except those who get permission. Now, that was not done for any reason whatever. It was done because we got a new staff of keepers and everybody fished, and a good deal of poaching went on, and for that reason the fishing was stopped from all and sundry. Some may think it was done for a purpose, but I am bound to say it was not.

42554. You are a Highlander yourself?—Yes, I am.

42555. And have every good feeling towards your fellow countrymen?—Yes, my sympathies are very much with the crofters.

42556. What do you think of the people now that you are among them?—I think that if they were let alone they are a decent enough class of people, and I would not be afraid of keeping the South Uist people if they were left alone.

42557. You recollect the Roman Catholic priest, Mr M'Call, making a complaint at Lochdar of the number of squatters upon the crofts?—Yes.

42558. Have you taken any steps in regard to that?—Yes.

42559. What do you propose to do to relieve the crofters of that great burden?—That is the difficulty, because these squatters are sons-in-law and brothers, and so on. They went there with the consent of the tenants. They are all related together, and what to do with them is the question. I don't know what to do with them unless some of them emigrate.

42560. You stated the proprietrix is disposed to encourage emigration; if the people should emigrate at all would it not be better to emigrate some of these squatters than to put decent crofters away?—Well, we are trying to do that.

JOHN PETER, Factor for Lord Lovat (63)—examined.

John Peter.

42561. *The Chairman.*—Have you a statement to make?—I have a statement to make as to the condition and management of the smaller or crofter tenants on the Lovat estates in the districts of the Aird, Stratherrick, and Fort-Augustus, and also Morar on the west coast. Having seen so much diversity of opinion expressed before the Royal Commission on this subject, I have been induced to make the following statement on the success attending the management of the crofter population in the districts above referred to, as originated by the late Lord Lovat upwards of fifty years ago. His Lordship on coming into the personal management of his Inverness-shire estates in 1827, to which he had succeeded some time previously when a minor, found his crofter tenantry in a very reduced and helpless condition, and the cultivation of their holdings carried on in a very rude and superficial manner, many not even knowing how to handle a spade or a pick, and consequently the returns from their possessions afforded them a very scant means of living. The first step taken by his Lordship to improve matters was to find work for the people, and to teach them how to do it, and for this purpose he brought experienced workmen from his Aberdeenshire estate to instruct them, with the result that they soon became as good labourers as were to be found anywhere, and as able-bodied, through regular work and the better means of living, through the good and regular wages they earned. The next step was to have all the property surveyed and laid out in regular divisions, so as to be

' managed most economically, both in working and draining and fencing ; the size of the crofts ranging from five up to fifty acres to suit the circumstances of the people going into them. At the same time, all grazings were cut off, as his Lordship found it was utterly hopeless to get any improvements effected while they possessed such, the object being to get each tenant's interest wholly centred in the reclamation and improvement of the land he had individual possession of. On the lands being so laid out, proper estate rules and regulations were framed, and nineteen years' leases granted to every crofter, however small—except to a few on the west coast to be referred to later on—in which leases every crofter became bound to improve one tenth-part yearly of the muir ground attached to his croft from the beginning of his lease, by trenching 18 inches deep, clearing, draining, and liming, the trenching being done in the winter months when no other work was available ; the muir ground being given to them at a nominal rent of 1s. per acre, and on being reclaimed as above stated, became worth to the tenant from 15s. to 20s. per acre during the remaining years of his lease ; and so well have these leases been appreciated by the crofters, that with the help given by the landlord in making roads almost to every croft, and all the open and outfall drains for the tenants, the arable ground on their holdings on the average has been doubled, and the crofters becoming the possessors of considerable holdings in many cases by the end of the first nineteen years ; and some of the most successful, where the opportunity occurred by some crofters dying out, or removing from some special cause, getting two or more crofts conjoined, and made a small farm, and some giving up their crofts and taking a farm from Lord Lovat as it became vacant, as a reward for their labours. It may be further stated, in support of the success of the system, that fresh leases are always desired before the old are expired ; and even in the recent depressed times, and bad seasons, when it was thought they would prefer holding by the year at the old rents, and not improving more for a time, it was found not to be so, and as soon as leases were obtained, fresh improvements in reclaiming and draining were set about with energy. It may be here mentioned that, in regard to the extent of ground improved yearly, Lord Lovat did not insist on one-tenth yearly as prescribed by the lease, provided every tenant was in his Lordship's opinion doing as much as he could. It may also here be mentioned that Lord Lovat, in the leases herein referred to, reserved power to remove any tenant on giving four months' notice previous to any Whitsunday term, and paying him for his improvements as specified in their leases, which payment is also made if the tenant gives up of his own accord, the object being to get quit of any one who would not do anything towards the improvements agreed for, or who had proved himself a disagreeable neighbour to the other crofters, or was dishonest, or a smuggler, sheep-stealer, and such like ; but so little is this provision been acted on, that there are not ten cases during the last thirty or forty years among a tenantry of 500, and the crofters look on the leases as quite good for nineteen years, irrespective of the clause here referred to. All leases are made out at the estate office, and granted to the whole tenantry, large or small, without the slightest charge for them. Another strict rule on the Lovat estates may be here mentioned, that no squatting is allowed, any crofter taking any family to live on his croft beyond his own, being served with notice of removal at the first term ; nor can any of his own family marry and remain on the croft, except the eldest son, if his parents are aged and require assistance. In giving this short account of the management on the Lovat estates in regard to the crofter tenantry,

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' it would be most incomplete if another cause of the success was not
' specially mentioned,—the personal intimacy both the late and the
' present proprietor have always had with their tenantry down to the
' smallest crofter, whose interests were as carefully looked after as
' the largest tenant on the estate, and indeed more so as being less able to
' maintain their rights ; and it was the crofters' pride to show their im-
' provements to their landlord, on his periodical visits to their several
' crofts, and which was usually rewarded by a helping hand from his
' Lordship in the next improvement they would point out as to be done ;
' at other times it was the estate office the crofters came to meet their
' landlord, and obtain help in connection with contemplated improve-
' ments, all these helps being irrespective of any lease obligations, and no
' repayment ever asked in respect thereof. *Crofters' Houses.*—The
' arrangement in this matter has been that the landlord gave the wood
' and the tenants put them up. In early times these houses were built
' with dry stone and turf, the roofs resting on Highland couples, and
' thatched with divot or turf first, and over this heather or broom ; these
' were called black houses. They usually had no chimney or window
' beyond a hole in the roof and in the turf wall to let out the smoke and
' in the light, or so much of it ; and frequently the cow was in one end of
' the house. These houses would barely see out a lease, and have now
' given place to what are called white houses, from the walls being built
' with stone and lime entirely, and with gables and chimneys at each
' end, and the landlord giving manufactured wood for them at a nominal
' charge to prevent its waste, and if properly applied, coming in the end
' to be given free ; and from the difficulty of now getting thatch of any
' kind, the landlord is occasionally giving slates or sharing the cost of
' slates, by which the tenant has them as cheaply covered as with a common
' heath or straw thatch, and permanently, while the latter is so frequently
' requiring repair or renewal. *Meliorations.*—On the Lovat estates no
' meliorations on houses or otherwise are allowed to arise, nor has been
' for the past half century and more. Whatever outlays are incurred are
' by the landlord, or the landlord and tenant jointly, which is the usual way,
' and in this case the tenant gets his holding at a rent that extinguishes
' his claim by the termination of his lease. *Morar.*—In regard to the
' crofters on the west coast property, a different cause has been pursued,
' the country and circumstances being so different. There being no extent
' of ground there under the old arrangement of the farms that could be
' improved, and the small portion that was improvable, the late Lord
' Lovat brought it in at his own cost in the years of the destitution in
' 1846–47, and gave it to the crofters ; yet the extent was very small, and
' only served to grow potatoes, and some hay and oats for the bestial
' during winter ; the arable ground on each croft being only from two to
' six acres, with a share of the adjoining hill as a common grazing to put
' their cows on during summer, when the crops are on the ground, and on
' the crops being reaped the cows and their followers are brought down
' to the crofts, and the hill ground is let as wintering for sheep, or grazed
' by a few sheep belonging to the crofters in fixed shares. Leases in
' this case have not been desired, the crofters having made no outlay on
' the ground. Their chief business is fishing, and the crofts are only for
' a house, with the keep of one or two cows and their followers for milk,
' and potato ground for their families. In addition to the reclaiming the
' ground by the late Lord Lovat in 1846 and 1847, a large outlay was
' also incurred at that time by his Lordship in making roads and a pier at
' Mallaig, without claiming 1s. of the destitution money, the landlord
' always providing for the people on his estates entirely at his own cost.

' The present Lord Lovat has divided a portion of a farm on coming out of lease among a portion of his crofter people there who were over-crowded, and given them leases similar to the crofters around Hennfort and other places, but there has not yet been time to know whether the system will be equally successful there on the west coast.'

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42562. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie*.—Has there been a very great extent of land reclaimed since the late Lord Lovat came of age in 1827?—Matters were not arranged till about 1838 or 1839.

42563. Since that time has there been a great extent of land reclaimed by the crofters?—Yes, upwards of 1000 acres.

42564. They have received no actual compensation in the shape of money for that—only leases?—Leases, and assistance in providing them with roads and drainage; open drains and outfalls.

42565. And material for houses?—And material for houses.

42566. You mentioned that part of Lord Lovat's system was to cut off the grazings?—Yes.

42567. Had these crofters common grazings before that?—Some of them had.

42568. Did their cattle graze on the hill pasture?—They did, I understand. It was before my time.

42569. And you understand that was not found beneficial to the cultivation of the lands?—No; his Lordship told me it was utterly impossible to get improvements done, when they had a piece of grazing ground to idle their time upon in place of devoting their energies to the cultivation of the ground.

42570. Then, as a first step to improvement it was found necessary to cut off the grazing land?—Yes.

42571. Do you think that would have been necessary if the grazing had been held independently and not in common?—I think so. As long as a crofter has a piece of ground in the way of grazing he will go and idle his time looking after a few sheep, in place of devoting his energies to what would pay him much better.

42572. What is the size of croft to which you now refer?—Perhaps from 20 to 30 acres, on an average. Here are some cases—14, 19, 21, 28, 23, 17, 32, and so on.

42573. Have the crofters who occupy these lands of 15 to 25 acres any other means of employment?—It depends on the locality where they are situated. In some places they earn a great deal by carting and such work as that. At other places where they are too distant they must employ all their time on their croft.

42574. Is it your experience that a croft of fifteen or twenty acres is sufficient to afford a good subsistence to a tenant, though he has no other means of earning money?—It depends on the croft, but I should say it would be too small to earn a living without other assistance.

42575. What size of croft would you consider sufficient to enable a family to live without assistance?—From twenty to thirty acres.

42576. I think you mentioned as evidence of the success of this system that a number of the crofters had grown into farmers?—Yes.

42577. Can you mention any particular cases where persons have begun with moorland and have held possessions of fifty acres afterwards?—Yes, there are two in Kilmorack. One was Neil Thomson, who died the other day. He took in sixty or seventy acres altogether, and improved it.

42578. Do any of the crofters, when other crofts are vacant, offer for larger crofts?—Yes, there was one man who was a contractor, and one way or another he made money, and he took one of these larger farms at £50.

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42579. And you think you have sufficient evidence that those crofters who have employed themselves solely in reclaiming the land have made money by it?—Yes, in many cases they have. Of course, it depends on whether a man is of economical habits.

42580. Have there been any cases of failure?—No, very few indeed.

42581. And as to those that have occurred, do you think they are due to the character of the man or the misfortune of being settled down on a bad bit of land?—Well, I hardly know a single case of failure. We have had a few cases in my time,—six or seven or eight,—but entirely from turning out bad characters, and being guilty of offences such as sheep stealing or smuggling.

42582. They have not devoted themselves to their proper work?—Certainly.

42583. What elevation is the land on which these crofters have been settled?—The elevations are very very various.

42584. What is the maximum elevation where it has been found successful?—I should think up to about 500 or 600 feet.

42585. You have heard the evidence to-day, and you have heard explained what is to be done with sheep farms when tenants will not offer for them?—Yes.

42586. Do you think there are many of these sheep farms that could be peopled by crofters?—I don't.

42587. For what reason?—Because most of those sheep grazings are hill ground, and could not pay. I think it would be quite a mistake to attempt it.

42588. They are not lands that could be profitably subjected to the processes of reclamation adopted by the late Lord Lovat?—Not at all. There is not the amount of arable ground that would warrant it at all.

42589. But I understand it was not arable ground on which this crofting population were settled?—I mean, that could be made arable.

42590. You don't think the land on those hill lands could be made suitable?—I don't think so, owing to the position of it, and the elevation of it being so steep.

42591. *Mr Cameron.*—You said that on these small farms or crofts, on the east coast, it was found desirable that the crofters should not possess pasture in common, and that they should be self-contained, each man having his own pasture to himself; is that in your opinion also the case as regards crofters on the west coast, or do you draw any distinction between the two?—On the west coast there is very little ground that could be improved, and we have not had experience. Lord Lovat was trying it about two years ago on a small piece of ground he had.

42592. I was not talking so much about improvable or non-improvable land, but of the system of crofters having common hill grazing or grazing individually on this new crofting farm, which Lord Lovat is seeking to establish on the west coast. Do you propose that each crofter there shall have his own grazing to himself, or do you propose that there shall be a hill grazing common to the whole?—Each one to have his own croft, and no common hill grazing at all.

42593. I suppose the hill grazing on the west coast, acre for acre, is not by any means so good as the grazing which the east coast crofters would have?—I don't know. It would depend very much upon the locality. Some grazings on the west coast would be quite as good as the grazings on the east coast. You are speaking of hill grazings?

42594. I am speaking of permanent pasture, as you would call it on the east coast?—We have not such a thing among crofters on the east

coast. If they have six or seven acres, we don't look upon that as it stands, it is only available for improvement.

INVERNESS.
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42595. What I wish to point to is this, that on the west coast the quality of the ground is such, that if each crofter required to have as much land as would summer his beasts, it would involve rather a considerable number of acres, if it was to himself alone?—It would.

INVERNESS.
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John Peter.

42596. And therefore, perhaps, as they would require to be fenced, it would add to the expense of the croft?—Yes, much beyond the value of it.

42597. Don't you think that, on the west coast, the system of common grazing might be more desirable than on the other side of the country?—Except in the case of what is necessary for providing the families with milk—two cows' keep. I don't think it is at all desirable they should go in for grazings as farmers. In my experience small grazings have never been successful at all, even the grazings of small farms. There is too much time lost in looking after a few beasts to recompense the tenant.

42598. What size are these crofts on the west coast that you propose?—About the same as those on the east coast—about twenty to thirty acres.

42599. How much of the thirty acres would be arable?—Perhaps half of it.

42600. And, of course, each farm would be separately enclosed?—Yes, with a wire fence.

42601. How far has the experiment been carried up till now?—It is only two years since it was done.

42602. Are the crofts occupied?—Yes.

42603. How many are there?—About ten.

42604. Is Lord Lovat satisfied with the result of the experiment?—Up to the present time he is.

42605. And are the crofters pleased?—Quite.

42606. Have they paid their rents regularly?—Yes, they have paid quite regularly up to this time.

42607. There is not much congestion of population about Morar?—Not much. There are not many tenants there altogether.

42608. *The Chairman.*—You stated that under the system introduced by the proprietor or his predecessors, about 1000 acres have been reclaimed, and made arable by the instrumentality of the small tenants; what rental do you think the land was worth before it was touched by the improvers?—Very little indeed.

42609. Would it be 3s. an acre?—About that.

42610. Then that is £150, multiplied by thirty years' purchase, which would make the land worth at that time about £4500, assuming it to be all done at once?—Yes.

42611. Now what is the present worth of the 1000 acres in rental?—Perhaps from £800 to £1000—say £800; it is not all equally good.

42612. You think it may be fairly stated that this improved area is let, or could be let, without pressure at £800?—I do.

42613. And that at thirty years' purchase is £24,000. Well, the capital value of the land has been raised from £4500 to £24,000?—Yes.

42614. That is to say the value of this block of property, so to speak, has been raised by £19,500. Now, how much of that rise of value is owing to the labour of the tenant, and how much to the co-operation and expenditure of the landlord? Can you give me any idea how much represents the expenditure of the landlord?—I cannot, but I should think a large proportion would be the expenditure of the landlord, between the

INVERNESS. work he has done in making roads and providing outflow and other drains, and providing wood for the houses.

42615. But you have never in your own mind endeavoured to form an estimate on this question?—No, I have not.

John Peter. 42616. Do you think that the proprietor has contributed 25 per cent. or 50 per cent.?—At least 50 per cent., and I think more.

42617. You think, then, the increment of value effected by the tenantry, might be calculated at something below £10,000?—I think so.

42618. I should like to understand more particularly the system under which this result has been produced. When the land is first granted, under the improving lease, I find you state the muir ground is given to them at a nominal rent of 1s. per acre, and on being reclaimed, as above stated, becomes worth to the tenant from 15s. to 20s. per acre, during the remainder of his lease. For how many years is the ground given out at a nominal rent of a 1s.?—Nineteen years. He holds it for nineteen years at 1s.

42619. Because I find you say ‘And on being reclaimed, as above stated, became worth to the tenant from 15s. to 20s. per acre during the remaining years of his lease?’—That was after he had got it improved and made arable.

42620. But why do you use the word ‘remaining’?—After it became improved and came into cultivation so that he could reap the benefit of it. He had ten years before it was all improved; that left nine years to run, during which he got the benefit.

42621. As soon as an acre or any portion of the ground is improved, is that improved ground charged with an increased rent, or does he pay 1s. an acre for all the ground during the whole lease?—One shilling an acre for all the ground during the whole lease. He might take it all in in one year.

42622. So he sits, during the nineteen years’ lease, at the nominal rental of 1s.?—Yes.

42623. In the case of the tenant, during the course of the lease, leaving the ground through loss of health, or by death, or for any other reason, on what system is the value of the improvement calculated to him or his heirs?—It is valued on a scale. If he remove five years after his lease begins, he would have £9 an acre paid to him on leaving; between five and ten years, £7; between ten and fifteen years, £5; between fifteen and nineteen years, £3, 10s.

42624. But without going into particulars, I understand the case is contemplated in the lease, or at any rate by the practice of the estate, that when tenants leave in the middle of their lease, and therefore in the middle of their improvements, they are reimbursed for the improvements they leave behind?—Yes.

42625. Is that paid by the proprietor or by the incoming tenant?—Always paid by the proprietor.

42626. Well, when the whole nineteen years of the lease are expired and the ground is to be let again, naturally at an increased rent, how is the value of the ground ascertained?—It has been hitherto ascertained by myself.

42627. It has always been ascertained by you acting as valuator?—Yes.

42628. When you value the ground at the end of the nineteen years, do you value it to the resident tenant exactly as if he were a new tenant, so to say? Do you make the valuation of the land just as it stands, or do you in making the valuation, consider in any degree, the fact that the ground has been, in a manner, half created by his own labour?—I make it as it stands, and it is for the landlord to make any deduction. I make

it on the value as it stands, just as if I were making it to a new tenant, and the same with all the farms on the estate—crofters and otherwise.

INVERNESS.

42629. But then, when it is re-letted, is there practically a kind of favour shown to the old tenant?—There is, by the landlord.

INVERNESS.

42630. When he comes to settle the rent?—Yes.

John Peter.

42631. So these crofts are, in your mind, practically valued below the market rate?—Yes; some cases have come up where they had to be advertised by reason of the tenants dying, and I found they always brought a higher rent than I put upon them.

42632. And, at the expiration of these improving leases and nominal rentals, you have not found any difficulty or any serious complaint on the part of the tenants, in taking a new lease, as to paying the rent which is asked for it?—None. They are most anxious to get new leases. They do not care for improving to the end of the lease, and they ask for a new lease before the end of the old one, so that they can go on with the improvements.

42633. And, if for some reason the old tenant did not take it, you would be able to re-let it again immediately?—Yes.

42634. At an increase of rent?—Yes; I have generally a dozen or more outsiders applying to get in.

42635. And in letting these small areas, for many years past, the tenants, on entering them, perfectly understood their position?—Completely so.

42636. That they were to hold the land for a certain term of years, and at the end of it they were to take the land, if they did so, at a valuation?—Just so; the same as any other farmer on the estate.

42637. There has been no misconception on their part?—No, I have never had a single case of misconception on their part.

42638. And the system causes no discontent?—None. There are no people I have been more delighted to go about amongst than the crofter population.

42639. Has any discontent been raised by the discussion of these land questions, and unexhausted improvements, and so on?—I have not heard a single word. Not a single tenant has made a remark to me about it.

42640. When the lease is renewed and taken at the new valuation, does it contemplate an extension of improvement?—Yes, when the ground has not been all improved they just go on, and where it is all improved they are generally anxious to get a piece to improve still further; and if any of the adjoining crofts fall out not fully improved, his Lordship will give them to the man who is anxious to improve them.

42641. In the second lease what is the new form of improvement put on the ground? It has been all trenched, I suppose?—Not all. It is seldom we come up to the strict mark of the lease. They could not improve one-tenth every year, and his Lordship, if he saw them going on doing what they can, did not press it. It might only be a twentieth part, and they might leave a third or a fourth of the land unimproved at the end of the first lease, and that forms the subject of the second lease.

42642. In coming into a new district we generally find new principles and new ideas, and this is the first place, I think, at which we have heard disapproval expressed of the system of hill grazing in the form of common pasture or club farms. I would like to understand your methods more perfectly in that respect. Why do you discourage the notion of common grazing or any grazing attached to the lot?—When a man gets a piece

INVER-
NESS.

INVERNESS.

John Peter.

of grazing, in place of going and reclaiming his ground, he will prefer walking about on the hill, smoking his pipe, with his hand in his pocket, and looking after his few sheep, and he fails to provide for himself a living. He is doing next to nothing.

42643. I perfectly understand that if tenants are confined to their arable lots they are stimulated to more steady application?—They are obliged to do so.

42644. And that is beneficial to the landlord?—And to the tenant too.

42645. Beneficial to the landlord?—To the one as much as the other.

42646. But beneficial to the tenant too?—Quite right.

42647. But might some degree of union of the two systems not be beneficial to the tenant? Take the case of an arable croft in process of formation, and without any common grazing or any outrun at all. In the case of bad seasons, for instance, might there not be a useful alternative to the tenant? There might be a bad season in reference to the crop, and it might be a good season in reference to the sale of young stock. Would there not be a profitable alternative secured to the tenant if the two systems could be united?—My experience has been this, that I never saw a small grazing but the sheep were very poor upon it, and the returns from the sheep were next to nothing. It is the name of having an income from a source from which there is next to no income at all. We have grazings attached to the farms beyond the crofts, and if I were to pick out those that were least successful, I would pick these out.

42648. But I have heard it stated in other parts of the country that really the stirk pays the rent, and wool supplies a useful source for making clothes, and so on?—I am afraid they rely too much on the stirk, and do nothing to provide for what they could use.

42649. But that may depend a good deal on the climate and the soil, and a system which might be good on the east coast might not be good on the west coast?—That may be so, but I have had a good deal to do with the west coast, and I don't think these small gazings are very successfully managed.

42650. Are not the crops very precarious on the west coast?—Yes, they have nothing to rely upon except fishing and the grazing.

42651. Do you find that the people themselves like the idea of the outrun or common pasture?—I do. I think it is very agreeable to their notions, because it gives them a sort of easy life—too easy.

42652. But some ease of life is, after all, a natural desire?—It is, but I think those who live the busiest life are the happiest, at least I have found it so in my experience.

42653. And, on the estate with which you are concerned, is there a very great power of expansion of the system still?—Not very much. The greater part within a reasonable limitation is improved.

42654. Have you in connection with this system discovered in your experience a great improvement in the condition of the people and their welfare and happiness?—I think they are all very very much better than when I knew them first, thirty years ago. Their houses are very much improved, and everything is different about their surroundings.

42655. There is some proportion of the estate held under deer forests exclusively?—Yes; there has been some for the last forty or fifty years.

42656. I think you stated that you don't think there is any considerable area occupied by deer which might be improved?—I do not.

42657. There is a little on the sheep farms?—Yes, and also on the deer forests,—little patches, but of no value for crofting purposes whatever.

INVERNESS.
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INVERNESS.

42658. Has any of the ground of recent years been cleared of sheep for the purpose of making forest?—Yes, a part at Fort-Augustus. We could not get the ground let. The farmer wished to be relieved of it, and we had no alternative.

John Peter.

42659. Has any portion within the last thirty or forty years been cleared of any human habitations for the purpose of making deer forest?—None; Lord Lovat was quite opposed to emigration, and believed there was work for every inhabitant of his property if properly arranged. Accordingly he set about giving them these crofts to improve. In the case of his own deer forest, some had to be removed, but he found out other and better places for them lower down.

42660. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—Have the rents on the estate been largely increased within the last thirty years?—Yes, to some extent.

42661. To what extent?—About £4000, equal to about 33 per cent., while the increase on the county is 90 per cent., showing that his Lordship has not increased them unduly. The increase on the whole county is £85,000—being 90 per cent.; while on Lord Lovat's estate it has been 33 per cent. A witness remarked to-day that the arable ground of Auchteraw had been taken into a forest there, which is not the case. The hill ground of Auchteraw was let to a tenant who had a deer forest already, and he enclosed it with a deer fence, and took the sheep off it; but that was his own doing. He was allowed to keep sheep on it if he pleased, and he preferred adding it to his other deer ground.

42662. *The Chairman.*—I did not understand the witness to say that arable ground has been turned into a deer forest, but that the area occupied by the deer forest contained some ground that might be arable?—I am under the impression he said it had been put in.

42663. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—Has the increase of rent from 1853 to 1883 been greater in proportion on the crofters' lands than on the large farms?—Yes, and that arises from the improved ground. Where there is no ground to improve, it does not increase so rapidly as where the ground has been taken in from the muir.

42664. What are the proportions?—About 38 per cent. in the one case, and 30 per cent. in the other, and the average on the property is 33 per cent.

42665. How often have the rents been raised in that period?—There were two lettings in my time—in 1857 and 1876. I think these have been almost the only lettings since they were first let out.

42666. A gentleman said yesterday that he had found in his experience that there is a decided difference of character between the inhabitants of the east and the west coast of Ross-shire, as well as a difference in their land; do you find the same in regard to the parts of the east and west coasts on which Lord Lovat's estates are?—Yes; their habits are quite different. On the east coast they farm like ordinary farmers, with rotation of crops. On the west coast, again, they have very small bits of ground, which simply afford potatoes and hay and straw for a very few beasts, and their main business is fishing.

42667. The quality of the land, of course, has very much to do with it?—Yes. On the west coast in some parts you will get as good land as on the east coast, but it is difficult to harvest the crops on the west coast, and the difference makes it inadvisable to go in much for that.

42668. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—In your very interesting paper you

INVER-
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INVERNESS.
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John Peter.

have devoted your attention chiefly to the crofter class about whom this inquiry has been instituted?—Almost solely.

42669. Has it not been a profitable thing for the estate that the late Lord Lovat did encourage the crofting system?—It was advantageous both to the landlord and to the tenant.

42670. Are you disposed to extend it still further?—Certainly, as long as we have any ground to improve.

42671. How many acres arable are there upon your estate? I believe you have 160,000 acres altogether. How much of that is arable? Will there be 20,000?—I have not the slightest idea.

42672. Do you think that is an excessive figure?—No, I should think about that.

42673. Will you say then that on all your estates, lying in so many parishes, and in so many districts, no more can be profitably reclaimed?—I don't think so—indeed I think we are almost going beyond the limit already, during the last eight or ten years. Owing to the seasons and the high elevations the crop has not ripened, and Lord Lovat has had to assist his tenants there very much in consequence.

42674. In answer to Lord Napier you have stated, in making a calculation of the increased value of these reclaimed lands, that the expenditure of the proprietor would be 50 per cent.?—Yes, I think, quite.

42675. You stated in answer to a previous question that there were no pecuniary advances to the tenants by the proprietor?—No money advances.

42676. You stated there were manufactured wood and lime given, and also roads and outfall drains made. Now is there not a deal of wood on the estate?—Not much available for use.

42677. Is there plenty of lime on the estate?—There is no lime. The late Lord Lovat tried for a lime quarry, and lost £500 upon it. It was too much mixed up with other materials.

42678. I suppose the crofters always pay road money?—Those above £4 do, but Lord Lovat has not been exacting it during the last few years, owing to the times not being very prosperous. He paid it himself.

42679. Considering they pay road money, do you think it fair to include roads for them as one of the things the landlord did?—Road money applies to the public highways, not to the roads leading to their own doors. Some of these do not benefit from the assessments.

42680. What would it cost the proprietor of late years to improve an acre of land. Is £20 too much to put upon it?—Yes; of late years prices have been going up, and last year I think, it was £12.

42681. Taking the case of an acre at £12, suppose you let a piece of land to a crofter, as you are in the habit of doing,—say ten acres,—he would have expended £120 before he got it in?—Yes. These are, however, recent prices; earlier prices were much lower.

42682. Then will you say £8?—From £8 to £9.

42683. Then it would have cost from £80 to £90 for ten acres of land?—Yes.

42684. Then, in reality, with the 1s. he gave to the landlord, did it not cost him 8s. or 9s. an acre from the beginning, at that rate?—It cost 8s. or 9s. for the improvement of it, but perhaps next year he took a crop of potatoes out of it that paid the whole outlay.

42685. But he must take it in, and if he did not take it in till late, so much the worse for himself?—Yes.

42686. He was obliged to hand it over to you improved?—He was not obliged to hand it over improved.

42687. But when you say he was only paying 1s. an acre, I am afraid, if you take the cost of the reclamation, it cost him a good deal more than 1s.?—He was only paying 1s. all through the lease, and he came to have it very cheap indeed; perhaps it was worth 15s. or 20s. an acre after it was improved.

INVERNESS.
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INVERNESS.
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John Peter.

42688. When you mentioned that the late Lord Lovat in the rearrangement cut off the grazings from the people down below, I presume he let out these grazings to sheep farmers?—No, he planted almost the whole of it.

42689. Is there a great deal of the estate planted at this moment?—Yes, a very large proportion.

42690. I suppose you have got the rentals of the estate for the last forty or fifty years in your possession?—Yes.

42691. And you have, no doubt, referred to these at different periods?—Yes, every year.

42692. Is there an old factor on the Lovat estates—Mr Macdonald—still living?—Yes.

42693. What do you suppose the rental of the estate was when he gave it up?—Something about £12,000. I succeeded very soon after he left.

42694. And it is now nearly three times as much?—No; you are speaking of the arable land. I should think the whole estate was about £15,000 at that time, and now it is about double.

42695. Are you sure it was more than £12,000?—Yes, I think so, taking the shootings and fishings. The land rents were about £12,000.

42696. Then you say it was doubled?—Yes.

42697. And also that a great portion of it has been planted?—A great deal of it has been planted.

42698. The late Lord Lovat was, in the strict sense of the term, a resident proprietor?—Yes.

42699. And the same may be said of the present proprietor?—Yes.

42700. And both, as is known, have taken a great personal interest in the management of their estates?—Yes.

42701. They are acquainted, I presume, with every tenant on the estate?—Every crofter and every tenant on the estate.

42702. You also stated that during the last thirty years of your time here, there were few or no cases of evictions from the property, or removals?—Yes, except the few cases I have already mentioned.

42703. There were a good many evictions in the old times?—I don't know; I never heard of them.

42704. Were you here yesterday?—I was, but not long.

42705. Did you hear Mr Colin Chisholm speak of Glenstrathfarar of old?—Yes, but I have explained that already—that there were three or four tenants there who were removed, when Lord Lovat made the deer forest, to other farms on his property.

42706. But Chisholm was referring to a much older period, when a number of men distinguished themselves as far back as the taking of Quebec?—That is much beyond my time; much beyond those I represent.

42707. Do you say that the present family are not responsible for anything that occurred prior to the accession of the late Lovat?—I think clearly they are not.

42708. There is a very fertile part of the Lovat territory in the parish of Urray, though in the county of Inverness?—Yes, Tomich and Barnyards.

42709. Have you heard as matter of history that there was once a very

INVER-
NESS.

INVERNESS.
John Peter.

large population in those places?—I have heard that at Barnyards, there were some old soldiers located by General Fraser, but that is all I know.

42710. Would it be a matter of surprise to you to be told, that in one year there were thirty-seven heads of families turned out of Barnyards?—Yes, because I did not know there were so many there. I never heard anything about it.

42711. The late Lord Lovat acquired several estates during his lifetime?—Yes; Struy, Eskdale, and Auchteraw.

42712. Do you know a place called Carnoch?—Yes.

42713. How is it occupied at present?—Captain Chisholm has it.

42714. Were there not a lot of people there at one time?—I don't know of any. I know an old man named Mackintosh, who was succeeded by Captain Chisholm.

42715. Have you never seen the remains of old buildings about there?—Yes, I have; but when they became vacant I cannot tell.

42716. Have there not been a number of people removed from the estate of Struy?—I cannot inform you.

42717. With regard to the forest of Glenstrathfarrer, we have heard the name frequently of Mr Winans; has your property not the credit of bringing him to the north for the first time?—Well, yes; but we cannot be answerable for all he did afterwards.

42718. But he has been extending his bounds a good deal since you gave him a location?—Yes.

42719. Have you any idea what is the extent of his possessions or his forests?—I have not the slightest idea.

42720. Have you any idea of the number of acres that are in these forests in Glenstrathfarrer and the adjoining grounds of Lovat?—About 45,000 acres.

42721. As we are speaking about deer forests, what was the reason of forming the last forest at Glendo?—The sheep farmer could not hold it all, and wished to give it up, and we did not see a possibility of getting a tenant for it as a sheep farm, and his Lordship decided upon making it a deer forest.

42722. With regard to your west coast estates, was the estate of North Morar for sale some years ago?—It was.

42723. Why was it not sold?—Because his Lordship could not get the money he wanted for it.

42724. Was that the only reason?—That was all I ever heard.

42725. You will not say there was no other reason?—I know of none. I never heard of any other.

42726. It is satisfactory to think that, considering your estate is the largest in the county, we have had no complaint from it; but I want to ask you again, is there at this moment any demand on the part of your present crofters to get more land or new land altogether?—None; none in the slightest degree.

42727. Don't you think it would be a wise thing, considering the great possessions of Lord Lovat,—I don't speak in any way in an invidious manner,—supposing a crofter with two sons, and one son succeeding to the croft,—would it not be wise and patriotic, and from a national point of view a good thing, to try and get a croft for the support of the second son?—Yes, so his Lordship does; and when a croft is out of lease the first thing is to see whether any one upon the estate wants it.

42728. Could any of the lands of the larger farms be broken up with advantage for the younger sons of crofters?—I don't think so. I think the expense of doing so would be so great,—providing buildings for each croft, and so on,—that it would be of no advantage to anybody.

42729. You will no doubt, be cutting down some of those great woods ; would it not be well to try something of that kind upon the place from which the trees are cut ?—Most of these plantations are on hill ground, and would not prove very advantageous for cultivation, except the policies about Beaufort.

42730. No one would presume to interfere in any manner of way with them ?—No.

INVERNESS.
INVERNESS.
John Peter.

ALEXANDER FRASER, Factor for Culloden and Ferintosh—re-examined.—

42731. *The Chairman.*—Will you have the goodness to make your statement ?—I wish to correct a statement made by one of the crofters at Ferintosh. With reference to the statement made by Donald Mackenzie, lots 114 and 114 A, Ferintosh, at the meeting of the Royal Commission at Dingwall, on 10th current, Alexander Fraser, factor on the estate, wishes to make a reply to the statement made by the said Donald M'Kenzie. He then said that his croft was valued by Mr Paterson, estate valuator, at £7, and that it was ultimately settled for £14 after considerable delay. This is a mis-statement. Mr Paterson's valuation is £14, 8s. for land, exclusive of a carpenter's shop, where a large business was carried on for the district. It will thus be seen that he has the land for 8s. less than the valuation, besides having the carpenter's premises free. The possession, including the carpenter's shop, was considered lowly rented at £17, but a deduction of £3 was given to the father of the witness on account of his being an old tenant. The extent of arable land in the possession is 16 acres 3 roods 38 poles, and the pasture 2 acres 3 roods 27 poles. The situation is close to the parliamentary road, and within two miles of the railway station at Conon. Further, Mackenzie stated that his improvements cost £20 an acre. It would be well to know how this is made up ; but the statement is denied, as any land taken in by the landlord cost only about £8 an acre. Mr Paterson's valuation is herewith produced.

Alexander
Fraser.

DUNCAN DARROCH of Gourock and Torridon (47)—examined.

42732. *The Chairman.*—You desire, I believe, to make a general statement ?—I do. ‘The evidence which I desire to give you to-day is on the amelioration of the crofters’ condition, caused by the change from sheep farming to deer foresting. Having myself cleared a district of some fifty square miles of sheep ten years ago at Torridon, I am in a position to speak on this side of the question, more particularly as, having no factor and working out all the details myself, my evidence is first hand, and not derived from the reports of others. When I began the air was full of denunciations of the wickedness of deer foresting ; the Game Committee of 1873 had not reported ; and I was a little afraid of entering on an undertaking which many good men, misled by the persistent clamour of the noisier portion of the sheep farming interest, had been brought to regard as unpatriotic and worthy of severe condemnation. But I was encouraged by observing that though deer forests were spoken of as ruining the sheep industry, yet the people’s wrongs were never touched

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' on, their welfare was contemptuously ignored ; and deeming that the life ' of man was above even that of sheep, I thought I saw my way to better- ' ing the condition of some of my fellow-countrymen. The report of the ' 1873 Game Committee silenced the cry against deer forest for the time ; ' but presuming I suppose on the shortness of the public memory, here ' are the old stories once more. It may be said that the grievances now ' complained of have arisen since that time ; but as an interested party I ' have been carefully watching, and only one instance has come to my ' knowledge, that of Kintail, where the good wishes of all in the north ' have gone with the proprietor, who has successfully resisted the unworthy ' attempts of the American who has been trying to turn the poor High- ' landers out of their little holdings : I have heard no one approve of his ' conduct, and surely for this solitary case, the attempted tyranny of a ' foreign lessee, the whole system is not to be condemned. It seems, how- ' ever, that there is still an impression that deer foresting means driving ' away or otherwise oppressing the inhabitants of the country ; and there ' is a further idea fostered, mainly by the sheep farming interest, and in ' support of which I observe some statements have been tendered to your ' Commission, that it diminishes the actual amount of food which the land ' supplies to the nation. And these views are not confined to Scotland, ' even in London society I find them pretty largely entertained, deer ' forests being looked upon as an expensive luxury indulged in at ' the cost of the well-being of the unfortunate aboriginal Celtic population. ' I will now endeavour to show that the only chance of existence for the ' crofters in large parts of the north-west coast of Scotland, is the ' restriction of the large sheep farms, and that the cultivation of cattle ' and deer, not only gives a possibility of living to the inhabitants of ' that country, but actually provides the nation with a greater supply of ' food. The physical peculiarity of the district is, that the mountains ' are high and rugged, rising to a height of between 3000 and 4000 feet, ' giving good grass up to the very tops in summer, but in winter very ' wild and generally snow-capped, in consequence of this, in October, ' when the first snow usually falls, all sheep come down from the heights ' of their own accord. To winter all the sheep that the hills will summer ' is an impossibility ; about one-fourth of the stock has to be sent away to ' the east coast to winter on turnips, and the remainder can only be kept ' in the west by utilising the comparatively flat ground by the shore ; ' but this is all the land that the crofters can till, and on it they have to ' depend for feeding for their cattle and potatoes for themselves, so that ' to provide for the wintering of the sheep stock the people have to be ' restricted as much as possible. In the year 1872 I became the purchaser ' of the estate of Torridon, in Wester Ross. When I went to see it, I ' saw noble hills well adapted for deer, with no deer on them, and a ' population driven to the verge of starvation by the all-devouring sheep. ' To most intending purchasers, the population was an objection—to me ' the reverse. It was just such a place as I had long thought of, and I ' speedily concluded the purchase. It had been well foreseen by an ' intelligent clergyman, the Rev. Roderick M'Rae, factor for Seaforth in ' 1827, how large farms held by strangers would work. He says in his ' report to Seaforth :—"It may not be amiss to observe that Torridon is ' best calculated for small tenants, and when such fail, great shepherds ' will never succeed, as they have not so much industry or economy or ' so many shifts to pay rent as the poor people have." He was a man ' wise in his generation, and it was a dark day for Torridon when "great ' shepherds" came in. Large farmer after large farmer failed ; little or ' no rent came to the proprietor ; while the condition of the poor crofters,

‘ by slow but certain steps, tended to the lowest point of misery and despair. My agent, on inquiry as to the circumstances of the estate, reported to me before I saw Torridon:—“There are a good many smaller crofters; these, I understand, have no leases, but are the remains of the old peasantry settled on the lands from time immemorial. They are not an enterprising race. They do very well any kind of work that their fathers did before them, but eschew anything that is new. The younger members of the families, however, now principally emigrate to the Lowlands, and the elder members generally go on the poors roll, and as they die out the cottages are taken down.” A truly charming and edifying result of some half a century of sheep farming. Reference is often made at Torridon, as elsewhere, to the good old times, and that period all agree to be the one when the M’Kenzies of Torridon ruled. But I find a judicial document of 1825 stating that the rental then was £627, while the arrears were £1963, and that the rents were hopelessly high, such as could only have been agreed to on account of there being a large surplus population, and in the hope of making money by smuggling; and I am assured, both by the ground officer and the elder, that the people have never before been anything like as prosperous as they are now. To cite independent testimony as to their condition as contrasted with the relief obtained by the sweeping away of the sheep, I will quote parts of a letter written me by the Rev. George Macleod, Free Church minister of Stratherrick, who laboured on the Torridon estate for more than ten years, first as ladies’ teacher, and latterly as missionary appointed by the Assembly of the Free Church. He says—“Could I describe the actual condition of the people of Torridon in the year 1870, and contrast it with their condition when I revisited Torridon in August last (1882), I believe my description would be considered a gross exaggeration by any party who did not know Torridon at both dates. While I was there last August, I spoke to a man who is an elder in connection with the Free Church there, about this great change since 1870. He remarked, ‘Oh, this is not the same estate or the same people you saw when you came here first,’ meaning of course that the estate and the people were so much improved since that time that both were quite different. Indeed, there was much truth in his remark, for improving the estate improved the people. When I went to Alligin, as missionary and teacher in 1870, the condition of the people was most deplorable, the children were almost naked, and many of the aged people very ill off for want of clothing. I have known families who for days, perhaps for weeks, had no other food than shell-fish; and what made it more sad the old people knew better times. When the Mackenzie family formerly possessed Torridon the people lived in comfortable circumstances, as they had land and stock then. But the late proprietor let the estate in large sheep farms, and in order to clear the ground for the sheep the poor people were deprived of their land and stock, and were huddled into corners on the sea-shore, with small patches for potato ground. In many cases, even in whole hamlets, the poor people had not an inch of land for potato itself; they in consequence got careless, and were not afraid that any harm could be done to them, since, in many cases the miserable huts in which they lived were all that could be taken from them. Considering all this, I often wondered how quiet and law-abiding the people did continue. When Mr Darroch got the estate he cleared away the sheep, the only possible arrangement which could benefit the poor people, for I believe under sheep it would be a necessity to retain the low ground along with the hills; the poor people could not of course take the whole land, the high and low, should they get it.

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' But Mr Darroch gave them kindly what they could take, the low ground ' as crofts. Special interest was taken in the schools, and the children ' soon had a very different appearance to the almost starved and naked ' condition in which I found them when I went there. When I visited ' the school at Alligin in August 1882, the change was so marked that ' any person who knew the same school and the same children before ' could scarcely believe that such a change was possible. But when the ' children got food, especially milk, and proper clothing, it made all the ' difference. The people are encouraged in every respect, even their ' moral tone is so raised. Mr Darroch, by his regard for their welfare, has ' gained their confidence and respect, so that they fear to do anything ' wrong that might offend him. This is one good result of a proprietor ' living on his estate along with the people. I believe if proprietors ' resided on their estates, there would be less poverty and less cause of ' complaint with landlords and tenants." To return to my purchase. ' Having invested a large sum, I feared I could not afford at once to throw ' away the whole interest of the money, so I thought I would try to let a ' part of the ground, if not the whole, as a sheep farm, for a time. I ' accordingly advertised the estate in due form, to belet in one or more parts ' as sheep farm; though I now can see that it was hardly fair to the ' people that I should have tried to prolong their time of bondage even ' for a short time, yet I do not regret that a thorough attempt to let as ' sheep farm was made. It puts on record unmistakably that some at ' least of the western hills, even in the sheep farmer's opinion, are better ' suited for deer than sheep. No real offer was made, and the only man ' who seemed at all likely to make a bid, inquired suspiciously whether ' the people were to have their cows still. To this I replied, "If the ' gentleman wants to know whether I am going to deprive the people of ' their cattle, you may tell him that such is not my intention." ' The sheep stock went, but I was still hesitating when the following ' petition was handed to me:—"We, the undersigned Easter Alligin ten- ' antry, have been blamelessly deprived of our lands by the late proprie- ' tor, which ourselves and forefathers possessed from time immemorial, ' consequently we have been subject to great privations, possessing only ' small patches of potato ground, which is insufficient to support us. ' Your petitioners most earnestly solicit, if at all possible, that you would ' kindly grant the low ground, and a cow's grass; by your doing so, we ' shall most thankfully pay any amount of rent which you may deem ' proper to ask." This petition finally decided me; and having been ' fully warned that if I gave the people cows, no retreat would be pos- ' sible, and that letting as a sheep farm would be no longer practicable, I ' gave an order that every family on the estate might keep a cow. The ' sheep having departed, the field was now clear before me, but a rough ' one it seemed to be. I had been told that the crofters I had to deal ' with were the worst of characters, never would pay rent, and most ' troublesome in every way; even dishonesty was imputed to them. All ' this was so entirely opposed to my knowledge of the Highlander, that I ' declined to believe it, though I could very well see that the way they ' had been treated was by no means calculated to make them extra com- ' plaisant to the south country factor in his unfrequent visits. And I am ' proud to say that I have found my people all I had hoped or trusted ' they would be. One slight circumstance will show the feeling between ' us; my ground officer had often said to me that there was no one thing ' I had ever asked them to do that they had not done cheerfully, and ' two or three years ago, at my wish, though not directly expressed, they ' gave up drinking whisky at the grave at funerals. Those of you who

' know how tenacious the Highlanders are of their customs, will appreciate what this sacrifice of one of the most cherished of them implied. ' I informed my people from the first, that I considered they had a right to enjoy their holdings undisturbed, subject always to the rules of the estate, and these rules they must trust me to make. Our trust has been mutual. You yourselves have seen in our parish how they comported themselves in my presence, you heard how they spoke of me, you doubtless noticed that they asked for no protection before giving their evidence; and does not this show how hollow the cry of the sheep farmers is, when they assert that deer foresting necessarily means oppression? It is no wonder, though it is admirable, that there should exist confidence and affection between the people and chiefs of ancient name, descendants of patriarchal landlords of kindly memory, such as Lochiel and Sir Kenneth Mackenzie; but when you see such relations obtaining between the Highlanders, and unknown men like myself, it surely is an indication that the system which Mr Wallace, Dr Cameron, and others would rashly sweep away, is not entirely inapplicable to the Highlands of the nineteenth century. It was in June 1873 that I finally gave notice that any tenant could have a cow. But the people were miserably, incredibly poor, and the difficulty of getting the wherewithal to pay for cows was immense; it was by getting hold of calves and rearing them, borrowing of any who would lend, letting grazing to neighbours, and by all sorts of odd persevering ways that they gradually got their cows. We had some little anxiety at first about the old arrears; though the rental was only £224, the arrears were £292. But John Mackenzie, Camustrole, has told you how these were dealt with. The rental now is £337, and the arrears *nil*. I consider that it is no kindness to allow a crofter to fall into arrears, and as every tenant comes before me personally about his rent, I am able to make any allowance that the case may require. When I gave leave to all to keep cows I laid down a rule that, unless by special arrangement, no one who had a cow should have less than an acre and a half of arable, and that no cottar should have less than half an acre for potatoes. No question arises as to extent of grazing, as owing to the system of deer foresting the outrun for cattle is practically unlimited. Every man who has a cow pays £4 at least, which brings his name on the valuation roll, so that he has a vote for parochial and school boards. In adjusting this, I hoped that by having a voice in public matters the people would take larger views of life, and eventually when the suffrage is extended have their proper share in the government of the country. When I came to Torridon there were ten names of Torridon tenants on the valuation roll, now there are sixty-nine; they take a real interest already in parochial and school matters, and I have no doubt, from what I see, that this interest will continue to increase. On his £4 rent, a crofter, besides leave to cut peats, stance, and wood for house, and right to sea-ware, gets grazing for his cow, two-year-old, and stirk. The produce of his cow in milk and butter, as I will show afterwards, amounts to £9, and his stirk sells for from £6 to £7, 10s. He raises at least £6 worth of potatoes to feed his family, and if he does not winter extra stock, he sends some corn to the mill, so that altogether the money value to him is about £22, that is five times the rent. The cottar, who does not keep a cow, has his sea-ware, peats, stance, and wood for house, and if he plants his half acre with potatoes, he raises £6 worth. But, instead of his having insufficient potato ground, as you will find from Sir John M'Neill's account he had in 1851, he utilises a large portion of his half acre now in growing corn, to sell to

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' his neighbours. None have complained of the 15s. rent for the half acre. In my opinion, the crofters pay more rent in proportion than the large farmers; and as they do not want expensive buildings put up for them, and pay forehand rent, so that no real risk is incurred by letting to them, the craze of turning them out to make room for large farms seems to me as senseless as it did to Seaforth's factor in 1827, before the sheep mania had fully set in. I will now briefly refer to the circumstances of the townships from which you received petitions at Shieldaig. The Annat people in 1825, in the good old Mackenzie times, sat at a rent of £81, and their arrears were £196. In 1853, Colonel M'Barnet, having trenched some twenty acres with Government money, gave them a fourteen years' lease at a rent of £88. At the end of that lease the arrears were so heavy that the factor got them to sell off their sheep, and thereby pay off their arrears. One or two, in the usual way, had plenty of sheep at that time, but the majority had few or no sheep, and were practically insolvent. Their rent then was reduced to £3, 3s. each, and each was allowed to keep one cow, but no calf. Twenty-four acres of arable were taken from them, and enclosed as a park, and to crown their misfortunes, eighteen families from Fasag, the village on the opposite side of the loch, were given a share of the remainder of the arable land. Thus I found them, with less than an acre of arable land to each family, forced to buy the wintering even for their one cow, and owing to the depasturing of the land by the sheep, the yield in milk of three cows was less than two give now. I at once removed these Fasag people, and finding the Annat crofters were still short of land, I gave them five acres of the enclosed park, and as with the cow and followers they can make some £22 a year out of the £4 lots, I don't think the rent too dear. They can hardly want more arable land, as I in 1875 offered them the rest of the enclosed park, nineteen acres, at a rent of £12, 10s., and this they declined; and as for wintering, none has of late years been purchased out of the estate, enough having been produced to winter all the cattle on it. My grievance from Renfrewshire, on inspecting the place in 1873, thought that a fair rent for Annat would be £4, 10s. for half an acre of arable land and one cow. You received the petition purporting to come from those Annat people, and you permitted it to be read. The history of that petition is worthy of note. At a meeting of the majority of the Annat tenants the whole matter was debated, but nothing was agreed on; very shortly, however, before the meeting at Shieldaig, Mr John M'Donald, the personage who composed the petition, and who though not elected as a delegate was so very anxious to be spokesman, went round at night with one or two others, and got most of the tenants to put their names to the document, which was not even read over to them, telling them that if they would not accept it, it was too late for them to have any say at all. This John M'Donald is not a tenant, has lived most of his life away from Torridon, being employed I believe as a navvy and tommy shopkeeper, and his main occupation seems to be amateur preaching at other places, not at Torridon. You doubtless observed that both the Annat delegates at once acknowledge that they had not read the petition, and John Mackenzie, honest man, when he had heard you read it, and was asked if he agreed with it, said that I had always been very kind to them, and that he did not want any sheep. So the complaint resolved itself into this, that the land was a little too dear, and that some few of the fifteen tenants might like to have a dozen or half a dozen sheep. It is well worth remarking the strongest case of oppression that can be cooked up as applicable to the so-called plague of deer forests at Torridon.

' There was something very touching to me in the honesty and candour
' of these Torridon delegates, the very men who had been described to me
' as a set of lawless incorrigibles. An impression had got abroad through
' the Highlands that your Commission was all-powerful, and that on the
' mere request of the crofters, any grazing, reduction of rent, or other
' privilege would be at once granted to them by you; so that any
' admission on their part of their circumstances being comfortable, and
' any failure to make a claim for what they desired, would seem in their
' eyes to be giving up benefits actually within their reach. But, besides
' John Mackenzie of Annat, you heard how Duncan Beaton of Alligin,
' when questioned by you, at once spontaneously mentioned the fact of
' their having had sheep given to them by me, and that they had failed in
' making a profit out of them by their own inability to manage them
' properly; and that they were quite satisfied with the grazing they have,
' if it is to be continued in their possession. This they might well be,
' as they have all the land both arable and pasture they ever had; but
' that they should say so much after all the expectations that had been
' raised, speaks volumes for their fairness and gratitude. You heard the
' evidence of George Mackenzie, the Fasag elder. His expression that I
' had swept the Fasag people across the river, seemed doubtless to you as
' if some harsh conduct was referred to; but he meant to describe, in his
' own homely language, the indignant way in which I at once brought
' back the Fasag people from the middle of the Annat lands, and gave them
' some of the best land on the estate, that beautiful green park which you
' my Lord remarked at the head of the loch, which had for years been reserved
' for the wintering of the sheep. The Fasag people are mostly old, with
' few children, and only four out of the whole townships have taken the
' opportunity of having cows. Some idea of the difficulty of arriving at
' the quantity of land each man held may be gathered when I explain
' that, in taking account of one man's plot of ground, I had to measure
' out sixteen separate bits in Annat, with chain and sextant, and at
' Wester Alligin, where the ground is more broken, I had to measure no
' less than forty-three! But the certainty obtained was worth all the
' personal labour; and I may mention, to show the confidence the
' Highlanders have in their proprietor, that when I told the Alligin
' people in 1874, that we would soon know whether they had full justice
' in extent of land or not, as the Ordnance Survey people had nearly
' completed their plan, the reply was that they didn't know much about
' that, but if Mr Darroch would only come with his instruments it would
' be all right. Working thus, from one end to the other, I by degrees got
' all who wished for cows comfortably settled, and gradually I came to see
' that for the ordinary crofter at Torridon with his cow or two, an acre and
' a half of arable is all that he can manage. The reason is not hard to
' see. The land has all to be tilled with the hand plough; the younger
' and more energetic members of the family go off south for employment,
' leaving the weaker ones to cultivate the croft; manure for more land
' they can hardly get, as besides the cow they depend on the sea-ware or
' sea-weed; this can only be got effectively at two spring tides in the
' beginning of the year, and altogether they have hard enough work to
' make up sufficient manure for the acre and a half. Unfortunately, or
' perhaps fortunately, as one question has been set to rest thereby, the
' success of my work has been much delayed by a trial of co-operative
' sheep farming at Wester Alligin, on the land formerly possessed by the
' Alligin people. You asked John Mackenzie, Camustrole, the reason
' why the people were allowed no sheep. Camustrole had at the time his
' mind entirely on his own case, and it did not occur to him that it was a

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' question referring to the whole estate. The question of sheep for crofters
 ' is not an easy one to solve. The old habit of allowing them sheep in
 ' common is one that in my observation has always worked badly and
 ' caused injustice. When a whole township pays rent, each man his own
 ' share, and each is supposed to have a certain complement of sheep, it
 ' invariably happens that in time, through misfortune and other causes,
 ' some few get large flocks together, while their poorer neighbours, with
 ' little or no stock, pay the same rent. Mr Wright, Lord Middleton's
 ' factor at Applecross, made the same observation to me the other day, and
 ' told me what trouble he had been put to in trying to set the matter
 ' right. But, even after all his trouble, a reference to the Applecross
 ' returns in your possession will show you that the inequality still goes
 ' on. At Ardtishlie you will find Donald M'Donald paying £6, 7s. 6d.,
 ' and allowed fifty sheep, has only four; while his neighbour Farquhar
 ' M'Rae, paying £7, and allowed fifty sheep, has his full complement.
 ' At Aridhnacrianachd you will find two tenants each paying £3, 15s.,
 ' and allowed fifteen sheep each; but while Alexander M'Lean has
 ' twenty sheep, poor Norman M'Beath has only two. The only fair mode
 ' in my opinion is, that so strongly advocated by Sir Alexander Matheson,
 ' the club farm system, where the sheep are held in common, all under
 ' one shepherd, and the profits are divided. This system I endeavoured
 ' to carry out at Wester Alligin, with what result the delegate Duncan
 ' Beaton briefly mentioned. From the first I heard that if they were
 ' only allowed sheep at Alligin, all poverty, all complaint, would disappear.
 ' In fact, I heard from the men themselves the same sort of loose inaccurate
 ' talk about the benefit of sheep to crofters, that we are now-a-days so
 ' dosed with. I resolved then on trying the experiment. After many a
 ' parliament with them, the land was valued; I found the sheep stock,
 ' they were to manage the farm, and after paying the rent and interest, were
 ' to divide the profits. But the whole thing turned out a failure, there was
 ' so much trouble about the management, and so little knowledge of the
 ' proper thrift of sheep farming, and the fact of twenty families having
 ' sheep, worked so much hardship on the ten who declined to join the
 ' undertaking, that at the end of six years, finding loss and vexation all
 ' round to be the only result, we, in another full parliament, agreed, by a
 ' large majority, to sell the stock and break up the arrangement. It is as
 ' well to say here, that all the complaints I have had about depasturing
 ' crops have had reference to sheep and not to deer. Sheep from neighbour-
 ' ing properties are most troublesome, and the craving that some have to
 ' keep a pet sheep, as they call it, is a great source of annoyance to their
 ' neighbours. Cattle are easily kept out by a small stone dyke, but the
 ' active sheep is a perfect pest in an unenclosed country. My people are
 ' supplied with wool, as I kill a good many wethers, and they take this
 ' if they like at wholesale price, in which case it comes much cheaper to
 ' them than if they stopped at home from fishing or labour to mind half
 ' a dozen sheep; and I had a good illustration the other day of the fallacy
 ' of supposing sheep culture betters them in clothing, for while inspecting
 ' a school, on an estate where the crofters keep sheep, a member of the
 ' board, although much in favour of the system, called my attention to
 ' the fact that the children of the sheep-owning crofters were not so well
 ' dressed as the children of my cattle-rearing ones. The sheep having
 ' thus for a second time disappeared, I saw more and more clearly that a
 ' return to the old native industry, cattle, was the best destination for
 ' the land, and the best chance for the people. Being desirous to let them
 ' this ground exclusively for cattle, the rent was the next difficulty.
 ' Ready money is most difficult for our people to get, work being scarce,

' and any money addition to each man's rent would probably not be paid
 ' for the first years anyhow. Thinking it unwise to make any stipula-
 ' tions which cannot be enforced, gradually I was forced back to an old
 ' custom which I had always hitherto condemned, but which I see now is
 ' the only one applicable to the circumstances—namely, service in lieu of
 ' rent. On the nature of this service I need not dwell, as your Lordship,
 ' I think, elicited from Duncan Beaton all the necessary information on
 ' this point. But this anticipates a little. To give an idea of the condition
 ' of the people, I cannot do better than quote an anonymous notice which
 ' appeared in a paper not too much prepossessed in favour of landlords,
 ' the *Highlander*. To this day none of us at Torridon have any idea
 ' who the writer was, or how he got his information. He says (April 28,
 ' 1874):—"Torridon Improvements.—In times gone by, people in this
 ' district gnawed away their hearts in silent sorrow, not daring to make
 ' their woes known; but a year of release has arrived; a new proprietor
 ' has come, and relieved them from the causes of complaint; and now that
 ' freedom of expression is allowed them, it is the good their landlord does,
 ' and not his oppression, they proclaim." Then after alluding to their
 ' getting all the arable land, and to the employment given to them, he
 ' says—"This is a very different state of things from what existed when
 ' nothing higher than the proprietors sheep had any consideration." The
 ' writer was evidently unacquainted with details, but it is instructive to
 ' mark the relief at once apparent in the people's circumstances after the
 ' change from sheep farm to deer forest. When you held a sitting at
 ' Shieldaig, you may not have been aware of the fact that you were in
 ' the middle of the estate in which, according to Dr Cameron, M.P., if
 ' rightly reported, "60,000 to 80,000 acres of arable land had been turned
 ' into waste for deer." Dr Cameron professes to quote Mr Wallace, but
 ' Mr Wallace says (*Land Nationalisation*, p. 79), speaking of the Game
 ' Committee of 1873 :—"It was shown that on one estate of Ross-shire
 ' from 60,000 to 80,000 acres had been cleared of inhabitants, and
 ' the arable land turned into waste to form deer forest." This is a
 ' tolerable sample of misquotation; but when we look a little further we
 ' find that Mr Wallace has omitted to mention that the evidence
 ' about the Applecross estate was given by Mr Thomas Purves, a
 ' sheep farmer, from hearsay, and from a letter not produced,—that
 ' it was contradicted personally by Mr Tennant, who had been pro-
 ' prietor of a large part of the estate, and that the committee seems
 ' entirely to have disbelieved the story. As, however, the fable of the
 ' Auchnashellach evictions under Lord Hill is still I see cropping up in
 ' the newspapers, it is as well to mention that the eight Gorston families
 ' said by Mr Purves to have been "cut off," and by Mr Mundell to have
 ' been "cleared off the Lochcarron property," are still holding crofts on
 ' the estate formerly belonging to Lord Hill. Their names are all in the
 ' present valuation roll, at rents averaging £12, 4s. 6d., and can be quoted
 ' if necessary. On this part of the subject I venture to recommend a
 ' careful study of the report of that committee. In it, for instance, you
 ' will find that their opinion was that deer forests had not tended to the
 ' depopulation of the country, and that they had not by the displacement
 ' of sheep raised the price of meat. In this part of the report Mr
 ' M'Lagan and Mr M'Combie agreed without calling for a division. The
 ' whole of the arable land in the two parishes of Lochcarron and Apple-
 ' cross, in part of which the Applecross estate lies, consists of 3038 acres,
 ' if we are to believe the New Statistical Account of Scotland. So
 ' Dr Cameron lays waste for deer twenty-five times as much arable
 ' land as there is in the two parishes put together! This case should be

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' noticed specially, as it is the case brought forward by land reformers ' as the most glaring and conspicuous instance of cruel hardships having ' been inflicted on a patient people for deer. And I wish particularly to ' call to your remembrance the sort of evidence that was given before ' you at Shieldaig. None of the poor people there asked for protection ' before giving their evidence. True, there were five people at Deruner ' who asked for a fence to keep the deer off, but from Applecross proper ' no man ever thought it worth while to make his appearance! Compare ' this state of things with the evidence in the sheep farming countries, and ' you can draw your own conclusions. You have seen the people of ' Torridon, people in tolerably comfortable circumstances, people who ' have no complaint, except that some say that the rent is a little too high, ' a complaint not uncommon among farmers. But leave the deer forests ' of Applecross and Torridon, and look about you on your way to Inver- ' ness. What did the delegates from Strath Bran say to you, what account ' did they give? Delegates there were none, because people there are ' none. There the political economy system has been carried to its full ' extent. There you see the stances of ruined houses beside the railway. ' Sheep and desolation reign supreme. No one can ameliorate the con- ' dition of the inhabitants; they are gone, and can never be recalled. The ' stock of deer being much lighter in proportion than the sheep stock, and ' being a natural production of the country, instead of an exotic, does not ' require the low arable ground for wintering as the sheep do. All through ' the winter, except on some of the very few days when the snow reaches ' down to the seaside, the deer are to be seen up under the top rocks, ' long after every sheep has of his own accord taken refuge below. Dur- ' ing the autumn, when the crofters' crops are on the ground, as a rule ' the deer are all on the heights, and the harvest is all housed, and the ' potatoes secured, long before the deer come at all low. No turnips are ' grown, so that even if the deer do come down in winter, there is nothing ' for them to ravage. I am here stating the results of my own obser- ' vation and experience, and my experience is no common one. I live in ' the midst of my people more than nine months of the year. Any man ' can see me privately any morning at a set time, and any grievance real ' or imaginary can be, and practically is, brought before me personally. ' The people have in the ten years of deer instead of sheep improved ' marvellously in appearance and physique, and what will astonish some ' people more, in numbers. In 1873, according to a census taken for me, ' there were 118 houses and 458 people; in January 1883, 121 houses ' and 519 people—showing an increase of nearly 14 percent., the increase ' of the population of Scotland in the same decade being a little over ' 11 per cent. The population of the Loch Torridon district, of which ' district my estate comprises about one half, was 616 in 1792, and ' in 1881 it was 1281. As I have 519, as before said, I keep in ' comfort on my estate, through the means of deer foresting, nearly double ' the population that lived on it a hundred years ago. Now, as to arable ' land said by so-called reformers to be laid waste for deer forest, the total ' amount of land tilled by the people under the rule of the sheep in 1872 ' was about eighty-seven acres, if so much; now they cultivate about 142 ' —an increase of 63 per cent. You may remember my pointing out to you ' the hillside above the Inver Alligin people, those who petitioned me for ' cows, and a wonderful and pleasant sight it is; land where nothing but ' the hostile sheep had been seen for forty years and more, where not one ' inch was allowed to be tilled, now waving with corn and green with ' potatoes, every possible bit of ground among the rocks being utilised and

turned up by the hand plough. The sheep experiment detailed above has delayed very much the full working out of my plans, but already the increase in wealth of cattle is most encouraging; whereas the people, including the shepherds, had 64 cows when I entered, they now have about 109. The 64 cows were all the cattle they had, as they were not permitted to keep the calves; but now the total head of cattle belonging to them is 225, an increase of 161 head. Reckoning these at an average of £8, 10s. each, we get an increase of wealth to the people of over £1368. As might have been expected, I had to help them in getting first-rate bulls, as it is difficult to persuade a not too energetic people that a good bull is more profitable in the long run than a bad one. This year I have known £7, 10s. given for one of their stirk, and £13 for a two-year-old. My expectation is, and that on good grounds, that in a very few years they will have about 200 cows with their followers, and then I think most of them will be beyond the present great danger to crofters, the ruinous effect of one really bad season. In 1792, the total wealth of the parish in cattle was 3000 head; but those were small, three of them counting for two of the ones now kept. The area of Torridon is less than one-fourth of the parish, so that when we have 500 cattle at Torridon, we will have the same proportion of cattle stock in our part of the parish as was kept in the good old times, one hundred years ago. In 1792, as the parish minister says—"The hills abound in deer; thirty, forty, or fifty is no uncommon sight in a flock." Here again we are approaching the good old times; while the cattle are feeding quietly below, the herds of deer again adorn the heights, a sight charming both to proprietors and tenants. I have thus shown that my people are far better off in land and in stock than they were during the reign of the sheep; but now comes in the assertion—"You are depriving the nation of food, and thereby injuring the resources of the country." Even were this to be the case, it can hardly be seriously argued that the oppression formerly practised on the people for the sake of the sheep is to be renewed on the chance of providing a little more food for the rest of the nation. Surely the rearing of such a race of men as we can show in the West Highlands is a matter of the last importance to the community at large. But on this point I take issue decidedly and fearlessly. I might rest on the report of the 1873 Game Committee, above quoted; but I will show from statistics carefully collected, that the actual supply of food which Torridon produces now is much greater than in the time of the sheep, and that when my plans have had their full time to be worked out the supply will be doubled. The accounts of the sheep produce are as correct as possible. I got them from the two head shepherds on the estate, shortly after I entered into possession, as well as from the late proprietor's factor, as I was determined to have correct data for comparing results. One of these shepherds had been thirty years at Torridon, and the other fifteen years, so that I am not going to deal with fancy figures, but hard facts. The total sheep stock in 1873 was said to be 6000 head; there were 5554 advertised to be sold at the dispenishing sale. The sales each year were on an average about 700 three-year-old wethers, 300 slack ewes, and 200 lambs. Taking the average weight of wethers at 56 lb. at 8d. per lb., slack ewes 40 lb. at 6d., and lambs 27 lb. at 8d., we have a total of £1786 for mutton produced in the year. But the weight of wethers sold was not all due to the sheep farm, as they were bought as wether lambs weighing on an average 27 lb. each; we must therefore deduct 700 at 27 lb. each, £630, which reduces the value of mutton produced to £1156. And further,

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' 1400 sheep, more than a quarter of the stock, had to winter away in the east country for about half the year, so that at least one-eighth of this sum must be deducted, say £144; and £45 was paid for wintering on a neighbouring estate besides, so that £189 has to be deducted, leaving £967 value of food produced by the sheep stock formerly, and now done away with. But we have to add to this sum the produce of the sixty-four cows which the people and shepherds then had. After going carefully into the matter, I find that, as nearly as I can make it, a cow gives two gallons of milk per diem for six months of the year; reckoning the value of this at one penny a bottle, gives us £9, 2s. value of milk produced; and to this is to be added the value of butter about $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. per week for six months at 1s. 6d. per lb., amounting to £4, 17s. 6d.; total produce of cow in milk and butter, £13, 19s. 6d. But with the sheep cropping the grass up to their very doors, and the insufficient wintering, three cows then only gave as much milk and butter as two do now. This you had in evidence from Camustrole. So that we must deduct one-third of the above sum, £4, 13s. 2d., and we have £9, 6s. 4d. representing the milk and butter, which for sixty-four cows gives us a sum of £596. As to the calves, half the cows in those starvation times used to be yeld each year, so that only thirty-two calves would be born. The calves were not permitted to be kept, so that as a matter of fact three-fourths of them were knocked on the head, and eight only would be kept. For these the people used to get 14s. or 16s. each, but reckoning that they weighed 50 lbs. each at 8d. per lb., we have a value of £1, 13s. 4d. each, making a total of £13, 6s. 8d.; total produce of cows in value of food, £609. As to land, about fifty-four acres were under potatoes, producing sixty barrels per acre, at 4s. per barrel; value of food, £648. The remaining thirty-three acres of arable were employed in growing corn, and produced about three quarters per acre, but all of this was used in wintering their cattle, and they had to buy wintering besides, the price of which ought by rights to be deducted from the value of the produce of the cows. Some stags were also shot, and I think it best to reckon them in, though they were mainly stragglers from adjoining forests. According to all I can hear, ten is a liberal allowance, and the average weight of a stag in 1873-74 being about 11 st. 1 lb.; allowing 28 lbs. for the horns, skin, &c., we have an average weight of 129 lbs., which taking 7d. per lb. as the price of venison, gives a total of £37 value of food produced on the hill. So that in the sheep farming days, counting flesh of sheep, produce of cows, yield of land, and venison, we have a money value of £2261 food produced for the nation. As to the present time, each cow now, in addition to milk and butter, is to be credited with a stirk. The stirk on an average weighs 200 lbs., which at 8d. per lb. makes £6, 13s. 4d.; adding that to the yield of milk and butter, £13, 19s. 6d., we get the total value of produce of a cow now to be £20, 12s. 10d. The calf, however, takes half the milk, say £4, 12s. 10d., so the produce of the cow may be taken at £16. There are 109 cows at present, so that the produce from cows is £1744, taking one year with another; this year there have been fewer stirk sold, but a good many two-year-olds about double the weight. As to land, there are about seventy acres now under potatoes, which produce £840, and forty-two additional acres of corn land at £3, which come to £12, 6s.; total from land, £966. To this is to be added the produce of the forest. In 1881-82, there were forty-four stagshot, and the average weight of a stag now is 13 st.; deducting for horns, &c. as before, so as to take the net weight at 154 lbs.

' we get a value of £197. Total food produced now of the value of £2907, which is £646 more than the value got out of Torridon estate under the sheep days. But more than this: I am entitled to look forward to the results expected when my plans have had full time to be worked out. I look forward to the produce of 80 more cows, making £1280 in addition, and when the deer forest is fully stocked, 16 more stags (value as above £71), and 90 hinds will be annually shot. Taking the hinds to weigh 110 lbs. each at 6d. per lb., we have £247, so that adding this future profit of £1599 to the £646 present profit, we have a total of £2245 additional value of food resulting from the abolition of the sheep. In making this comparison I have not taken the home farm into account, to avoid complicating matters, but I cultivate about the same acreage, and keep about the same quantity of stock as the late proprietor. It will be objected that I do not take the wool into account, but even if wool were food, which it hardly is, the value would not anything like cover the above difference. 5554 fleeces at 2s. come to £555, the skins of the 1200 annually sold come to £300 at 5s. each—a total of £855, from this deduct $\frac{1}{8}$ th for sheep wintering away, £106, and £48 the value of the stirk skins (150), which should be credited to the present system, and we have a net result of £700, representing the loss caused by the abolition of the sheep. But to realise this £700 from wool, we have to sacrifice no less than £2245 in value of food as produced by the deer forest and cattle scheme, leaving the life of the crofters out of the question. There is no difficulty in supplying wool from our colonies and elsewhere, but how can we recall our Highlanders when banished? A sheep farmer carries all the wealth he can out of the country. His object is to get rich; he spends as little as he can. It is the system, however, as applied to the locality that I blame, not the individuals. In our parish, for instance, a sheep farmer is one of our best and most intelligent School Board members; and the chairman of our Parochial Board, another sheep farmer, is one of the best chairmen in the north. But the system is bad, where among our hills there are crofters. Witness one of the few sheep farmers who gave evidence before the Game Committee of 1873, Mr David Mundell. He was asked (Q. 4190), "Did you make it a condition on taking the land that these people were to be cleared out?" Answer—"Yes, I made the condition on taking the land, that I was to get peaceable possession of all the land, and these people were to be provided for elsewhere." Mr Mundell seems to have been too humane to insist on his conditions being carried out, although he took their lands from them; but what do you say to a system one of the most influential exponents of which actually stipulates for the depopulation of a Highland glen? On the other hand, a man who sets about forming a deer forest is bound to build a good house, whether he occupies or lets, and surround it with all modern improvements. Gardens, pleasure grounds, and stables cause great outlay among the people, besides the wages paid to keepers, gillies, and domestic servants. Mr Purves, before the same Game Committee, pledged himself to the statement, that (Q. 2570), "Except in the matter of rent, they (the sportsman) do not spend a tenth part of what a sheep farmer spends." Mr Harry Browne, tenant of Kinlochewe forest, adjoining mine, has kindly given me a note of the sums paid by him. Besides his rent of £1730, he pays through the keeper no less than £1566 per annum; and in addition to this he has spent in improvements, rates, &c., over £5000 in his ten years lease—an average of £500 per annum, making a total of £2066 per annum, not counting small bills

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INVERNESS.
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Duncan Darroch.

' is one every three and a-half years, ten times as many as before. The amelioration is trifling, but it shows how hollow the assertion is. Another point I see often made against deer forests is that vermin, meaning foxes, wild cats, &c., are encouraged. As to this I can only speak of what I know. At Torridon, for at least six years before 1873, hardly a fox had been taken, and the fox hunter was not allowed into the district. Hares there were hardly any, grouse were almost extinct. We set about trapping at once, and in the ten years now passed we have killed seventy-two foxes and fifty-eight wild cats. On the north side, where I did not see above one hare in a day's walk, we can now shoot eighty in a couple of hours, and not a single fox's track is to be seen; while seventy brace of grouse were shot during three days in December. It may be said by people who do not know the country, that the conditions at Torridon must be unusual, as it is against all reason that deer foresting should really benefit the people. To show that Torridon does not stand alone, look at the large estate of Applecross in the same parish. Lord Middleton's people having had the advantage of a deer foresting regime for many years, under kind personal rule, have been singularly well off in medical attendance and schools; the population, which was about 800 souls in 1792, is now 958; and his people who were mentioned by Sir John M'Neill as being well off thirty years ago, are still comfortable and well-cared for: they did not come forward with any complaints before your Commission; they had no old oppressions to rake up, no new grievances to complain of. The cry of destitution heard from so many other parts did not come from Applecross, and the same was the case at Torridon, although an unfounded appeal for aid was presented to the Mansion House Committee by Dr Cameron, an appeal which I will not deal with here, but with reference to which I have full documentary proof to produce if necessary. I am bound to say, however, that there is one grievance touching deer forests, as well as shootings, which in my opinion is well founded, and should be redressed. I refer to the rating, or rather non-rating of them. A deer forest or grouse shooting is only rated as such when let; when unlet, a forest is rated merely as grazing land, so that a man holding a deer forest worth £1000 a year for his own pleasure, is only rated on the grazing rent, probably not the half; while the poor crofter pays rates on his full rental. This is the survival of a privilege, harmless under old social conditions, when shootings were not commercially valuable, but under the circumstances of the day indefensible. For the rest, my land being deer forest, all the arable is given to the use of the people, except the ground reserved for the home farm. Out of the 30,000 acres in my possession, I suppose there are not more than 400 altogether that could possibly be cultivated, and, if as proposed by some amiable enthusiasts, the remaining 29,600 acres fell to be divided in 5½ acre lots for indigent dwellers in towns, then heaven help the poor creatures who had to try and make a livelihood out of the rock, gravel, and heather on which his kind friends would place him. Why, it has been asked, should not an Act like the Irish Land Act be passed, so as to secure these good people from capricious eviction? I think that a great deal of the Highland crofters' miseries have been caused by over-subdivision of lands and over-population. On this there is a check at present on well-managed estates. In my own case, every house is marked on the Ordnance map, and no change whatever can be made without leave. This is cheerfully acquiesced in by the people, who know well that it is for the benefit of all, though naturally each

INVERNESS.

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Darroch.

' family is inclined to wish for an exception in its own case. Should the people get an indefeasible right to their holdings by law, there would be nothing to check this process, and twenty or thirty years would see Torridon so overcrowded, that existence would be hardly possible for any one, and the old cry of destitution would again be heard. I myself believe that public opinion is quite sufficient check on any flagrant injustice; under any system there must be some inequalities, some hardships, but there has, I believe, been no real case of cruel eviction for many years; some have been attempted, but by publicity, the wrong I think has always been prevented. As far as I am personally concerned, the application of such an Act to the north would make no appreciable difference, but I think that it would be against the public interest to throw away wantonly such a powerful instrument for good as the proprietor's rule can be made. Leases also have been talked of; but the people do not like leases; a crofter who accepts a lease thereby admits that he has no right to be on the land, and that the termination of his lease is the termination of his interest in the soil. To talk of leases in connection with improved agriculture in such cases is idle—where only the hand plough can be used, no scientific methods of agriculture can be employed; they can and do improve in the way of clearing ground of stones, and building dykes to keep the cattle out, but the only real hardship I have seen is with regard to houses. Good people often wonder how human beings can live in such hovels as are seen on the west coast, but what could you expect a very poor man to lay out on a house, when he was liable to be turned out summarily, without any compensation? Often men wishing to improve have asked for some sort of guarantee that they would not lose their all; this being denied them, as a natural consequence houses were not improved. One of my first acts was to introduce a system of ameliorations, whereby I agree with any crofter who will build a house with two gables, chimneys, and practicable windows, that in case of disturbance he shall be paid a sum to be fixed by arbitration. This I think is all that is wanted in this direction, and it is cheering to see how they are gradually improving, one following another. Nine improved houses have already been built on my conditions, and many more are in course of erection. Had time permitted I should have liked to have said something as to the revival of illicit distillation, and the evils consequent thereon, caused by the repeal of the malt tax; the beneficial effect of the proprietor's power in restricting the number of whisky shops; and the injustice of cheapening telegrams for rich business men in the south out of the consolidated fund, while the Highlands are left practically without telegraphs. To sum up, by the change from sheep farm to deer forest on the Torridon estate, the grazings have been improved, quantity of land cultivated has increased 63 per cent., the population has increased 14 per cent.; and while their rent has been increased 54 per cent. arrears have disappeared, and pauperism has diminished 27 per cent. Their wealth in cattle is enormously greater, and 8 per cent. of their houses are of an improved class; while their contributions to the Free Church sustentation fund are increased from about £8 in 1872 to £22 even in this present year of scarcity. Corn has again been sent to the mill, a circumstance unknown for some forty years; and finally a poor despairing population has been raised to a state nearly independent of the seasons. I have only, in conclusion, to submit the following comparative statement for the years 1873 and 1883:—

Torrion Estate—Crofters and Cottars—Comparative State
1873 to 1883, ten years of Deer Foresting.

INVERNESS.

INVERNESS.

Duncan
Darroch.

Year.	Condition of Estate.	Families	Number of Persons.	Arable Land Cultivated in Acres.	Peoples' Cattle.	Rental.	Arrears.	Paupers.
1873, . . .	Sheep farm,	118	458	87	64	£224	£292	22
1883, . . .	Deer forest,	121	519	145	225	337	...	16
Increase in ten years, . . .	...	3	61	58	161	113	...	...
Decrease in ten years, . . .	...	...	...	...	...	...	292	6

Value of 161 cattle at £8, 10s. = £1360, 10s. increase of wealth of people.

42733. You have described to us a case in which, according to your contention, the abolition of a sheep stock followed by the creation of a deer stock has been attended with advantage. But the change has also been attended with the introduction into the lower part of the ground of a large number of resident small tenants?—There are no more small tenants than there were before, except two or three families. There is no appreciable difference in the families.

42734. At any rate, there is on the skirts, as it were, of the deer forest a considerable resident small tenant population?—That is so.

42735. And those are living down at a low elevation near the border of the sea?—That is true.

42736. And consequently you have had, in this case, the advantage of low ground and ground susceptible of arable cultivation?—Quite true.

42737. But the contention to-day before us was that in many cases the advantages which belong to your property do not exist; that is to say, that the whole area of the deer forest is at a high elevation, that it is precipitous and rocky, and that for one reason or another you could not establish a colony of labourers upon arable soil. In that case the same advantages would not exist?—Clearly not.

42738. Do you believe there are many forests in the Highlands in which a margin of arable cultivation in the hands of small tenants could not be established?—I am not sufficiently acquainted with the country generally to be able to say. I don't feel safe where I travel beyond the thing I actually know.

42739. Your forest goes down to the sea-level?—Quite to the sea-level.

42740. Are there many other forests in which there are the same advantages as there are on your own, and on which the small tenantry could either be re-established, or, if they existed, improved?—I don't know sufficiently about the other forests to say. It is impossible to give an opinion with accuracy about ground one does not know well.

42741. Then may it not be possible that your forest is in a very exceptionally favourable position?—That is very likely. But all I came here to do was to give you the actual facts of my actual experience, and if everybody did that you would be able to form your own conclusions.

42742. So far as I remember, I think I only saw, and that a little

INVERNESS.

INVERNESS.

Duncan
Darroch.

distance from the sea, one township or one settlement of your crofters. They lived on cultivated ground between the sea and the margin of the forest, with, I understand, the liberty of outrun to a certain extent on the forest for their cattle?—That is so.

42743. I would like to understand something about the cultivation and the rent. You say there were nearly the same number of families before, but the area of cultivation was smaller?—Very much smaller.

42744. What was the nature of the soil, which the people are now taking in, on the additional area of cultivated ground; was it reclaimed from the heather?—It was old cultivated arable ground that had been cultivated from time immemorial, and which they had been put out of for the sake of sheep.

42745. Did you hear the evidence given by Lord Lovat's factor?—Partially; I could not catch it all.

42746. But such a scheme as he described would not have been at all necessary where you are?—Not at all. Small bits were taken in by individual crofters, but as a rule it was all ground that had been originally cultivated.

42747. All ground previously cultivated and now improved; well, the lots of what you term crofters included what area?—An acre and a half.

42748. And, of course, a cottage and some small outbuildings?—They put up the buildings themselves. They get the wood from the estate.

42749. The cottages are put up by themselves entirely, except that rough wood is given them?—The rough wood and the thatching—heather and divots for thatching.

42750. They gather it?—Yes.

42751. Then your contribution to their dwelling is rough wood and liberty to gather the raw material of the roof?—That is true.

42752. Then what do you think is the value of their houses; how much did they expend upon their houses?—It is very difficult to get at that. The lowest estimate I have had put upon it was £8. I don't think a man could do it for that. What they generally do is to get one of the local masons to do the mason work for them. It is difficult to get the actual cost.

42753. £10?—I don't think it would cost much more than that.

42754. The crofter lays out about £10?—Something like that.

42755. And you contribute what you have stated; what do you value that at?—I have never tried to estimate what it is—a very few shillings.

42756. £1?—I think it would hardly be that.

42757. That is not the class of house for which you engage to pay meliorations?—No, that costs a good deal more. They have to get a skilled mason to put up gables and chimneys, and there is a certain kind of carpentry work.

42758. What is the contribution to that class?—No more than to the other class.

42759. What do you think the crofter in that case pays for the better house, £30?—I don't think it is so much as that. It would be really speaking at random, for I don't know what they pay.

42760. Then, at any rate, taking the first class of habitations that were erected there were houses which cost the people £10, and which cost you £1, in connection with half an acre of arable ground?—Yes.

42761. We need not count the house at all as responsible for any

portion of the rent. What is the rent for $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres of ground?—That goes with the grazing.

INVERNESS.
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42762. I want to analyse that. The rent is £4. How much of that do you credit to the arable and how much to the grazing right?—I am not able to apportion it now at all. We attempted to do it at first. We put down 30s. an acre for the land at first, but now they have got a good deal more stock. Therefore the rent comes to be a great deal less; but I got into thorough confusion about the apportionment between the cattle and the land.

INVERNESS.

Duncan
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42763. At any rate, in connection with $1\frac{1}{2}$ acre of arable land, how many cows do you aim at?—For that he keeps one cow and a two-year-old, if he likes, and astirk.

42764. It is equivalent to two cows?—I suppose it is something of the sort, but I aim at their having more cows than that. There is a payment for extra cows by work.

42765. But in the case of their keeping two cows in connection with the $1\frac{1}{2}$ acre of ground, they would be paying £4?—If they wish to keep an extra cow they would do so much work on the estate—ten days' work on the estate for the cow.

42766. Then they would be paying £5 if they kept two cows?—
Yes.

42767. An acre and a half and two cows' outrun for £5?—*Yes.*

42768. How do they feed the two cows? Are they able to raise enough on the $1\frac{1}{2}$ acre to feed the cows entirely, or do you allow them to get hay or some sort of fodder?—In some of the villages there is a great deal of hay cut. At the west end there is so much cut that they are able to sell and exchange with those at the eastern end who have not so much. But it was so equalised that there was not a bit of wintering bought off the estate last winter.

42769. And none bought from you?—None bought from me.

42770. I mean nothing paid for?—Nothing.

42771. They wintered all their stock one way or another without reference to you or anybody else?—*Yes,* entirely self-supporting.

42772. It seems a full rent compared with the terms we found in other parts of the west coast and the islands, but, according to your account, they are grateful for it?—They are.

42773. And there is no difficulty in getting the rent?—Not the very slightest.

42774. And in case of any vacant crofts, you would have no difficulty in getting people to fill them?—There never has been the slightest difficulty. The difficulty up to this point has been for the people always to get their cows. A great many of them have not cows at all. I am only just getting them settled. There has been hardly time to turn one's self round.

42775. Is the full rent exacted before the full stock is obtained, or do you make an abatement till the man buys his cow?—An abatement is made. I deal with each case as I think the justice of the case demands.

42776. You consult the interest of each case separately?—*Yes.* If there had been any injustice in that way you would probably have heard of it at Shieldaig.

42777. You expressed an opinion decidedly hostile to leases in favour of the crofting class. I suppose you do not extend that to all classes?—*No,* merely to crofters in the same condition as ours on the west coast.

42778. Did you hear what the factor for Lord Lovat said about improving leases?—I did

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42779. Do you think something of that sort in some other part of the west might not be advantageously applied?—In most parts of the west there is so much land that has been under cultivation that you don't want so much trenching. There is not much land in the west, so far as I know, that could be trenched. There are sheep farms occupying the places where people were, and the arable land merely requires to have a spade put into it again.

42780. Do your people fish?—Yes, that is one of their chief industries. They go off to the east coast fishing, and a man in a good year will make £22 to £28 off it.

42781. Well, I suppose, as they commonly say, the rent is in some measure got out of the sea?—Very much so.

42782. They pay this rent for the advantage of home and the favour and kindness bestowed on them?—Yes; they like their home, and would not go away on any consideration.

42783. Supposing you were no longer there, and that the amount of employment you personally give—partially because you are able to afford it and love the place—were withdrawn from them, do you think they would still be able to live and pay their rent in connection with the land *plus* the fishing?—Well, it would not be so easy; but so long as anybody lives on the estate he is bound to spend money,—so long as it does not get into a case of sheep farming again. Any man occupying a house in these West Highlands is bound to spend a good deal of money. He cannot keep up the place without it.

42784. So you think the expenditure is a necessity of the place?—Quite a necessity, unless the mansion house were burnt and the deer forest given up.

42785. There seems to me hardly any opportunity for these people rising out of their condition. They are all alike, or nearly alike?—All but one. I was able to give one a rather larger croft than the rest, at a rent of £12, and there were three applicants after that; but the land is limited, and is peopled to its full extent just now, so there is no gradation at present possible.

42786. But if there were, are you in favour of gradation?—Certainly.

42787. So your system, as developed and described by you, would not apply to other places?—Not at all. It is merely showing how I made the best of the materials I have.

42788. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—You mentioned that you found it desirable to adopt the old and much-condemned system of accepting service in lieu of rent?—Yes.

42789. Can you explain why the people prefer to give service rather than pay rent?—It is so excessively difficult to get any ready money. It is quite easy for a man at home in the winter to work on the roads, and so on. I give them work in the winter on the shore. It is near their own homes and near their township, and it is a comfort to them to do these things.

42790. You might offer wages for their work and allow them to pay their rent?—I might do that, but it was most extraordinary the way they jumped at that proposal.

42791. There is no complaint of it?—They all jumped at it.

42792. I think, in the concluding passage of your paper, you mentioned that the grazings under the foresting system have improved?—That is true; most enormously improved. I have been talking a good deal to my ground officer and keeper. My stalker was going about the hills the other day, and the grass is something magnificent. You see in

the old time, to winter the few sheep that were kept there they would hardly allow an inch of the old heather to be burned. All the green hill above Alligin was just a waste of brown heather. Now we burn a good deal of it for the grouse. So the place would carry double the stock of sheep now that it would when I got the place.

42793. The grass is ranker and closer, is it not?—In some places; but it is splendid grass.

42794. More plentiful?—Very plentiful, and beautiful grass too.

42795. You heard a contrary opinion stated here to-day?—I did, and was very much surprised. He was evidently a man who had never been over a place changed from sheep to deer.

42796. Have you had experience in any other place besides Torridon of this change?—No; it has surprised me all the more, because I never expected it.

42797. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Your elaborate paper is devoted more to contrasting sheep farming with deer foresting than to the crofting question?—Perhaps it is.

42798. Now, our inquiry is principally connected with the crofters. Are the arable lands of the crofters fenced in any way with you?—No. One of the townships has its land fenced, because I gave them a part which happened to be fenced, quite accidentally.

42799. Have you heard any complaint from them that the deer come down in winter or at any other time to their arable land?—None at all. There have been two complaints. One man had a small bit of ground, and I gave him some wire to put up a fence and he put it up. In the case of my old ground officer I offered to fence it for him, and he said he did not much mind; and he sits up at night blowing a horn, but he could get rid of them if he liked. As to the crofters, there has never been anything of the sort.

42800. Don't you think there will be some danger of that when your forest is fully stocked?—I don't think so, because the deer don't come down till all the crops are off the ground.

42801. You have been rather surprised at what the delegate Macdonald said about the falling off of pastures?—I have been very much surprised.

42802. You say that, from your experience, they have improved very much?—Very much.

42803. Will you undertake to say that ten years after this your pastures will be as good as they are now?—I don't see what should keep them back. The same system of burning will go on under my management that goes on now.

42804. Have you not heard that in some of the older forests that have existed for forty years and upwards they were obliged to put black cattle into them for the purpose of trying to restore the ground?—I have not heard of that.

42805. Supposing that were the case, would it convince you that in course of time pastures in forests would deteriorate?—If I knew it I should certainly believe it, but I have not heard it.

42806. I suppose that before you gave these privileges to your crofters they were very ill off for milk?—Miserable. As the minister said in the letter I read, the want of milk made the children look wretched.

42807. Was that a matter which you took into consideration in making your plans?—Certainly it was one of the first things I wanted to do to give the cows on account of the milk; and that necessitated the

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sweeping away of the sheep, and that was the reason of my hesitation.

42808. You stated, but I don't think you were quite accurate, that there were no complaints from Applecross, in connection with the forest; but I think one man stated there, that he was obliged to sit up every night to frighten the deer?—I said Applecross proper. You got a man from the extreme point, living nearly sixteen miles from anywhere, but from Applecross proper there was nobody came over. This man was a long way from Applecross proper.

42809. Do you think there is a deal of land in the Highlands that might be again put under cultivation which is now occupied by sheep farms and otherwise?—I have not a doubt of it.

42810. I heard you use the word Strath Bran. You see that often when passing by the rail?—Yes.

42811. Does that place not look very much adapted for crofters?—I think so, certainly.

42812. It lies comparatively low, and is within reach of the railway?—Yes, I quite agree with you.

42813. Then you don't agree with the factor for the proprietor, who scouted the idea of Strath Bran being populated?—I don't know where you will get the people from, but I think it is a place that would support people, undoubtedly.

42814. Are you in favour, so far as that could be done, of keeping the people at home and migrating them, rather than emigrating them, if there be land suitable for them?—Well, I have not given my attention to that question at all.

42815. But surely the general question of migration and emigration must have come across your thoughts?—There are a great many difficulties in the way of migration. The people hate leaving their own villages. I cannot get them to migrate from one township to another on my ground.

42816. Even if you give them a better place?—Even if I give them better places. I have had men nearly starving at Alligin, who refused to go and take a good croft at Annat, only four miles away, and the Annat people would not receive them because they were Alligin people. I believe many of them would rather go off to Manitoba than go five miles off to another township.

42817. You have not found the population upon your estate then to be superabundant?—No. There is a curious thing about the population that I should like to mention. I gave you the increase during the ten years, but the increase all took place during the first year. Then, on looking through the details, I found as the reason that the younger, and better, and more able-bodied class had all been driven out of the country, because they had nothing to do. They came back to help their parents in working the farm and looking after the cattle, and now the population has kept at that during the last ten years.

42818. You found the population of Torridon very poor; was that a good deal owing to there being a non-resident proprietor, and no labour going of any kind?—No doubt. There was no labour, and that was one thing very much against them.

42819. And that is, unfortunately, a position which may again occur?—It may, but still they could not get into such bad straits again, unless the land were taken from them, because they can go and get work elsewhere.

42820. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—What is the number of crofters on your estate?—About one hundred families, roughly.

42821. There are cottars also?—Yes.

42822. What is the number of them?—You have got the families all together there, crofters and cottars.

42823. Can't you tell how many of them are cottars?—There are very few.

42824. And none of these crofters, except one, has arable land beyond $1\frac{1}{2}$ acre?—That one I think has only two acres, but he is in a position where he is able to keep more cattle. I forget what was the number he kept, but he offered a certain rent for it.

42825. That is very much below the average of the size of crofts on other Highland estates?—It is perfectly true, and it is a thing that astonished me very much, to find the smallness of the crofts.

42826. And the rent for that is about 30s. an acre?—It does not come to that when you consider the cows and their followers.

42827. But that also is considerably above the average rental of Highland crofts; so that, *prima facie*, one would say the people are highly rented?—Yes.

42828. But they are contented?—Quite contented.

42829. And prosperous compared with what they were before?—There is no comparison at all.

42830. Then the way in which they make their living must be outside of the land on which they live?—A great many of them go off as gillies and shepherds—for the smearing; and fishing is a great industry with them.

42831. You don't give them all constant employment on the estate?—No, nothing like it.

42832. How do the cottars live?—They live very much in the same way. They have their half-acre, and most of them are in fenced land. They have so much potatoes on the half-acre, and they actually grow corn which they sell to the crofters.

42833. I suppose it is not possible for you, if you desired it, to increase their holdings so far as the arable is concerned?—Quite impossible, because it does not exist. They can take in anything they like.

42834. In your calculation of the amount of food produced for the nation by Torridon, you don't mean that it is contributed in the shape of money?—No, not at all.

42835. All that milk, cream, and butter is consumed upon the premises?—By the people, and they are part of the nation.

42836. And they were not able to produce so much when it was a sheep farm?—No.

42837. Then does the venison go to the market, or did you only calculate the value?—I only calculated the value. Last year I calculated the amount of mutton it saved me, and it saved me thirty-five lbs. Of course, that liberated so much mutton for the rest of the nation. If a man eats venison he does not eat so much mutton.

42838. So your contribution to the food of the nation is in the shape of a contribution to the maintenance of your own family and yourself?—Yes, and people we give it to.

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JAMES MOLLISON, Factor for Dochfour (55)—examined.

42839. *The Chairman*.—You have a statement?—Yes.

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42840. Will you please read it?—I come before the Royal Commis-

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' sioners with the twofold purpose of giving my views generally on the great question now under their consideration, and of remarking upon the evidence given before them on the occasion of their sitting at Glenelg on the 4th of August last, by parties calling themselves delegates, and therefore supposed to represent the district for which they spoke. And I shall also be willing to answer any question the Commissioners may wish to ask respecting any portion of the estates that have for the last fourteen years been under my charge, or in respect of any evidence that has been given at the present sitting. The district of Glenelg, which I believe was alone represented at the sitting of the Commissioners to which I have referred, has been largely under my management for the last fourteen years, and I am therefore intimately acquainted with whatever has taken place within the district, both in respect of ownership and occupancy, during the period I have named. I am not going to follow the delegates in their statements to the extent of repeating them, but I will give facts and particulars, aenent the various statements submitted, which I must beg of the Commissioners to compare with those laid before them at their sitting above referred to. I should therefore like to notice—first, that there are about twenty crofters on the Kirkton and adjoining lands. The crofts vary in size from one acre up to seventeen acres, and the rents vary from £1 up to £10, 10s.; these crofts are wholly green land or arable, and in each case the croft includes the cottage and other housing of the occupant. There are also about eleven cottars in the above district, and these pay rents varying from 2s. 6d. to 5s. per annum, whilst a few pay no rent at all. There are also a number of paupers' houses for which the proprietor has not been in the habit of charging rent, but the inspector of poor has been in the practice of allowing able-bodied men, not paupers, to occupy these houses, and the practice cannot be continued. The population connected with these crofters and cottars numbers about one hundred. On the 1st January last, the number of milk cows owned by the crofters was twenty-four, and the number of other cattle was also twenty-four; there were two working horses, and several swine, but no sheep. Besides the Kirkton of Glenelg district on which the above crofters and cottars reside, there is also the Arnisdale district on Lochhourne, which also belongs to Mr Baillie of Dochfour. In this district there are two fishing hamlets, with a population of about two hundred; these occupy about thirty-four crofts, varying in size from $1\frac{1}{4}$ acre up to four acres, at rents varying from £2 up to £5, 10s., but, with only three exceptions, the rents do not exceed £2 for both houses and land. A number of the houses occupied by these people are miserably poor, many comparatively unthatched, and otherwise greatly neglected; there is, however, abundance of thatch to be had at no inconvenient distance; as in the Glenelg district, rushes grow in great abundance on the carse lands, along the river banks, and to prevent these rushes injuring the pasture, they are largely mown down every year, and are allowed to lie on the ground, or to be carried away by the river to the sea. These rushes make excellent thatch, and might readily be tied up in sheaves, and carried—if not in carts, in the fishermen's boats, to the very door of every cottage in Arnisdale, so that not one need be without thatch; many are, however, in a deplorable condition, necessitating the removal of roofing every other year; yet young and able-bodied men may be seen on any day throughout the year, in groups at the end of each other's houses, keenly discussing imaginary grievances, rather than

attending to the improvement of their cottages or crofts, or the performance of any kind of regular labour whatsoever. Besides the crofters, there are in this district about ten cottars, some of whom pay 5s. per annum of rent, while others pay nothing. On the 1st of January last, there were only six milk cows and a few starks belonging to the entire population of the Arnisdale district, a few swine also, but no horses, nor sheep. It appears from the evidence of some of the delegates that there is a desire for more land, so that more cows might be kept. I have to state in connection with this, that at Whitsunday last intimation was made that grazing would be supplied on the farm of Eileanreach, which comes close up to the village of Cambusbane at 30s. per annum for each cow or stark, but up to this time only two parties have taken advantage of the offer. The village of Corran could be most conveniently accommodated with cows grazing on the farm of Arnisdale, where it is stated that the tenant Mr Milligan charges the very high rate of £3 for each cow. I find, however, that this charge covers not only the cow's grazing, but that of two followers, probably a stark and a calf. It was also stated to the Commission that a good many years ago the villagers of Corran were deprived of a portion of the hill they had long enjoyed as grazing. I have made most careful inquiry as to this, and I am able to state that there is not one shade of truth in this statement. The system that now prevails is the same as that which prevailed about eighty years ago, and the charge for grazing is also the same as it was about eighty years ago. But by the now current lease of the farm of Arnisdale, it is provided that land may be taken and enclosed as a grazing for the crofters; but up to the month of August last I have not been asked for additional grazing, and then by one gamekeeper only; and in connection with this question of grazing, I may state that I find considerable quantities of hay are cut by the crofters off their crofts, and carried for many miles for the supply of neighbouring sportsmen, showing that there is grass and hay sufficient to feed more cows than are at present kept. I need not say that these statements are greatly at variance with those made by the delegates, but they are facts which cannot be gainsaid. I must also give my contradiction to other statements made before the Commission while sitting at Glenelg. For instance, it is not true, as stated by the delegates, that the Arnisdale crofters pay £2 for every acre of land they occupy. The Cambusbane and Corran crofts, which are the only crofts in this district, were laid off about eighty years ago; I believe they were laid off all of one size, and, with three exceptions, they are all of one size still, viz., $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres. The rent for each, including the cottage each tenant lives in, is £2 per annum, and there has been no change in this charge since the crofts were first given off,—at any rate, there has been none during the last fifty years. It is also not true when it is stated that no work is given upon the estate. I can only speak for the last fourteen years, but I can say that during that time not a year has passed in which the proprietor has not given a considerable amount of employment to labouring people; and at the date on which the statement was made that no work was given, there were no fewer than twenty seven workmen in full employment by the proprietor upon the Glenelg estate. And I find, on referring to pay rolls, that as many as fifty different hands have been employed in different places since June last; and although the work generally in hand was largely unskilled labour, not a single man from the village of Cambusbane or Corran sought or accepted an hour's work. I have also to say, that in

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' previous years I have been obliged to take workmen from Dumfries-shire and from Inverness, when those upon the estate, either from habits of sheer laziness, or from even worse causes, could not be intrusted with the work, although of the most ordinary description. It is very painful to have to make these remarks, but they are true, and in the true interests of the people ought not to be kept back, as has been far too much the case during the present inquiry. It was also stated before the Commission, that the crofters and cottars on the Glenelg estate have had to pay for rough timber for the repairs of their houses. I am not aware of a single instance in which timber for the repair of a crofter or cottar's house, for which the proprietor receives rent, has been either charged or paid for. It is true that timber has been refused for re-roofing of sheds and outhouses, and that for the reason that the occupiers will not thatch such buildings, and that roofs so neglected will only last a few years. I have to mention, however, while speaking of grants of timber, and I do it with regret, that on the occasion of the high tide of November 1881, when many of the Glenelg fishermen's boats were broken or carried away, the proprietor made a grant of a considerable quantity of larch timber for repairs and building of boats. This timber had to be brought from Glenshiel, as the larch in Glenelg was too old and too hard for the purpose. It was cut off the root by the proprietor, and he also offered to pay fifteen shillings per week to those of the fishermen who could work the strip saw, as several of them could, so that it might be cut up on the spot, and thus be more easily transported. The offer was, however, refused, and twenty shillings per week asked, showing an ingratitude that induced the proprietor to withdraw his offer of fifteen shillings entirely. The timber had therefore to be carried from Glenshiel in rafts upon the sea, but for this the fishermen were paid, from funds publicly collected; but when the rafts arrived in the bay at Kirkton, and while Mr Mundell, the tenant of Eileanreach, Mr Mackintosh of the hotel, and Mr Baillie the proprietor, had each a horse upon the beach ready to drag the logs on shore, not a man would give a hand to assist in this operation unless paid for doing so, and Mr Mundell and others, in order to save the timber, had to do the work, standing knee deep in the sea until all was landed. Notwithstanding all this, I believe some of the delegates stated before the Commission that "bad the fisherman got the money they could have bought the timber cheaper." And it remains to be stated that much of the timber may still be seen lying rotting behind the fishermen's houses, or by their potato plots, never having been used for any purpose whatever. I am sorry to have still more to say of the indolent and improvident habits of these people. In June 1882, some seven months after the disastrous storm of November 1881, and at the rent collection for Whitsunday 1882, a number of the fishermen met me, every one of them able-bodied young men, and told me they were unable to pay any rent. I replied, "All arrears due at Martinmas have been struck off, in consequence of your loss of boats in November, but all succeeding rents must be paid." I asked if their boats and nets were ready for the fishing season drawing near? The answer was, "Neither boats nor nets are ready." I asked further, if they could themselves make and mend their nets? They answered, "We can; but," said they, "we can buy them cheaper." These men, and many others belonging to the place, had been all but absolutely idle during the winter months, and these are the men who asked for timber to repair their boats, and when rafted to their doors, refused to take it from the water. They ask for more land,

' while that which they have grows weeds and docks taller than the
' sturdiest fisherman amongst them. They ask for work, and when it is
' at their doors they refuse to do it. Might not their numerous advisers
' tell them that such habits would ill compare with those of our east coast
' fisherman ? and that such can only lead to that privation and misery
' which too much prevails amongst the crofter fishing population of the
' Highlands, and that if such were practised by our low country labourers
' our poorhouses would be filled in less than six months ? The counsel
' given is, I regret to say, of a very different character. There was
' still further evidence given before the Commission at Glenelg
' which I must notice, viz., that of Donald Macpherson, Kirkton. This
' man represents himself as occupying a croft. He has, however,
' no such occupancy. He lives upon a croft occupied by his mother.
' He is a carpenter to trade, but I am sorry to say far from being useful
' in the place, either to himself or his family. The croft occupied by
' Macpherson's mother extends to 17 acres, at a yearly rent of £10, 10s.
' The arrears of rent due at Whitsunday last were £31, 10s. The croft is
' the largest in Glenelg, and the only one in arrears, showing that the
' larger the croft the worse for the occupant. Macpherson is a good fair
' tradesman, and he was some years ago given employment at
' Dochfour, with a house to live in, with the view of inducing better and
' more industrious habits, but after a short trial of six months it was,
' I regret to say, found necessary to part with him. He has since had
' the offer of a gratuity of £15, and his mother the offer of all arrears of
' rent written off, if he would remove entirely off Glenelg. This he
' refuses to do. His mother must, however, be removed from the croft,
' the buildings being entirely in ruins, and a cottage is now in course of
' being built, by the proprietor, to admit of this being carried out, with-
' out hardship to the poor old woman. Macpherson in his evidence
' stated that Mr George France, who was for the last thirteen years local
' factor on the Glenelg estate, evicted a poor widow, so that he might
' himself occupy her croft. There is not a shade of truth in this state-
' ment ; there never was such an eviction. Mr France had no power to
' evict any one, his duties being to carry out instructions given him from
' time to time. But Macpherson was not the only one who in giving
' evidence attempted to reflect on Mr France's local management ; I must
' therefore, in justice to a highly intelligent and faithful servant, say
' that beyond being so, Mr France was a true friend to the poor
' people, and the working men on the estate, and it is not too much to
' say that the latter class were in very different circumstances at the date
' of his leaving from that in which they were at the time he went to
' Glenelg. I never heard of a total abstainer in Glenelg prior to Mr
' France going there ; ultimately, through his influence, there were at least
' a few, and I believe it would be no worse for Macpherson were he one
' of them. There are working men in Glenelg at present, living in com-
' parative comfort, having a cow for the use of their families, who had
' not 5s. in the world at the time Mr France went amongst them, and I
' leave these men to say whether his influence operated for or against
' them. I have also to notice some remarkable evidence given by the
' delegate Donald M'Rae. This man occupies a croft of about five acres
' useful land, within a few hundred yards of the village of Kirkton, and
' pays a rent of £2, 10s. Macrae tells what he thinks is a clever story of
' the late Mr Donald Horne, W.S., who he says turned him out of Kirkton
' on account of the clever point of this same story. Macrae can scarcely
' say he is out of Kirkton yet, although he had certainly to remove out of

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James
Mollison.

' his former house, which was a little nearer Kirkton, and a little further ' from his croft than where he now lives. This removal was, however, in ' consequence of the house he then lived in being in ruins, and unfit for ' habitation. The house he now lives in is upon the croft, and the croft is ' the same he had when living in the former house. The removal, as he ' calls it, took place after Mr Horne's connection with Glenelg manage- ' ment had ceased. Indeed, after his death, Macrae also goes on to say ' that he recollects 400 of the Glenelg people leaving it for America ' in one day. I believe it is safe to regard M'Rae's statement as untrue ' from beginning to end. I do not regard the foregoing statements, nor ' the contradicting of them, as of very great importance, because they ' really apply to comparative trifles, but it shows to what an extent the ' truth has been evaded, and the most wilful misrepresentation set before ' the Commission, and in this respect it is to be feared Glenelg is far ' from singular. This must surely be looked upon with regret, for no ' one doubts that there is need for great amelioration in the circumstances ' of the fishing, labouring, and crofter population of the Highlands ; but ' getting at a true and permanent cure for this can only be by getting at ' the true disease itself, and this cannot be by wilful misrepresentations, ' nor can it be by exciting hopes that can never be realised. I have lived ' thirty-three years in the Highlands, and during the whole of that period ' I have been very closely connected with the labouring, the crofting, ' and the fishing population of the counties of Inverness, Sutherland and ' Caithness, and I have closely watched and carefully considered the ' whole question now before the Royal Commission, and I am more ' convinced to-day than I have ever been that an extension of the crofter ' system will not be beneficial to the crofters themselves, but the reverse. ' One cannot, forget that the whole West Highlands, taking one season ' with another, is ill adapted for the growth of corn crops, and that even ' with good cultivation a boll of meal will cost much more to grow it ' than it will to buy it ; still it is a fact that, in the estimation of almost ' every Highlander of the working class who has a home of his own, a ' great charm attaches to a croft, and while it is so it is surprising that in ' no other part of the kingdom will the labouring man's croft be found ' so slovenly cultivated, and to the occupier so worthless, as in the West ' Highlands. But what is most to be regretted is, that the worthless ' croft forms an inducement and an excuse for the occupier to stay ' at home, and waste time that would be so much more profitably ' spent in regular employment at fair wages. It is no doubt true ' that in the Highlands labour cannot be got without going ' some distance from home, but no more can it be for many in ' the low country. There also the labourer has often to seek work five to ' ten miles from home, which is about as bad as if it were thirty miles, ' for, in either case lodgings will have to be paid for, no doubt shorten- ' ing the sum available for the use of the family at home ; still it is much ' better than all that can be derived from a few acres of even the best of ' land in the West Highlands. My opinion is, that the most comfortable ' home for the working man in the West Highlands is, a cottage with ' potato land and grazing for a cow, nothing more than affording employ- ' ment for his wife and the younger members of his family,—either that ' description of home, or a grazing farm sufficient to afford him full em- ' ployment, and in such a case, the occupier would require to be fully ' experienced in the management of stock, and possessed of at least £500 ' of capital. It is really this class of holding that is being sought for by ' the Highland crofters and cottars at the present time, and that too

' without a thought of where either experience or capital is to come from.
' It is believed by many who are now zealous counsellors, and apparently
' anxious about the amelioration of these people, that it is a very simple
' thing to manage a small stock farm; but I venture to say it is very
' much otherwise, and those who now seek to aspire to it would speedily
' find it so, for without both experience and capital, coupled with incessant
' care and attention, ruin would be the result, and that in a very few
' years, even had they the land rent free. I speak with confidence when
' I say that the proper management of grazing land and sheep stock is
' now more a science than is the highest class arable farming. We have
' it stated every day by those who know very little of what they are
' speaking about, that the larger-sized farms are proportionally lower
' rented than smaller-sized holdings are, and that as a matter of profit to
' proprietors, the larger farms ought to be broken up; now, as a matter of
' fact, the larger-sized farms throughout the Highlands are in the hands
' of men of the highest practical skill, men who have been, and who still
' are, exerting every known means for maintaining their stocks in the
' highest perfection, both in respect of judicious breeding and thorough
' management, both at home and at wintering. They know and adopt
' the best means for managing pasture land; they know also the best and
' most economical mode of dressing their flocks, so as to keep them free
' of disease, and promote the growth of the fleece; and it must also be
' kept in view, that shepherding, and also marketing, can be more
' economically done with large flocks than with small, and in spite of all
' that can be done in this way, many can tell with truth, that they have
' of late years been loosing money to the extent of double their rents.
' I could name a farm on the west coast—and not a large one—on which
' a few years ago, a little over £2000 was lost in one spring by death in
' the ewe stock. The sheep stock in the Highlands was never in greater
' excellence than now, and never of greater money value; it is not too
' much to say that the stock on many farms is of considerably more value
' than half the actual value of the farm itself. Can it be possible that a
' gigantic interest such as this is to be tampered with, by making ex-
' periments such as many utterly unacquainted with the real question now
' venture to propose?—experiments too, that would certainly panperise in
' a very few years the class intended to be benefited, and not only so,
' but the land and the stock to be experimented with would be so
' deranged and ruined, that a period of five-and-twenty years would not
' suffice to restore either the one or the other. These are no extreme
' views, but views arrived at after a long and intimate experience of the
' several questions evolved; but whether these views are believed in or
' not, I know they are not generally commended, but sometimes actually
' condemned. On looking closely, however, this condemnation will be
' found to come sometimes from those who do not altogether practise
' what they preach. We have a rather striking instance of this in one
' of the Glenelg delegates, who in his evidence somewhat significantly
' warns the Highland proprietors of coming danger, and tells them "to
' give their small tenants more land, before the spirit of Socialism gets
' possession of the Highlands." No one can fail to see the underlying
' dangerous influence of such a warning, particularly as it comes from the
' church. If, however, we look at the actings of this same speaker, we
' find that in place of supplying either cottars or crofters—although there
' are a few of the former living on his extensive glebe, who recently very
' urgently demanded an allotment of land from Mr Baillie—this speaker
' lets his glebe lands almost entirely, both arable and pasture, and to a

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INVERNESS.

James
Mollison.

INVERNESS.—James Mollison.

' tenant occupying adjoining lands, to the extent, as reported, of 30,000 acres. It might well be asked of this counsellor—seeing what his views are—why the glebe cottars were not supplied from arable lands lying at their very doors, before these lands were let to one who is already the holder of so much? Every person of ordinary observance, who either lives in or frequents the Highlands, must see that there is need for improvement in the circumstances of the working and fishing population, and that it is a very easy matter with people in that condition to arouse that discontent and excitement that have of late been so conspicuous amongst a hitherto peaceable class; and well it would be, if those whose privilege and duty it is to give counsel, would have the honesty and the courage to teach the propriety of more diligence and industry, and even to tell many who seem to forget the fact, that misery and poverty are the certain outcome of morbid indolence and discontentment. Much of the teaching given of late has been on different lines, with already, in some cases, sad results. In nothing has this teaching been more successful than in rooting out and destroying the naturally good feeling and healthy dependence that have so long been cherished as binding elements between Highland lairds and their tenants, both great and small; and it is to be deplored that not a little of this teaching has emanated from a quarter whence it ought to be least expected. I have said that an extension of the crofters' system in the Highlands is not to be approved of, and I have given some of my reasons for so saying; and I believe that to raise the crofter from his present position to that of a farmer by any artificial means is impracticable, and even were it not so, it would certainly lead to disaster to the parties so treated, and that within a very short time. And all who know anything of practical sheep farming must know that large grazings, surrounded by crofters or small farmers, would be altogether unlettable at their real value, as well as unworkable. In such cases nothing could prevent trespassing, and the consequent abusive disturbance of stock, and the effects of this during breeding seasons would be ruinously vexatious to large farmers; and besides all this, there would be great risk from disease that has so constantly to be guarded against, and which would be ruinous in large stocks, although little thought of in small. Something, however, may undoubtedly be done towards the permanent amelioration of the labouring and fishing population of the Highland and Islands, over and above giving them cow's grazings and potato land. Is it not the fact that deep-sea fishing is comparatively neglected along the whole western seaboard and sea-lochs of Scotland, and is it not likely that if properly prosecuted these would afford an enormous source of employment and wealth, as well as largely increase the food supply of the kingdom? I cannot speak from actual experience of this, but I am well aware that large numbers of well-equipped fishermen come long distances, and at very great expense, from the east coast of Scotland and elsewhere, and often reap goodly harvests under the very noses of those who it may be said live upon the spot. This is more in respect of herring fishing, I admit; but these men would readily prosecute line fishing in the west, as they do at home, had they the same facilities for sending their fish to market. It is no doubt true that deep-sea fishing in the west is a perilous calling, as it is everywhere, and from this and various other causes it has never been prosecuted by local fishermen to an extent worth naming. But surely something can be done to promote this great industry in the west as has been done elsewhere, so as not only to give profitable employment to the superabundant population, who are almost to a man

' naturally seamen and fishermen, but also to increase the national food supply ? Might not some thorough experiments be made, both in line fishing and in trawling, and made in the presence of local fishermen, who, if possible, ought to take part in the work ? And if these experiments should prove at all satisfactory, or even encouraging, improved anchorage and the erection of landing piers, to a reasonable extent, ought to follow. We know that some of the better varieties of flat fish, and also haddock, are not to be found in the west coast waters ; but cod, ling, saithe, lithe, mackerel, halibut, and many other varieties of excellent table fish are in great abundance, and in large sizes, but unless for immediate family wants scarcely an attempt at fishing is made. Shoals of excellent mackerel were this season in abundance in several lochs in the west, but local fishermen said they were not worth the catching ; they could not sell them, and they could not cure them. All this shows that the means for transporting fish in a fresh state to market is also required, and thus all the more should deep-sea fishing be prosecuted as it ought to be. The herring only is regarded as worth fishing for in a wholesale fashion in the west, and it is sad to see scores, yes hundreds, of able-bodied young men waiting day after day and week after week in idleness for herrings to appear. Sometimes this waiting is not in vain, and extraordinary harvests are reaped. I believe it is not too much to say, for there is good evidence of the fact, that during the seasons 1881 and 1882 upwards of £500,000 worth of herrings were caught and sold off one sea-loch in the west of Inverness-shire. This fact one can scarcely realise, for the sum named is larger than one year's total rental of this large county. Not so this year, however, for it is to be feared that the herring fishing in the west of Inverness-shire has been almost a blank, and the waiting spoken of has therefore been in vain. It is this waiting for a harvest they are accustomed to have for the reaping, that has proved the very bane of our Highland crofter fishing population. The provident outlook so requisite to enable the working classes everywhere to provide for a rainy day, is almost unknown in the West Highlands, and the result of this cannot be otherwise than it is. The same indolent improvidence amongst the working classes in the low country would bring about a state of misery tenfold more than is known in the West Highlands, for there a wholesome fish diet can always be had by the very poorest. And while this is largely trusted to, and is the cause of much improvidence, it can hardly be doubted that had local fishermen in the west the means and the knowledge for prosecuting deep-sea line fishing or trawling, they would not be so often waiting in idleness, and although deep-sea fishing might be less a harvest than herrings, the regular employment thus induced would lead up to increased diligence and more independence, as well as more real comfort to themselves and their families, and they would be all the same ready when herrings should appear to take advantage of their favourite calling. The worst for our west coast fisherman is, that when heavy shoals of herrings do appear, east coast fisherman are at once upon the scene, and these fishermen, with their superior boats and nets, and greater courage, all but drive our local men off the waters, and the gleanings of the field, so to speak, are all that falls to their share. It is in respect of all this that I think the most solid and lasting help might be given to the superabundant population in the west in some such way as I here suggest. Some have suggested emigration, but it is useless to talk of emigration to these people ; they have not the courage

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INVERNESS.James
Mollison.
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INVERNESS.—
James Mollison.

'to emigrate. Their fear would be that, as at home, they would be crushed aside, and thus left to starve. Their energies must first be aroused, and a spirit of greater independence stirred up, and if this can be done, the west coast Highlander has both intelligence and physique to enable him to "keep his own" both at home and in any other part of the world. At present his energies and his intelligence are comparatively lost both to himself and to the country at large.'

42841. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—I wish to put a very few questions to you with regard to the paper you have read. It is divided into two parts. The first is directed to counteract, in your opinion, the observations at Glenelg, and the next is giving your opinions upon the question generally?—Yes.

42842. Are you not aware considerable dissatisfaction prevailed among the people in Glenelg with regard to the general administration of the local factor, Mr France?—I am not aware.

42843. Did you not receive, now and then, when he was under you, complaints against the way he was going on?—Never.

42844. I believe he is no longer factor upon Glenelg?—No.

42845. May I ask whether he left of his own accord, or did you wish to make other arrangements?—He left of his own accord.

42846. You did not discharge him?—Not at all.

42847. And you say that, during all that time, you received no complaints from the people about him?—I never received a formal complaint of any kind. I knew quite well that there were bickerings amongst them—I presume that is not uncommon—but I received no formal complaint. I knew there was no occasion for complaint.

42848. Was there not considerable litigation between Mr France or the estate, and some of the people on the estate?—There was no litigation in connection with the estate. There may have been between him and private individuals, but it had nothing to do with the estate, or with the management of the estate.

42849. When he went away did he receive any testimonial from the people?—He did.

42850. By the people generally?—I am not sure how far it spread. I know it was very hurriedly got up. I was present at the presentation; and I know he got a presentation a few years before that of very considerable value, from the people generally.

42851. You had another factor under you at the same time with Mr France?—Yes.

42852. He was present here to-day—*Mr MacLennan?*—Yes.

42853. Can you really affirm distinctly that the estimation in which Mr MacLennan was held at Kingussie bears any relation to the estimation in which Mr France was held at Glenelg?—Mr France had a very difficult duty to perform. The Kingussie people are feuars; and with the exception of half a dozen tenants, I don't know Mr MacLennan had anything to do with them in the way of control, but in Glenelg it was a very different thing entirely. Mr France exerted himself for the amelioration of the people in a variety of ways. It is well known that no man can deal with any affairs without giving offence somewhere, and I say that the people with whom Mr France came into contact—particularly the working people—were very much ameliorated from his residence amongst them.

42854. He was a great advocate for temperance before he went there?—Yes, and he continued an advocate for temperance, and improved the circumstances of the people very much in consequence.

42855. You have, in your paper, commented rather severely upon the character of many of the people; can you attribute that to any particular cause?—Well, I am afraid it can be attributed to a cause which is too general in that part of the country. I have heard it said that climatic influences are at work, but I don't believe anything of the kind. I have taken those people repeatedly, and given them periods of employment; and, though it appeared very irksome at first to keep our hours, they came to be tolerably good workers; but no sooner did they go amongst those at home inclined for idleness, than they became as ill-disposed to do a day's work as ever.

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James Mollison.

42856. Glenelg is a large district?—It is a large acreage.

42857. And is chiefly occupied by three farms?—Oh! no—Eileanriach, Arnisdale, Scalisaig, Beolary, Kyle Rhea, and Balraid. There are half a dozen large farms at least.

42858. What is the name of the farm in the big glen?—Scalisaig on the one side, and Beolary on the other.

42859. Don't you think the consolidation of farms was carried in former times to rather too great an extent?—I know there has been a considerable population in that glen at one time, by the ruins I see there.

42860. But don't you think the depopulation was carried rather too far in the glen in former times?—Well, judging by the circumstances of those who have been left upon subjects as suitable as that, I would say the reverse, for there was anything but comfort among those who were allowed to remain. I should say that those who emigrated, did well, for judging by the circumstances of those who were left, there is not much inducement to say it was a mistake.

42861. Would it not perhaps have been better if you had sent a representative to contradict the assertions made at the time in presence of the people?—I was not in the least degree aware of anything being said that required to be contradicted.

42862. And at that time you did not happen to have a local representative?—No.

42863. Is there a local representative now on the estate?—A temporary one.

42864. Has the new proprietor been among the people of Glenelg since his accession?—Yes, twice.

42865. I suppose it is hardly fair to ask whether his opinion of the people is the same as yours?—Well, I can only speak for myself.

42866. I observe in the latter part of your paper, that the increase of the crofting system is in your mind, if practicable, erroneous?—I say I consider it would be a mistake.

42867. But surely all the complaints we have heard in different places of want of more land must have some foundation?—I say distinctly that there is a great charm that attaches to a croft, and almost every one who has a home has the idea that he would like to have land; but from my experience I say he would be a great deal better without it, because it keeps him at home, and there is an inducement or excuse, and he does not take out of the land all he could take out of it. Considering the mode of cultivation and the climate, it is very little, so far as my judgment goes, that can be made out of a Highland croft.

42868. Did you hear the evidence of Lord Lovat's factor to-day?—I did not hear it fully.

42869. The purport of it was that a good number of his crofters who had plots of arable land to the extent of £30 were uncommonly well off,

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INVERNESS.
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James
Mollison.

paid their debts, and were anxious to get renewals?—Yes, but that extends to something larger than we have any experience of in Glenelg.

42870. Do I understand your objection to the crofting system only applies to the west coast?—Only to the west coast.

42871. I thought it applied generally?—Not at all.

42872. Do you think that that great glen is not capable of sustaining in comfort more people than there are at present, if they would set their minds to it?—There is no doubt there is good soil there, but we have always to contend with the climate, and apart from growing green crops and hay for stock, I am not convinced by any means that it would be a profitable thing to grow grain crops there.

42873. Speaking generally, we have heard all over the country a great deal of this demand for land; what would you propose to do with the people who want it?—I would sooner see large arable farms cut up for crofts than talk of breaking up Highland grazings. I think it would create a disappointment and diminution of value that a great many of those who are speaking of it have no conception of.

42874. What I am speaking of is this, supposing it to have been ascertained that there is in this country additional land capable of being reclaimed, that could be given to crofters with some of the old lands attached to it, do you think, rather than that should be done, the people should be driven away from the country?—I don't approve of emigration at all if the people can be supported at home, and I repeat I would sooner see arable farms broken up and made suitable for the population than make any attempt to divide the grazing land, because the grazing land is only profitably worked in large sections. I know it is impossible to keep stock profitably and carry on a system of breeding as it should be without a large stock, and it would almost amount to the value of some of the subjects to attempt it. I see no reason why some of the arable land should not be made available; and if we were able to induce our Highland population, who have plenty of physique and intelligence, to occupy arable land in the low country, where they would see the operation done, they could not but be spurred up to apply themselves with more energy, and they would acquire skill when they saw it on every side of them.

42875. Then, I infer, you are rather in favour of migration from certain congested localities?—Yes.

42876. *Mr Cameron.*—You mention, in your paper, that no hill grazing was taken away from the place called Corran?—None. I heard of it by mere report, because I did not see it in the newspapers. It was reported to me by people in Glenelg, that it was stated the Corran villages were deprived of land that was at one time allotted to them as grazing. I made particular inquiry on the two occasions I have been in Glenelg since as to whether these were facts or not, and the answer I got from two of the oldest men, was that there was no change whatever; that from all time—at least during the last fifty or sixty years—the arrangement was, that whoever took an animal to a certain grazing paid a certain sum for it.

42877. And no change has been made?—No change has been made. The only change has been by the present tenant under his present lease—they have had to give up a certain section of land so that it could be fenced as a common grazing for these villages, and what led Mr Baillie to adopt that, was what took place on the banks of the Spey. There we have common grazing, and as much as forty or fifty acres, at so much a

head ; and my impression is that, if these people want cows, that is the most simple and workable way. The ground is near their homes, where they could drive an animal and bring it in with little trouble, and make the whole thing more workable ; but up to this time only one individual has asked for the privilege. If even half-a-dozen would ask for it, it would be at once supplied.

42878. As I understand, it is the intention and has been stipulated in the lease of the farm, that this privilege shall be accorded whenever it is required ?—It is.

42879. So, in that case, the crofters are in a better position with regard to hill pasture than they were before ?—They might be.

42880. But you are certain no hill pasture was taken away from them ?—If I am certain of anything I hear, I am certain of that.

42881. We had evidence from a factor a few days ago, who was asked whether certain hill pasture was taken away that the crofters said was taken away, and he declared positively it was not the case, and then the crofter appeared with a friend and maintained stoutly that it was so ?—Well, here it is—surely a better provision than if they had had it.

42882. Will you tell us the circumstances under which this minister you refer to refused to give pasture to the crofters ?—I don't say he refused, but I say he condemns such action as that, and I know he lets his glebe almost entirely with the exception of two small fields. He lets his entire glebe, pasture and arable, to the adjoining tenant.

42883. But you are not sure whether they ever asked for land ?—No ; but I know there are parties living on the glebe, and if they had asked Mr Baillie it would have been more convenient than part of the glebe lands.

42884. About the twenty-six people who were employed by Mr Baillie in Glenelg ; what was the nature of the work ?—We were engaged in the erection of a saw-mill and pitching a considerable stretch of the beach where the sea had been encroaching upon the arable land round from the Established Church to almost the mouth of the Elg.

42885. Was the nature of the employment such as would be likely to last for a considerable time ?—It would last for so many mouths ; it is not finished yet.

42886. And when that is finished, will there probably be employment of some other kind given ?—There has been always employment on Glenelg estate during the last fifteen years. There has been from £300 up to £800 or £900 expended on labour alone. I have taken the trouble to inquire, and I have the notes in my pocket, if necessary, for every year since 1870.

42887. What is the population of Glenelg ; I mean the district from which these people came that might be supposed to be benefited ?—There will be a population of 400 or 500.

42888. No more than that ?—I don't think the population of Mr Baillie's property is more than 450.

42889. We have heard a great deal to-day about sheep farms and deer forests. Is Eileanriach now occupied by a tenant ?—No, it is occupied by the proprietor.

42890. Can you state under what circumstances it fell into the proprietor's hands ?—I know it was at first from the death of one of the tenants.

42891. The lease was not out ?—No.

42892. And in consequence of a certain arrangement Mr Baillie had to take over the farm of Eileanriach. What steps did he take to get a

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INVERNESS.

James
Mollison.

INVERNESS. tenant?—The farm was advertised in the ordinary way in various newspapers.

INVERNESS. 42893. Had you any offers for it?—Yes, we had offers.

James Mollison. 42894. From people you would be inclined to accept?—Yes, it was the rent that was the difficulty.

42895. Now, what percentage of what you consider a fair rent did the highest of these offers come to?—It was not more than half of what the farm was rented at a few years ago.

42896. About half?—Yes.

42897. And you did not feel yourself justified in accepting that on Mr Baillie's behalf?—No. I knew there was an element in operation that was bringing about such a miserable offer as that, which in all probability would be out of the way in a short time. I heard of it to-day at this table. I refer to the extreme rates that have to be paid where stock is taken over at a valuation.

42898. How do you expect that system to come to an end?—I think, if it does not come to an end the letting of sheep farms will come to an end, because very few men are able to pay such extraordinary rates.

42899. Do you allude to the extreme rates current in the market, or what are caused by what one of the witnesses called scandalous valuations?—I call it a fictitious valuation.

42900. Do you allude to the rates in the open market or to the valuation?—I mean the difference between the valuation and the market value of sheep.

42901. How do you think that is likely to come to an end,—I mean the system of valuation?—I don't see any difficulty, as the farm gets out of lease, in adopting the principle of giving and taking stock and making it optional to both parties. If you have an incoming tenant, he might or might not take the stock. Every one knows that the stock bred upon the farm is of more value to the incoming tenant than to any one else. If it were left to the two men, the incoming tenant might say, 'I admit it is of more value to me than any stock I can buy in the market,' and the outgoing tenant would not be such a fool as to take them to the market where he would get no more than the market price.

42902. I quite agree that it would be a much more satisfactory and a fairer arrangement than at present, but how do you propose to get rid of the present system under existing leases, because in an existing lease the outgoing tenant is entitled to have valuation for his stock. The incoming tenant again might say, 'I decline to leave the farm upon different terms from those upon which I am bound to enter it'!—There is nothing to prevent the proprietor implementing his agreement with the tenant that is going away, and making a different arrangement with the man that is coming in. Mr Baillie is doing it. He is taking over the stock, and when the farm is let again I am bound to say there shall be no such system in operation. I have been able to effect it with another farm when out of lease, that he shall give it to the incoming tenant without this system of valuation being maintained.

42903. Then every farm would have to pass through the proprietor's hands in order to effect that change?—No, but you can surely step in between the two tenants, and say—'I take the stock from the outgoing tenant, and I can give it to incoming tenant by a mutual agreement between us,' and then he starts fair.

42904. But in order to change the system, the proprietor would either have to take the farm for a long or short period into his own hands, or he would have to pay a fine upon every change of tenancy amounting to the

difference between the valuation price and the price got from the incoming tenant?—It is so.

INVERNESS.

42905. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—It would be only once?—Only once.

42906. *Mr Cameron.*—Has Mr Baillie any crofters on the east coast here?—Yes.

42907. What crofters has he?—We have three little districts that are occupied by crofters—one almost in the immediate neighbourhood of the town, another right behind Dochfour, and another to the west of Dochfour.

INVERNESS.

James Mollison.

42908. We have had a good deal of evidence as to the different treatment which various people have suggested with respect to the east coast and the west coast crofters, especially as regards hill grazings, and as to whether they should be in common or whether the pasture should belong to the tenants individually. It has been suggested that on the west coast common grazings are more desirable, and on the east coast they should have independent grazings; what is your opinion upon that subject?—It would still depend upon the class of grazings. You might be disposed to give every low country crofter his pasture along with his arable land, but if it was to involve the keeping of stock separate, then, if the pasture were to any extent pasture such as a moor, I would say it would be just as right that it should be held in common in the low country as in the Highlands. I see no difficulty at all.

42909. Is the management of those crofting farms you talk about pretty much the same as the management of the crofts in Glenelg?—I may mention that one set of crofts upon the Dochfour property at a former period had a common grazing attached to these crofts. That has not been in operation since Mr Baillie succeeded to the property, but it was up to a very short time—up to the immediate period before he got possession of it. I allude to the crofts of Lochend to the west of Dochfour. These crofts at one time had a common grazing, as I understand it, and when the property was purchased by Sir John Ramsden (about whom one of the Commissioners knows) it was done with the object—or at all events it was done for the ostensible reason—of making an excambion with Dochfour, and during the interval of being purchased from Sir John Ramsden I am able to state that the crofters of this immediate district were deprived of their hill grazing. That, I believe, however much Mr Fraser-Mackintosh may have changed his mind since, was carried out by himself as commissioner for Sir John Ramsden, and those people were deprived of their hill grazing, and a very great hardship it was considered to be.

42910. But it was before your time?—It was before I had anything to do with it, but not before my time. It was immediately before the excambion was carried out of the Laggan estates.

42911. But what is the position of the crofters' community at Lochend? Comparing the west coast crofters, are they treated in the same way in the matter of having common hill grazing, or in a different manner?—As to the crofters in the immediate neighbourhood of the town here, there is no pasture attaching to them at all. Every crofter has so many acres arable land, and every crofter has his independent subject, with probably his horse and cart, and when he is not employed at home, he is employed at carting stones, or whatever labour may be going at the time, and these people are, so far as I know, in perfect comfort. I see from the papers it was stated by one of those who were examined on Thursday, I think, that this same set of crofts, at a recent period, was increased in rent 200 per cent. Now, I would tell the speaker that this statement was exactly

INVERNESS.

INVERNESS.

James
Mollison.

100 per cent. from the truth, for the increase was precisely the half of that or very nearly ; and I have no hesitation in saying that if these crofts were exposed in the market, they would bring double the rent they are paying now. I myself had an offer at the time of £105 for the whole to be held as one, and it is let for £79, and the former rent was £40.

42912. Then, as regards the industry of the crofters, you speak in terms which I rather regret as to their power of cultivation ; do you find the same to be the case with the crofters in the neighbourhood here ?—No, it is different altogether. They are an excellent, industrious class of crofters here, both in the immediate district and elsewhere.

42913. How many crofters have you ?—About twenty-eight.

42914. What average rent do they pay ?—About 20s. an acre. Five or six are just what are called black folds.

42915. How many acres has each ?—From eight to nine acres. £78 is the present rent of those in the Sligachan district. It was represented that it had been raised 200 per cent., but formerly it was £40, 3s. 6d. The total average is 78⁸⁷⁵ acres. It is slightly under £1 per acre. The Lochend district has 98 acres, and present rent is £105, or slightly above £1 per acre—in fact, 22s. or 22s. 6d.

42916. Is that about the average rent paid by Mr Baillie's farmers ?—Not very much under it.

42917. What is the average rent per acre paid by Mr Baillie's farmers in this neighbourhood ?—It will not be under 28s. or 30s. The greater part is rented at 40s.

42918. Do you consider it the same quality of land, or is it better ?—It is close by the town, and suited for dairy purposes a good deal.

42919. Big farms ?—Yes, and some of it used as dairy farms.

42920. Do you consider it better land than what the small tenants have ?—No, the land at Lochend is better than any of it.

42921. And that is rented at a little over £1 ?—Yes, about 22s.

42922. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—They have only six cows at Arnisdale among thirty-four families ?—That is so. That is what it was on the 1st of January, when I ascertained the exact number.

42923. What is the reason of that ?—It is impossible to tell. It may be that they have no desire for the bother of cows, or are not able to purchase a cow ; but it is not because there is not keep for a cow, because I made the offer when Mr Baillie took possession of this farm that cows and cattle should be taken in upon this farm of Eileanriach at 30s. for each beast, and with two exceptions, that was all that was asked. As to the other village, there is no truth in the statement that the tenant charges £3. I am satisfied that is for one cow and two followers, but unless I am misinformed we are ready to give grazing on such terms as are reasonable.

42924. But there was no grazing vacant until Eileanriach fell in ?—This grazing has been quite open. It is close to one village, while Eileanriach comes up to another village. There is a provision in Mr Milligan's lease that land can be taken off and fenced for cottars' and fishermen's cows if required, and if requested, it will be done.

42925. Do you think it would be taken, if there is to be an increase of crofters' land, to give them arable land rather than pasture land ?—I don't think that, not in the Highlands. I am confident that any attempt to grow grain will be disappointing there, compared to being without land altogether, so long as they have a cow and land for a potato crop.

42926. Then, I suppose, the reason the people have not taken advantage of the offer of that grazing is that they cannot afford to buy cows at present?—I scarcely think it is that, because with the extraordinary fishing last year and the previous year I am aware those people were not without money.

42927. But they had no fishing at all this year?—No, there is no doubt they are in worse circumstances this year than last. It has been, perhaps, as disappointing a year as they have had for a long time.

42928. But if they were to get that grazing, would the arable land of Eileanriach go along with it?—No, that part of Eileanriach that comes close to this village is about thirteen miles from Eileanriach, and there is no part of that land they could possibly get; but it is quite different with the other farm. There is excellent green land that comes close to them.

42929. Do you propose to let the arable part of Eileanriach without the grazing?—No, the proprietor holds Eileanriach farm in his hands just now, and it would spoil it to separate the arable from the grazing. It is twelve miles from Eileanriach proper, but it is still part of the farm that comes in behind the village and most convenient for them, only I don't call it first-rate grazing, because it is a very choice part that the villagers would be supplied from, and this part of Eileanriach is not really the same class of grazing.

42930. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie*.—You don't think, as I understand, there is any room for a class of labourers on the west coast except as fishermen?—Well, there is no room at home just now?

42931. I think you say you object to extending the crofting system on the west coast?—I do.

42932. Do you think the $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres with cow's grass on the hill behind is sufficient for a crofter on the west coast?—I won't say $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres, because that happened to be the size that was let when these crofts were laid off, and from what I read and hear, the proprietor at the time said he objected to give the fishermen, whose proper calling was the sea, crofts of any extent beyond what would supply them with potatoes and vegetables, and on that account this land was laid off in the sizes I have mentioned, and remains so, with the exception of one or two that have fallen out, and I suppose fallen into the adjoining lot.

42933. What do you consider a proper size for a croft on the west coast?—If it is a croft for the people situated as they are, $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres is enough, but then they are fishermen.

42934. You don't think that a man with ten acres of arable, and pasture that would keep 200 sheep would make a fair living?—No, we have had experience of that too. One of the subjects Mr Baillie owns was fourteen years ago let to three tenants—one tenant having half and the other two a fourth each; previous to that it had been let in fourths. One of them failed, and gave up his position entirely. It was about the size you speak of, and the other offered for the subject as one. I took the lowest offer of the two, and now that party has failed also. This shows that that size of subject is not suitable, and it quite corresponds with my own experience.

42935. Is it not the case that the large sheep farmers have been losing money lately?—I know if they had not great enterprise or means to fall back upon, they must have been ruined during the last five or six years, and I say that with any such period as that coming upon tenants such as you now speak of, nine cases out of ten would simply be pauperism.

INVERNESS.

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James
Mollison

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James
Mollison.

42936. Does not the same argument hold good against small crofters and small holders of arable land on this side of the country?—I don't think it, because here, if the croft is too small to employ him, he can do something with his horse or by hand labour.

42937. But suppose a bad season comes or a long period of depression, do you think the large farmer is better able to withstand it than the small farmer?—Yes, very much so.

42938. The grazing farmer?—Yes.

42939. Is it not the same in the case of the arable farmer?—No, not at all. I would be a strong advocate for medium-sized arable farms, but I would be the reverse in regard to grazing farms unless they are made unwieldy. I hold that shepherding, managing, marketing, and everything that follows the management of sheep stock, can be done cheaper on a large scale than on a small one, and it is not within my experience that those small tenants will maintain the breeding of sheep to that state of excellence that would command a price such as those command who know it by experience, and who are leaving no stone unturned to have their stocks in the best possible condition.

42940. Of course, a man brought up as a shepherd might have sufficient skill?—Perfectly true, and I am quite willing to admit that if you get a man of skill, with say £500, from my calculation, that would enable him to secure a possession that would be employment for him and probably one or two of his family; but unless he has full employment he is throwing his time away.

42941. You think it would require £500 to stock a farm of sufficient size on the west coast to give full employment throughout the year?—I am confident of that. I have been at pains to ascertain it.

[ADJOURNED.]

KINGUSSIE, INVERNESS-SHIRE, MONDAY, OCTOBER 15.

INVERNESS.

Present :—

KINGUSSIE.

Lord NAPIER and ETTRICK, K.T., *Chairman.*
 Sir KENNETH S. MACKENZIE, Bart.
 DONALD CAMERON, Esq., of Lochiel, M.P.
 C. FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Esq., M.P.
 Sheriff NICOLSON, LL.D.

Lord TWEEDMOUTH, Proprietor of Guisachan, Beauly (62)—
 examined.

42942. *The Chairman.*—I believe you desire to make a statement in consequence of something that was stated at Inverness?—I do. Lord Tweedmouth.

42943. Will you have the goodness to do so?—It is my wish to offer a few remarks in reply to the evidence given at Inverness on Friday last by Mr Colin Chisholm—evidence affecting Strath Glass, and the management of the Guisachan property during the last thirty years. That evidence I read on Saturday at Guisachan. I could have wished that Mr Colin Chisholm had given me some notice of his intention to attack the management of the Guisachan property. I think he would have shown not only more courtesy towards myself, but also a greater desire to place the whole truth before the Royal Commissioners, as had he done so I should have been prepared to bring forward witnesses to contradict his statements—for instance, Alexander Stewart, who was my manager at Guisachan from 1855 to 1864; also Hugh Fraser, who has been on the estate for fifty years—he is a son of one of the old crofters; also two Macdonalds, William and Archie, sons of an old crofter on the property; and I feel quite confident that those men would have borne testimony to the consideration and liberality and kindness shown to every inhabitant of the property at Guisachan. I at once say that Mr Chisholm was entirely correct in stating that I, when I took possession of Guisachan in 1855, found sixteen tenants. There were two large sheep farmers and fourteen small crofters; and he was also quite correct in saying that not one of those sixteen is now remaining with land on the property. But admitting that, I deny entirely that Mr Chisholm was right in any of the details he gave, or right in saying that those men were evicted. The only one instance that could bear the colour of an eviction was the case of John Macdonald, the innkeeper. John Macdonald's house was little better than a bothy. He had some land, and he paid £15 a year of rental. His sale of whisky was very considerable, and there were constant rows and constant brawls between the great number of workmen I was employing at that time and also among the labouring population of the place. I told Macdonald that unless he could dispense with his licence for selling whisky he would have to remove at the expiry of his lease, which was in 1864, nine years after my coming to the place. Macdonald said it was impossible he could make a living without selling whisky. He left the property at the expiry of his lease in 1864, and settled at Invermoriston. If Mr Chisholm calls that an eviction, I do not myself, but it is the only case that would bear the smallest colour of an eviction of any kind or sort. My great wish is to be as brief as possible and to take up as small a space of the Royal Commissioners valuable time as possible, and, therefore, last evening I put a few notes on paper in order to show what was the state of Guisachan in 1855, when I took possession, and how Guisachan stands to-

INVER-
NESS.

KINGUSSIE.

Lord

Tweedmouth.

day. I may say that, previous to making the purchase of Guisachan, I had rented various grouse moors in the county, Guisachan among the number, in 1851. It was a place of great natural beauties and capabilities, also affording good grouse shooting. For these reasons I purchased the property at what was then, before railway days, considered a fancy price. I certainly did not purchase it on account of its rental, then only £692, exclusive of the shooting rent. The shooting rent in 1851, when I rented it, was £420. The estate was said to contain about 25,000 acres, but Mr George Mackay, after a careful survey in 1857, gave an acreage on his map of 21,944. Later on, a few years since the Ordnance Survey gave 19,186 of an acreage. I believe Mr Mackay's acreage to be the correct one. It was stated a few years since before the House of Commons that the population of Guisachan in 1855 was 227, inclusive of those residing at Guisachan house. In 1855 there were two farm houses, one of them slated, two other cottages, and forty-three bothies, the large majority of which were built of boulders and stones, with wooden vents, and heather thatched. The school-room of the place, where the Church of Scotland held services occasionally on Sundays, was 17 feet by 14 feet, height 7 feet 4 inches. This room is still standing, and forms part of a cottage. In 1855 there were sixteen tenants in all, paying in the aggregate £640. Of this amount the two large sheep farmers—strangers to the place, and introduced in 1847—paid £499, leaving £141 to be paid by the other fourteen tenants. Taking the acreage at 21,944—Mr Mackay's survey—the two sheep farmers held 20,291 acres, at a rental of £499; the fourteen crofters sixty-four arable acres, twenty-one of pasture, and 1650 of moorland in common, in all 1735 acres, at a rental of £141. The total of the arable land at Guisachan in 1855, as given in Morrison's book of 1845, which was made at the time of the crofters were given their leases, was 165 acres and 95 pasture—the total arable and pasture at Guisachan.

42944. Improved pasture?—Yes. Of the larger portion of this arable land, namely 165 acres, about 130 lay between the river and the only approach road, the breadth between river and road varying from 1 to 300 yards; and it is unnecessary to say that the approach road was used in common by the tenants, as also by the two sheep farmers. The sheep farmers had not been doing well for some time. The larger one, Alexander Cameron, emigrated to Australia in 1856, assisted by his brother-in-law, Mr Williamson of Knockfin, and myself, and the other settled at Fort William in 1857, there having been breaks in their leases.

42945. What was the name of the other?—John Cameron. They were two brothers. Alexander introduced John. The fourteen crofters' leases expired in 1864. Some three or four had previously asked to be relieved of their crofts, but there was not one removed or one who left until provided with either a better farm or an occupation more suitable to himself. I have here the names of the fourteen small tenants, the quantity of land they each occupied, the rents they paid, and the dates of their either leaving or dying. I have mentioned the two sheep farmers. I then come to Auchblair, in which there were four tenants. They occupied 20½ acres arable land and 8½ pasture, and the four tenants between them paid £46 of rental. John Macdonald died at Guisachan in 1870; John Fraser died at Guisachan in 1857; William Fraser died at Guisachan in 1856; William Macdonald went to New Zealand in 1863, before the expiration of his lease. He left of his own accord. At Tomich there were three tenants—John Macdonald, the innkeeper, of whom I have already spoken; Alexander Macdonald died in 1863; Alexander Fraser, blacksmith, died in 1879 at Guisachan. At Easter Auch-na-heglish there were two tenants—Robert Grant died in 1866 at Guisachan; Alexander Macdonald left

Guisachan in 1864 and settled at Belladrum, near Beauly. Wester Auch-na-heglish, five tenants—Colin Macdonald left Guisachan in 1864 and went to Croil, about six miles off; Donald and John Fraser had a small holding between them, for which they paid £17; Douald died in 1872, John was placed at a small brewery which I had built at Tomich, and which he left in 1869; Donald Macdonald, crofter, paying £2, died at Guisachan in 1868; Alexander Fraser, miller, died at Guisachan in 1870. That is a list of the fourteen tenants said by Mr Colin Chisholm to have been evicted. I have shown that the majority died at Guisachan years after they were said to have been evicted. I will now speak of 1883. Considerably larger sums than the purchase money of the estate have been expended since 1855 in building, levelling, trenching, reclaiming land, draining, fencing, and making roads and bridges. The population is now 169, exclusive of those resident at Guisachan House for six months of the year. There are now thirty-seven good houses and cottages—that is, inclusive of the two farm houses and the two cottages on the property in 1855. That is thirty-three entirely new ones, and four have been repaired, reroofed, and slated. They are all built of hewn stone and slated. To each house is attached a garden, varying from a quarter to half an acre. A shilling a week is the rent for each, with the exception of two, the tenants of which pay £5 per annum. The very poor pay no rent. All the working men on the estate are employed regularly at 15s. or 16s. per week; the skilled labourers 18s., 19s., and 20s.; the women at 1s. and 1s. 6d. per day. The wages are paid on the last Saturday in each month, and exclusive of manager and keepers, they amount to over £2000 per annum. That is at the present time, when all the large works have been completed and things have been placed in regular working order. I consider that the property is more than doubled, if not trebled, in value since 1855. I may say generally that there is no district I am acquainted with that has more greatly improved than Strath Glass during the last twenty years. I am speaking now especially of The Chisholm's property—that is, in regard to the comfort and well-doing and the dress of the inhabitants, their houses, and the greatly improved state of agriculture in the strath. Should it be thought right that the straths and glens should again be thickly populated as they were once said to have been, Government should make either a railroad or a tramway in each strath or glen. The Highland Railway has done more than all the other causes during the fifty years put together to deprive the straths and glens of their population. The working people must and will go to the near neighbourhood of the railway towns and stations. No man rests contented with paying £1 a ton for the carriage of his coals, lime, and food, which he must do if he lives twenty miles from a railway, and no man earning 15s. per week, the smallest sum given in Strath Glass, can afford the time to winter his peats as he did in former times. It is cheaper for him to buy coals and to pay for their carriage at the rate of £1 per ton—coals go so much further than peats. Besides, a working man in a strath, at a distance from a town, contrives to get a considerable quantity of wood free. I omitted to state that there are now about 600 acres of trenched and improved land at Guisachan—about 305 arable and about the same quantity of pasture. In addition to the expenditure on my own place, I have rented a shooting lodge and a farm from The Chisholm. I spent £6000 on building a shooting lodge on The Chisholm's property, and £4000 in making sixty acres of new land, and draining—thoroughly draining—200 acres of arable. I built a schoolhouse as well. The schoolhouse now serves as a church for the Church of Scotland, and the minister of it resides now at the new inn which I built some years since, and in which I placed an old servant of mine, a native of the place.

INVER-
NESS.

KINGUSSIE.

Lord
Tweedmouth.

INVER-
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KINGUSSIE.

Lord

Tweedmouth.

Whisky was still sold, and I thought it best to do away with the inn to stop the importation. I may say that the notes I have read from are all taken from the estate book of Mr Morrison in 1845, made for the late Mr Fraser of Culbokit; from my rental sheet for 1855, and from the Guisachan book from 1854 to 1863.

42946. You have stated that when you purchased this property there were sixteen tenants, two of whom were large farmers and fourteen of the crofting class. How long had the two large farmers been farming?—Since 1847. They came in 1847. Alexander Cameron left in 1855 and John Cameron in 1857.

42947. Did the land occupied by these two large farms in whole or in part form small tenancies before?—I cannot say, it was before my time.

42948. Is there any evidence in the character of soil or the *débris* of ancient habitations?—Certainly not. Of the two large holdings on grazings I put about something short of 14,000 acres into forest. In those 14,000 acres there was not a single cottage save a keeper's and a shepherd's. The shepherd has been moved lower down, and the keeper still remains there.

42949. But I speak of a remoter period—whether this large area of ground consolidated into two holdings had formerly been under cultivation by the crofter class?—Certainly not under cultivation, neither as pasture nor as arable land.

42950. Had it never been?—No, there is no trace. There were remains of a few walls—loose stones—and I am told they were occupied as sheilings by people who came up to feed their black cattle towards the end of the last century.

42951. Then the loftier ground which had been consolidated as two farms had formerly been sheiling pasture?—Yes, to a certain extent, in the more favoured spots, but it is very exposed.

42952. Do you think this sheiling pasture had been attached in any degree to the crofting holdings which you found upon the estate?—No, certainly not. It must have been held by some large farmer, I should think, from the south probably—from some of the southern counties in Scotland. I found the remains of these old sheilings, and the late Lord Lovat told me the way he accounted for the quantity of birchwood about Guisachan was this, that he remembered as a young man that there was not such a thing as birch, and the birch sprang up when the black cattle were removed and the sheep put on, about 1825.

42953. Does it not seem that if these were the remains of sheilings on these waste grounds, these were sheilings for the service of small tenants in the neighbourhood and not sheilings for the service of large farmers from the south of Scotland? They did not use the sheilings in hills as far as I know?—It may be so.

42954. But it is at a remote period of which you have no knowledge?—Yes, I know nothing.

42955. When you bought the estate, you say it was a good sporting estate so far as grouse shooting was concerned; were there any deer upon any part of the estate?—Every now and then a shepherd came down to say that a stag had been seen. The first season I was there, in 1851—looking back at the old game book—I killed three deer.

42956. The two large tenants were named Cameron?—Yes.

42957. They seemed to have belonged to the country by their name?—To Inverness-shire.

42958. Do you think they were in any degree representative of the old class of tacksmen tenants—I mean gentlemen farmers?—I don't think it.

42959. Well, there were fourteen small tenants, and those fourteen small

tenants have gradually disappeared, but, as I understand you, without any individual personal hardship?—With the exception of the innkeeper, who left on the expiration of his lease because I would not allow him to take out a licence again.

INVERNESS.
KINGUSSIE.

42960. When you got the estate you found all those fourteen people in the enjoyment of leases?—Yes, nineteen years' leases. The leases were granted in 1845 and expired in 1864.

Lord Tweedmouth.

42961. Were there any stipulations in those leases for reimbursement for improvements?—No.

42962. Or to promote improvement of any sort? Were the tenants in any degree bound to reclaim land, or anything of that sort?—I think not.

42963. Well, those people seem, most of them, to have lived till about the termination of their lease—some of them, however, not—but the most of them, according to your account, died on the ground, as it were, at the place itself?—Yes, and years after the expiration of their leases.

42964. Now, the leases all fell in at once?—They all fell in in 1864.

42965. But some, I presume, did die during the currency?—Yes, three of them, I think.

42966. As to those that died during the currency of the lease, had they any natural heirs, as it were, or did they die without children?—I was requested to take their portions.

42967. Had they families or not?—I will not be certain.

42968. Then we may be certain that at the end of the lease there were about nine or ten still living and still in the possession of the land?—Yes, that was about the number.

42969. Were those families, when the lease expired, valid families, in the possession of grown-up children?—Yes, some three or four were the Macdonalds, whom I have already mentioned.

42970. No attempt was made, I presume, from what you say, to consolidate those small holdings,—to retain two or three or any number in the possession of larger holdings?—No. My object in taking that large farm was simply to afford employment for the people living on the estate. Had it not been for that large farm it was impossible I could have found employment for the people at present on the place.

42971. You took the large farm into your own hands?—Yes, and I doubled the size of it, besides renting a considerable farm from The Chisholm.

42972. Was it essential to the improvement of the large farm and to your benevolent operations that the whole of these small holdings should be extinguished? I mean, would it not have been possible to have consolidated two or three of them?—No; I might have left the small portion at Easter Auch-na-heglish, but Robert Grant died and the other man left the place.

42973. During the currency of the lease, and before the expiry of the lease, the small tenants were in the possession of several hundreds of acres of hill pasture?—Yes.

42974. Was any of the hill pasture withdrawn from them during the currency of the lease, or did they retain the whole of the hill pasture?—They retained it all. Your Lordship asked about the two tenants at Easter Auch-na-heglish. Robert Grant died there in 1866, two years after the expiration of the lease; and not one of those men left without having provided himself either with a better farm or with an occupation which he preferred.

42975. I understood you to say that none of them left without being provided with a proper place, with the means of subsistence and occupation; but what I wished to know was whether those occupations, those

INVERNESS.

KINGUSSIE.

Lord
Tweedmouth.

new occupations, were provided by you or by other people?—Provided by those who went—by other people—but those who remained have been employed with me up to the time of their death.

42976. As the matter now stands, there are a larger number of cottages of a far better quality and a larger population than there were when you took the property, but, if I understand it aright, none of those families are in the occupation of what may be called land?—No; but the population I may say was larger in 1855 than it is at this moment, and the number of bothies in 1855 was larger than the improved stone and slated houses now.

42977. But there are a number of houses, and there is a considerable population left. None, I understand, are in the occupancy of land. Have any of them got as much as a single cow's grass attached to the cottage?—Yes, the keepers of course have, and then there is one man, the general dealer; but I may say all of them have milk. I keep a very large number of cows, and there is a place where they go and are supplied with as much milk as they require at a very small price.

42978. Well, now, it is not my wish to cast the least reflection upon the character of the occupants of your cottages, or the manner in which they have been treated, or anything of that sort. I have no doubt they are worthy families and very properly an object of favour on your part, but I would like to know what their occupation generally is. Are they, properly speaking, dependants?—On weekly wages.

42979. Dependants on the wages given by you and dependants upon your sporting establishment?—I would not say altogether on sport.

42980. I do not mean altogether?—Considerably more than the half of the sum I mentioned is spent on farm labour.

42981. But they are divided between the two?—Yes. Some are employed in the garden and in various other ways.

42982. They are dependants upon your farm and your establishment in general?—Yes.

42983. And I presume there are no leases?—No leases.

42984. All tenants at will?—Yes.

42985. This seems to be a case on a small scale of the substitution of a little community of labourers and dependants, well lodged and generously treated, I doubt not, for a community of small tenants holding land under lease?—Yes, that is so. But then, on the other hand, had those small tenants remained, the condition of the other squatters—if you may call them so—other people on the estate would have been now even more miserable than it was in 1855, and anything more wretched and poverty-stricken cannot be conceived.

42986. I find in this report there are six squatters mentioned, to whom I do not understand you have alluded, but I suppose those squatters followed the fortunes of the others?—I knew nothing of the men who were said to be dependent upon the larger tenants. I knew nothing of that arrangement.

42987. I would ask you generally whether, as a matter of policy, you think that the substitution of a class of persons, however respectable and well treated, in the position of dependants, for the small old tenantry, however ill off, but themselves susceptible of improvement—whether the substitution of the one class for the other is, on the whole, a desirable thing?—I can answer you if you tell me what on earth I could have done with the 150 people who were on the property in 1855, irrespective of the sixteen tenants, because it was a case of this kind, whether the sixteen tenants were to leave or the 150 or 160 other people; and I thought it better to provide for the larger number.

42988. What were the 160 other people besides the fourteen families of tenants?—They were on the place living in dry stone bothies with wooden vents—those bothies scarcely thatched—no shoes or stockings.

INVERNESS.

42989. Well, as to the fourteen tenants what sort of houses had they?—As to the two sheep farmers, one of them lived in a slated house and the other in the farm house that was thatched—both good enough—but there is no labourer on the place who now lives in such a house as the fourteen tenants lived in in 1855.

KINGUSSIE.
Lord Tweedmouth.

42990. I, of course, am not acquainted with the land, and it is not my business to give you advice about your property, and I don't know what could have been done with them. The only thing that suggests itself to my mind is whether it might not have been possible that the two large farms might have been in some degree used for the development of the holdings of the small tenants?—I have a plan of the estate in the next room, and you will see that it is an excessively narrow strip of land, and that it is only at the east end that any cultivation is possible. I may say, that half a mile west of the house there are no signs of cultivation of any kind at all. I also say it would be impossible to grow either oats or turnips on any portion of the land west of Guisachan House—say a mile west of Guisachan House. For thirteen or fourteen miles west of Guisachan House it would be an impossibility either to ripen corn or grow turnips.

42991. What is the elevation of the bottom of the valley?—It is very small indeed in the valley; 380 feet at Guisachan House, and 800 feet at Cogie in the valley, four miles west.

42992. Are the slopes of the hill very precipitous?—Very precipitous.

42993. Well, according to the account we get from you, this may have been a peculiar case in which any land available may not have been appropriate for small cultivation or the accommodation of those tenants, but I would ask you, as a matter of general opinion, whether you think that in other, and perhaps more favourably situated places, the substitution of dependants and persons living upon labour—upon wages—is desirable for the class living in small tenancies?—No, I am clearly in favour of small tenants—clearly in favour of small crofters.

42994. Do you think there is much opportunity for these in your neighbourhood?—There would have been small crofters at Guisachan if Guisachan had been double the size. If I could have found occupation for the people and given them crofts, I should have done it. Without the farm it would have been impossible to have given them occupation. But you spoke of Guisachan not being favorably situated. On the contrary, I think it is most favourably situated—only 380 feet above the sea. East of Guisachan we grow magnificent oat crops and magnificent turnips, and it is a very mild place, but west of Guisachan there is no land on which you could grow either oats or turnips, and there is not a trace of a ploughshare half a mile west of Guisachan House.

42995. Upon the wild grounds?—Not a trace.

42996. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—May I ask what you paid for the property?—£52,000.

42997. And you say you have laid out fully as much upon it since?—Yes, considerably more.

42998. We shall say £100,000 altogether. You have also stated that the estate, in your opinion, has trebled in value?—I would say so. I purchased before the age of railways and before the mania for deer forests.

42999. Don't you think, if it is trebled in value since you bought it, the rental should have shown some indication of being trebled since you bought it?—I think I can explain that. I did mention that I had paid

INVERNESS. £420 for the grouse shooting in 1855. If I was to let it out as a deer forest I should have £2500 or £3000 for it.

KINGUSSIE. 43000. Then do you object to this proposed change by which proprietors in the occupation of forests and grouse shootings will be charged like other people?—If all are charged with the county rates, and so forth, it will be as broad as it is long. You only want a certain sum of money for your rates and taxes, and it is as broad as it is long.

43001. But the rental which appears in the roll is only £1300?—Yes, because it has never been let.

43002. Don't you think the tax payers in the parish suffer rather in consequence of this, that the area of taxation is so far diminished by your rental being so small?—I receive no rental if I live there. On the contrary, the expenditure is very great indeed.

43003. You stated that when you bought the property the population was 227?—I said it was stated before a committee of the House of Commons. I do not say it was not so, but that appears to me to be a very large number.

43004. You are not aware that there was anything that would reduce it. It is now only 169. There was no particular reason why it should be reduced?—Well, in the first place, I could make it up to 200 at once by including the residents at Guisachan, and I suppose the residents at Guisachan House in 1855 were included. But even say it is only 170. I don't think the decrease would be very great as times go, because there is no doubt in my mind that the Highland Railway has caused a greater amount of depopulation in the Highland glens and straths than all the other causes put together, in the last fifty years.

43005. With reference to the questions put to you about the possession of the land in former times, was not the former proprietor a man of some importance in the county—a Fraser?—The grandfather was. I do not know it, but I fancy the last proprietor during the time he was proprietor—which was for a few years only—was in America the greater portion of the time.

43006. Do you know that they had a distinctive name in Gaelic?—Yes.

43007. And are you also aware that that was not generally given unless the person or family was of some consequence?—Quite so.

43008. Well, you referred to your rental account that you had in your hand. You gave the names of the two Camerons; were there not two tenants of the name of Alexander and Colin Chisholm there as well as the Camerons?—No; there was only one Chisholm.

43009. Did the Camerons pay something like between £300 and £400?—Alexander Cameron paid £320.

43010. For Cogie?—Yes, for Cogie, and down to the Guisachan gates almost.

43011. And Mid-Guisachan?—No; John Cameron rented that, and paid £179.

43012. But between the two brothers they had both places?—Yes; in fact, they occupied 20,900 acres out of 21,900.

43013. Look at Auchblair for a moment. How many John Macdonalds were there, tenants and crofters?—One.

43014. Were there not three?—No; one, and William Macdonald. The four tenants were John Macdonald, John Fraser, William Fraser, and William Macdonald, in 1855.

43015. There was not John Macdonald, first; John Macdonald, second; and John Macdonald, third; paying respectively £5, £10, and £5?—No. Here is the book of 1848, and I notice they speak of John Macdonald, sen., and then John Macdonald.

43016. When you got it there was only one John Macdonald?—
Yes.

INVERNESS.

43017. But you stated there were six cottars?—I know nothing about cottars—you mean servitors of the big tenants. I know nothing about them. I saw it stated by Colin Chisholm, but I know nothing to the contrary, and I do not admit it as a fact.

KINGUSSIE.
Lord
Tweedmouth.

43018. Did you read the advertisement of the estate?—I read it three or four years before I purchased the estate. It was in the market several years.

43019. Have you any doubt the following expressions were used in it?—The population on the estate is moderate in number and of a respectable 'class'?—They were most respectable, and a nicer population of tenantry could not be seen.

43020. And 'moderate in number.' Do you recollect that expression?—I think 220 a very large population for the place.

43021. For 20,000 acres?—That is not quite the case, because there was no person, no cottage, nobody living half a mile west of Guisachan House, and that would be over 20,000 acres out of 21,900. It was quite a narrow strip on which all these people lived.

43022. Do you know as a fact that the father of the present Culbokie was rather embarrassed in his circumstances and was under trust?—Yes, he was in the Guards, and his trustee was Mr Sandeman, of some house of business in London.

43023. But, notwithstanding he was rather embarrassed and under trust, he still allowed all those crofters to live upon his property, and they must have made a living of it, both proprietor and tenants?—You see I do not know the exact date of Culbokie's death, but those crofters were there previous to 1849.

43024. You stated they, the present residents, were weekly tenants, and paid 1s. a week; on what notice are they subject to removal?—Six months, either November or May, on leaving my service.

43025. Is there any writing between you and them?—No. It would be simply impossible for any person to live up there who was not paid wages; that is just the long and the short of it. It is impossible for any person to live at Guisachan unless he receives wages from the proprietor at Guisachan.

43026. Why did you take this farm and expend so much money upon another man's property—the farm of Kerrow?—Because the land at Guisachan, which was 600 acres, was not sufficient to employ all the people on the Guisachan estate. I was desirous of employing every person, and therefore I took this farm from The Chisholm. There are about 200 acres at Kerrow, and I trenched a place called Crannich, 80 acres, belonging to The Chisholm.

43027. What will become of these unfortunate people after you yourself must go; have you never thought of them?—I hope those who will come after me will look after the people in the same way.

43028. Have you ever contemplated that matter?—I have, but I do not see any use contemplating a thing in which one will have no voice.

43029. But don't you see that if you gave them a certain quantity of land and leases, the leases would last after you?—You mean give them the fee simple?

43030. No, leases; give them land on certain conditions?—But if I gave them leases, how could I employ the greater proportion of the people at Guisachan? I have taken a farm from The Chisholm for the express purpose of giving employment to the people, and therefore if I was to give

INVER-
NESS. leases of farms on my own property, how would it be possible for me to employ other people?

KINGUSSIE. 43031. I put it in this form, without making it in the slightest degree invidious, as no doubt a great deal has been done by you; suppose the same operation had been carried on by other people in the Highlands as by you, that is reducing the position of a crofter or holder of land to the position of a servant or dependent; would it not be most prejudicial to the country generally if everything should be dependent on the will of the person in possession?—I have said I should infinitely prefer a system of small crofters, but the land at Guisachan would not keep the number who lived on the place in 1855 in comfort, and I say that more abject poverty than existed at Guisachan in 1855 I never saw, and it was borne out by the late Mr Williamson, who was speaking of it at the dinner when The Chisholm took possession of his property. He spoke of it then, and gave very great offence.

43032. So it comes to this, that you found yourself in this position, that to make anything of it you had to do as you did, though you do not recommend that such a course should be generally followed?—Most certainly not. If you ask me now, I think I made a mistake in buying Guisachan at all.

43033. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—I suppose cottars rather than crofters formed the principal portion of the population when you bought the property?—Quite so.

43034. And they were in poverty?—Yes.

43035. And the present population on Guisachan is not in poverty?—I don't think so.

43036. That is what you intend to represent?—I do.

43037. You referred to the fact of having built a new school; is there a large number of children attending there?—Yes. The average in 1855 was something under twenty, and the average attendance now is forty-three. It is a very good school—a boys' school and a girls'—and in the boys' school on Sundays a Scotch service takes place. A minister is sent up by a committee of the church.

43038. You mentioned that the Highland Railway caused depopulation; you mean that in proximity to the railway the expense of living is lessened, and that this draws down the people to the low country?—They will go; and I have no doubt in my own mind that the Highland glens are being depopulated by that more than by any other cause.

WILLIAM MACDOUGALL, Merchant, Grantown (40)—examined.

William Macdougall. 43039. *Mr Cameron.*—How long have you been established at Grantown?—I have been there for twenty-five years.

43040. What does your business chiefly consist in?—In drapery principally, and in grocery and ironmongery, and the different things that are kept in large stores.

43041. You are well acquainted with the inhabitants of Grantown and the neighbourhood, I presume?—Yes.

43042. You have dealings, I suppose, with all classes of persons—with proprietors, with shooting tenants, with farmers, and with small farmers and crofters?—Yes. I did not come here as a delegate, but by invitation of the Commissioners.

43043. I am aware of that. The Commission asked you, as they thought you would be able to give some evidence about the condition of

the people and the business in which you are engaged. Now, with which of these classes do you deal to the greatest extent?—With the farmers of the strath.

43044. Are there many of what we call small crofters in the neighbourhood of Grantown?—There are a good many small farms, but I could not say about the size of them. There are a number of farms from thirty to eighty acres in the country round about.

43045. Do you have many dealings with those small farmers?—Yes.

43046. What has been the result of your observation for the last fifteen years with respect to the condition of those small farmers?—I should say they are better now than they were fifteen years ago; and they were getting on very well till about seven years ago, but since then they have had very bad years, and it has been up-hill work.

43047. Has your business shown a falling off in consequence?—We do a large business outside the strath, but I should say it has not improved in Strathspey in that time.

43048. I am confining my observations to the small farmer; what has been the cause of the diminution in the volume of business?—I do not suppose there is any. It is very much the same as it was seven years ago.

43049. I thought you said their condition was not so good?—No, they have had bad years, but if good times were coming again I should say our trade will increase with them.

43050. But so far as your trade is concerned, have you noticed any falling off in the trade between you and the small farmers in the last seven years?—Well, the trade is very much the same, but they do not pay so well as they did.

43051. You have more bad debts?—More bad debts.

43052. But you believe that is caused chiefly by bad seasons?—Yes.

43053. And you believe a recurrence of good seasons will mitigate that evil, if not altogether remove it?—Yes.

43054. I want to ask you some questions regarding your dealings with shooting tenants; do you have much to do with them?—Yes.

43055. I suppose you find they are a pretty good class of customers. You have not many bad debts so far as they are concerned?—No.

43056. What class of goods do you supply to those shooting tenants?—Tweeds principally, but we do a good deal in grocery goods also.

43057. But we were told at Inverness that the shooting tenants of late years had been in the habit of obtaining their groceries more from stores in London and elsewhere than in the district?—A great many of them do, but they all buy largely in Grantown.

43058. Have you found the disposition to take groceries from stores increase of late years or not, or has it been much the same?—I cannot say, —I think very much the same.

43059. But has the volume of your business with shooting tenants increased of late years, and is it increasing?—I should say it was increasing.

43060. A gentleman made a statement, which I could not quite understand, that not only were the shooting tenants in the habit of employing stores more than formerly for groceries, but they also got cloth from the south instead of from Inverness; is that your experience?—They buy house furnishings and carpets from those stores.

43061. But I am talking of cloth?—I am not aware.

43062. You mentioned cloth as one of the principal commodities with which you supplied them?—Yes; I am not aware of their getting tweeds or cloths of any kind from the stores.

INVERNESS.

KINGUSSIE.

William Macdougall.

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William
Macdougall.

43063. Now, what is your opinion generally as to the effect of these shooting tenants upon the bulk of the population—the native inhabitants of the place? Do you think it is a beneficial effect, or the reverse?—I should say a beneficial effect. During the two or three months in autumn they leave a great deal of money in the country.

43064. Have you ever noticed that the employment of the people, of the servants connected with the shooting lodges—gillies, and so on—has any demoralising effect upon their characters?—I have often heard it said it has, but I am not aware it is so, and I cannot mention an instance.

43065. Have you heard it said by any person upon whose judgment you would be apt to rely, such as a minister, for instance?—No.

43066. You do not recollect any instance of a minister telling you he noticed anything demoralising in the effect of contact with the shooting tenants by the people?—No.

43067. I suppose they do employ a good many people of one sort or another?—They do. In one lodge there are seven or eight gamekeepers employed.

43068. And how many gillies?—I cannot say.

43069. Have you ever heard any general complaint made as to the conduct of any of these shooting tenants—any exercise of hardship or unfortunate misunderstandings between them or their keepers and the farmers or natives?—I cannot recollect of any just now.

43070. Of course, you have often heard of damages done by game?—Yes, but I am not in a position to mention them.

43071. But your impression, having mixed largely with the small farming class, is that they are well satisfied with the state of things that exists and the relations which subsist between them and the shooting tenants?—I should say so.

43072. And they would not like to see them disappear?—They would not. There is no feeling against them. For instance, in regard to the grouse shootings, there is no unkindly feeling that I ever heard.

43073. And with regard to the deer forests, is there any feeling about them?—There might be more in the case of deer forests.

43074. But is there; have you heard of any?—I am not prepared to mention any particular case.

43075. When I talk of shooting tenants, I include deer forests as well as grouse shootings, and your dealings are with both?—Yes.

43076. And the deer forest tenants as a rule are the wealthier of the two?—Yes.

43077. Though not so numerous?—No. In Strathspey we have only two, I think.

43078. What is done with the venison which these deer forest tenants kill?—Well, I think it is sent away in presents by the sportsmen to their friends.

43079. Do they give much of it away to the farmers in the neighbourhood, and innkeepers?—Not in the neighbourhood where I am. They give it to the poorer crofters.

43080. They use it all somehow or other?—They use it all.

43081. Do they kill hinds in the winter?—I am not sure.

43082. Do you never see any hind venison about?—No, I have never been in the forests, and am not posted up about the way they do.

43083. Have you any cattle shows in Grantown?—Yes.

43084. Any other festive gathering of any sort?—I think there is only the cattle show.

43085. Have you not games?—Yes; they used to be held at Castle

Grant at one time, and were very successful, but they have not been so successful latterly.

43086. Are there any games held at Abernethy now?—Yes, and the people turn out very largely.

43087. Do the shooting tenants at all subscribe to the festivities of the district and assist in the amusement of the people?—Yes, but there is not very much money required. I know they all give cheerfully, and at our cattle show they give prizes very handsomely.

43088. Do they subscribe to the local charities at all? Perhaps there are none?—Well, I am not very sure about that.

43089. Have you had anything to do with contracts for wire fencing?—Yes.

43090. There is a great deal of wire fencing employed in connection with these deer forests, is there not?—Yes, a great deal.

43091. You have had something to do with these contracts?—Yes, we have had a good deal to do with several forests for ten or fifteen years.

43092. Can you tell me the number of miles of wire fencing erected in connection with these deer forests within the last ten years?—No.

43093. But you have had something to do with these contracts?—Yes.

43094. Are a good number of people employed in connection with these wire fences?—Yes, a large number.

43095. Is that still going on?—Yes.

43096. Do they make many roads and paths up to the tops of the hills, or partly to the tops?—Well, occasionally; but there is not very much work in that way, I daresay.

43097. Perhaps the ground is sound, and they do not want paths?—Yes, in many places they do not require paths.

43098. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—I have heard that people used to gather cranberries a good deal in Strathspey?—Yes.

43099. And that they are prevented in some places by the shooting tenant?—I have not heard of a shooting tenant ever keeping them back from gathering them, but I have heard that this year some of the keepers kept them back. I do not know whether it was with the consent of the tenants or not.

43100. Was that prejudicial to the industry of the people?—It would have been this year, but for four years back there was no crop.

43101. I suppose gamekeepers can do a good many things disagreeable to people which are not ordered by their masters?—It is in the interest of the masters. They wish to behave as kindly to the natives as possible. The people, however, gathered a great many. I am sure that several cart-loads have been gathered in the different parts of Strathspey this year.

43102. But do you know any instance in which they have been actually prohibited?—No, but I know the gamekeepers do not wish to allow them inside certain parts of the forest.

43103. Then it would be a loss to some poor people?—Yes, but they would not make very much money out of them.

43104. Where do these cranberries grow?—Just on the hill sides, always where there is heather, and it is only one year in three or four that there is a crop.

43105. At what time of the year are they gathered?—From the middle of August to the middle of September.

43106. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Are there any complaints in your district on the part of the crofters, do you hear, in the district of Strathspey?—No. They have not had good years the last six or seven years, but they are certainly a contented class of people, and have been all their time looking forward to bad years.

INVERNESS.

KINGUSSIE.

William Macdougall.

INVER-
NESS.

KINGUSSIE.

William
Macdougall.

43107. Have you heard any complaints about some of their hill grazings being taken away partly for planting and partly enclosing in forest?—There have been instances, but I am not prepared to speak of them, because I am not a farmer, and from a business point of view I cannot speak.

43108. I wish to know whether people complain to you when they come to your shop?—No, they would not make a complaint to me in a case of that sort.

43109. Supposing you were dunning them for a past due account, would they not give the reasons why they did not pay?—They just speak of the bad years, and hope times will improve.

43110. Has there not been a forest within the last few years created in the parish of Abernethy?—Yes, a good many years ago.

43111. How many years ago?—About twelve or fifteen years ago.

43112. How was that occupied before?—I cannot answer that. I was not the least interested in farming, and cannot answer.

43113. You are not able to give an opinion?—No; I thought you would only ask questions of me in a business way.

43114. Are you acquainted with Badenoch and Strathnairn?—Yes, I am a native of that district.

43115. What are the people there saying?—I have not been there twice in seven years.

43116. Are they better off than in Strathspey; do they pay more readily?—We have no accounts in Strathnairn.

43117. Which is the more flourishing district—Badenoch or Strathspey?—I cannot give any comparison upon that.

[ADJOURNED.]

KINGUSSIE, INVERNESS-SHIRE, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1883.

Present:—

Lord NAPIER and ETTRICK, K.T., *Chairman.*

Sir KENNETH S. MACKENZIE, Bart.

DONALD CAMERON, Esq. of Lochiel, M.P.

C. FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Esq., M.P.

Sheriff NICOLSON, LL.D.

JOHN MACARTHUR, Farmer, Ettridge (66)—examined.

John
Macarthur.

43118. *The Chairman.*—You desire to give evidence as to your experience and grievances regarding deer forests?—Yes.

43119. Would you be so good as to make a statement?—I have no statement.

43120. Then will you state what your hardships and what your grievances are?—I am marching with the forest for a considerable distance, and I have been very much aggrieved ever since I came.

43121. How long have you been in the occupation of this farm of Ettridge?—Seven years.

43122. Under a lease?—Under a lease.

43123. What duration?—Nineteen years.

43124. What is the nature of your farm—I mean with reference to arable and pasture?—There is a good deal of pasture, but very little arable.

43125. What is your area of arable?—I believe about 50 or 60 acres crop—not more at all events.
43126. What area of pasture?—I believe it will be upwards of 20,000 acres.
43127. How many hirsels do you keep—how many shepherds?—I keep five in the summer, and I keep double in the winter.
43128. Then you mean you have five hirsels; how large is your sheep stock?—About 6000.
43129. Cheviot stock?—No; blackfaced.
43130. All blackfaced?—All blackfaced.
43131. Is your arable enclosed and surrounded by your own pasture, or does it border at any point on the deer forest?—No, it does not border at any point on the deer forest.
43132. It is surrounded all by your own pasture?—Yes.
43133. Is there any substantial fence between your arable and your own pasture?—Merely a wire fence.
43134. An ordinary wire fence—no stone dyke?—No stone dyke.
43135. Have you any fence round your hill pasture?—Partially now, but not before I came.
43136. Is it in the nature at all of a deer fence?—No, it is not a deer fence, but merely a sheep fence.
43137. Do your farm and the adjacent forest belong to the same proprietor?—No, they do not.
43138. Will you kindly give me the name of the proprietor of your farm?—My own proprietor is Mr Macpherson of Belleville, with whom I have no grievance at all; I find him one of the best proprietors.
43139. Who is your neighbour—the proprietor of the neighbouring forest?—I understand it is Sir George Macpherson Grant.
43140. When you entered on your farm, was the land belonging to Sir George Macpherson Grant under forest?—It was.
43141. Well, now, when you entered, you were aware your farm was conterminous with a deer forest?—I had no idea that I was joining a deer forest.
43142. You did not know?—I did not know. I was never marching with a deer forest in my life before, old as I am, and I did not know it when I came to Badenoch.
43143. Was it not a subject on which you might naturally have made inquiry in taking the farm?—I made no inquiry, because I was a long distance from it. I believe I was perhaps 150 miles away. I am a native of Argyllshire, and did not know anything about Badenoch when I came to it.
43144. But there are deer forests in Argyllshire?—Very few.
43145. Do you complain of the aggressions of the deer?—No, I do not complain of the aggressions of the deer at all, not so much. I complain of the aggressions of the tenant and the landlord.
43146. Of the shooting tenant?—Yes, and the landlord.
43147. What is the nature of these aggressions?—When I came there I understood that my predecessors had bothies erected in the summer season. I only get the benefit of the neighbourhood of the forest in the summer months, and I very naturally put my sheep up there when I can get the benefit of it, because these high hills are covered with snow during seven months of the year. I put them all up there, consequently they cross over to the forest. My predecessors had bothies there and shepherds to keep them back, and so had I. I erected an iron bothy to make a permanent thing, because I concluded it would see out the termination of my lease, for I did not expect to see it out myself. Very well, I erected a

INVERNESS.

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permanent, bothy and my shepherd of course was there the whole season keeping my sheep back as my predecessors did, but still they were going over in spite of him. Well, the first two years I was very much aggrieved indeed with complaints from the head forester and from the tenant that my sheep were going over. I told them I used every precaution to keep them back, but could not, and when it is foggy weather for two or three days my sheep will go over in spite of the best shepherd, and then when they are putting them back they are disturbing the forest, which is a great grievance to the shooting tenant, and certainly very injurious to my stock. The second year I was gathering my stock, about the end of September, for marketing. I wrote to the principal keeper over there that I intended sending my shepherds in on such a day, and I hoped they would disturb the forest as little as possible, in order to get out my stock for marketing. I have still a farm in Argyllshire, and I had occasion to go there to look after it, and I left word with my manager, but a letter came in my absence prohibiting me going into the forest, and saying that legal proceedings would be taken against me if I entered the forest even for my own property. My men did not go on that occasion, and consequently I lost about £150 that year.

43148. On the sheep that strayed into the forest?—I was not allowed to get back both ewes and wethers that I should have put away, and I calculated I lost £150 that year.

43149. What became of the sheep?—The sheep I did get I sold at the Falkirk October Tryst for 34s. 6d., and I had my ewes sold previously for 22s.

43150. I want to know first of all what became of the sheep; were the sheep which you were not allowed to pursue and gather honestly restored to you by the keeper?—I was prohibited from going in for three weeks. The consequence was I gathered all I could get upon my own ground, and sent them to market. At the end of three weeks I asked liberty to get in and got it. But between the time I sold my first lot and the last lot I was short of about £150, because the market came down.

43151. I quite understand your loss, but I do not yet see where the responsibility exactly lies. They were your sheep which were on your neighbour's property. May it not in some degree have been the fault of your shepherds in not watching the marches with sufficient strictness?—I grant you all that, but we cannot do it. For instance, I am marching with the same forest a distance of eight or nine miles.

43152. Would your grievance be entirely set aside if there was a deer fence?—Certainly it would, I would even be pleased with a sheep fence.

43153. Although it might not be as good as a deer fence, would the sheep fence not prevent your sheep straying upon the ground? Would it not be entirely a remedy for your grievance?—Yes, it would be a remedy for my grievance that my stock would not trespass into the forest.

43154. Has your proprietor not a right at law to compel his neighbour to put a sheep fence?—I do not say but he has, but it becomes very expensive for my proprietor even to share the half. He has done a very great deal for me already, and if he will do this it will be more than I ever anticipated.

43155. Then it appears to me that the law provides a complete remedy for your present grievance?—Well, I do not say but it does; but I say myself that the law is one-sided very much now in regard to deer forests. How in the name of goodness are deer forests more sacred ground than my land? I do not object to them coming over to my ground, and the deer come over in hundreds and they never heard me complain, yet about their deer.

43156. You never complained?—I never complained yet to my neighbour about his deer coming over.

INVERNESS.

43157. Do they do you any harm?—Of course they will not stand and look at the grass.

KINGUSSIE.

43158. Then you think it is hard that your proprietor should be obliged to pay half of this fence?—I think so.

John Macarthur.

43159. Do you think that in a case of a conflict between a deer forest and a sheep farm, when a fence is necessary, the fence should be put up entirely at the cost of the proprietor of the deer forest?—I say so, that it should be put up entirely at the expense of the proprietor of the deer forest, because he is getting an equivalent benefit, a very great deal more benefit than the grazing proprietor is getting. Besides a considerable portion of this forest that is marching with me was under sheep for two years after I came. There was no reason of complaint between that neighbour and me in the world, though there were some sheep going back and forward. We were all neighbourly, but now this portion of the farm is added to the forest and is made a sanctuary, so that I am the same as if I was beside a house of glass.

43160. Then your sheep have been feeding in the sanctuary?—Not the slightest doubt. There is nothing to keep them out of it.

43161. Do the deer ever come down to your arable ground at all?—No, they are very seldom seen in the arable ground.

43162. You have no complaint to make on that score?—I have no complaint to make of the arable ground as to the deer, nor yet even for the grazing. I make no complaint, supposing they are over in hundreds. The only thing I complain of is the grievances I have with the shooting tenant of Gaick forest.

43163. And you think the neighbouring proprietor should be obliged to go to the expense of the whole fence?—Perhaps between himself and his tenant.

43164. *Mr Cameron.*—What year was it you suffered this loss by the sales of sheep?—I think it was in 1879.

43165. Are you sure prices fell that year between the Inverness market and the Falkirk market?—Not at all. I did not sell my sheep at the Inverness market, but I sold them at the Falkirk tryst for 32s. 6d., and for what I took out of Gaick I only got 25s. 6d. at Perth market, which was the only market I could send them to after the tryst was over.

43166. You lost your market?—I lost my market, because I was not allowed to enter the forest for them.

43167. I do not quite understand what you mean by there being a one-sided law for forests. Do you mean to say that you have no right to go on to the ground of the tenant of the deer forest, but that the tenant of the deer forest has a right to come on yours?—It looks very like what you say, because I should never think of interdicting the tenant of the forest from coming in upon my ground, but the proprietor and the tenant of Gaick summoned me to the Court of Session to get interdict against me. Of course they failed, fortunately for me and for the whole country. It was not granted. How could their land be more sacred than mine? I could never think of trying to interdict them from coming on to my ground, but they tried to interdict me from going on to their ground, even after my own property.

43168. Do you mean you have not a right to interdict them from coming on to your own ground?—I don't believe it. I don't know whether I have the right, and even if I had it I would not put it in execution.

43169. Supposing you were told on good authority that you had as good a right to interdict all men, whether sheep farmer, tenant of deer forest,

INVERNESS.

or proprietor of deer forest, from coming on to your ground, would you still say the law was one-sided?—No, I certainly would not.

KINGUSSIE.

John
Macarthur.

43170. Then there is another thing I do not quite understand. You told the Chairman that by the erection of a fence the owner of the deer forest would be the gainer, and therefore he ought to pay the expense?—Yes.

43171. But, as I understand, the present complaint comes from the farmer; and, therefore, if the complaint comes from the farmer, the gain from the fence would be to the farmer too?—The complaint always comes from the weaker side, not from the strong side. The strong side knows the law better than the weak side, and can put it in force because he has plenty at his back to do it with. Now, I am the weak side, and I have a very little at my back to spare, although perhaps I am as independent as he is with regard to what I take in hand. I do not want to throw anything away in law.

43172. But the question which the Chairman asked was at whose expense the fence should be erected, and your answer was that it should be at the expense of the deer forest owner, because he would be the gainer. Now, as I understand, the deer forest owner does not complain of anything. The complaint is by the tenant?—I complained, in the first instance, that he interdicted me going into the forest, and took me to the Court of Session. Then I came to lay my grievance before you as Commissioners. That is the only thing that I have to do. It is immaterial to me how you take it, but I know I am very much aggrieved with the deer forest.

43173. But under the present law a fence may be erected on an application by one or two conterminous proprietors at their joint expense. You suggest it is a hardship upon your proprietor that he should be called upon to pay the half, and you think it should be paid by the owner of the deer forest. Perhaps what you mean is that as the owner of the deer forest gets a larger rent for his land, he therefore can better afford to pay for it?—Yes, I mean that.

43174. But you will admit the damage done is done to the sheep farmer, because he is the person who comes and complains?—Yes.

43175. And, therefore, a fence erected would be to the gain of the sheep farmer?—It would be no gain to the sheep farm.

43176. But it would be an advantage to the sheep farmer?—I believe it would be a greater gain to the forest than to the sheep farm to keep the sheep out of the forest.

43177. To avoid disputes?—To avoid disputes entirely.

43178. What is the length of this fence?—I believe from end to end of the forest it would be seven or eight miles. But, let me tell you, a few miles of that have been erected within a few years.

43179. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—When hill lands are employed for the grazing of sheep, is there any necessity for fences between conterminous farms?—None in the world, because there is seldom any complaint between ordinary farms.

43180. There is mutual trespass and mutual obligation?—Mutual obligation.

43181. It is only when on one side of the fence the land is cleared that it becomes a necessity to have a fence?—Yes; when the forbidden fruit is on the other side of the fence we are all liable to go to it.

43182. And you think, when a person clears his ground for the purpose of amusement, he should be the person who should be at the expense of putting up the necessary fence?—I would say so.

43183. How many sheep had you in the forest when you lost the £150?—I don't know, but I would have 400 or 500.

43184. And you lost 7s. or 8s. apiece?—I did indeed.

43185. You mentioned an attempt having been made to interdict you from getting into the forest; was that the exact object of the interdict? Was it for the purpose of preventing you getting to the sheep in the forest?—I was cited to the Court of Session with the expectation of getting interdict against me. My neighbours were going against me to prohibit me from going into the forest. Besides, I was threatened with legal proceedings about which there is a good deal of correspondence between us, and all my letters are in the hands of my agents in Edinburgh, or I could have brought them here. I was threatened with legal proceedings, and two years ago, or about twelve months ago, I was summoned to the Court of Session to protect myself against an interdict for going into the forest for my own property.

43186. You mentioned that part of the ground was fenced?—Yes, now, within the last year or two.

43187. Did that fence answer the purpose at that point where it existed?—It answered the purpose well enough as long as it stood, but the snow breaks it down, and my sheep went round the end of it. There is five or six miles not fenced yet, and my sheep go round the end of it and go in at the back of it.

43188. You were satisfied with it so far as it went?—I was satisfied with it so far as it was a fence. They were threatened with being pointed over there, and on several occasions they have been gathering them down to the bottom of their own valleys. Their men would not let them get back the way they went forward, and they had twenty miles to travel before they got into their own hirsle again.

43189. Have you suggested that the fence should be extended?—I suggested long ago that the fence should be extended, and not limited to the few miles it is. But I do not blame my proprietor at all. I tell you he is one of the best of proprietors. I have got a very great deal from him that there was no stipulation at all about.

43190. *The Chairman.*—You have been in the habit of walking on the forest ground occasionally when you collected your sheep?—I never walked on it in my life except on one occasion.

43191. I am sorry for that, because I wanted to ask whether you observed the condition of the pasture of the forest. Some people tell us that deer improve pasture and some tell us they injure it?—If they do not keep grass for deer, deer will not be there. They must have grass to the point of their horns nearly.

43192. Suppose at this moment Sir George Macpherson Grant cleared his forest and put sheep back again, do you think the pasture would be found in worse condition than it was when under sheep?—Certainly it would. It would be in worse condition under sheep than under deer.

43193. If he put it back to sheep again, would it be found to be in worse condition than it was years ago when it was under sheep; will the deer have done the pasture harm or good?—I don't believe the deer have done it any harm.

43194. Then you think the pasture of the hills does not suffer from being cleared and lying under deer for a term of years?—I don't believe it.

43195. You don't think it makes any difference either for good or evil?—I don't believe it does; but I believe that land deteriorates under sheep.

43196. That is another question, but you don't think it deteriorates under deer?—I have no great experience, I must say, about deer—none in the world.

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43197. Now, about the deer getting on to your ground, supposing there was a sheep fence all the way along between you and the forest, a number of deer would get over the sheep fence into your ground?—Yes.

43198. What would become of them; would they get freely back again over the sheep fence, or do you think they would remain about your ground, and not have as it were an equally free passage back to the forest?—I would expect they would go back the same way as they would come forward if there was a sheep fence.

43199. You don't think they would be practically enclosed in any degree upon your ground?—No. I do not believe it would keep the deer from entering into my ground, because I never made any complaint against them.

43200. But would the fence prevent the deer getting back again to the forest?—No, it would not.

43201. Is the lie of the ground such that they would get back and forward equally?—Yes, equally the same, I believe—perhaps not exactly, but it would not prevent them going one way or another.

43202. In fact, you would not catch the deer within your enclosure?—No, and I would not attempt it. Suppose you put a rifle in my hand, I would not think it worth while to go to the railway station down there for one.

43203. You said you thought sheep deteriorated pasture?—I believe they do.

43204. Explain how and why?—I cannot see for myself how there is so much bone, wool, and flesh taken off the same land every year without deteriorating the land, and there is nothing put in there to replenish the grass except the droppings of the sheep, which are a mere bagatelle. Now, there is an extraordinary quantity of flesh, bone, and wool put off the land yearly, and nothing put in to replenish the ground for it.

43205. Do you find, practically speaking, that the pasture on your own farm is deteriorating?—Yes, I do.

43206. Can you keep as numerous a stock as you did formerly?—No, and that is the reason why I am at a very great deal more expense in wintering them than I was the first years I came in there.

43207. Though it is a blackfaced stock?—A blackfaced stock.

43208. *Mr Cameron.*—I should like to ask you a question about that, because we had some rather contradictory evidence in Inverness. A butcher informed us that winterings were no dearer now than they were fifteen years ago?—It is my experience that they are dearer; and I will say another thing. I know that you, Lochiel, and the like of you, spoil us tenants very badly. I don't say you know of it; but you send your managers out scouring the country for winterings. Then if I go for it—‘Oh, Lochiel's manager, and Sir John Ramsden's manager, and Sir Robert ‘Menzies' manager, have been here, and we will get anything we want, ‘and if you don't give that just move away.’

43209. Might not that difficulty be got over if some of the sheep farmers came and took our farms?—Let me tell you it will be a good job now for you if you get your farms let. You will appreciate your farmers when you get them.

43210. But if we cannot let our farms, how can you blame us for taking wintering for our sheep?—It is not that you take wintering, but you take them far too high, and raise the wintering upon us down in the country. If your men were keeping them down, of course we could easily live. If I could sit upon another person's coat-tail, my word, I would make the purse long enough, but I am sitting on my own coat-tail unfortunately.

43211. Do you think that the managers for proprietors do not try to do

the best they can for their employers and get wintering as cheap as they can?—I don't know, but I know I can do better than they do. I know that perfectly, and can prove it. And you are not singular. There are plenty of the noblemen in the country that I can prove the same thing about, and I don't doubt but I have plenty witnesses here that I could bring forward to substantiate my statement.

43212. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—What was the prayer of the petition in the interdict; was it to prevent you from entering upon the lands on the other side of your march—you or any persons coming under your authority?—I believe it was, but when I got it I tell you honestly it made me shake. It is a thing I am not accustomed to.

43213. It was to prevent you from setting foot upon the deer forest?—Yes, I sent it at once to my agent.

43214. Had you to appear at Edinburgh?—No, I had not to appear. I believe I would have had to appear, but it was not granted.

43215. Was the petition refused?—It was refused.

43216. Your agent appeared for you?—My agent appeared for me.

43217. And the interdict was simply refused without ordering a proof?—I understand without ordering a proof.

INVERNESS.
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KINGUSSIE.
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John
Macarthur.

Sir JOHN WILLIAM RAMSDEN, Bart., M.P., Proprietor, residing at Ardverikie (52)—examined.

43218. *The Chairman.*—You desire to make a statement to us?—No, Sir John W. Ramsden.

I have no statement. I am only here to answer questions.

43219. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—How long is it since you came to Scotland first?—I first came twenty years ago—in 1864.

43220. You have now a very considerable estate in Inverness-shire?—Yes, considerable.

43221. May I ask what your objects were in purchasing land in the Highlands?—My first inducement was to obtain a deer forest, but I wished, in addition to that, to become possessed of a large extent of wild land which would give me the opportunity of planting and draining and improving it according to my own wishes.

43222. I understand you had some difficulty in acquiring the estate you now possess, and that it was necessary for you to purchase other estates and make exchanges. Is that so?—Yes, the possession of Ardverikie was very complicated owing to a very long lease, and also some other land which ran into it very much, which was entailed land, and in order to acquire the estate which I now have I was obliged to buy other lands to exchange for the entailed lands. In consequence of that, I had to make myself very minutely acquainted with the circumstances, much more so than if I could have bought the land straight off.

43223. In that way your attention was necessarily much more closely directed to the land than if you had got the land simply at once without any trouble?—Much more closely.

43224. May I ask the extent of your lands in acres?—The acreage I have round Ardverikie is 130,000 acres, and Alvie, which is a detached property, 8000—138,000 in Inverness-shire altogether.

43225. What did you pay for these lands?—The 130,000 acres round Ardverikie cost £350,000, and the 8000 at Alvie cost £20,000, making £370,000 as the original purchase price.

43226. What state was Ardverikie in when you bought it; was it a forest?—Yes, the whole estate was a forest. It was entirely clear. There

INVER-
NESS.

KINGUSSIE.

Sir John W.
Ramsden.

were no sheep upon it, and no people whatever, except the foresters in charge of the forest, and Ardverikie you may say was quite deserted. There was only one old woman to take care of the house, and one forester to take care of the out-buildings.

43227. In going through the estate, do you find remains of ancient cultivation of any consequence, or do they appear to be merely summer sheilings within the forest?—The remains that exist are chiefly remains of summer sheilings merely, but there are in one or two places traces of old cultivation which must have taken place at some very distant time.

43228. I suppose no great extent?—No great extent. I may say I have taken a good deal of trouble to ascertain the history of them if I could, and as to when they were thrown out of cultivation, but I have been quite unable to do so. There seems to be no tradition in the country as to when they were cultivated. The only case where I have been able to trace any sort of trustworthy tradition was this, that my late head forester, who died this year at eighty-four years of age, and had lived in the country all his life, told me that when he was a young man he remembered an old woman whose father was understood to have once had a small farm inside what is now the forest.

43229. I believe the forest is of considerable altitude?—Yes, very high above the sea indeed.

43230. What is the level of Loch Laggan?—The water level of Loch Laggan is 818 feet, according to the Ordnance survey.

43231. And there are a great many high hills within the forest; how many distinct peaks may there be over 3000 feet in height?—I had the curiosity to count them the other day, and there are nine peaks over 3000 feet. Fully half of the forest is above 2000 feet above the sea. A considerable part of it is above 3000 feet. There is hardly any of it that is lower than 1000 feet above the sea.

43232. Do not the waters run from Ardverikie in three different directions? For instance, do some streams not run into the sea at Fort William by the Spean?—Yes; part drains to the west by the Spean, another part drains to the east by the Spey, and another drains to the south-east by the Tay.

43233. All finding their sources more or less in the forest?—Yes, there is a hill just behind Loch Ericht lodge from which the water drains into three seas.

43234. When you got Ardverikie and the other lands, was there a farm called Strathmashie which ran inconveniently into the forest?—Yes, it ran in with a narrow sort of tongue into the forest, and consequently made a march which it was very difficult indeed to keep.

43235. And when the pastoral lease of Strathmashie fell out did you put some of that farm under forest?—Yes, I took the high ground of Strathmashie, about 8000 acres, off the low ground, and added that to the forest.

43236. And that is all the afforesting you have made?—Yes, that is all the addition I have made.

43237. And, in point of fact, you deducted a very large proportion from the old forest for plantations and for the home farm?—Yes, I have taken off a large extent for this purpose. Altogether, I must have taken off 5000 acres for the home farm and plantations.

43238. What became of the farmer at the time the lease fell out; was he provided in the meantime with another farm on your estate?—Yes, I was able to make an arrangement by which he was undisturbed. It happened at the same time with the expiry of the lease of Strathmashie that the lease of the adjoining farm of Dalchully expired also. The tenant of Dalchully was an absentee. In fact, I never saw him and never heard

of his being in the country. When his lease expired, he made no communication to me. He did not ask me for any renewal, and the farm consequently fell into my hands.

43239. And you arranged with the outgoing tenant of Strathmashie?—I gave that and the low ground of Strathmashie to the tenant from whom I had taken the 8000 acres of hill ground, and he remained as my tenant until his death.

INVERNESS.
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KINGUSSIE.
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Sir John W.
Ramsden.

43240. That finished the afforesting?—Yes.

43241. Can you give us an idea how much money you may have spent upon the estate since 1870 when you came? We shall take plantations first. How many acres have you planted at Ardverikie?—At Ardverikie I have planted over 6000 acres, on which I have planted 18,000,000 trees, and at Alvie I have planted nearly 2000 acres with 6,000,000 trees, making altogether 8000 acres planted with 24,000,000 trees; and that I am going on with as quickly as the seasons will permit.

43242. Your plantation operations are by no means at an end?—By no means. My nursery is calculated to enable me, if the weather allows it, to plant 2,000,000 trees yearly for the future.

43243. What was the total cost of these plantations?—I am afraid I cannot give you the cost of the plantations alone. I can give it to you with the other expenditure generally. As to fencing at Ardverikie, I have put up more than 76 miles of my own internal fences, and I have joined with neighbouring proprietors in putting up more than 34 miles of march fence. At Alvie I have put up 14 miles of internal fencing, and joined with other proprietors in putting up about 9 miles of march fence. I have done a good deal of draining, although I have a very great deal more still to do. I see I have made 37,834 chains, which is, roughly speaking, 473 miles of open drains. During the same time I have made over 20 miles of carriage road, and more than 18 miles of pony tracks and walks, without counting several miles which I have made at Alvie of similar walks. During the same time, without counting my own house at Ardverikie, or the shooting lodges which I have built or enlarged, I have built eighteen new houses and put into repair thirteen old houses. I have built two complete new sets of farm buildings, besides making considerable additions to three other sets of farm buildings. I don't include in these the ordinary estate repairs.

43244. What may be the cost of these works?—The whole outlay I have made, exclusive of the cost of purchase, during the twelve years, has been £180,000, or an average of rather more than £15,000 a year spent in the country.

43245. Do you generally employ the country people in these works?—I employ all the country people I can get.

43246. Do they come from as far as Skye and the Lewis?—A good many of the road makers come from the west coast—principally from the island of Lewis. I don't think many Skye men come, but a good many come from Lewis.

43247. Is there barrack accommodation for them to sleep in?—Yes. Of course these roads are away from any houses generally speaking, and I have to build a barrack near the work, at which they live during the summer months when it is going on.

43248. Are all your servants and employées Highlanders or natives of Scotland so far as you know?—All my estate servants are.

43249. All the foresters?—All the foresters are men of this country.

43250. And in fact you may say the establishment generally here is Scottish in every sense of the term?—In every sense, except my own household servants, who travel about with me.

INVER-
NESS

KINGUSSIE.

Sir John W.
Ramsden.

43251. Did you take on most of the old foresters?—I took on all the old foresters. I took them all on twelve years ago when I came into the forest, and I have nearly all of them now. If I may be allowed to make a digression, I should like to say this—because I have seen in this inquiry it has often been stated that employment as a forester or a gillie is a demoralising employment, and that men become unfit for other work. As far as my own experience goes, I would ask permission to contradict that altogether, and I may say I have very good means of comparing the people here with those in the south, because I have a great many people employed on my estate in England, and I can compare the two, and I must say, that of all the people of the labouring class that I have ever employed, I know none whom I have found more thoroughly trustworthy than the foresters I have had in this country. I think the state of the forest is a proof of that. When I entered upon it more than twelve years ago, there were seven foresters employed. Five of these are still in my service. One of them emigrated ten years ago, and I filled his place by promoting his brother, who was at that time one of my gillies, and he is still in my service as forester. In all those twelve years, among all the men, I have only had one single instance where I had to discharge a man for misconduct, and that misconduct did not consist of any unfaithfulness in the discharge of his duties.

43252. *The Chairman.*—In what sense exactly do you use the word forester? Is your forester a game servant connected with the deer forest exclusively, or does forester mean a man connected with the woods as well as the game?—I use the word forester as a man simply employed in a deer forest as distinct from a woodman and as distinct from a grouse keeper; and I may add that my own gillies are really among the best of the workmen. I employ them not merely for the time when they are gillies, but at my other work all the year round. They go on from year to year, and there are none of my workmen that I value more.

43253. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—These, I presume, may be said to be drawn from the crofter class?—I believe they are. I should say they are entirely from that class.

43254. Before turning from this subject, may I ask you to refer to your late principal forester, Mr Cattanach. Was he not a man who was exceedingly satisfactory to you in the discharge of his duties, and was he not a man held in the highest estimation by the whole parish?—He was a man for whom everybody in the country, I should think, had the highest respect. I can only speak of him as one of the most valued friends I ever had in the world. He died this year eighty-four years old, and he has been a very great loss to me.

43255. He was connected with game for fifty or sixty years?—During his whole life. He began life as a fox-hunter in the parish of Laggan. When the Duke of Abercorn made the forest of Ardverkie he put him at the head of it, and he remained there under the Duke of Abercorn, under Lord Henry Bentinck, and under me up to the day of his death.

43256. I should like to ask you something about the population of your estate; has it increased or diminished, or is it stationary?—The population of the parish of Laggan, according to the census, has certainly not increased. It has diminished. I have no means of comparing the population of my own estate now with what it was ten years ago. I have no means of subdividing the old returns for the parish, but I think I have other evidence which must show that the population on my estate has increased.

43257. Will you explain your reasons for coming to that conclusion?—First of all, I had to build a number of new houses, and every one of

these new houses is fully occupied, and if I had more I could fill them very well. I not only built new houses, but I repaired any old ones capable of being repaired. Then, in addition to that, it has lately been found necessary to build a new board school close to my home farm, where no school had ever been before—a school which is attended by thirty children. Certainly twenty of them are the children of labourers and persons employed on my own estate. Then there is another school held now in an old inn at Garvamore—a much less populous part of the parish—which is attended by fifteen children, and all come from my estate. Then the parish school at Gargask, I believe, is almost entirely filled by children from my own estate. I say almost entirely for this reason, that Cluny has a school of his own for the children on his estate, which is only two miles from this school on my estate.

43258. Now, considering the nature of the ground—its altitude and otherwise, and what used to be done before—do you consider its occupation as a deer forest is the natural and legitimate use to which it should be adapted?—I cannot myself see any other means of employing the ground that would be so valuable or so generally beneficial to the district, certainly.

43259. Has the rental of the parish of Laggan increased very much within the last ten or fifteen years?—Yes, it has increased very considerably. It is a remarkable point connected with this, that the increase of the rental has arisen almost altogether from the increase in the value of the forests and shootings, very little from the increase in the rental of agricultural land.

43260. What is the rise since 1870 in the parish?—I have compared the last year in the valuation roll with the valuation roll of 1869–70, which was the last year before I became possessed of the place. In 1869–70 it was £10,925; in 1882–83 it was £16,175, showing an increase of £5250.

43261. Could you divide that money, showing the arable or pastoral rent and the shooting rent?—I ought to say that from that increase I should take £370, which is merely a nominal increase on my own estate, owing to the farms in my hands having been returned at higher than their true market value, and this is to be corrected in the forthcoming roll; so that the real *bona fide* increase in the thirteen years is not £5250 but £4880. Of that £4880, £4062 is due to forests and shootings, and only £818 is due to land.

43262. That is the proportion between the two?—Yes. The case of the parish of Alvie, where I am also interested, is found to be still more striking. There the increase in the last thirteen years has been about 80 per cent., namely from £4854 in 1869–70 to £8752 in 1882–83. The increase on shootings and fishings is £3777, while the increase on land rents is only £121.

43263. Regarding the product of the forests, what is done with it—the stags that are killed in the season and the hinds in winter?—A certain amount is consumed in my own household, but every bit not consumed in my own household is given away.

43264. Is a good deal given off in the country?—The great bulk of it is given away in the country. Of course, I send a certain amount to friends in Scotland and friends in England, but that is a drop in the ocean. The great bulk is distributed among my neighbours in the parish.

43265. Among the tenants?—Among the work people and the poor people.

43266. And you carefully see to it yourself that such a distribution is made?—Yes.

INVERNESS.

KINGUSSIE.

Sir John W.
Ramsden.

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Sir John W.
Ramsden.

43267. You have unfortunately, I understand, got several large sheep farms on your hands. You have Glenshero and Braeroy?—Yes.

43268. When these fell out did you advertise them and try to get them let?—I advertised them in every paper I could think of.

43269. Did you get an offer, on one occasion, for part or the whole?—Yes, I got an offer, and accepted the offer, but when it came to the point the man declared off.

43270. And you found you could not compel him?—Yes. I was so anxious not to have the farm thrown on my own hands that I put it into my law advisers' hands to see whether the man, who was a man of considerable capital, could not be compelled to adhere to the offer he had made.

43271. So that, in point of fact, these farms have fallen upon you unwillingly, and I suppose you are quite prepared to accept a reasonable reduction of rent according to the state of the times?—They have fallen upon my hands most unwillingly.

43272. And they still remain?—They still remain in my own hands.

43273. Have you ever removed any one out of his holding since you got possession of the property?—No person, unless you can call it so in the case of 8000 acres, when I gave the man an adjoining farm in return for what I took from him.

43274. You have stated you have built some cottages and several new houses and others; have you also repaired bridges which the public use, and one at considerable expense, which the county authorities have now taken over?—Yes, I have practically rebuilt the old bridge at Garvamore, which had become impassable, and now the authorities have accepted it.

43275. Have you some tenants at Crathie who occupy common hill pasture?—Yes; these are the only tenants, I think, who would come under the definition of crofters on the whole estate.

43276. They have a common pasture?—Yes.

43277. Are these Catholics—old remnants of the Highland people?—Yes, a number of them are so, and there is a chapel close by.

43278. Did you enclose a small bit of ground about the chapel for the purpose of allowing it to be beautified and ornamented by the people?—I have enclosed and planted it myself. When I obtained the property there were simply the bare walls without anything round them—no enclosure of any sort.

43279. Have you, because some of your tenants are old Catholics, and to show your goodwill to them, given the priest who has charge some land at a nominal rent?—I have.

43280. I believe this farm is not a club farm in reality, though it ought to be?—No, it is not what you would call a club farm—that is to say, the tenants have no common stock. Each man has his own stock.

43281. Whether do you consider it would be more advantageous for people like them to have a common stock with one herd or to have a common grazing?—I should myself think it would be very much better for them to have a common stock, and shepherds acting jointly for all of them; and I may say that under their leases these Crathie tenants are bound to come under that system, and I should have been very glad to put them under that system, but I found there was so much unwillingness on their part to agree to it that I did not press the matter.

43282. Have the leases of these small tenants fallen out since your time?—They have not fallen out, because I have renewed them.

43283. But they did fall out?—Yes, they expired, and I have renewed them for another term.

43284. Did you raise the rents?—No, I renewed the leases at the same rents, and on the same conditions.

INVERNESS.

43285. Have you ever raised the rent of any tenant you found in the property when you bought it?—I have raised the rents of the shooting tenants, but I have not raised the rent of any agricultural tenant I found there.

KINGUSSIE.

Sir John W.
Ramsden.

43286. Have you got all your deer forests fenced where necessary?—Where necessary they are. My forests are peculiarly situated. There is a large lake at the north and another at the south, so I have twenty miles of water boundary. Then, the eastern end of it abuts upon agricultural and pastoral land, and is all fenced from the one lake to the other. On the west end it abuts on the property of two large proprietors, part of which ground is also cleared for deer. At that west end there is no fence, but I have offered to the proprietor whose ground is under sheep to join him in putting up a march fence if he wishes it.

43287. Do you consider that all forests should be fenced from the pastoral tenants?—If you ask me the question I should carry it much farther. I should say that not only all forests should be fenced, but wherever one owner of land wishes to have a march fence put up the adjoining owner ought to be bound to bear his share, and put up a fence whether it is forest or sheep ground.

43288. Have you ever had any difficulty with your tenants or with your neighbours about game?—None whatever.

43289. Have you taken great pains in keeping down hares and rabbits all over your estate?—Yes; I have taken very great pains in doing that.

43290. Might I say you have even got trappers or a trapper from England to keep them down?—Yes. I have employed trappers, and when I was told I would get a better trapper from England, I imported him, and in all my shooting leases I reserve to myself the power of keeping down hares and rabbits of my own authority without permission from the shooting tenant.

43291. Did you give your tenants that had leases power to kill hares and rabbits?—I did so directly the Act of 1880 passed.

43292. Can you say that in all the arrangements you have made about your estates here, you can look back upon them with this feeling of satisfaction that you have never injured anybody—any crofters or tenants, or pastoral or agricultural land?—No, certainly, I cannot conceive that in any possible way I have injured any person whatever, though I hope it has done much good by putting a great deal of money into the pockets of the people here.

43293. Has pauperism rather decreased in the parish of Laggan?—Yes, very decidedly.

43294. Decreased more than in proportion to the decrease of the population?

—The decrease of pauperism has been considerably more than the decrease of the population.

43295. Have you been told that you are entitled to a little credit for that yourself in consequence of the large expenditure that has taken place now for so many years?—I am told that is so, and the proof that has been given to me is that people are now able to buy a more expensive sort of food, and more of it, than they could do before this expenditure was going on.

43296. Do you get applications made to you by any people in the parish in the way of alms?—Very rarely indeed.

43297. Do you look back with satisfaction then upon having acquired the estates, and all you have done?—Yes.

INVER-
NESS.

KINGUSSIE.

Sir John W.
Ramsden.

43298. And are you satisfied?—Yes, I must say it has been to me a very great interest, and I find it is an interest that grows greater and greater every year.

43299. With reference to a matter that occurred at Inverness the other day, I cannot tell whether your memory will charge you with it, but a person examined before us at Inverness stated as a great hardship that the people—crofters—at Lochend, while it was in your possession, were deprived of their hill grazings; do you recollect the circumstances, or can you give any explanation of it?—I certainly have no recollection whatever of any crofter being deprived of his hill grazing. I believe there were some who had the privilege of putting out one or two horses on the hill—who were allowed as a favour to do that—and that ground on which they put the horses was enclosed for planting. Well, necessarily when that was enclosed for planting we could not allow horses to be turned out on it; but I remember further that those very tenants had their rents reduced, and I presume it was in consideration of little privileges being taken away; and I also remember that, till I got the property they had no leases. You yourself strongly urged they should have leases, and at your request I granted leases. Perhaps I may be allowed to add, in regard to this property at Inverness, that Mr Fraser-Mackintosh, who was living there, was good enough to look after it then; and I am perfectly clear that no people were turned off, and no hardship was inflicted upon them, because in all my conversation with him that was one of the objects Mr Fraser-Mackintosh urged upon me. He said—‘Whatever you do, don’t inflict any injury upon these poor people. Let us make our improvements without in any way affecting them; and if possible give them a more permanent tenure than they had before;’ and in consequence of his representation I gave them those eleven years’ leases.*

43300. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—Has the population on your property decreased since you became proprietor?—I have no means of comparing the population on my estate, since I became proprietor, as distinguished from the parish.

43301. Have you any reason to think the population on your estate has diminished?—No; my opinion is that they must have increased, because I certainly have built a number of houses which did not exist before, and every one of those houses is fully occupied.

43302. Have you any idea of the number of families you have on your property altogether?—I am afraid I have not got that. I could easily ascertain it, but I cannot state it just now.

43303. Or how many tenants you have altogether?—Yes, I can state that. It is in the return I have made out for the Commission.

43304. According to this return, you have just eight crofters on Ardverkie?—Eight crofters.

43305. And paying rents of from £7, 15s. to £22, with from five to fifteen acres of arable land. Have they hill pasture?—Yes; they have hill pasture above their arable land. I think it is stated there that their proportion of the common grazing would work out to be 1442 acres. That is their proportion of the grazing *plus* their arable land, and the rent they pay is £100, 15s., if I remember right.

43306. It has been raised from £79, 10s. in 1853?—Yes; during the thirty years, but I have only possessed it twelve years. There have been no alterations since I became the owner.

43307. Are these people in comfortable circumstances?—Yes, I think they are in very comfortable circumstances.

43308. Are they able to live by the land or by the work you supply to them?—Well, I employ their sons as my workmen, and I hire a good

* See Appendix A, LXXVIII.

many of their horses. Of course, that must be an advantage to them, but whether or not they could live without it I cannot say.

43309. Are the houses good or above the average of ordinary Highland cottages?—I cannot say they are good. They are about the average.

INVER-
NESS.

43310. Thatched houses?—Thatched houses.

43311. Who built them?—I don't know that. They are just in the state they were when I got the property.

KINGUSSIE.
Sir John W.
Ramsden.

43312. How many persons altogether are employed by you?—I can show the number employed at weekly wages. Here is the return of those on day labour paid monthly from the 1st January 1871 to 1883. That is merely the day labourers employed on estate improvements. It does not take in any of the foresters, or gamekeepers, or carters, or any of the people we permanently employ; and it does not take in anybody who is working on contract.

43313. Do you think there are as many people employed on your estate, occupied as it is chiefly as a deer forest, as there would be if it were let out in sheep farms?—Certainly a very great number more.

43314. Are there more men required for a deer forest than for a sheep tack?—Well, I should say there are perhaps rather more required, but not many more required necessarily, only I live there, because the inducement to me to live there is the deer forest, and when I live there I carry on all those improvements on the estate; while the sheep farmer, of course, would limit his expenditure to the narrowest possible amount.

43315. Have all those employed by you a cow's grass?—All the foresters have, and the keepers have. They have generally two cows each.

43316. But unlike those on other deer forests, your men are employed all the year round?—The foresters are. The labourers are employed as long as the weather will allow.

43317. You get a good many labourers from as far away as Lewis; are there not sufficient hands to be had in the country round about you?—There are not sufficient men for these works of mine—road making, and so on.

43318. And where are these men from a distance accommodated when at work; do they get lodgings?—I build barracks for them wherever the work is, barracks which I can move about from place to place so as to let them be near their work.

43319. Of course, you don't look upon the deer forest as any contribution to the economic profit of Great Britain? It was altogether a matter of pleasure for you?—Entirely.

43320. So the amount of venison produced on this forest of yours cannot be regarded as an item of any importance in the statistics of the food produce for the benefit of the British nation?—I have seen it reckoned in that way, but I should not lay stress on it myself.

43321. I suppose you don't sell any of it?—No; it is all either consumed in my own house or given away.

43322. Do you think, in point of fact, that venison can be looked upon as comparable to mutton as an article of food for the benefit of the British public?—Certainly not in an economic point of view—not as a matter of trade—but I should think that for the people in the parish of Laggan it is very much better, because there might be a great deal of mutton, but not a pound of it would be given away. I never think of giving away a pound of mutton, though I give the whole produce of the deer forest.

43323. So whether it is better or not for the British public generally, it is better for the people on your estate and for your neighbours?—I should say it is better for the people of the district.

INVER-
NESS.

KINGCUSSIE.

Sir John W.
Ramsden.

43324. *The Chairman.*—You stated that none of your forest was below 800 feet above the level of the sea?—None of it.

43325. And it runs from that to 3000 feet?—The highest is the top of Ben Alder, which is 3757 feet.

43326. What is the extreme level of cereal cultivation here; is there any corn ripened or turnips cultivated above the level of 800 feet?—There is some sown, but I doubt if there is any ripened above 900 feet.

43327. At what level do we sit here at this moment?—I think it is about 700 feet.

43328. But you look upon 800 feet, practically speaking, as the extreme level of profitable cultivation?—I would put it at between 800 and 900 feet.

43329. So no arable land is lost by your deer forest?—No, certainly not—so little that it is not appreciable.

43330. Then, with reference to the pasture, you say that the ground bears no traces or few traces of ancient habitation, but some traces of the existence of sheilings in former times, to which the people in the lower part of the country probably sent their cattle?—I believe that was the system.

43331. Do you think that the withdrawal of this liberty of summer grazing is the withdrawal of any considerable benefit from the people below? I mean, if it were restored, would the people be found to make use of it and pay rent for it?—I suppose they would pay a certain rent for it. But the conditions of agriculture are so charged that one can hardly conceive it, because that would imply that you did not graze sheep. Of course the sheep and cattle would interfere with each other, and it is so much more profitable to graze the ground with sheep than with cattle that we can hardly conceive of the old sheiling system being restored.

43332. But do you think that sheep farming proper might be profitably practised within your area of forest with a blackfaced sheep stock?—No doubt blackfaced sheep could be grazed there, but very few could be wintered there, and there we come to the difficulty. From the sheep farms now in my own hands I have to send away 10,000 sheep in the winter. Each sheep I reckon on an average costs me 6s., and there is £3000 a year spent in hiring wintering.

43333. Then, treating the question from an economic point of view, there is no loss of arable land—there is no appreciable loss by summer grazing—but there is a loss by the withdrawal of a regular blackfaced sheep stock?—Yes, there is a certain loss no doubt, but if the forests were put back into sheep, of course the result of that would be that winterings would be dearer still than they are now, and what really limits the quantity of stock you can graze is the difficulty of feeding them in winter. You could, no doubt, graze a great deal more sheep than you have in summer, but they would starve in winter.

43334. Then again, in an economic point of view, the area of forest may have produced in former times a larger quantity of a valuable commodity, that is timber. Was the ground at one time largely timbered?—At some very remote time no doubt it was, because I find a great deal of timber in the mosses, but those mosses are the very ground which will not now grow any timber at all.

43335. But you have no record that there were great cuttings of timbers in that district last century?—No, I don't fancy there were any such cuttings.

43336. There are no contracts existing for felling timber in your area such as we have heard of in other places?—No; in fact, Lord Abercorn

afforested the ground before there were any means of communication with that part of the country, which would have made it pay to cut timber ; and from the date of his afforesting, of course nothing could be touched, and therefore I may say I came into it as nearly in a state of nature as any piece of ground in Scotland.

43337. Well, valuable natural wood might also be said to be in a state nature ; but there was none, according to your account, and if there was any loss of that commodity you are busily employed in restoring it by making plantations ?—I am planting every acre I can spare for the purpose.

43338. Do you plant for beauty or for profit, or for both ? Have you a view to profit from planting ?—I certainly hope my descendants will reap the profit from it, but there is no prospect that it will in my lifetime be a source of profit.

43339. Do you plant larch extensively ?—Wherever the ground will grow larch I plant larch.

43340. Have you, up to the present time, ever arrived at any profitable sale of young timber ? Do you get any rent in any form from your plantations ?—Not as yet. I have only been planting for twelve years.

43341. In connection with the plantations, do the woods or will the woods offer employment to a greater number of persons than the same area would have afforded if under pasture ?—Undoubtedly, to a very much larger number.

43342. I suppose there is some drainage done on the area of wood ?—Yes, a great deal.

43343. And in the making of fences ?—Making and repairing fences.

43344. And thinning of trees ?—I am sorry I have not come to the thinning yet, but in a few years it will begin, and no doubt it will be a very great work. I have begun thinning at Alvie, but there I began planting a year or two earlier. At Ardverkie I have nothing to thin as yet.

43345. So, between your improved farm, your improved arable cultivation, and your woods, you look forward to being able to give employment to a greater number of people than would have found employment under the pastoral system—under sheep farming ?—Certainly I do.

43346. You say you have fenced one end of your forest ; what is the cost of the deer fence per mile from lake to lake ?—The most expensive deer fences, I have put up have cost about 3s. per yard—six feet high with ten wires, and iron standards. Where I can I employ wooden standards, the cost is very much less.

43347. Do you think a deer fence should be constructed in an average situation for 2s. per yard ?—With wooden posts certainly ; a five feet deer fence.

43348. You heard, perhaps, a former witness state that he thought in the case of the sheep fence to be erected between a sheep farm and a deer forest it would be equitable, considering the nature of the forest, and of its occupation, and the high rent it pays, that the whole cost of the march fence should be defrayed by the proprietor of the deer forest ; what do you think of that ?—Certainly, in my opinion, it ought to be equally divided between the two.

43349. You don't think it ought to be entirely defrayed by the proprietor of the deer forest ?—I see no reason for departing from the ordinary rule of dividing it equally between the two.

43350. It has been contended that if the two sides are alike sheep pasture there is no quarrel between the tenants ; in fact, that the sheep rectify that among themselves, and the one passes over to the one side and the other passes to the other, the tenants giving and taking, and the want of a fence is not felt ; but that, when one side is deer and the other sheep,

INVER-
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Sir John W.
Ramsden.

INVERNESS.

KINGUSSIE.

Sir John W.
Ramsden.

the sheep stray, and quarrels ensue, and the want of a fence is very much felt, and that it is felt in consequence of the deer being put upon the one side. Does there not seem to be some equitable claim, in that case, and also because the rent obtained from the deer forest is so much greater than the rent obtained from the sheep, so that it seems natural that the proprietor of a deer forest should pay a slight fine for his advantages in other respects? Does there not seem to be something equitable to that extent? —I think the benefit would certainly be as great to the owner of the sheep as to the owner of the deer forest.

43351. Still, in consequence of its being a deer forest, he is asked to do a thing, and an expensive thing, which he would not be asked to do otherwise?—My own opinion is that we must be guided in that entirely by the circumstances of each case. Some marches between two sheep farms it is perfectly unnecessary to fence, but some marches between tenants, on the contrary, it is necessary to fence, just as much as between the deer forest and the sheep farm. Admitting that, I am bound to say that in some cases sheep will go from the higher ground on to the lower, and at certain times of the year they would always be nearest to the direction in which they are wintering. If the wintering is to the east, and two farms are divided by a march east and west, the sheep on the farm most to the west would about this time of the year encroach in hundreds upon the farm to the east of them, because they would be trying to get down to their wintering, and those to the east would not encroach at all on the farm to the west. I think it depends on the special circumstances of each farm.

43352. So you think it would be scarcely wise to lay down an absolute rule that the proprietor of a deer forest should undertake the whole expense?—I think the fair plan is what I believe to be now the law—that it should be equally divided. May I add one qualification? If the owner of a deer forest required that to keep in his deer a higher fence should be put up than is necessary for sheep, then I should say he ought to pay the extra cost which he causes, but not in the case of an ordinary sheep fence.

43353. But in the case of land occupied as forest by one proprietor abutting upon arable ground belonging to another proprietor, do you think the proprietor of the deer forest should be obliged to put up a deer fence to prevent his deer getting on to the arable ground of his neighbour, or do you think that expense ought also to be shared equally?—I think those cases would be so infinitesimally few where the forest borders upon arable ground—which is generally the lowest part of the ground—that you could hardly expect legislation to provide for that.

43354. You mentioned you had various sheep farms on your hands at this moment, to your personal inconvenience and regret; are those sheep farms, or any of them, lying at a similar elevation to your deer forest? Are some of them lying very high?—Yes; not altogether so high, but there is very high ground in those sheep farms as well, though they are not so high, nor wild, nor rough, as the forest.

43355. Would some of those sheep farms be tolerably valuable for the formation of a forest? Could you turn them into a forest with advantage?—I have no intention of doing so.

43356. I don't speak of your intentions, but I wish to arrive at an impression of whether there is much land still under sheep in the country which might be turned into forest, and which may probably be turned into forest. You say that some of those farms or parts of them might be used as forest?—No doubt they might be turned into forest, but I don't think at present anybody would do so, but, if there came to be a very great

demand for forests, land which is not so well fitted for forest as other land would then probably be turned into forest.

INVER-
NESS.

43357. But would some of those sheep farms still be good deer ground or good sporting ground?—Oh, yes; certainly.

KINGUSSIE.

43358. So that a man fond of sporting might still use them for the purpose of sport?—Yes.

43359. They would make good forest?—Yes; I think they would.

43360. But you have no intention of turning them into forest?—I have no intention.

43361. If you had, they would probably give you a larger profit than you derive from them as farms in your own hands?—Always assuming the supply of forests was not overdone.

43362. Well, you could get a good return if you turned them into forest?—Always supposing I could get a tenant for them.

43363. Do you think there would any difficulty in getting a tenant for them—always assuming proper lodges provided?—It is so doubtful that apart from any other considerations, I would not undertake it.

43364. You spoke of other considerations; what other considerations would induce you not to make the best use of your property you could in another sense? What other considerations at this moment would govern your actions in that respect?—That consideration would hardly come into play, because I should not do it merely as a matter of profit and loss, but I should also consider that I had two forests already, and did not wish to have another. I don't wish to let a forest. I would rather have the farms under sheep if I could possibly carry them on as sheep farms.

43365. Do you think that is generally the feeling of persons who possess land which might still be turned into forests and which is at present under sheep? Do you think the proprietors would be generally governed by the same considerations—that they would not desire to increase the area of the forests?—No. For instance, if I had not a forest of my own at all, if I had only these sheep farms, and wished a forest for my own use, I should be very much inclined to turn some of those sheep farms into forest.

43366. Do you think the demand for forests has diminished? Is it more difficult to get tenants for forests than it was?—I think that, owing to the great difficulty of letting land as sheep farms, a great deal of land has lately been cleared for deer, and the consequence of that is that there is a risk of the supply of deer forests exceeding the demand.

43367. You spoke of the population and the moral effect of forestering upon the population, and you said that the foresters and the persons exclusively or almost exclusively engaged in forests were as moral and respectable as any other class of their countrymen. Are the foresters of whom you speak employed all the year round in connection with the forests, or do they do any other labour besides?—The men whom I call foresters are employed all the year round attending to the forest.

43368. What do they do in winter?—They have to watch the ground, and watch the deer to take care they don't stray over the march.

43369. In fact, they walk round the ground and the marches in winter in all weathers and at all seasons?—Yes, that is their duty.

43370. That is the class of foresters. Now, as to the class of gillies, will you define a gillie?—I should define him as a man who goes out and attends upon the grouse shooter and deer stalker.

43371. And he is a casual servant, and not employed in sporting affairs all the year round?—No, only for the sporting season.

43372. But in your case you take care to give him work for the other seasons?—Yes. I take a certain number of my regular workmen and

INVERNESS.

employ them during the season as gillies. If they are not out in the forest they go to work.

KINGUSSIE.

43373. So these gillies may be married men and fathers of families?—Yes, just like other people.

Sir John W. Ramsden.

43374. Is there any other class of men connected with the deer forest?—No, I cannot recollect any other class.

43375. Foresters and gillies?—Yes. Of course there is an infinite number of miscellaneous people who are employed about the forest, because there is generally a large lodge with a number of people with various wants living in it, but still that is not special to the forest. They get their employment because there is a forest there, but they are not employed on the especial work of the forest.

43376. I perfectly understand that, in the case of a resident proprietor—a proprietor residing on his own ground and taking an interest in the people, and having a forest at the same time—there may be no bad effects upon the morals and habits of the people whatever by placing them in connection with the game industry; but is it as certain that in the case of tenants who have not the same moral obligations towards the people in the country, the life of a forester or a game dependant may not be as moralising a life as an ordinary one?—So far as my experience goes, I cannot say I have seen any difference. When I first came here I came as Sir George Macpherson Grant's tenant under a seven years' lease of the forest of Glen Feshie; and all I wish to state in reference to the Ardverikie foresters I can say in reference to the foresters I had at Glenfeshie. Of course, as regards the gillies, my knowledge does not extend far, because they were only employed during the time we were in the forest. When we were out of the country, not being the proprietor, I had no work to give them.

43377. In fact, you have never seen or heard, in your experience, of any bad moral effects on the population from the existence of the game industry?—None whatever.

43378. It was stated to us in a written memorial the other day from a gentleman on the west coast, who took a darker view of the effects of game on the morals of the people, that it was a custom to throw away the meat upon the hill—that the venison which was killed on the hill was frequently left there. Have you ever heard of such a practice or such neglect in this part of the country or in your experience?—I have never heard of it except in the case of killing very miserable hinds, some of which are really not worth carrying home. I daresay some of those may have been left.

43379. But you think it is very rare?—Very rare—nothing that is worth anybody's while carrying home, so far as my experience goes.

ALEXANDER STEWART, Crofter, Strone (38)—examined.

Alexander Stewart.

43380. *The Chairman.*—Where is Strone?—On the estate of Mr Macpherson of Belleville.

43381. Have you got a statement to make?—No. I did not prepare a statement.

43382. Are you a delegate?—Yes.

43383. From whence are you a delegate?—From the township of Strone.

43384. Were you elected at a meeting?—We had not a special meeting.

43385. How have you been chosen a delegate?—Because there was no other one that would come to speak. They were afraid, or something of that sort.

INVERNESS.

43386. I only wish to understand by what process you were elected. Were you nominated by other people, or have you come forward spontaneously as the representative of other people?—I came as the representative of a few of them, not the whole of them, because we had not a special meeting, but I came to represent a few of them.

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43387. You have been privately asked to come?—Yes.

43388. By various persons?—Yes.

43389. Then what statement do your friends wish you to make?—That we cannot live in the place—that the place is too dear for us to live in. The place is put out to carry so many sheep and so many cattle, and the place will not keep that number of sheep or cattle.

43390. What is Strone; is it a township?—Yes, it is a township.

43391. How many holdings are there?—There are eleven holdings.

43392. Has it got a common outrun or common pasture?—Yes, it has a common pasture, and we are in common with two large sheep farms, and they get the better of us there.

43393. Do you mean you run your sheep out upon the same ground which is also pastured by sheep farmers?—Yes.

43394. So that the stock of the sheep farmers and that of the crofters go together?—Yes.

43395. Ought they to go together by rights, or is it merely because there is no fence?—Yes, they ought to go all together by rights; but we wish that ours should be separated, and that we should be fenced from the big farmers.

43396. Have you asked for a fence?—No, we did not ask for a fence.

43397. Supposing the proprietor would put up a wire fence, would the crofters assist him in carrying the materials and help to put it up?—Undoubtedly they would, but in the way we are just now it is taking the last thing out.

43398. Have you got leases?—I got a lease last year upon condition that I would build a house and steading upon the ground. I have not got that lease. They charged me £3, 10s., and I think that an enormous price to pay for a lease.

43399. But, speaking at present rather for the others than for yourself, have the other crofters in the township got leases?—No, the only one who has a lease is myself.

43400. What area of arable has each crofter, on an average?—The croft I have is between myself and my brother, and there are eighteen acres of it, and the rest have from seven to nine acres.

43401. Of arable land?—Of arable land.

43402. Is the arable divided by a fence from the pasture?—It has been done this year by the proprietor. He has divided it.

43403. What sort of fence is it?—A wire fence.

43404. Do the people keep sheep upon the common pasture, or only cattle?—Sheep.

43405. Supposing a man has eight or nine acres of arable, how many sheep will he have?—There are 1000 sheep put out for the whole of our township.

43406. Then a man who has eight acres of arable would usually have how many sheep?—One hundred and ten, if he had nine acres.

43407. Nine acres of arable and one hundred and ten sheep; what cattle does he keep generally?—Four cows and one stirk.

43408. Any horses?—One horse.

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43409. What is his rent?—£21, 5s.

43410. Has your township been deprived of any hill pasture?—It has been deprived of the low pasture, and that is what makes us suffer altogether. It has been planted, all except our arable ground.

43411. The lower part of the hill pasture has been planted?—Yes.

43412. When it was planted, were the rents of the crofts reduced?—No, they were not, but they were put up at that time. The whole township was put up £50 at that time.

43413. How old is the plantation now?—Either seven or eight years.

43414. Was it the best part of the hill pasture which was planted?—It was, undoubtedly.

43415. When this good piece of hill pasture was taken away did the proprietor give the crofters any other compensation or benefit?—We got a small thing on the other side of the Spey, but the water is between us, and it does us very little good.

43416. Was it for cutting hay upon?—No, for feeding the cows.

43417. How do the cows get over the water?—It is very bad for them to cross the water. They lose more by going over there than they gain by it, and they cannot get there but very seldom.

43418. There is no bridge near hand?—There is no bridge at all.

43419. However, the people have not given up the piece of pasture—they have not surrendered it?—No.

43420. They keep it?—They keep the pasture.

43421. So it looks as if it was of some value?—Yes, undoubtedly it is of some value. There is another thing. We are taxed for a road, and we don't get anything done in our township for the road. Our neighbours in Glen Banchor get their road repaired every year, and there are only two or three townships there, but in our township there is nothing done at all. It was repaired for four or five years at the time Mr Macpherson of the British Linen Bank was taking sheep from our fank, and every time he was there the road was repaired; but since then there has been no word of it.

43422. Am I to understand generally that the complaint is that the rent is too high?—Yes, and that there is no feeding for the stock we have on the ground, and that we don't want to be in common with the big farmers.

43423. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—What are the farms with which you have grazing in common?—One is in the proprietor's own hands, and the other is Glen Banchor, now in the possession of a large farmer.

43424. What stock is there in Glen Banchor?—One thousand sheep.

43425. And on the farm in the proprietor's hands?—Eight hundred.

43426. What stock is your crofter township entitled to keep?—A thousand sheep; but there is another township which is in common too, and there are about 700 in that township.

43427. Does your township keep 1000 sheep?—Yes, or very near it.

43428. Have those 1000 sheep worse grazing than the sheep belonging to the other farms that have a right to the common pasture?—The other farms have very low ground. They have it fenced, and our sheep when they are in common with them are not fenced, and their sheep will come into our ground at this time of the year when they don't get into their own ground. They have good arable ground when they come into it, and plenty of meat, and when our sheep come into it there is nothing.

43429. I understand that was so in former years, but now your low ground is fenced?—It is fenced between the arable land and the low pasture ground. There is ground put out which is not in common, for use in the latter end of the year, and that ground is not fenced.

43430. And if that ground were fenceed it would give you what you want?—Yes, it would give us what we want; and to value our ground for what stock it would keep, and to pay for them.

43431. Do you mean you are paying more highly for your stock on the common pasture than the tenants on the other farms are paying?—I don't mean to say that, because I don't know whether we are or not, but I mean to say there are a good many more sheep in common than are able to live upon it, and then our sheep have not feeding in the winter time the same as the others have, and it is from that we suffer most.

43432. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Does the proprietor live in the neighbourhood?—Yes.

43433. And I suppose he is accessible to all his tenants?—Yes, he is. He is very easy to speak to.

43434. Why have you not gone to him and made a representation either in a body or by a deputation to represent your case?—Because we think it is useless.

43435. There is a large population about Clunes and Newtonmore, on the same estate?—Yes.

43436. And there are some fine glens there—Glen Balloch and Glen Banchor?—Yes.

43437. Who has got them just now?—*Mr Macarthur.*

43438. Is there plenty room for all the Clunes people up there?—In Glen Banchor they may go there, but there are enough already.

43439. I don't mean to put them there, but suppose this farmer gave up the place, or it came into the proprietor's hands, would there be plenty of room there?—Plenty room there.

43440. Do your people belong to the estate? Have you been there for some time?—Yes.

43441. I suppose all the Strone people are old residents?—Yes, they have been on the estate for generations past.

43442. And probably they expect the proprietor would be kinder to them than to a stranger?—Yes, they do expect that, but they don't think it is the case. Of course this present proprietor is very good to his tenants. He gives them almost everything that is wanted. If it were stated right to him what was wanted, I don't think but what he would give it.

43443. But he has heard the story to-day?—Yes, I think he has heard it to-day.

43444. *Mr Cameron.*—How many of the eleven tenants asked you to come here and speak for them?—Four of them.

43445. What did the other seven say?—I was not personally speaking to the other seven. We have all the same tale in all our gatherings—how we are used, and how our sheep are in a mesh; and next year we shall be much worse, as The Mackintosh of Mackintosh is to make a forest on the other side of the hill where our sheep go just now, and it is in every gathering where two or three meet together—'What is to become of our 'sheep if that is made a forest of—whether they are to be driven further away or whether he is to fence it?'

43446. That refers to the future, but as to the existing state of things these four people asked you to speak for them?—Yes.

43447. And the seven did not?—Yes.

43448. Do you know if any of the other crofters ever asked about this fence?—I don't think they have.

43449. How long would it require to be in order to be of use?—If we got the fencing the same as the other farms have, I think it would require to be three miles, if we got our half hill fenced the same as the other farms

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have it, but there are about twenty crofters on the length of three miles; for there is another township of crofters, and I don't think there is any delegate to speak for them here. Of course, we crofters will agree better in common than we do with the large farmers.

43450. *The Chairman.*—Speaking of the amount of rent, you said there were four cows and one stirk. I want to know whether the crofters in your township are obliged to buy in fodder for the cows in winter, or can they keep the cows on the stuff grown on the ground?—They are obliged to buy in stuff for winter; and as to the feeding they have in the summer time, it will be half the year, because there is not proper feeding in the summer time.

43451. How are your houses built?—It was the reason I got a lease that I took in hand to build a slated house, and the proprietor was to supply me with all the materials, but I was to pay for the carting of the material myself. That was the reason why I got a lease, or why I shall get it if I pay £3, 10s. for it.

43452. Generally speaking, what kind of houses are they; are they old black houses or good houses?—They are mostly the old black houses.

43453. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—What would you consider a fair rent instead of the £21, 5s. which you are paying just now?—Well, I don't consider anything fair till we would have just a proper grazing for our beasts.

43454. How many pounds instead of £21 would you think a reasonable rent?—The last rise that was put on the place was £3 on every £12. But there were one hundred more sheep put upon our township at that time, and all the rest were added to greatly, and ever since that time every one has enough to do to eke out a living.

43455. But you have not answered my question. What do you think you should be paying instead of the £21? Do you think it should be £15 or anything like that?—I should think that would be quite sufficient. I think if one-third of all the sheep on the hill were put off and one-third of the cattle, and the rent reduced greatly, we could live.

43456. When was the rent last raised?—About nine or ten years ago.

43457. By £3?—£3 for every £12.

43458. How many sheep are you able to keep instead of 110 which is your summing?—I have that number.

43459. If it is a fair question, how much did you get out of these 110 sheep last year?—For instance, I bought in fifty-three young wedder hoggs last Whitsunday, and all I was able to send away this year was forty. All the rest died, and I thought it was the want of feeding that was the cause of it.

43460. Are you not able to make a good comfortable living off your croft?—No, the way we are just now, it is impossible for us to make a good living.

43461. Have you not corn or potatoes enough out of your ground to support you?—Yes, there are plenty for us, but to pay the rent and everything that follows it we are not able to pay our way.

43462. Do you mean that you are in debt?—Yes, I mean to say I am losing money.

43463. And do you think your neighbours are so too?—Yes, I think so. Some of them are more lucky than others in getting jobs out by.

Sir GEORGE MACPHERSON-GRAFT, Bart., of Ballindalloch, M.P. (44)—
examined.

Sir George
Macpherson
Grant.

43464. *The Chairman.*—I believe you have a statement you desire to

make?—I am in this position. It was considered desirable that some information should be given to you and the other Commissioners respecting the question of deer forests on the north and western slopes of this high ground of the Cairngorm range, and we thought the simplest and probably the easiest manner for the Commissioners to receive the evidence was that a short general statement should be prepared, giving the acreage and other facts in connection with this tract of land. I only appear accidentally so far, to submit this statement to you, owing to the fact that I happen to be the proprietor owning the largest area of this ground to which the few remarks I wish to make apply. I ought to mention that this sort of general statement has been prepared by the different proprietors who are interested. They have all signed the statement, and I believe they coincide in it, with the exception of one of the five—the Duke of Richmond—who owns a portion of that land, but from whom I have not received any information, and therefore my remarks do not refer to him. In addition to the general statement, I have also short statements which affect each of these different properties, and which I propose to leave with you; and I may mention further that, being here, I am for my own part anxious and willing to answer any questions or give any information regarding the details of my own part of this question or my own property. I cannot speak as to the details affecting the other proprietors' lands, but I believe they are either here themselves or their representatives are here, and that they are ready to give the Commission every information regarding the land to which this statement refers. This statement is really practically a short description of the western side of the high ground of the Grampian Cairngorm range, which is the high ground in the centre of Scotland.

The whole of the ground on the north side of the Grampian mountains in Inverness-shire let as deer forests lies contiguous, forming one block, and extending to about 200 square miles, or about 128,000 acres. It is owned by the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, the Earl of Seafield, Sir George Macpherson Grant, Bart., Sir John P. Grant of Rothiemurchus, and Mackintosh of Mackintosh. The lands are situated in the parishes of (1) Abernethy and Kincardine, (2) Duthil and Rothiemurchus, (3) Alvie, and (4) Kingussie and Insh, all in the county of Inverness. For purposes of general assessment, the gross rents paid are subject to certain deductions in respect of the value of furnished houses, &c., not liable to be assessed as "lands and heritages." The net values of the several forests, including grouse moors adjoining, let under the same leases, were fixed by the county assessor last year as follows:—Duke of Richmond and Gordon (Glenmore), £1000; Earl of Seafield (Abernethy), £1671; Sir George Macpherson Grant, Bart. (Glenfeshie, &c.), £5030; Mackintosh of Mackintosh (Glenfeshie, &c.), £1290; Sir John P. Grant (Rothiemurchus), £1680; total £10,671: and the local assessments paid on this rental for the year to Whitsunday 1883 are, per schedule annexed, as follows:—Assessment for relief of the poor, £589, 2s. 4d.; educational purposes, £261, 9s. 4d.; maintenance of roads, &c., £285, 17s. 10d.; registration, £14, 3s. 10d.; total, £1150, 13s. 4d.; and while the general body of rate-payers are relieved to this extent, tenants and occupants of lands and houses in the said parishes, other than deer forests, are thus relieved of public burdens by tenants of deer forests to the extent of £575, 6s. 8d. It is important to bear this in view in forming any estimate of the value of forest lands of the description in question, treated by any other method. A great proportion of the ground exclusively under deer is high and sterile, and could not from any point of view be so advantageously utilised otherwise. Much of it stands upwards of 2000 feet above the sea-level, the surface above that elevation in a great

INVERNESS.

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Sir George Macpherson Grant.

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KINGUSSIE.

Sir George
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' measure consisting of bare rock and beds of disintegrated granite, without sustenance to vegetation of any description. There is of this barren ground, shown by a green line on map of the Ordnance Survey appended hereto, about 85,000 acres, or two-thirds of the whole forest lands. There is also within the forest boundaries about 24,000 acres bearing a partial crop of growing fir wood, for which much of the lower hill ground is peculiarly adapted. This forest of natural wood extends from Glenfeshie on the one side to the boundary between the counties of Inverness and Moray in Strathspey on the other, or along the whole length of the deer forests now dealt with, the forest of Gaick excepted. It is not a regular crop, and little of it could conveniently, and at a cost bearing a reasonable proportion to its prospective value, be protected from sheep by fencing, as is invariably done in the case of lands selected for planting. It grows in patches where the soil is dry and of a gravelly nature, and these patches are intersected by belts of moss or grass where stagnant snow-water lying for several months in the year prevents the seedlings from coming up, and renders the ground unfit for growing fir. There is thus left of the whole area under deer adapted for the grazing of sheep about 19,000 acres only. In several instances, in which the grazing of sheep was discontinued, the stocks were removed not for the purpose of converting the ground into deer forests, but, as in one instance, for the purpose of planting, in a second for the preservation of trees of natural growth, and in others on account of the difficulty of procuring winter grazing at the early period at which it was necessary to remove stocks from the high grounds—a difficulty much increased at the present time by the high prices paid for wintering, which varies from 3s. to 4s. 6d. per head. The number of sheep which tenants were entitled to keep according to their leases was less than 10,000, but it is impossible to ascertain the number actually grazed, and it is also difficult to form an approximate estimate of the number which the high grounds, excluding woodlands, would graze for a period of from four to five months. It is, however, the opinion of graziers of experience that such a grazing, without winter and spring pasture for at least part of the stock, is practically valueless. Summer hill grazing lets in the locality at rates per head varying from ninepence to one shilling and sixpence. The value of ground which can only be relied upon for grazing for five, or at most six months in the year, is estimated at one shilling per head; and, assuming that the best portions of the lands in question are capable of grazing 10,000, this would yield to the landlords £500, or £75 less than their contribution to local rates affording to deer forests' rental. Supposing that the grazier's profits amount to double the grazing rent paid to the landlord, or £1000, the sum is only one-seventh part of the money, other than rents, circulated by tenants of deer forests in the district. The number of heads of families removed from lands and houses now within the forest boundaries during the last forty years—and forty years reaches the date at which the first attempts were made to induce deer to settle on the ground—is fifteen, and they were all provided with other holdings on the same properties. There are at present employed in connection with deer forests permanently, forty-one individuals; during a period averaging four months, sixty-one individuals; occasionally twenty-five individuals, exclusive of household servants. The tenants of the forests have supplied for the purpose of the present inquiry note of the sums expended by them in the country, apart from rent. In one case it has on an average of several years exceeded the fixed rent. In the majority of cases it is equal to a rent, and in no instance is it less than one-half the rent. Taking the average at three-fourths of the net rental, the sum

amounts to £7148 per annum. The evidence now tendered is given in this shape to show the utter impossibility of any profitable application of the great extent of high ground under deer in any other way; and besides the statistics upon which this general statement is based, there are appended hereto for the information of the Commission statements by several proprietors interested bearing upon their own particular cases. It may be added, that the deer forests in question are bounded on the south by the deer forests of Athole, Braemar, and Glenavon, in the counties of Perth, Aberdeen, and Bauff. I should like now to read a short memorandum regarding my own forests of Gaick and Glenfeshie. The forest of Gaick, which extends to upwards of thirty-seven square miles, or about 24,000 acres, lies high, and the part of it let to the present tenant by the proprietor was never let for grazing purposes. By an arrangement between the sporting tenant and the tenant of the grazing of Ruthven adjoining, the former acquired from the latter in 1877 about 4500 acres of hill ground then under sheep. This arrangement was acquiesced in by the proprietor at the urgent request of the grazing tenants, who received compensation from the sporting tenant during the existence of the then current lease. The grazing tenant has since entered upon a new lease for the remainder of the subject formerly held by him. The Glenfeshie forest ground extends to about sixty-one square miles, or upwards of 38,875 acres. It marches with the forest of Athole, and has been, as well as Gaick, frequented by deer from time immemorial. The present proprietor is informed that forty-five to fifty years ago the then proprietor and agricultural tenants of the low grounds grazed a certain number of sheep in Glenfeshie, but the difficulty of procuring winter grazing at the early period necessary, and at the price now paid for it, would have rendered the summer grazing of little value. The price of wintering sheep from 1st November to 1st April is about three times the price paid for hill grazing during the seven months, and sheep would fall to be removed from Glenfeshie before the end of autumn, and as a rule could not with safety be sent back to the hill before the middle of April. In 1872 negotiations were entered into with Mackintosh of Mackintosh for an excambion of lands in the neighbourhood, which was at the time considered by both proprietors desirable; and as a preliminary to this arrangement, sheep were removed from about 5000 acres of Coriekoy, &c., the tenants retaining the low ground pasture and their arable farms at one-half the rents formerly paid by them, and right to winter sheep. No tenant was removed, and the several holdings are now large enough for the support of a family. I think I may say that, with this exception and the one I have already mentioned, in which an arrangement was made between the shooting tenant and the grazing tenant, the extent of deer forest on my property has not been extended by myself. I beg now to submit the following notes as to the Invereshie estate. The estates of Invereshie and Dalraddy extend to about 97,700 imperial acres, made up as follows:—

1. Ground under deer.—Glenfeshie,	.	.	32,800
Gaick,	.	.	23,800
Invereshie,	.	.	7,000
			63,600
2. Ground let as farms at a rental of £30 and upwards each,			32,300
3. Ground let as small farms and crofts at a rental not exceeding £30 each,			1,800
			34,100
			97,700

Note.—Grounds 2 and 3 are let for grouse and other shootings.

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KINGUSSIE.

Sir George Macpherson Grant.

Rental in 1853.

<u>INVER-</u> <u>NESS.</u>	Eighteen farms at a rental of £30 and upwards each,	£1885	2	3
<u>KINGUSSIE.</u>	Thirty small farms and crofts not exceeding £30 of rental each,	217	5	7
<u>Sir George</u> <u>Macpherson</u> <u>Grant.</u>	Ten cottar houses and gardens,	12	5	6
	Insh village acres,	5	0	0
	Stance rents and interest at Insh and Milton,	22	5	0
	Insh meadows,	309	16	0
	Total non-sporting rental,	£2451	14	4
	Shootings.—Invereshie and Glenfeshie, £832 0 0			
	Gaick,	600	0	0
	" Dalraddy,	50	0	0
	Total sporting rental,	1482	0	0
	Total rental in 1853,	£3933	14	4

Rental in 1883.

Eighteen farms at a rental of £30 and upwards each,	£2429	16	6
Twenty-four small farms and crofts not exceeding £30 of rental each,	163	5	6
Twenty-one cottar houses and gardens,	44	12	6
Insh village acres,	15	4	3
Stance rents and interest at Insh and Milton,	21	1	6
Insh meadows,	285	14	6
Total non-sporting rental,	£2959	14	9

Shootings:—

Glenfeshie, deer shootings, £1700 0 0			
grouse do. 800 0 0	£2500	0	0
Gaick, deer shootings, 725 0 0			
grouse and other shootings, . 1000 0 0	1725	0	0
Invershie, deer shootings, 200 0 0			
grouse and other shootings, . 1100 0 0	1300	0	0
Dalraddy shootings,	200	0	0
Total sporting rental,	£5725	0	0
Total rental in 1883,	£8684	14	9

The deer forest of Gaick includes a portion of Ruthven hill grazings, for which the tenant receives from the sporting tenant £225 per annum, which, if added to sporting rental, makes a total in 1883 of 5950 0 0
And deducted from non-sporting rental in 1883, 2734 14 9
£8684 14 9

Total non-sporting rental in 1883,	. . .	£2734	14	9	INVER-
do.	1853,	. . .	£2451	14	4
Increase about 12 per cent.,	. . .	£283	0	5	KINGUSSIE.
Total sporting rental in 1883,	£5950	0	0		Sir George
do.	1853,	1482	0	0	Macpherson
Increase about 300 per cent.,		£4468	0	0	Grant.
Total increase,	. . .	£4751	0	5	

'Clearances.'—With the view of carrying out a very desirable exambion with The Mackintosh, whose land in Glenfeshie is surrounded by Sir George's property, about 5000 acres of high hill pasture in Coise Roy carrying a sheep stock of about 700, were cleared of the sheep in 1872, but a large extent of fine low ground pasture and arable land, forming comfortable holdings, was reserved to the tenants, none of whom were disturbed in their possessions by this sheep clearance. These tenants have still the privilege of grazing sheep on their low ground pasturcs during six months each year. In respect of this clearance the rents were reduced one-half. In 1873 about 500 acres of hill pasture were taken off the farm of Balguise and put into Glenfeshie forest, to admit of a fence being erected between the forest and the farm on a proper line. The erection of this fence was a great improvement to the farm which still consists of a large extent of hill and low ground. In 1877, at the urgent request of the grazing tenant, the proprietor allowed him to put into the adjoining forest of Gaick about 4500 of the high hill ground at the far end of Ruthven farm, rising to about 3000 feet above sea-level at Mheall Cuaich. In respect of this clearance, the grazing tenant alleged that he had to reduce his sheep stock about 1500 (?) head, for which he receives £225 of annual compensation from the sporting tenant. The farm has still a large extent of hill and low ground. Not a single tenant was removed from his holding by these clearances. About forty-five years ago there were some sheep clearances in Glenfeshie, but it is believed the ground, in common with the adjoining forests of Gaick, Marr, and Athole, was many years previously under deer. Gaick forest had been under deer from time immemorial. About 1400 acres of wood of natural growth are within the deer forest boundaries. There have been no sheep clearances to any extent on the property for plantations. Since the present proprietor succeeded to the estate in 1860 he has enclosed and planted about 300 acres. *Crofters.*—There are no crofters properly so called on the property except at Drumguish, where there are sixteen tenants paying an average rent of about 30s. a year each. They have from one to two acres of good arable ground each, and every crofter is allowed to graze one or two cows and their followers on the adjoining common hill. They are tenants at will, and never desired to have leases. Except in cases of death changes seldom take place, the present tenants having generally succeeded their forefathers. The total rents of these crofters have not been increased during the past thirty years. When not engaged at home, they readily find employment as tradesmen and labourers in the district, and are more or less in contented and comfortable circumstances. Evictions are unknown on the property. *Large and Small Farms* on the property are generally held on leases from fifteen to nineteen years. In most cases the farm buildings have been erected by the proprietor. When the tenants themselves erect buildings the pro-

INVERNESS. proprietor is in the habit of giving them wood and slates free of cost.
KINGUSSIE. When the tenants erect fences at their own cost they are taken over, in the event of any change of tenancy, at valuation by the proprietor or incoming tenant. In recent important lettings the proprietor has agreed to give tenants compensation for unexhausted improvements effected by them. *Outlays on Improvements.*—Since the proprietor succeeded in 1860 he has expended on permanent improvements on the estate the following sums, viz.—

On farms and crofts,	. . . . .	£7,249	0	0
,, Shooting lodges, roads, and other sporting subjects,	. . . . .	10,046	0	0
,, Woods and plantations,	. . . . .	2,185	0	0
,, Embankments, roads, &c.,	. . . . .	4,334	0	0
Total,	. . . . .	<u>£23,814</u>	0	0

43465. Is that all the written statement you desire to make?—Yes.

43466. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—You named the separate rates upon the forests; have you included the county rates?—No, I have only, included the parochial assessments. I have only taken the rates that affect the local assessments, not the county assessments.

43467. Is there any profit made from the sale of any wood now-a-days in Strathspey?—Yes, not to the extent there was, because very much of it has been cut down, but there is a certain amount no doubt still.

43468. Could any portion of this lower ground be profitably planted?—Yes, a considerable portion has been. I referred to the one case where sheep had been removed from a considerable portion for the purpose of planting. That was done on The Mackintosh's estate, and I believe it has been done very largely on Lord Seafield's property, but I would rather answer these details only as regards my own property. I myself planted between 300 and 400 acres.

43469. Is it likely that that system of planting may be extended?—I think so, and I hope so.

43470. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Have any complaints come to your knowledge from the farmers and others about the deer forests?—No, I cannot say there are any.

43471. There are no substantial complaints?—I don't think so, by my own tenants.

43472. Have you heard of any from your neighbours as a matter of rumour? Is there any general complaint?—Not that I am aware of.

43473. There is no complaint on your own estate, and you are not aware of any on the part of your neighbours?—No serious complaint has reached me.

43474. Do you know that Glenfeshie is an old Scottish forest mentioned in old Acts of Parliament?—I believe such is the case.

43475. It is one of the old forests of Scotland?—Yes.

43476. And quite incapable of wintering any stock?—I believe the high forest ground is almost incapable of doing so.

43477. I don't think you actually stated how high some of the ground was; is not some of your ground over 4000 feet?—I should think the ground on the Braeriach must be nearly 4000 feet.

43478. I think there is some over 4000. Look at the Cairntoul?—4149 feet is the height given on the ordnance plan.

43479. Do you consider that these northern slopes of the Grampians are best adapted for, and most profitably used in the way which they are now used?—I am quite sure we cannot put this ground to any more profitable

or better purpose, if I am right in my contention that this high ground will not carry sheep to profit.

43480. Have you any experience of sheep farming; have you any sheep of your own?—No, I have more experience in cattle than in sheep.

43481. Can you give us any information regarding the alleged deterioration of pasture ground by sheep?—No, I cannot of my own personal knowledge; I have heard of it.

43482. From your knowledge you are not able to speak?—No, not from my own practical experience; but I have heard what a witness said to-day, and I know it is said so.

43483. *Mr Cameron.*—We heard it from a witness that he had a serious cause of complaint because there was no fence between your deer forest and his sheep farm?—Yes.

43484. On the ground to which he refers would a fence stand; could it be put up, or is the ground too high for the purpose?—I believe a fence could be put up. I have no wish to go into this matter, but if I am asked about it I am bound to say that so far as I am concerned I should have had a fence up long ago. I am glad to say the neighbouring proprietor agreed with me in the erection of a fence. I believe that fence extends to between three and four miles. But our experience was not very encouraging, and the fence has never been prolonged.

43485. Then, so far as you were concerned and the adjoining proprietor, you were prepared to put up a fence?—So far as I am concerned, if the damage done is serious, I should be quite prepared to carry out the obligations that lie upon me as regards fencing this ground. But the adjoining proprietor and I agreed to put up three or four miles of fencing and it was done very much in the nature of an experiment. I did not think it desirable to carry a sheep fence over this very very high ground, because it is almost impossible to save it from absolute destruction in the storms of winter, and this fence was so far a failure, and I am sorry there has been any difference of opinion about it.

43486. In what way was it a failure?—Do you mean it was destroyed by snow?—I have no doubt it was probably partially destroyed by snow, but, rightly or wrongly, I believe it was understood by my shooting tenant that the fence had not altogether been very fairly treated, and the interdict which was applied for, and which has been referred to by the previous witness, if my memory serves me right,—I had no idea that question would be introduced, and I had no wish to introduce it,—was more to protect the fence, because it was plain that if the fence was to be destroyed because it did not suit any person, it was unwise for us to prolong the fence or go on with it in the meantime.

43487. But who was supposed to have destroyed the fence? Do you mean some one was supposed to have destroyed it wilfully?—Well, that was alleged, but I have no knowledge of it myself.

43488. Who was the person alleged to have destroyed it wilfully and for what purpose?—It was naturally alleged that Mr Macarthur's shepherds and people had interfered with the fence. There were various disputes in connection with this fence, and it was in consequence of that that the application was made to protect the fence and prevent it being destroyed. I was surprised to hear Mr Macarthur say that that interdict was refused. My recollection of the state of matters was that the interdict was abandoned and the whole thing was abandoned, and I am glad to say, so far as I have been able to ascertain from my subordinates, that this year there has been no trouble about the fence at all. I have not heard anything.

43489. But what object could it have been alleged the farmer had in interfering with the maintenance of the fence, so far as his interests were

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Sir George
Macpherson
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concerned? — Well, in putting up this fence, the fence was not put on the march, which is very easily understood. Instead of being a tortuous fence it was a straight fence, and I think the arrangement was—but it was very much carried out by my shooting tenant, more by him than by me—that the line of fence should not interfere with the sporting rights, nor, of course, with the rights of property, but should only affect the grazing rights. Under this a certain portion of Gaick was put into Belleville for grazing purposes, and a certain portion of Belleville fell into Gaick for grazing purposes, but for some reason—I should not like to call it more than misunderstanding, and when there is a misunderstanding it is very difficult to get at the bottom of it—it was alleged there had been some interference with the fence. Well, steps were taken, and when I was told that Mr Macarthur claimed the right under his lease with his landlord to come across on to that grazing ground, I at once abandoned any proceedings in the matter, and the thing has remained in abeyance ever since.

43490. Was Bellville willing to join you in making a fence at joint expense? — He did so.

43491. But I mean the remainder of the fence? — I don't know; I have not asked him.

43492. But I suppose you did not feel inclined to go on with this fence so long as this misunderstanding led to the destruction of the property? — No.

43493. And you were clear the fence should not be broken down in consequence of misunderstanding on the one side or the other? — Certainly not.

43494. But the remaining portion of the fence which requires to be made could be erected without the risk of being destroyed by winter storms? — I should not like to go so far as that. There is no doubt a considerable portion of it must be over very high ground, land where I have never been myself. It is very high and exposed, and I doubt very much if you could keep a fence there during the winter.

43495. What is the amount of rent per sheep you keep upon these very high grazings? — I have no very high grazings on my own property, and I cannot tell you; but I know that, in the statement which has been prepared and which I have read to the Commission, it is put that for summer grazing it is 9d. to 1s. 6d. per head.

43496. That is in cases when the sheep would have to be bodily removed during winter? — Yes.

43497. And in cases where the old sheep could stand it in winter and the young ones would have to be removed, what would the cost be there? — I know a case at 2s. per head.

43498. But your calculation is, that if these deer forests were all let for sheep, in that case the rent would equal only one-tenth of the present rent? — That is so. If all this high ground were put under sheep, I believe that in certain cases you would draw almost no rent for the pasture.

43499. *The Chairman.* — You mentioned a tract of natural wood; do you mean fir wood? — There is other wood, but fir wood is the only wood of any value in this country.

43500. Does that reproduce itself naturally, or has it to be planted? — It reproduces itself.

43501. When it is cut for purposes of sale is the area enclosed so that it may spring again? — No. It has been the case no doubt in the large forest of Abernethy, but the natural fringe that runs along the foot of those hills has not been enclosed.

43502. What pastures the ground ; is it pastured by sheep ?—So far as regards my own property, there are sheep in the winter. There no sheep in the summer.

43503. There are sheep in the winter, and the area partially occupied by the natural wood, or what was formerly occupied by the natural wood ?—It is occupied by natural wood now.

43504. Does the natural wood grow in spite of the depasturing, or do the sheep get the mastery over it and keep it down ?—No, the sheep have not mastered this belt of wood here.

43505. But the belt of natural wood really does grow and reproduce itself practically ?—That is so.

43506. To the full area ?—That may be going rather further than I should like to say, because my own observation is, that when wood has been cut down it grows very slowly ; but all the wood in Glenfeshie, which I can speak of best, I believe, is wood grown in the course of nature, though from the blanks in the wood, where the wood has been lately cut, it has not reproduced itself, or at all events has not shown.

43507. But in the case of birch and other wood that grows from the stool, do you think that reproduces itself better than the wood that grows from the seed, or do you think it is just the same ? Do you think the fir sprouts better than the birch in despite of the sheep ?—I have never had my attention drawn to that. My idea is that the seedlings would grow as well as the birch.

43508. But seedlings do practically reproduce themselves, and come out in considerable numbers ?—Yes, in this district.

43509. Do any cattle run in that area, or is it all pastured by sheep ?—In the wood I speak of, I suppose there is no regular pasturing of cattle. It is principally pastured by sheep in the winter, and there are no cattle there.

43510. Would the cattle kill down the wood, either springing from seed or stool, more than the sheep ?—If you have a heavy stock of either cattle or sheep, or both, you must naturally make it a slower process in getting up this timber again.

43511. With reference to the area above the 1800 feet line, that area had no practical value at any time, according to your account, except for summer grazing ?—I don't think it ever had,—not as a pastoral subject.

43512. And you think its value as a summer grazing is so insignificant now-a-days, for various reasons, that it is not worth considering ?—As a rule, I don't think it is.

43513. Above the 1800 feet line ?—There may be exceptions ; but taking it as one great block of country, I don't think it is.

43514. Some gentlemen at Inverness, who were great adversaries of the forester system, contended that Highland cattle would go to any elevation to which deer would go, and I presume derive some benefit from the pasture ; what do you think of that ?—I don't understand Highland cattle sufficiently well to tell you about them. I should not like to say how high they would go.

43515. *Mr Cameron.*—Your polled cattle would not go ?—No, they would not.

43516. *The Chairman.*—Above the 1800 feet line, do you think the land has any economic value for planting at all ?—I should doubt it very much, because we find it so happens that this line is drawn very much just at the termination of the natural wood, and it seems to me reasonable to suppose that if there was value for timber here, these natural woods would have spread further up the hills than they have done ; but that is not the case.

INVERNESS.

KINGUSSIE.

Sir George Macpherson Grant.

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Sir George
Macpherson
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43517. Do you observe, in the character of the wood which grows nearest the 1800 feet line, that the trees dwarf and seem to diminish in stature?—Yes; they are better at the bottom of the hill than at the top, as a rule.

43518. So it looks as if the wood died naturally out at that elevation?—Its struggle for existence seems to be such that it does not do much good.

43519. You don't think any of the old Highland forests were cut and profitably sold at a higher elevation than 1800 feet?—I have no doubt they were, for we find the remains in the peat.

43520. You find wood in bogs, but that may be prehistoric. But as to the wood cut and sold last century in the Highlands,—I believe to great advantage,—would that be cut at more than 1800 feet?—I fancy what you mean is in Glenmore or Abernethy, and I should not like to speak to the details of the elevations.

43521. You stated that the area of deer forest, except in one case, had not been of late years extended?—On my own property.

43522. Has the area of forest been much extended in the neighbouring properties below the 1800 feet line?—I would rather not be asked details about these other properties. The gentlemen themselves are here, I believe.

43523. In this particular case, where your own was extended, to what elevation was it extended?—The highest part of the corrie that was cleared in 1877, so far as I can make out, is somewhere about 3000 feet. The very highest point seems to be 3600 feet. I do not say there were sheep there.

43524. What was the lowest elevation of any part which was afforested in 1877?—If you exclude the wood which was pastured during winter, it was practically between the summit of the hill and this 1800 feet line.

43525. So, practically, there was no area cleared in connection with your property at a lower elevation than 1700 feet in the year 1877?—I don't think so.

43526. Of course I don't speak for a few acres, but I want to understand generally?—I don't think so. I am afraid we don't quite understand each other. The whole of this piece of ground was cleared, but the greater proportion of the summer grazing was the upper ground in this corrie, ranging from 1800 to 3000 feet. Below the 1800 feet, although the sheep would be moved under this arrangement, they are still there for wintering purposes during six months of the year; but on the upper ground, from the 1800 feet to the top of the hill, which is 3600 feet, it is cleared of sheep, and was cleared in 1877.

43527. But at no great sacrifice of economic value in regard to the production of meat?—I don't know what that would be; but I know what abatement of rent the tenants received.

43528. In the neighbourhood of these forests already constituted, are there sheep farms at present out of lease, or likely to be out of lease?—No, not on my own property. There is one out of lease at Whitsunday next, but I have re-let it.

43529. Do you anticipate that, in case of farms falling out of lease in that vicinity, there will be the same difficulty in re-letting them as sheep farms which has been experienced elsewhere in the country?—I have no great experience of sheep farms. I fancy it is no easy thing to let sheep farms, and I don't see why it should be easier.

43530. But in these parts are there not sheep farms which are thrown on the hands of the proprietor, and which he is obliged to hold against his will?—None on my own property.

INVER-
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Sir George
Macpherson
Grant.

43531. But in your vicinity?—I don't know any cases specially with my neighbours, but on my own certainly not.

43532. If any such cases occurred, I presume they would be farms largely below the 1800 feet line. They would be sheep farms which are of material value for the production of meat?—These farms of mine are very small farms. With one or two exceptions, you can scarcely talk of them as sheep farms. There are only three or four farms you could really call sheep farms, as generally understood by sheep farms. The others are more mixed husbandry.

43533. So you have had no personal contact with that question of the difficulty of re-letting large sheep farms?—I have had no experience of it; I let one the other day.

43534. You say you have got a small tenantry upon your property?—Yes.

43535. Are they, properly speaking, crofters? Have you got crofters on the estate paying less than £30?—Yes, I have. There are twenty-four small farms below £30—I mean in 1883. That would be inclusive of what I call cottar houses, which are principally houses and gardens.

43536. Do the cottar class hold direct from you or pay rent direct to you?—Those I speak of in this statement do so. I have no return as to the number who may hold direct from tenants, but they are not numerous.

43537. On your estate has there been any withdrawal of common pasture from the crofting class?—Leaving out what we have already spoken of, I don't think there has been.

43538. Are these townships of which you speak generally in the possession of common pasture?—There is, strictly speaking, only what you would call one township. They have a certain amount of common pasture. There is a village which is held on a different tenure altogether.

43539. What is the nature of that tenure?—It is an old building lease for ninety-nine years, which expires about 1920 or 1930.

43540. These are feus?—Practically, but not perpetual.

43541. Do they hold any extent of land on that tenure? Have they any common outrun?—No, they have what they call village acres, but these are not held on the same tenure. I don't think they have any hill ground, or very little.

43542. You mentioned you had planted in this district about 300 acres yourself; was that ground taken from the common grazing of the township, or from the pasture of a farm?—From the pasture of a farm, not from common ground. The village of Inch is the village I alluded to. They are very small holdings.

43543. What is the average area of the holdings?—The arable is about two acres—what we call the very lowest crofting class. There are a considerable number of people paying less than £30, whom I should never mention as crofters. I know many of the crofting class who are as industrious as any person I am acquainted with. But there is a place called Rumguish, where the average is not above two or three acres, and they graze one or two cows and their followers. They are not the same as the village of Inch, and their tenure is quite different.

43544. Take the case of farmers paying £20, £30, and £40 rent, have those farms been reclaimed or made from wild ground by the tenantry in the course of years?—They have been reclaimed for a long time back.

43545. In fact, none of them have been formed on what we call improving leases within your experience?—No, I cannot say any one has been so formed. Some of them may have been added to undoubtedly by the industry of the tenants, but no farm I should say has been formed.

**INVER
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KINGUSSIE.
—
Sir George
Macpherson
Grant.

43546. What I wanted to arrive at was, whether there was any system going on in this country similar to what we heard of as on Lord Lovat's property?—No. I have heard of that system. There is none on my place. Of course I appear before you so far as the representative of others, and I beg now to hand you statements of a brief nature regarding some of the other forests referred to. I believe gentlemen are here to speak to them if that is desired. In addition, there are schedules of the measurements of these forests, and the rates of local assessments, and the number of people employed in connection with the deer forests. '*Forest of Abernethy*, belonging to the Earl of Seafield.—This deer forest extends to 25,000 acres, of which about 10,000 acres are at the present time under a partial and irregular crop of wood. The extent under wood formerly consisted of about 5000 acres, and was never let for grazing purposes; but so long as the land remained unenclosed, it was found impossible to prevent trespass by sheep grazing in the neighbourhood. The remainder was, before 1869, held in common by a number of tenants in the district. Each tenant paid a fixed rent to the landlord, and was allowed to graze on the common pasture a number of sheep corresponding to such rent. Complaints were, however, constantly made that tenants in the immediate neighbourhood took advantage of their position to graze a considerable number of sheep in excess of their right, and for twelve years preceding 1854 there were litigations pending in the Sheriff Court between the tenants themselves, which cost them £600. It was thus found that what is commonly known as the club system would not work satisfactorily, and at the general re-letting of the farms on the property the hill pasture was allocated to the tenants in its immediate neighbourhood, the holders of low ground farms being confined to their arable lands, which as a rule were sufficiently large to give employment to and support a family. This limitation of the number interested, and the adoption of precautions,—such as the appointment by the landlord of independent shepherds, to prevent differences between the parties,—did not wholly put an end to complaints, and tenants generally now prefer to have an exclusive right to the land grazed by them, even when the subject is less valuable than their former interest in the common. The letting of large tracts to several tenants in common has, therefore, so far as the nature and extent of the ground will admit of, been discontinued. In the district of Abernethy, the manufacture of timber,—much of which is of natural growth,—is next to agriculture the most important industry, and affords employment to about one hundred individuals. There are on the margin of the forest five water-power saw-mills in nearly constant employment; and as the extent under wood is being year by year largely increased, further employment will in time be afforded to an increased number of hands. It was found that the protection of the natural woods by fencing enabled young trees to make rapid progress; and as there was much land which could not be otherwise so profitably occupied several small grazings were added to the area under wood, the occupants being invariably provided with holdings elsewhere. This change could only be properly effected gradually, and by keeping in view the claim and interests of particular tenants; but it has been accomplished without turning a drift a single tenant who desired to continue the occupation of farming. The following schedule gives the names of the tenants removed, their several rents, the complement of sheep allocated to each—being at the rate of five head to each pound of rent,—the places in which they are now settled, the rent paid, and the extent of arable and pasture land held by each:—

Schedule referred to.

Names of Tenants removed.	Possession.	Extent.			Rent.	Removed to.	Arable.
		Arable.	Exclusive Pasture.	Total.			
Alexander Fraser, . . .	Ach, . . .	Ac. ro. po. 10 1 13	Ac. ro. po. 17 1 7	Ac. ro. po. 27 2 20	£ s. d. 14 2 0	Lochnellen, . . .	Ac. ro. p. 7 2 0
James and John Cameron,	Rynettan, . . .	18 2 33	35 2 7	54 1 0	29 12 0	Tomchrocher, . . .	71 2 0
Lewis and Duncan Smith, .	Rynue, &c., .	11 0 21	44 2 35	55 3 16	16 0 0	Mains of Tulloch and Tomgown, . . .	50 3 0
James Grant, . . .	Ryvoan, . . .	2 1 36	2 2 20	5 0 16	5 12 0	Employed as a game-keeper on the same ground, . . .	...
Donald Anderson, . . .	Inchtomach, .	6 3 36	20 3 16	27 3 12	7 12 0	Took employment as a gamekeeper, . . .	...
John Stewart, . . .	Bogalchynack, .	2 1 23	30 0 19	32 2 2	3 12 0	Dirr,	8 2 0
Alexander Grant, . . .	Rynerick, .	16 0 24	13 2 32	29 3 16	16 10 0	Lynbeg,	26 0 0
Donald Fyfe, . . .	Sleack, removed about 30 years ago from small holding,	...	...	...	...	Ellanyecorn, . . . .	...
John Cameron, above mentioned, . . .	...	...	...	...	...	Toperaie, . . . .	...
					93 0 0		

INVERNESS.

KINGUSSIE.

Sir George
Macpherson
Grant.

It may here be noted that while the rents of the tenants removed from the forest amounted to £93, the local assessments on the forest rent amount to £254. Forest of Rothiemurchus—the property of Sir John P. Grant, K.C.B., &c. This deer forest extends to about 28 square miles, or upwards of 18,000 acres, of which upwards of 5000 are presently under natural wood. The remainder lies high, and is not adapted for grazing purposes; indeed, it never was let for sheep or cattle grazing. In the early part of the present century the then proprietor put a stock of sheep on the part known as Glen Euch, but the difficulty which he experienced in procuring wintering for the stock at the early period of the season at which it was necessary to remove them from the high grounds, rendered the summer grazing almost valueless, and he was obliged to abandon this system. The sheep were accordingly removed, and the whole let as a grouse shooting in 1827 to the Duke of Bedford at a rent of £100, along with the mansion house and policies at a rent of £165, making together £265. It continued to be occupied in this way by his Grace's family till 1853. In 1841 the present proprietor, who then managed for his father, tried to induce deer to settle on the ground, and put a few on it. Deer from the forests of Braemar and Athole then began to frequent it. In 1854 the shootings, house, and policies were let to the Duke of Abercorn for £350. The ground was let for the first time as a deer forest to the Earl of Stamford in 1859, for £900 a-year for the forest, and £100 for the mansion house and policies. Some years ago a shooting lodge was built upon it by the proprietor, and it is now let for upwards of £2000. The only tenants removed from the forest were—(1) Donald Macgregor removed from Aldra in 1853; he paid £5, 10s. of rent, and he was provided for at Coylum Bridge on the same property, and with a holding of about the same extent; and (2) James Robertson removed from Incherchonie, rent £2, 12s. 6d.; he was also provided with a suitable place on the same property. The local rates at present paid on the Rothiemurchus forest rental amount to more than any possible gross rental derivable from the lands in question treated by any other method.

Note of Local Assessments on Forest Rental referred to in foregoing Statement.

Parishes.	Parochial Assessment.	Education Assessment.	Roads, &c.	Sundries.
Parish of Kingussie— Gaick Forest,	£ s. d. 87 4 4	£ s. d. 55 13 10	£ s. d. 43 0 11	£ s. d.
Invermarkie and Glenfeshie,	25 4 10	7 15 4	58 14 7	
Parish of Alvie— Glenfeshie,	100 6 0	33 8 6	41 14 2	4 3 6
Invermarkie,	20 8 0	6 16 0	12 16 8	0 17 0
South Kinnara,	20 16 6	6 19 0	13 2 0	0 17 4
Parish of Abernethy— Glenmore,	90 0 0	31 17 6	26 14 9	1 17 6
Abernethy,	155 17 8	55 4 2	44 13 6	3 5 0
Parish of Duthil— Rothiemurchus,	89 5 0	63 15 0	45 1 3	3 3 6
	589 2 4	261 9 4	235 17 10	14 3 10
Roads, &c., . . . . .	...	...	...	285 17 10
Education Assessment, . . . . .	...	...	...	261 9 4
Parochial Assessment, . . . . .	...	...	...	589 2 4
			Total, . . .	£1150 13 4

*Measurement (approximate) of Deer Forests, Inverness-shire, lying to the South
Truim and Spey Rivers.*

No.	Name of Forest and Owner.	Extent.		Wood, p which suit Shee
		Square Miles.	Acreage.	
1	Abernethy—The Earl of Seafield,	40·55	Imperial Acres. 25,952	Imperial 10,02
2	Glenmore—The Duke of Richmond,	18·64556	11,933	4,73
3	Rothiemurchus—Sir John P. Grant,	28·85425	18,466	5,23
4	South Kinrara—The Mackintosh,	5·51090	3,527	2,29
5	Part of Glenfeshie, do.,	8·69375	5,500	
6	Invereshie—Sir Geo. Macpherson Grant,	10·74250	6,875	1,40
7	Glenfeshie— do.,	51·078125	32,690	
8	Gaick— do.,	37·1875	23,800	
		201·162585	128,743	24,81

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Sir George
Macpherson
Grant.*State showing the Number of People employed in connection with
Deer Forests, referred to.*

	Number permanently employed.	Employed during part of season.	Occasionally employed.
Forests occupied by the late Earl of Stamford and Warrington,	14	16	10
Glenfeshie—Sir C. Mordaunt, Baronet, Tenant,	7	12	8
Gaick— Hargreaves, Esq., Tenant, Invermarkie — A. P. H. Lonsdale, Tenant,	9	20	...
Rothiemurchus — Sir C. Lampson, Tenant,	6	8	...
	5	5	7
	41	61	25

ALLAN MACDONALD, Factor for The Mackintosh, Inverness (39)—
examined.Allan
Macdonald.

43547. *The Chairman.*—Have you got a statement to read?—I have two statements. The first is a short one connected with the statement by Sir George Grant, and the other is a longer one connected with the subject of club farms. ‘Forests on The Mackintosh Estates.—1. South Kinrara, Inchreoch.—This forest extends to about 3500 acres, about 2300 acres of which are under wood, planted and natural grown. The soil is admirably adapted for planting, and in the year 1869 about 800 acres of hill pasture were enclosed and to a great extent planted. Ample compensation was made to the tenants of the farms from which this land was detached, the rents being indeed reduced by about one half, that is from £150 to about £75. No person was removed. Formerly the shooting rental was £100, but afterwards as a grouse moor fetched £200. In consequence of planting and enclosing, deer began to come in from the neighbouring forests of Rothiemurchus, and it now brings in a yearly rent of £500, and a considerably larger rent has been afforded for it. Although the ground has thus become a forest, it was with no intention of foresting it that the hill land was first enclosed and planted. 2. Glenfeshie.—This forest, extending to about 6000 acres, is, I have been told, mentioned in old charters and Acts of Parliament as one of the ancient forests of Scotland. It is surrounded by other forest lands of much greater extent belonging to Sir George Macpherson Grant, Bart. It never was a place of cultivation in any proper sense, being described in the titles as the “Summer Shealing of Dalnavert.” About 700 acres is under a crop of natural-grown timber, and the whole property is better fitted for a forest than for any other way of occupation. Isolated as it is from other parts of The Mackintosh estates, and surrounded by forest lands, it would be difficult to treat it in any other way, probably impossible to obtain the same return from it. Formerly the rent was small; it is now £800, and the rates are correspondingly relieved. It was first my intention not to make any statement except that which I

have just read, and to present myself for examination on any further points upon which the Commission might desire information; but yesterday it was suggested to me that as a good deal has been said about club farms, I should prepare a statement, and accordingly I have done so regarding club farms on The Mackintosh estates in Brae Lochaber:—‘The Mackintosh estates, extending to about 124,000 acres, lie in seven different parishes in the county of Inverness. They are tenanted by about 170 individuals, including joint tenants and crofters, of whom only two pay above £100 sterling of rent, and only ten upwards of £100 sterling rent. The majority of the farms—exclusive of the club farms to be immediately referred to—yield rents of from £40 to £80, occupied for the most part by an industrious and thriving tenantry. In Brae Lochaber, in the parish of Kilmonivaig, The Mackintosh estates extend to 32,000 acres, with a population according to the last census of 491 souls. In addition to other holdings, there are here three club farms, the nature and management of which I propose briefly to describe. Two of these—Bohuntn and Gaelmore—resemble each other, in having large common sheep stocks. The third farm—Iveroy—has no sheep stock. 1st, The farm of Bohuntn extends to upwards of 6000 acres, of which less than 100 acres are arable. It is at present occupied by twenty-four tenants or crofters, who have each about four acres of arable land, and as a rule about three cattle above one year of age and two under. These are the separate property of the individual crofters, and every two crofters have a horse between them. The farm also carries about 3000 sheep as a common stock, in which all the crofters have an interest. It may be mentioned that the arable land on this farm is still to a great extent worked on the runrig system—a very bad system, but which it has not yet been found possible to get rid of altogether. The number of crofters on the farm is, as already stated, twenty-four, and the number of persons habitually residing on the farm sixty-eight. The average rent of each share of the farm is about £19 sterling. 2nd, Gaelmore contains about 7500 acres, of which 100 are arable. It is tenanted by eighteen crofters, who, as in the case of Bohuntn, have separate arable land and cattle, and a common stock numbering at present about 2000. Of the eighteen tenants fourteen have, nominally, full shares in the farm and four half shares. With the exception of two, all the crofters have a horse of their own, and the cattle estimated to be kept, and in most cases actually kept, is five above one year of age and two under. The extent of arable land held by a crofter with a full share is about seven acres, which in this case forms a separate and distinct holding. The number of persons habitually residing on this farm is 87. The average rent of each share of the farm is £21, 17s. 6d. 3rd, Iveroy.—Until about twelve years ago, a number of crofters in Lochaber were sub-tenants of the tacksman of the farm of Keppoch. About the time mentioned, their crofts were detached from Keppoch, and formed into the club farm of Iveroy, holding directly under the proprietor. It extends altogether to about 1200 acres, of which considerably upwards of 200 are arable. The crofters number thirty-one, and the crofts vary in extent from one and a half to fourteen acres of arable land. These crofts are distinctly defined, and each has a dwelling house and usually a barn and byre upon it. The majority of the crofters have a horse and two cows, although some of the smaller ones have no horse and only one cow. There is no sheep stock upon this farm, but after the crops have been gathered sheep are taken in to winter. Last year about 800 sheep were wintered in this way. The number of persons habitually residing on this farm is 125. The rents run from £1 to £30. With reference

INVERNESS.

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' to the management of these farms, I may mention that the crofters elect
' certain managers from their own number who transact with the proprietor,
' and are responsible to him for the rent. The proprietor himself does
' does not interfere with the internal arrangements of the farm beyond
' seeing that the stipulations of the respective leases, which are few and
' simple, are observed. As might be expected, the managers do not always
' give satisfaction to the other tenants, nor even upon all occasions to
' each other. In the event of a croft becoming vacant in Inveroy, where
' there is no common stock, it falls to be filled up again by the proprietor,
' and where at all practicable it is usually added to an adjoining croft or
' divided between two adjoining crofts. In rare cases, an outsider has
' been taken in, but the other tenants as a rule do not like this, even
' although they themselves are not able to take up the vacant croft. In
' Bohuntin and Gaelmore, on the other hand, any vacant share is divided
' among the remaining tenants who object to the admission of a stranger,
' or even of its being given to any one of themselves willing and able to
' take it. To depart from this rule would create general discontent
' among the partners in each farm. Yet they themselves at times blame
' it for the difficulties into which some of them have fallen, and to which
' I shall have further on to refer. I am strongly in favour of the principle
' of adding crofts together as they fall vacant up to a certain limit; but
' what I have stated shows that this in club farms is attended with cer-
' tain difficulties which do not apply when the holdings are separate and
' independent. The mode of succeeding to a croft on the death of the
' tenant is somewhat irregular and uncertain. The members of the family
' have as a rule to go out into the world to support themselves, while one
' probably remains at home to assist the parents in looking after the
' croft. Not unusually this one continues to carry on the croft after the
' parents have died irrespective of age or sex, and without making any
' arrangement with the other numbers of the family. Occasionally in
' this way the occupant of the croft is really only a remote connection
' by marriage of the real heir, and family claims and disagreements are in
' consequence not unknown. In addition to working their crofts, some
' of the tenants add to their incomes by engaging in other occupations,
' such as carting, labouring on the estate or elsewhere, and shepherding,
' while others of them go out in the season as gillies, water-bailiffs, &c.,
' while others go still further from home in search of occupation. The
' rents which are collected from the crofters by the managers—who, as I
' have already stated, are responsible to the proprietor—are as a rule paid
' with regularity; and although occasionally the whole sum may not be
' collected by the managers by the rent day, it is not allowed to remain
' long outstanding, and at present I am glad to say there are no arrears.
' I fear, however, this cannot be taken as a sign that the crofters are
' possessed of much wealth; on the contrary, and according to their own
' statements, many of them are very poor indeed, and these statements
' are confirmed by the fact that the proprietor has recently had to come to
' their assistance with a very large sum of money, under the following
' circumstances. Some of the tenants of Bohuntin and Gaelmore began
' to incur accounts to a merchant in Fort William a good many years ago,
' and paid them by bill instead of cash. When the bill fell due it was
' renewed interest, and the price of additional purchases being added to
' the renewal. Credit was in this way given as long as the merchant
' believed the value of the debtors' interest in the common sheep stock
' was sufficient to cover the debt. In this way some accounts were
' allowed to run up to nearly £200. Last year, however, the creditor
' began to press for payment of his debts, and finding the crofters unable

' to pay, raised actions and obtained decrees against about a dozen, and
' took out "cessio" against four or five. Whatever the immediate effect
' of these proceedings might have been, the ultimate result could only be
' that the debtors' share in the sheep stock must be realised, and that the
' crofters themselves would have to leave their holdings, and probably the
' country altogether. Under these circumstances, the proprietor came
' forward and offered to advance a sum sufficient to pay the debts referred
' to, on condition of the whole sheep stock on the farms being mortgaged
' to him in security for the sum advanced. It was considered necessary
' that the whole stock should be so mortgaged, so as to give the proprietor
' the entire control of it; but he undertook to keep the solvent tenants
' free from any loss, in consequence of having become parties to the
' transaction. Notwithstanding this, considerable difficulty was ex-
' perienced in obtaining the consent of the solvent tenants to the arrange-
' ment. This was, however, ultimately managed, and the debts were
' paid. From my experience of this matter, I do not believe such an
' arrangement could have been carried out with any one but a proprietor,
' or that the solvent tenants would have agreed to concur in the mortgage
' to any other person than him. I mention these facts, partly because I
' have seen something said lately about a system of mortgaging sheep
' stock, and to show that in the case of club farms, at any rate, such a
' system would be accompanied by more difficulties than some people
' seem to have contemplated. It is worth while drawing attention to the
' fact that it was crofters with a sheep stock at their back who almost
' ruined themselves by obtaining credit and running up accounts; while
' the tenants of Inverroy who have no sheep stock, and thus no security to
' offer, got no credit and kept out of debt. Some of the buildings on
' these crofts are still of an inferior character, but these are being rapidly
' replaced by better ones. Since the accession of the late Mackintosh in
' 1868, who succeeded after a long minority, during which few improve-
' ments could take place, a great number of stone and lime houses, many
' of them slated, have been erected, and at this moment seven or nine
' additional ones are in course of erection. The principle on which these
' buildings are erected is that of helping those who are willing to help
' themselves. Thus, wood and lime are given free, and occasionally a
' sum of money in addition, provided the tenant does the carriages and
' workmanship. Slates are also given where desired, upon payment of
' interest on their value. Tenants are not always very ready even upon
' these terms to erect new houses, but latterly they are, I think, beginning
' to see more clearly the reasonableness of meeting the proprietor halfway,
' and doing something for themselves. Subletting is strictly prohibited,
' and all crofters are required to live on their crofts. Large sums are
' spent yearly on improvements on the property,—fencing, planting,
' draining, &c., and the tenants themselves are employed as much as
' possible in carrying out these improvements. I observe that for the five
' years, from 1869 to 1874, there was an average expenditure of £1500 a
' year on the Lochaber property, and the expenditure for the last fifteen
' years is about £12,000, or an average of about £800 a-year. If in the
' course of this statement I have alluded to what seemed to me to be dis-
' advantages in the club farm system, my object has been, by stating facts
' to show that there are two sides to the question, and that although no
' doubt club farms may be useful in some localities, and under certain
' conditions, they are yet attended by drawbacks, which render them
' unsuited to other conditions and many parts of the country. I should
' be sorry to leave this subject without bearing my cordial testimony to
' the many good qualities of the Lochaber tenantry as individuals. In
' disposition, as in physique, they are second to none I know.'

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43548. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—The population of The Mackintosh estate in Lochaber is abnormally large?—It is, compared with the acreage.

43549. They are nearly all old Catholics, are they not?—I think there only two Protestants upon the estate, apart from some of the officials.

43550. Is it not exceptional in the whole county that there is a company of volunteers raised and officered from one estate?—I have never heard of another case.

43551. And they are a fine, strong body of men?—Yes.

43552. And altogether a credit to their proprietor and to the district?—I think so.

43553. And I think it may be stated of The Mackintosh and his predecessors that in that particular locality the people of the crofting class have been allowed to remain from time immemorial upon the estate?—Certainly.

43554. You say they pay their rents fairly well?—Yes, with more than average regularity.

43555. With regard to the forests you refer to in Badenoch, I suppose you concur very much with what Sir George Macpherson-Grant has stated?—Yes.

43556. And the two small forests belonging to The Mackintosh are strictly adapted to forests more than to any other purpose?—I am not much of a sportsman, but that is my opinion.

43557. Are there any complaints upon the part of the persons living in South Kincraig?—I have never heard of a single complaint.

43558. You have several tenants on the south side of the Spey?—Yes, I have never heard of a single complaint.

43559. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—You mentioned that the tenants of Inveroy were sometimes not able to take up an additional croft when it became vacant?—Sometimes they are not able.

43560. But on the other two townships they were always able to take them up?—I did not say they were always able to do it.

43561. You never take in a stranger?—We never take in a stranger.

43562. Then, I presume, they are always able to take them up?—They have to pay their share of the sheep stock, but where they get the money to do it I don't know.

43563. Is it frequent at Inveroy that tenants are not able to take up an adjoining croft?—No; when a croft is out of lease, as a rule the adjoining tenant is only too glad to get it.

43564. Are these club farms let upon lease?—They are.

43565. Has each individual a separate lease?—No, there is just one lease.

43566. In whose name is the lease made out?—It is a minute of agreement, containing a schedule with the names of all the tenants, and in the body of the lease it is stated that the managers are responsible to the proprietor for the rent.

43567. If one tenant falls into arrear are the whole tenants jointly responsible for that rent?—I should think so.

43568. Has it ever happened that the other tenants have had to make good the default of a single tenant?—I cannot tell you. The rents are always paid in a lump sum. The managers come to me with a cheque on the day.

43569. Do the managers have the sole control of the sheep stock?—The entire control.

43570. Is that sheep stock well managed, in your opinion? Is the utmost profit made out of the land that might be made out of it by an individual farmer?—I should think not.

43571. You think the interference of the neighbours rather tends to pre-

vent the good management of the stock?—I don't know very much about it. I am not a practical sheep farmer, so I should not like to say very much about it, but I have asked the managers themselves, and they tell me that in the hands of one man or so, greater returns would be got from the farms.

43572. *The Chairman.*—You spoke of the disinclination on the part of crofters of certain townships to take a stranger in among them?—Yes.

43573. Is that founded on a desire to consolidate or increase their holdings, or is there any religious feeling connected with it? I understand they are almost all Roman Catholics?—I don't think there is very much religious feeling in it. They would not care about taking in a Protestant, but I don't think the religious feeling operates very greatly.

43574. Are there any single Protestants here and there scattered among these townships?—I just know one Protestant in Inveroy.

43575. What is the name of The Mackintosh estates?—They are just called The Mackintosh estates.

43576. Then you appear on behalf of the whole of them?—Yes.

43577. You say these estates are in the hands, in a great measure, of the crofting class, and generally in the hands of small farmers?—That is so.

43578. How many tenants are there on the estates below the £30 line?—Seventy or eighty, I think.

43579. What is the total number on the estate?—One hundred and seventy.

43580. Of which seventy or eighty are below £30?—I am wrong. There are about eighty in Lochaber, and probably ten more altogether. There are fully ninety under £30.

43581. So rather more than half the tenants are what we call crofters?—Yes.

43582. Now, are these ninety smaller tenants living, as it were, generally in crofts or townships, or are there many of them scattered about among the larger tenantry as independent small farmers?—The great majority reside on these three club farms of which I have spoken. There is another little community at the head of Strath Dearn, where there are nine or ten crofters.

43583. Do these ninety hold under lease?—Those Lochaber ones hold under lease. The tenants at the head of Strath Dearn have never got a lease. It is tacit relocation. There has been never a lease since the old one expired.

43584. Do all the tenants hold under written leases?—No; a good many of them have not written leases.

43585. What is the rule of the estate? Is it to hold under leases or not?—To hold under leases. These leases are not always extended. Usually there is a missive and acceptance.

43586. But I include missives among leases?—Then the majority hold under leases.

43587. The majority hold under written agreements?—The rule of the estate is so.

43588. But still there are many exceptions?—If you include simple letters, there are not.

43589. By far the greater number hold under written engagements, and, I understand, missive engagements are as binding as written documents?—Yes, I hold they are.

43590. Can you give me the rental of the estate thirty years ago?—No.

43591. Or the rental fifteen years ago?—If I am not mistaken, it was about £8000.

43592. What is it at present?—£15,000.

INVERNESS.

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43593. How has that rise in rental been effected?—Well, before my time, in the time of some of my predecessors, there was a very large expenditure in erecting shooting lodges and improving the property generally. But at that time there was a large increase in the rental of farms.

43594. I should like to get a general impression of how this rise of £7000 in fifteen years is accounted for. Is it chiefly an increase in sporting rents?—Yes.

43595. But you cannot give details?—I should think at least £5000 of it is an addition of sporting rents, or the increase of the former sporting rents.

43596. So that would leave an addition of £2000 on agricultural rents?—Yes.

43597. Can you tell me whether this increase of agricultural rental has been equally upon the small tenants and on the large, or whether it is chiefly on the large farms that it has accrued?—There has been very little increase in my time. Any increase there has been in my time has been pretty evenly spread over the property.

43598. Small and large?—Small and large.

43599. Have you got any sheep farms out of lease at the present time?—There are two sheep farms out of lease at the present time.

43600. Have they been advertised?—Yes.

43601. Has there been great difficulty experienced in finding a tenant?—We have not found a tenant.

43602. Were there any offers?—Yes.

43603. At a great reduction of rental?—At a considerable reduction of rent.

43604. How much compared with the old rentals?—We were offered £500 for a farm which formerly let at £600.

43605. You did not accept that?—There were other reasons which entered into the matter.

43606. I want to arrive at a notion of the depreciation of sheep farms?—Well, there are only the two. In the one case, as I said, there were other considerations that entered, and the other farm we got no offer for at all.

43607. You said there were other considerations in reference to one of the sheep farms. Was there any idea of letting the sheep farm as a forest?—None at all. It was a purely personal reason.

43608. Would either of these farms be available for forest purposes?—One of them is going to form part of a forest.

43609. Which is that?—The smaller one.

43610. What was the rental of that before?—£200. It could be added to a very large extent of land to form part of a forest. At the head of Strath Dearn there is a large extent of land, extending to about 40,000 acres, mostly occupied as summer grazings. Another part of that is this farm which I have referred to, and it is now out of lease; and the remainder is occupied by these nine tenants whom I have referred to. They occupy about 10,000 acres, and they are not to be disturbed in any way. The rest of the land consists of summer grazings, the rent of which has within the last year or two fallen from £540 to £195. In these circumstances, and the land being well adapted for forest, it is intended to form part into a forest.

43611. There is a large area of ground which you say you occupy chiefly as summer grazings, the rent of which was at one time £540; who used these grazings?—Sheep farmers in the low country sent their sheep up there in summer.

43612. Sheep farmers not of the crofting class?—No.

43613. Then in consolidating these summer grazings as a forest, nothing is withdrawn from the crofting class?—Nothing whatever. They are left exactly as they were.

43614. Then the grazing rent for these places fell from £540 to £195. What was the reason of that decline in value?—Well, the grazing, although very good, is very high. The sheep cannot remain there for a very long time, I believe, and the tenants refused to continue their holdings except at this great reduction of rent; and, in fact, they did not thank us for giving it to them at the reduction. They would just as soon give it up.

43615. What is the aggregate area of the summer grazings and farms which are now to be consolidated as a forest?—Close upon 30,000 acres.

43616. Then on The Mackintosh's property there are 30,000 acres, a block, as it were, which has been hitherto used in one form or other for grazing purposes, and which is going to be made into a deer forest?—Yes.

43617. And that will be let?—As soon as formed.

43618. In affecting this operation of consolidation and afforestation, has any class of resident persons been disturbed in their holdings or houses in any way?—Not to the slightest extent.

43619. Are you about to erect a shooting lodge?—I presume there will be a lodge of some kind erected. There is a small lodge on the ground at present.

43620. I want to arrive at what compensation, as it were, the world is going to get in the form of labour and of buildings in connection with this afforestation. You say there will be a shooting lodge erected?—There will certainly be a shooting lodge of some kind.

43621. In fact this is a new forest, and is not to be added to another existing forest, but is to be let as a separate subject?—Yes, let as a separate subject.

43622. Is it in a good situation for making a shooting lodge or a gentleman's residence?—It is very far out of the way, but there is an excellent site for making a good lodge.

43623. Is it a beautiful and attractive place?—Yes, very pretty.

43624. Likely to attract a good tenant?—Yes, in fact, some years ago, when we thought of afforesting it, we were offered a rent of £2000 if a suitable lodge were put up.

43625. What would be the aggregate sheep rental for the same subjects at this moment? There are two farms and the summer grazing. How much rent, if it were let for sheep, would it fetch?—Even supposing we could get £200 for the farm, which we could not, that would give us £350.

43626. You think the aggregate rental at this moment would be £350, and you hope to be getting how much?—To that £350 I must add £300 which we at present get.

43627. That would be about £650?—Yes.

43628. Besides that, you will have to expend a considerable sum on building a shooting lodge?—Yes, say £1000.

43629. I think you might call it £2000 before it is done?—That depends very much on the size of the lodge. It would cost £2000 for a new house, but there is one there already, and it would not cost so much. However, say £2000.

43630. The interest on which we may take at 7 per cent.; and that represents £140 a year more. That would be £790 which you sacrifice, as it were. Well, you get £2000. The operation will involve a profit to the proprietor, it is hoped, of about £1200 a year?—I trust it may.

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43631. Is there any sacrifice of arable area in that at all?—There might be about seventy-eight acres.

43632. Seventy-eight acres would be absorbed, but perhaps in connection with the shooting lodge there might be something like a home farm or cows' pasture?—There would be a forester's house, and the keepers will probably live upon this farm.

43633. So there is not a real sacrifice to wild forest of these seventy-eight acres?—No, not necessarily.

43634. Then according to your theory, there is to be the formation of a new considerable forest with a gain to the proprietor of £1200 a year and a sacrifice to nobody?—A sacrifice to nobody.

43635. Except whatever amount of meat was raised, in which the general public are concerned?—Yes.

43636. And that you cannot estimate?—No.

43637. You say that in this operation nobody is disturbed, nobody is deprived of common pasture, or anything of that kind. There is no human local interest injured at all?—Not a soul. There is one gentleman who will be disturbed—one of the former witnesses, who said he usually grazed his stock upon this land.

43638. I hope you will fence that witness's ground?—There is going to be a very large extent of fencing.

43639. I understand the common grazing of this township will not be included in the area of the forest?—Certainly not.

43640. *Mr Cameron.*—You mention, in this paper, that these small tenants in Lochaber had got into difficulties of late years?—Yes.

43641. Do you know how those difficulties arose?—They paid their accounts by bills and took credit, instead of paying cash, and the interest was added to these accounts.

43642. But how was it that they had not the cash to pay; how did their poorer circumstances arise?—That I cannot tell. I don't believe they were in poor circumstances, because the poorest township of all has not got into debt. These two that got into debt were the two richest townships.

43643. Do you think it was in any degree by the mismanagement of their sheep stock by those whom they appointed managers?—No. I believe that, to a certain extent, they went in for greater luxury and extravagance.

43644. You mean they spent more money on themselves?—Yes.

43645. But it was not owing to any mismanagement or want of skill on the part of those deputed to manage the common stock for the crofters?—No, I don't say that.

43646. How do you find the buying and selling in these joint stocks and club farms? Is the buying and selling done pretty well?—They come down to the wool market here.

43647. But is the man who comes down on their behalf as well qualified to buy and sell as the ordinary farmer is who manages his own affairs?—They usually get very good prices.

43648. What I mean to ask you is whether you think there is any want of skill or power of bargaining which appertains to the farmer who manages his business, and does not appertain to the manager of a club farm? Is he as sharp in his bargains as the farmer who works for himself?—I cannot say he is not.

43649. Have these crofters obtained as good prices for their wool as the market rates would justify?—Very much about the same—perhaps a little below the price.

43650. And have they sold their lambs as well?—They sold them last

year just a little below the prices that others were getting for blackfaced lambs of the same kind.

43651. But you have never heard that their affairs were not managed properly by those managers?—I say they do complain, and that is one of the drawbacks, that the managers don't manage well, and that they don't pull well together.

43652. But you do not attribute the loss of those townships to that?—No.

43653. Do you attribute it in any way to the price of the wool?—Yes, undoubtedly. They were not getting such profits as they formerly did. They themselves say the sheep stock was giving a very small return indeed. Some years, when sheep and wool were high, they must have got large returns, and probably got into the habit of spending these returns.

43654. Did their difficulties begin before the price of wool fell, or after?—They have increased very much lately.

43655. Do I understand clearly that you mean to give us the impression that 30,000 acres of land is now only worth for grazing purposes, exclusive of shooting rents, £350 a year?—That is what we actually get for it.

43656. £350 is the actual value to the public and the community of the amount of mutton or whatever it may be that could be raised or fed upon this land by farmers?—The farmers I mentioned really don't care about keeping on these summer sheilings unless they can get them for nothing at all.

43657. I know all about that. I only want to be sure you are accurate about the 30,000 acres and £350, because it seems very small?—It is quite correct.

43658. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—With regard to the management, are the managers in these townships freely elected by the whole body?—Yes.

43659. Is it not to be presumed, therefore, that they select the wisest men among them for that purpose?—I suppose they think so at the time, but they may discover afterwards that they have made a mistake. There is a natural jealousy sometimes.

43660. With regard to the new forest that is proposed, in old times, before forests were let, was not this particular district well known and famous for its red deer?—Yes, and it has always been frequented by red deer.

43661. And it is commonly called Monadhliath?—Yes.

43662. Has the matter, as it were, been forced upon the present proprietor?—Entirely. That is the only way to make anything out of this enormous tract of land. It has come to a crisis now.

INVERNESS.

KINGUSSIE.

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FRANCIS MACBEAN, Commission Agent, Grantown (43)—examined.

43663. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement to make?—Yes.

43664. Will you kindly read it?—‘The short statement that I have now the honour of laying before you is drawn out in the belief that it contains the opinions of the great majority of the people on whose behalf I have the honour of appearing as a delegate from Strathspey. Our chief wants are—(1) fair rents; (2) security of tenure; (3) compensation for improvements; (4) the addition of pasture to our arable lands; and (5) Government or mutual valuators for land. With regard to the first want, viz., fair rents, we most willingly grant that, so far as the proprietors of Strathspey, past and present, are personally concerned, their wish has always been to work on the principle of “live and let live;” but we are

Francis Macbean.

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KINGUSSIE.

Francis
Macbean.

' compelled to say that in practice this policy has not in many cases been adopted. The present system of land valuation by incompetent men has been and will be, unless an alteration is made, the cause of grievances and losses to all concerned, and proprietors will do well to seriously consider whether it is not to their own advantage to adopt the system of mutual valuators. As an illustration of what we mean, we have only to go down the length of Aviemore—go over the various crofts in that and the adjoining districts of Avonlochan, Granish, and Kinveachy, and we ask if any sane man will tell you that these places are fairly valued. It's only the other day that George Anderson sent me word to state his grievances. We state what we know to be notorious facts. The same remarks apply to other districts. For this state of matters we lay the blame at the door of the valuator, who, on account of his ignorance of the disadvantages of Strathspey, works in the belief that the Strathspey farmer and crofter is sure to reap what he sows. How different is the state of matters: will five thousand pounds pay for next year's seed oats? It is very doubtful, and this is a state of matters by no means uncommon in our beautiful summer residence. To be a competent valuator for a district of country either like Strathspey or Badenoch, requires a man who has resided in one or either for seven or ten years at least. The want of the knowledge which would be acquired by a land valuator during these years has had its effect on many in the district from which I am sent. So warm is the attachment felt for the late estate valuator, that I would not much care to walk in the dark with him. For these and many other reasons, with which I will not trouble you, we respectfully recommend that in any Bill drawn out for the management of land, special provision ought to be made for the introduction of a clause making it compulsory to have Government or mutual valuators. If allowed, whilst treating under this head, we would take special exception to an admission made by Dean of Guild Mackenzie when examined by Lochiel, in which the dean is said to have hinted that, providing Highland proprietors came to an understanding with their crofters, the present agitation would terminate. Seeing that we are always sure of having good landlords and other landlords amongst us, we would, for the sake of the others and ourselves, advocate the statute book as the only place of reference. Our second want—"security of tenure"—is one of the greatest blessings that our country's laws could bestow on us. As at present, many of us are at the mercy of those inheritors of the soil who can only have one motive in withholding the security asked. Besides the many small crofters up and down Speyside, we have about thirty around Grantown,—all holders from year to year. The consequences of so short-lived a tenure is not far to seek. No man knows who is to go next. To illustrate this text, I submit for your inspection the copy of a correspondence which passed between Lord Seafield's factor and myself with reference to a croft which has been attached to a house property which I purchased in Grantown, for about thirty-five years. I gave nearly one hundred pounds more for the house in question, on the faith that the croft would be left as formerly. The arrangement was homologated at the proper quarter, and I paid the money. The law as it now stands says I must clear out next month without a cent. of compensation, and my house property reduced about one hundred pounds in value. The iniquity of the law is still more shown when such can be done, considering that every inch of arable land in and around Grantown is either the work of the present feuars or their ancestors. Give us security of tenure, and we will make two blades of grass grow where only one is at present. The crofter, like other men, must have an incentive to work. His present insecurity puts

' the dead lock on all improvements both for his own and his fellow beings' good. Compensation for improvements and meliorations.—On the assumption that I am right in saying that the land, generally speaking, is over rented, I arrive at the conclusion that the proprietor has benefited to the tune of about fifty thousand at least by the last letting of farms in Strathspey. Rough estimate of meliorations on buildings equal to two years' rent, say £16,000; difference between the old and the new rental, say at £2000 per annum, will amount in nineteen years to £38,000; total £54,000, say £50,000 which should now be in the hands of the tenants, had the law of fixity of tenure and compensation for improvements been in force. The rental was about £10,000, but I have struck off £2000 for small feus and other places not embraced in the above. On the question of pasture, to the Strathspey farmer and crofter the want of a piece of pasture means simply a great drawback. As already referred to, the insecurity of the climate often brings the crofter into great difficulties, owing to his inability to fall back on a few sheep as a means of support when the crop fails him, as it has done this year in many cases. As things are at present, what with deer forests and plantations, almost all the grazings held in former days in conjunction with the various holdings, large and small, are done away with. In the parish of Abernethy alone the deer occupy the ground once grazed on by about 10,000 sheep, and we are informed by practical men that the same ground would now graze a great many more. The same remarks apply to the parish of Duthil, although not to such an extent in the meantime. In the parish of Cromdale planting is also hemming in the crofter to a very hurtful extent. We therefore submit that every crofter should have grazing land attached to his croft or in common, sufficient to graze from fifty to one hundred sheep; and to enable this to be done, we strongly advocate the curtailment of the present lands laid waste under deer and other enclosures. I have just to add, that while the population has decreased by one half within the past fifty years, the rental of Strathspey has been more than doubled.'

43665. Your first complaint was about the system of valuation; what is the practice of this district? Suppose a small farm falls out of lease at the end of nineteen years, how is the valuation for the next lease conducted?—The valuator is appointed by the proprietor, and he goes over the ground and sends in his report.

43666. Is that generally done by the local factor, or is a professional man employed?—A professional man.

43667. When the lease is renewed to the occupier, is a valuation generally demanded, or is there a reduction usually made in favour of the present occupier?—If he has meliorations to get, there is a certain reduction made.

43668. What are the works or improvements for which meliorations are allowed?—In the case I specially referred to—I mean for houses built by the tenant.

43669. Is that melioration allowed for the erection of substantial fences, drains, and trenching?—I am not aware.

43670. When a lease is renewed do you think the tenant who is continued in the holding is allowed to continue at a lower rent than would be paid by an outsider if the holding was thrown into the market? Is there any customary or benevolent reduction allowed to the actual occupier, or is he charged the full market value of the holding?—He is charged the value of it as put upon it by the valuator.

43671. As a matter of fact and practice, is that the case? He is charged the full value put upon it by the valuator?—Quite so.

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43672. Do you know any case in the country where valuators are appointed on both sides with an oversman?—No; I am not aware of any proprietor doing that.

43673. Do you think that in the case of small farms the land is let at the end of a lease at an exaggerated value, or if it were offered in the market do you think the proprietor would generally get offers equal to the price put upon it by the valuator?—Yes, I believe he would get more in some cases; but the reason is this that when a man gets into a place his credit is established, and whether he is able to pay rent or not, he is in such a position that he will get credit in the nearest town or village, and can go on for a few years.

43674. So there is a considerable demand in the country for small holdings?—There is.

43675. You spoke of the withdrawal of grazing; I would like to have an example communicated to me of any recent withdrawal of grazing from a township to any considerable extent, whether for the purpose of grazing, building, or foresting?—There are various instances—a great many instances in Strathspey of grazings that have been withdrawn and substituted by planting.

43676. Will you give me an example in which the whole or a considerable part of the grazing of a township has been withdrawn for planting?—What I understand by a township—we have not got a township down there—but I am referring to the forest of Abernethy. It is not long since almost all the tenants in Abernethy had a share in the hill now used as a deer forest.

43677. I was speaking of planting in the first instance. I see there are a great number of woods here which are agreeable to the eye, and I hope some day will be profitable, and I want to understand whether these woods have been formed in any material degree of the holdings of small farmers?—I will give a case in point. The nearest farm to this place is down at Aviemore. The people there, I think, had their right in common to the ground all behind their several lots or crofts down in that district, and now there is a wire fence running straight at the back of their places, and they are precluded from going in, which in my opinion makes these small holdings a very poor concern for them.

43678. There is a fence drawn behind their arable, and behind the fence come the plantations?—Yes.

43679. And behind the plantations are there no common grazings left higher up?—None to my knowledge.

43680. Has that process of taking away the hill pasture been a frequent one?—Well, the planting of wood in Strathspey has been gone into very extensively within the last thirty years, and the consequence is that people have been deprived of the grazings that have been attached to their several places.

43681. And have these plantations generally been made upon the common grazing of small holdings, and not upon large farm lands?—I don't think they are confined to any common in particular or any place. It was general all over the district.

43682. Has the extension of the plantations given a great deal of work to the poor people?—Well, it has given them a little work certainly in the immediate neighbourhood where they are carried on.

43683. Have the people of the country been employed, or have these plantations been wholly effected by contract with people coming from a distance—say from Edinburgh or Aberdeen?—As far as I understand, they have been made by the proprietor and the people of the country.

43684. The trees have been raised in the country here? The nurseries exist in the country here?—I think so, to a great extent.

INVERNESS.

43685. Then it may be said to have been a domestic industry?—Yes, quite so.

KINGUSSIE.

43686. You mentioned, speaking of your own individual case, that you had given £100 more for house property, believing it would be held permanently in connection with a croft. When you made this purchase of the house, I presume it was made by some written instrument of sale and purchase?—Yes, so far as regards the house.

Francis Macbean.

43687. When you made this purchase did it occur to you to ask for any security that the croft would not be divided from it?—No; I went on the principle of use and wont, so far as regards the land.

43688. Was the croft previously attached, as it were, to the piece of ground you bought for the house, or was the ground bought for the house actually on the croft?—It was detached from the ground I bought for the house. There is about half a Scotch acre attached to every property in Grantown. This was detached.

43689. It was detached from the property you purchased for the house?—Yes

43690. Is it usual to have a detached piece of land attached to a feu?—All the tenementers in Grantown, with few exceptions, have a piece of land consisting of four or six acres. These have been attached to their places for a great many years.

43691. And are retained in connection with the land occupied by the house?—The custom is that if a man buys a house from another he goes and gets the proprietor's consent to have the land, and that is very often attached to the value of the land, as in this case.

43692. Is there not usually some lease or deed or instrument by which the land is secured with the house, or are they just accepted on a verbal understanding?—It is a verbal understanding from year to year.

43693. Can you give me any other case or cases of common pasture being withdrawn from small tenants? You mentioned Aviemore?—When I say Aviemore, I mean the district for several miles down there.

43694. When the common pasture was taken away for the purpose of planting, was a reduction of rent made corresponding to the loss of that privilege?—I cannot speak with certainty on that point, but there is a belief that people pay as much for the land without the pasture as they did when they had it.

43695. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—How many delegates are there from Strathspey besides yourself to-day?—Only three.

43696. Was there a meeting held when you were appointed?—Yes.

43697. Was it pretty well attended?—Yes, there were a good number of people there.

43698. You have been connected with Strathspey for some time?—For twenty years.

43699. Has a good deal of the planting of Strathspey occurred within that time?—A good deal.

43700. What was the state of the ground occupied by the plantations before; was it hill pasture used by the tenants?—So far as I can think, it was hill pasture used by the tenants, in some districts at any rate.

43701. Then what they complain of is that though it may be a proper act of administration to plant largely, they suffered by the loss?—Yes.

43702. And I suppose they had to part with their flocks?—Yes.

43703. Was there a good deal of sheep in Strathspey at one time?—I have been told that the number of sheep on Abernethy at one time was 70,000—some say 100,000.

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43704. In Abernethy alone?—Yes.

43705. And how many are there now?—A very good authority told me that 2000 would cover all the sheep that are in stock there.

43706. What did they do in the matter of wintering; were they obliged to send them away?—In the summer they grazed them in the forest here and on the hills, and in the winter they wintered them on their own lands.

43707. There is a good deal of low land on both sides of the Spey?—Yes.

43708. There are not many large farms on that large property of Lord Seafield?—No.

43709. What would be the average rent?—I would be safe in saying that three-fourths of them are below £40.

43710. And there never were any large farms?—Never.

43711. Strathspey has always been a very populous country?—Yes.

43712. Very well known?—Very well known.

43713. Can you not give any information as to whether or not at the time these large blocks under plantation were taken away from the tenants, any substantial reduction was made on their rents?—I am not aware any reduction was made.

43714. Do you think the land rental in Strathspey is now as large as it was before the plantations took place?—Much larger.

43715. Are there any other complaints the people in Strathspey have to make except what you have stated in your paper?—I think I embrace them generally here. They blame the proprietors for coming down from Badenoch with their sheep—the like of Sir John Ramsden—coming down and taking the grazings, and of course it has the effect of putting up the price on the crofters and others.

43716. Will you explain that a little more distinctly?—They complain that the like of Sir John Ramsden comes down and takes grazings from Lord Seafield, and, of course, that puts up the rents on the crofters.

43717. What you say is this, that people from Badenoch, which is higher ground, take wintering in Strathspey?—No, I mean so far as taking the grazings from Lord Seafield is concerned—the wood grazings.

43718. They take some wood grazings in Strathspey at the expense of the Strathspey people?—That is the interference which the people complain of.

43719. What particular parts are you referring to; is it the wintering in the woods?—I have a note here saying that Sir John Ramsden rents several thousand acres of pasture at one time in the hands of the crofters. These lands are situated at Tom Varich on Lynemore, belonging to Lord Seafield.

43720. And you adduce that as an instance of the hardships that the people are subjected to?—That is what they represented to me as a hardship.

43721. Have you any remedies except those you have stated in the paper?—No, I have not.

43722. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—I suppose if these sheep farms now in Sir John Ramsden's hands were let to a farmer he would be bound to find wintering for his sheep?—Very likely. The grievance, so far as I can understand from the crofters, is that he took it from the proprietor. If he took it from themselves very likely the rents would be increased.

43723. You used the expression at the close of your statement—‘land laid waste under deer and other enclosures;’ do you speak of land under wood as being laid waste?—Yes, waste to the farmers and to the crofters.

43724. *Mr Cameron.*—How many tenants were present at the meeting at which you were elected a delegate?—I cannot be certain—about a dozen or two. The meeting was got up in a very hurried way.

43725. How was it got up?—By public bills circulated through the country.

43726. Who composed the bills?—I cannot tell. I was blamed for it myself, but I am in a position to affirm that such is not the case. The first intimation I got of the meeting was when a man came and asked me whether he could get the use of the public hall for the meeting. I spoke about the matter, and he would not tell me who was paying the expenses of getting the matter set agoing. I said if there was a public meeting I should certainly be present, and I have been asked by a great number of people who did not attend the meeting to represent them at Kingussie.

43727. How did you first get notice of the meeting?—A printed hand-bill was handed into my house.

43728. Who put it into your hands?—I cannot tell you.

43729. How did it make its way in?—It was given to the servant, I suppose. I found it in my lobby in the morning.

43730. You did not have the curiosity to ask who gave it in?—No, I knew it was coming. I knew the party who applied for the hall was sending out the bills.

43731. Then, at the meeting, how many of the tenants were present; was it really a representative meeting of the Strathspey tenants?—Considering the short notice, I considered it a very fair representation from all quarters.

43732. How many were there from all quarters? You said just now a dozen or two; was it nearer twelve or twenty-four?—I should say it would be nearer twenty-four.

43733. How many persons can you name who were present, who were tenants of Lord Seafield?—I tried to take a note of them after I went home, and I have fifteen names on the paper, and there were a great many more than these, besides the people in and around the immediate vicinity of Grantown whom I did not put down.

43734. I am talking of tenants on the Strathspey estates; you can answer for fifteen?—Yes.

43735. How many tenants are on the Strathspey estates of Lord Seafield?—I suppose 400 or 500, including crofters.

43736. There were a number of names of delegates sent in from this meeting, amounting to eighteen; so according to that there were three more sent in as delegates than were present at the meeting?—No, there were more than fifteen. I made up this list after I went home, and I know I am correct in saying there were more present than I put down.

43737. I thought you said these were all you could answer for?—In the meantime.

43738. How did they proceed to select delegates; did they select them from among themselves?—No; we came to an understanding that we would not confine ourselves to the people in that meeting, and elected them without asking their consent, simply because they were not present.

43739. Then, as I take it, those eighteen delegates were never asked for their consent to represent the people?—We knew—at least some of the parties knew—the sympathies of some of those who were elected.

43740. That may be so, but as a matter of fact they were not asked?—I am not prepared to say.

43741. You say yourself they were not consulted?—Not by me.

43742. But by anybody?—I am not prepared to say that.

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43743. Is it your impression they were asked?—No, I cannot say; I am not able to answer that question.

43744. In the statement you read it is mentioned that Abernethy formerly grazed 10,000 sheep?—Yes.

43745. But, in answer to the Chairman, you said it would graze 100,000?—I said some people told me it would graze 100,000, and I put it down to be within the mark.

43746. How is your evidence to be of value to us if you are not able to say whether Abernethy formerly grazed 10,000 or 100,000 sheep?—I am putting this down on the estimate of a party who was very likely to be near the truth.

43747. Then do you think the estimate of the person who told you it was 10,000 or of the person who said it was 100,000 is the right one?—Well, I am not very certain about it.

43748. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—How many of the twenty delegates whose names were sent in were present at the meeting when they were appointed?—I have not got a list of the delegates.

DUNCAN LAWSON, Achnagallin (26)—examined.

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43749. *The Chairman.*—What is your occupation?—I am a farmer's son.

43750. Will you make your statement?—The notes on which I am about to make a few remarks regarding the agricultural condition of the country were hurriedly got up. I did not think I would be called upon to give evidence till to-morrow, and I intended to finish them up to-night. ‘The crofters have ever been treated in a considerate manner on the Seafield estates. I cannot say from personal knowledge that there have been any evictions, as the word is generally understood in my neighbourhood. There have been a good many cases of putting small crofts together so as to form larger holdings; but I do not think that the result has always been satisfactory. One result of this has been, and still is, a scarcity of skilled farm servants and labourers. When crofts were more plentiful in Strathspey than what they are to-day—and I am old enough to remember a good many crofts which are to-day swallowed up in larger holdings and sheep runs—a farmer could get hands from the neighbouring crofts as he required them at a rate of wages which paid both the hirer and the hireling. The hands thus employed were in almost all cases superior, as they were, so to speak, to the manner born, whereas to-day farmers have to employ what they can get from the neighbouring towns and villages. These is very few cases have any knowledge of farming matters, and as there is no term of apprenticeship for farm servants, they fly away as soon as they are partly broken in, to try their luck in places where farmers can afford to be more liberal. I have stated this as one result of depopulation in rural districts. The crofters with whom I am more intimately acquainted in Strathspey seem to have a difficulty in forming an opinion as to what their real grievances are. One of them seems to be a want of good dwelling houses. The Earl of Seafield gives wood and slate free, the farmers and crofters paying for building, in short for all labour. The wood is only given in a rough state, and crofters experience difficulty sometimes in finding money to manufacture the wood, and paying for the labour required. The landlord builds houses too, but the rate of interest charged for the money laid out makes it impossible for small farmers to benefit by this; and in fact the

' large farms on which this has been adopted change hands pretty quickly.
' High rents, to adopt a mild term, seem to be another grievance, if not the
' chief. The last leases were renewed at a time when crops were good and
' prices for agricultural produce and cattle high; in short, they were
' renewed in the end of a succession of good seasons, and the result was
' that high rents were given. This was in 1866 or 1867. Immediately
' after the commencement of the leases a series of dry summers set in, and
' farmers had to dispose of most of their cattle at merely nominal prices, or
' buy hay and straw at famine rates. This series of dry seasons had barely
' passed when another of a still more disastrous nature set in; I allude to
' the late harvests which have visited us for the past ten or eleven years,
' more particularly those of 1877 and 1879, where there was scarcely a
' sound quarter of seed in Strathspey. Any person—let his knowledge be
' what it may—valuing a country such as Strathspey, where the danger
' from frost is so great, without taking this fact into consideration,
' will be likely to value crofts by far too high. The late Earl of Seafield
' in a very generous manner gave a reduction of rent on the farmers
' and crofters petitioning his Lordship. This reduction extended only
' over one year's rental. There is no estate in Scotland to-day in which
' more respect and affection is shown for the proprietor than in Strathspey,
' but I think that the crofters' grievances are too deeply seated for the
' landlords to redress. I would not for one moment think of blaming the
' landlords for the high rents; I would lay the blame at the crofters' own
' doors. If I see my neighbour improving his croft, and reclaiming
' waste land and making his croft snug, it is quite natural that I become
' envious of his compact holding, and I am willing to give an advance on
' the old rent if I can get quietly slipped into my neighbour's shoes. I
' have known men going secretly to the factor's and offering more rent
' than was indeed asked, and that before the old tenant had an opportunity
' of closing with or rejecting the terms offered. But I am quite confident
' in saying that I never heard of such an offer being accepted in Strathspey.
' Hillside crofts suffer a good deal from the ravages of game, more
' particularly grouse. I have seen packs or flocks of grouse amounting to
' hundreds lying on the stooks of corn. These birds play sad havoc, as
' after they alight on the stooks and flatten them out and eat up the grain,
' if rain falls to any great extent the corn and straw rot. Some farmers
' and crofters complain of the hill being taken from them, so that they
' cannot keep sheep; but I think the old way of giving every person liberty
' to keep sheep on the hills was productive of more evil than good, for the
' simple reason that they took who had the power, and the result was an
' endless quarrel and a great amount of ill-feeling. The evils I have stated
' can all be remedied, I think, by—(1) security of tenure, or fixity of
' tenure if you will; (2) a saleable tenant right which will enable me
' to sell my lease to the best advantage; (3) an appeal court composed
' of commissioners appointed in the same manner as the Irish commissioners;
' and (4) a right to protect my crops against all ravages of game.
' I have had opportunities of ascertaining the opinions of crofters them-
' selves on the subject, and they all agree that a Bill on the principle of
' the Irish Land Bill would give them what they want. The Scottish
' peasantry ask indignantly why should a law be framed so as to give so
' much to Ireland and so little to Scotland? Is it because the Scotch are
' a law-abiding people, and the Irish, alas! too often the reverse? Is our
' respect for the laws of our country to be used against us, to bind us down
' to a life of servitude? If such is to be the case, do not wonder that we,
' a class who are pitied for our ignorance, and made the butt of many an
' ill-timed and rankling joke, look upon the Irish Land Bill as the reward

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' given for illegal agitation. Some would-be reformers tell us to live less expensively. Well, if any person thinks that our distress is brought about by expensive living, let him or her come and see. I am giving facts when I say that I have seen families brought up on porridge and milk and potatoes and milk without any other variety, and not only the families but the head of the family sharing the meal; and sometimes when the milk failed, it was a repetition of the Irish meal of "tatties and point." Think you, gentlemen, how this would suit your valets and footmen. We are not seeking a method by which to "make money," as the term goes; we could not do this on a Highland croft even if we had no rent at all to pay; we are simply asking the land on terms which will enable us to live in some degree of comfort. I believe the average depth of soil on a hillside croft or farm in Strathspey would not be more than three or four inches. There are acres and acres in some places where you cannot get enough mould to cover the stock of the plough; and such land would be dear at 2s. 6d. per acre, as you seldom get a return to your seed. A good many crofts are deficient in drainage; of course, since the passing of the Agricultural Holdings Act, greater attention will be paid to drainage, &c., but still this Act does not give the security crofters require. There are vast tracts of land in Strathspey which could be reclaimed if sufficient encouragement were given and sufficient security. These improvements could be carried out by farmers, and would give employment to a good many hands at remunerative rates of wages, if the farmer had security of tenure, and a right to dispose of these improvements by a saleable tenant right; but without this it would not pay him to lay out £15 or £20 an acre on improving waste land. The country is, I am quite well aware, suffering from the want of lime. About thirty years ago I am told the crofters used to procure limestones from two quarries on the estate and burn them at home. They could procure the limestones for very little more than the cost of quarrying, and they had thus a plentiful supply of lime, a first class fertiliser, at very little cost. I have it on the authority of an aged miller, lately deceased, that the amount of grain raised on the north side of the Spey, in the parish of Cromdale, thirty years ago, was double what it is to-day, and the price obtained was equal to one-third more. The number of cattle raised then was considerably more than to-day, although the quality is certainly better. I can certify from personal experience that the cereal crops of the present day do not equal those of nearly twenty years ago; but I attribute this to the backward state of the past few years, and the use of too much artificial manure instead of lime. What, in my opinion, would go a good way to restore the land to its former vigour would be a few years of rest, and then breaking it up and applying lime. As things are at present this cannot be done, but if sufficient encouragement were given waste land could be reclaimed gradually by crofters, and this would give an opportunity of resting the old worn-out arable land. There can be no doubt but a good deal of the land which has been lying under sheep in favoured spots could be made to yield good crops of cereals; now I would not like in any way to interfere with the land attached to the home farms throughout Scotland, as these farms are models which we in many ways could profitably imitate. I said at the commencement of my evidence that there were few if any evictions in Strathspey, but further down towards the "laich of Moray," there have been cases of evictions. On Lord Thurlow's property at Dunphail several crofters have been evicted, and the crofts all put under sheep. I think this is one of the greatest hardships that can be inflicted on crofters, removing them from their homes involuntarily—homes which they have been accustomed

' to look upon as their own, by the strong hand of the law, such as it is
' at present—and the ground they once occupied, and loved to till, the
' land which was reclaimed by their forefathers and themselves, covered
' over by their landlord's sheep or deer. Was it for this that on countless
' bloody fields Scotland's sons, our fathers, asserted their liberty and love
' of independence? Surely not for this; and if the present method of
' driving out men to make room for sheep and deer be persisted in, you
' will, as has been often stated, require to recruit your thinned ranks of
' soldiers from your deer herds and sheep flocks, which cover the fields
' where once the hardy sons of Scotland toiled—men who had to leave their
' homes and seek in far distant climes that which their native land denied
' them, and who are now sending from the utmost parts of the earth grain
' and meat cheaper than we can raise them at home. Did it ever strike
' you as peculiar, that a mechanic could purchase a pound or two of beef
' or mutton for less money, after coming thousands of miles by sea and
' land, than he could the same quantity of Scotch meat? And why should
' this be? for the simple reason that our colonial brother lives in a land
' of freedom; the land is his own, and the improvements he makes are all
' his own. I think I stated in the commencement of my evidence that
' eviction led to a want of skilled labourers and servants. This was well
' illustrated in the case of a crofter who married rather suddenly a short
' time ago. Happening to meet him shortly after the auspicious event, a
' friend began to quiz him on the start he had taken; but I think he was
' a little taken by surprise with the crofter's reply. "Faith, its as fack's
' death I wisna meanin' tae marry sae soon, but I couldna get a quine
' either in Tomintoul, Grantown, or Forres to keep the hoose an mak my
' brosc, and I wis just forced tae daet." In Strathspey at present we have
' little cause for complaint. We live under a good landlord—descended
' from a line who were always distinguished for their leniency to their
' tenants; but we have no assurance that it will always be so. Our noble
' proprietor, although in the bloom of manhood, has no fixity of tenure of
' life more than his tenants have of their crofts and farms, and who knows
' what years may bring round. When we read the accounts of the
' Sutherland evictions do not we question ourselves thus, what hinders
' their fate from being ours? Events might occur which would bring
' round such a result. We know that a good deal is left in the hands of
' factors, and although Strathspey is blessed with a factor who is every
' such a gentleman at present, still things may not be always so. It may
' be asked why do I hint at any thing so calamitous as this? My answer
' is, what has been may be again, and you know the Scotch proverb "Pre-
' vention is better than cure." The grievances I have stated are not of a
' local character, and I should be extremely sorry if anything I may have
' stated should be looked upon as a reflection on the Earl of Seafield or
' any of his servants. The redress which the crofters whom I have the
' honour of representing before you to-day seek is the redress which crofters
' and farmers over England and Scotland seek,—fixity of tenure, saleable
' tenant right, and fair rent; and even if the two first benefits were
' bestowed upon us we would not care so much for the latter, as any per-
' severing person could improve sufficient land to make the croft pay better.
' One of the accusations brought against crofters is that they are generally
' lazy. I can give this report an unqualified denial. I do not think that
' there are a harder working lot on the face of the earth to-day than the
' crofters and their families, and for my own part I can say that laziness is
' an accomplishment I never had time to cultivate.'

43751. One of the complaints I think you have mentioned, and that
you have heard made by others, has been the limitation of area—land

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taken from crofters and occupied by sheep and deer and plantation, and so on. You did not seem to attach so much importance to that. You thought that the people, when they had the common pasture, did not care about it?—In many cases they did not.

43752. But still, do you not think that the possession of outrun or common pasture, if properly regulated, is a great benefit to the people?—There can be no doubt it must be, if properly regulated.

43753. Well, but among the remedies which you have suggested I don't see any remedy for this evil of withdrawal of common pasture. You have mentioned fixity of tenure and compensation, and so on, but none of these remedies, if carried out, would, I think, give you or your class back a single acre of the land that has been withdrawn from their occupancy?—No, I suggested no remedy for that, because in my immediate neighbourhood that policy of turning farms into sheep farms and deer forests has not been carried out to any extent. There are no deer forests within a good many miles of where I reside.

43754. Then in your immediate neighbourhood no common pasture has been taken away from the small tenants?—Yes, it has been taken away for plantation, but still I think the benefit at the end of a few years that would accrue from planting would almost compensate for any loss.

43755. Are there any cases in which plantations have been made previously in older times and in which the right of pasturage under the trees in the plantation has been restored to the small tenants?—In some cases, but not always. Mr Macbean remarked, and I think it was made sufficiently clear, that such gentlemen as Sir John Ramsden, with long purses at their back, and with whom tenants could not successfully cope, came and offered large sums of money for these plantations, and so excluded the crofters.

43756. Then you don't know any case in which the small tenants or crofters have been admitted to the enjoyment of the pasture in the plantations when the trees have grown up?—Yes, I know of some cases.

43757. Then, when that is the case, they are charged a separate rent for pasturing plantations?—Yes.

43758. When the common pasture was taken away from them on which the plantations were made, was their rent reduced in consideration of the ground taken away from them?—I cannot speak as to that.

43759. How old are the trees when people are restored to the use of the pasture below the trees?—It depends on the nature of the soil. In some cases they may be restored in fifteen or twenty years, and in other cases it may take forty or fifty years.

43760. Have you ever fed sheep or cattle in woods, or known others who did so?—I have known many who did so.

43761. You can feed best under larch trees, I suppose, or can you feed among fir trees?—You can feed better under fir than under larch, because the foliage of the larch trees falls and covers the grass to a large extent at this season of the year, whereas the fir does not fall to such an extent.

43762. Then you think the pasture under Scotch fir trees is better than that under larch trees?—I think so.

43763. And you think a higher rent would be given for pasture under fir trees than under larch trees?—I would naturally expect so.

43764. How about the other trees—such as the birch, and trees of that sort? I suppose there are not many of them planted?—No, the birch woods are all natural.

43765. Have you had in your part of the country, on Lord Seafield's estate, any recent cases of land being withdrawn from cultivation or pasture to be made forest land?—Not in my part of the country.

43766. You mentioned that Lord Seafield gave rough wood and slates towards dwelling houses; does he charge interest for the slates, or is it given without interest?—It is given without interest. I don't know how it is given at the renewal of the lease, but in the meantime it is given without interest.

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43767. So the proprietor provides rough wood and slates; does he lay the slates down at the place?—No, the tenant carts them.

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43768. Now, supposing a new house on a farm of £20 or £30, what sort of a house is built with the assistance of the proprietor?—Well, I suppose, it would be best described in the old Scotch saying as 'a but and a ben,' with generally attics.

Duncan
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43769. With a closet below or sleeping room?—Yes.

43770. Three rooms below and two above?—Yes.

43771. With glass windows and a chimney at each end?—Yes.

43772. Is the wall built of stone and lime usually?—Yes.

43773. When it comes to be finished, how much do you think it costs altogether? It would cost more than £100?—I cannot speak from experience in the matter, but I think £100 would build a fairly respectable crofter's house.

43774. What share of the value of the house is represented by the rough wood and the slates, and what share is represented by the expenditure on work and the stones and the fittings inside? How much does the proprietor substantially do, and how much does the tenant do?—That is a subject on which I have arrived at no definite conclusion.

43775. I understand there is a great deal of wood and probably good wood for building purposes, and there are saw-mills, and so on; would it be considered a great advantage by the tenantry if the wood were supplied in the manufactured state—if the couples and boards were cut out, for instance?—Yes, it would be considered a great advantage.

43776. What provision is there for compensation for the value of such a house at the end of the lease if the man goes away?—I don't know of any compensation.

43777. Though there are no rules, what is practically done? Did you ever know a case of a man going away and another man coming in? How was the man going away compensated for his outlay on the house?—I am not aware he receives any compensation.

43778. Does the man who is coming in ever compensate him; does he pay anything for the standing improvements?—Sometimes he gives a grassum; but that is a word I don't understand. It is not so much for the improvements as for coming in.

43779. You mean as a sort of good-will?—Yes.

43780. Is that paid to the landlord or to the outgoing tenant?—To the outgoing tenant.

43781. The landlord takes no part of it?—No.

43782. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—What rent does your father pay?—I think he pays rather more than £100.

43783. Do you help your father?—Yes, I have done so since I was fourteen years of ago.

43784. Where were you educated?—At the parochial school in Strathspey.

43785. Have you been away out of the country at all?—No.

43786. You are accustomed to speak in public, are you?—Not to any great extent.

43787. Where did you learn that accomplishment; was it in Strathspey?—I don't know whether I can consider it an accomplishment or not.

43788. But such as it is you have learnt it at home?—Yes.

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43789. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Is this grassum given with the knowledge of the proprietor or factor, or given underhand?—It is given with the knowledge of the factor. It is only given in some cases, I suppose.

Hon. THOMAS CHARLES BRUCE, M.P., Commissioner on the Seafield Estates (58)—examined.

Hon. T. C.
Bruce, M.P.

43790. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement you would like to make?—Yes. I have no written statement, but I have certain notes which I wish to read to you illustrative of the management and general state of Lord Seafield's property in Strathspey, and which will have some bearing on the principal questions which you are considering. I would like to go a little way back so as to explain myself clearly. I may add that I have been for thirty years in charge of this property, and I think I know it pretty well, and that the changes which have been made, and which I shall describe, have been made almost entirely on my responsibility. When I first knew it thirty years ago there were a large number of tenants, as there are now. They held patches of arable land, and they held a considerable amount of common pasture. In addition to that there were certain plantations, and the great forests of Duthil, from which, according to the regulations on which they held their farms, they were excluded. But as a matter of fact all these regulations have been neglected, and they used the pasture in those forests and also in the plantations. This state of things had existed, I presume, for a considerable time, but I think the pasturing had increased very much within the last fifty or sixty years. Previous to that, in Sir James Grant's time, when there was nothing like bad harvests, it was frequently necessary for Sir James to spend large sums of money in bringing meal up to the inhabitants, else they could not have lived. The last time that happened was in 1822, so I hold the progress of the country since that time has been very great. When I was first in this country there was a peculiar arrangement here that all the leases fell out at the same time, and when I first saw it in 1853 the whole of the country was under lease, up to the year 1863 or 1864. There were a great many of these common rights of grazing and others which were very much intermingled, and it was very difficult to do anything with them; and, accordingly, during these years there was no change made. But I had had during that interval an opportunity of considering very maturely what could be done with the property; and it appeared to me that in justice, not only to the landlord but to the country, I must consider how I could make it available for the district and for the country at large. Now I found this peculiarity about it, and it is limited to the area of that county, viz., that along the course of the Spey from Craigellachie and Aviemore to near Sir George Macpherson Grant's march, the land is almost exclusively of a very gravelly character. The result of that is that there is very little grass on it, and that it is available, the better parts of it, for arable land—it makes very fair arable land, what is improvable—but that the moors are excessively dry and very barren. It is of very little value as a summer grazing at all. Where we have grazings we estimate that five acres are required for a sheep, which at 1s. 3d. a head, makes 3d. per acre as the value of the land. But that very quality makes it very valuable as wintering, because in winter the water does not lie so much as it does in other districts, and it becomes valuable for wintering sheep on the low ground. In addition to that, it is extra-

ordinarily adapted for the growth of trees. I suppose there is no district in Scotland equal to it. The most of these dry moors were available for plantation, and in these forests the trees came up naturally; in fact, they were only kept down by burning and other means, and it occurred to me that to do proper justice to it the real thing was to keep in view the production of wood as much as possible—to encourage as far as possible the arable land, and not to attach to the summer grazing an importance which it did not deserve. I may add that a good deal of the land was held in common, but there were constant disputes among the tenants about the commonies; and when two men have undefined claims to a certain thing, and one is strong and rich and the other is poor, I defy any law or regulation to keep the one from infringing upon the other. That was what happened, and there were constant complaints on the subject. As to the natural forests on Abernethy and Duthil, this was the state of affairs. There were a large number of sheep kept there by the tenants, but as the putting of sheep there was illegal they paid no rent for it, and the whole rent of that district of Abernethy was £90, though there were some thousands of sheep—not 70,000, but, I suppose, about 5000 or 6000. These sheep were kept on the top of the hills in summer and in the woods in winter. But they were absolutely destructive to those woods, because there is a difference between planted woods and natural woods in that respect. If you enclose a plantation the plants are all the same age, and they get on uniformly, and after a certain number of years you may open the plantation as soon as it has got well out of reach of the sheep and cattle. But in natural woods the trees are of all ages at the same time, and you cannot open any of it, because you destroy the small trees even if the large ones can take care of themselves. The sheep were entirely destructive to these small trees, particularly in winter. In summer, when they had other pasture, they did not eat them much, but in winter, when the tops of the trees came up above the snow, they cropped them, and though they did not kill them they retarded the growth. That was the case with the natural fir and with the larch and birch. Now, these being the circumstances—I am afraid I speak rather egotistically—at the time the leases came out I determined I should do what I could to put the ground in the most available condition possible. I accordingly first had a plan made of the whole place, with the existing farms. We then marked upon that plan whatever was available for wood, and that we reserved, including the natural forest. The farms were very much disjointed. The marches were very bad, and we straightened the marches as much as we could. We then divided the commons as far as possible between the separate tenants, as we found the tenants both liked it better and got a better advantage of the piece they had themselves than of a piece divided with others. In some places it was impossible to do that, and we still had the commonies of two or three farms; but these commons have invariably been the subject of discontent, and whenever it was possible to divide them we had to do so since. That was done in the year 1864—in three successive years ending in 1866. We endeavoured to supply an arable farm to every tenant we had, and we succeeded, because nobody was evicted. I instructed Mr Mackay, whose name you may perhaps have heard, and who was a very eminent surveyor and valuer, to go over the whole thing, and re-distribute the farms and value them on these conditions, taking away the woods and dividing the commons, and that was done, and the result was that the rents were fixed by him, that the whole of these farms were re-let on these conditions, and at the rents so fixed, and there has been no change since. That they have been entirely satisfactory to everybody I shall be surprised to hear, because I don't know

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Hon. T. C.
Bruce, M.P.

INVERNESS.
KINGUSSIE.
Hon. T. C.
Bruce, M.P.

anything that is satisfactory to everybody in any part of the world that I have been. But on the whole I have not heard any great complaints. I am certain the property has increased immensely in value, not only to the landlord, but to the people occupying it, and I am certain it has a very different appearance from what it had then. We attached to the farms all the land which by the wildest imagination we conceived would be improvable, and the tenants undertook to improve these parcels. They have not done it entirely. They have done the easiest parts, and we never pressed them *any more about it*. This occurred two years after the greatest improvements that have taken place in the country, namely, the opening of the railway from Inverness to Perth and the other railway that goes up the Speyside, so that the condition of the tenants was very much improved by these circumstances, and I can give you an instance. I remember, when I was here first, I used to see people selling a three-year-old beast at £8, and now they sell a one-year-old beast at £9. Such were the conditions under which I put the place. I quite admit that some of the holdings are too small. I would willingly have enlarged them. I quite admit it; I have no hesitation about it; though on the whole when they are industrious they manage to get on, but it was the express wish of the late Lord Seafield that none of his tenants should be removed in carrying out this operation, and accordingly we had to divide the land according to the number of tenants, and not according to the way one would abstractly like to do it. Then came the great difficulty—if these people were to take to arable farming. They had neglected their arable farms as long as they had these commons. It was necessary to give them some facility. Formerly all the buildings belonged to the tenants, and they held them on a condition that when turned out at the end of the lease they were entitled to two years' rent as compensation. As they never were turned out they never got compensation, but the claim remained, and the buildings were partially theirs, and nothing could be done for it. You had a difficulty between what was your part and what was the tenants, and as a matter of fact, both farm houses and buildings were perfectly miserable from one end of the property to the other. I did away with these claims by giving a reduction on the valued rent equivalent to what would, in fact, be a terminable annuity, which would pay that amount during the lease, and the houses reverted to the proprietor. But they reverted to the proprietor in this condition, that nine-tenths of them were quite unfit for any decent system of farming. They were so bad that the larger class of cattle could not be accommodated, and we were accordingly obliged to make a very large expenditure on these subjects. I find that during the twenty years which have elapsed since then we have spent £85,000 on buildings alone. The system we went upon is this. Where there was a farm that required a totally new steading—remember the thing was taken and valued as it stood—we built the steading and charged interest upon it. This is the great difficulty with all small farming—the buildings. If you build steadings and charge interest, you raise the rents so much that the people cannot pay, and so in many cases we were obliged to abate a great part of the interest. Then we took this system of giving tenants wood and slate to build their houses, they being able to build the walls or get them built, particularly the smaller ones, the principal outlay being the wood and slate, and the wood work of the farm; so we saved them most of the outlay they would have had to sustain. The stones were at hand, and they could generally get them built easily enough. A good many of the houses were built in that way. There was no interest charged on that. The tenant did his part and we did ours. If one was evicted it would go back to the landlord; but, as I said, they were never

evicted, and we need not consider that agency. In addition, there was a great want of roads and of outlets for water on the wet ground, and on that we expended £25,000 in twenty years, besides £40,000 which we repaid to the tenants for the value of their tenant rights. I think I may say that was the position in which we placed the agricultural tenants. I should be very much pleased to make the conditions better, but as a matter of fact for the last twenty years we never evicted anybody. There was one case where we summoned three people in the forest of Duthil. They said they would like to remain on from year to year, and we paid them back the expenses of the summonses, and they are there from year to year. Of course farms have changed hands from the death of the tenant or abandonment. In almost every case we allow the tenants, when they wish to retire, to find a successor, and make their own terms; and I am informed that generally speaking, the successor pays a grassum—namely, a premium to get into the farm—which shows the bargain is not so bad as some people say. This, of course, goes to them, and with that we have nothing to do. There has been a considerable increase in the price of cattle, and of produce. There has been a considerable addition to the prosperity of the country since these buildings were made, and large numbers of people come there in summer—because, apart from the shooting people, there are large numbers who come and fill every farm house, and who spend a large amount of money in the country, principally in the purchase of chickens, eggs, and so on. Then the shooting tenants of the grouse moors, of whom we have several, also spend a good deal of money in the country. I daresay your Lordship is not aware that, of late years, there has been a complete change in the system of shootings. I remember when people taking shootings went into the next cottage and lived six weeks there, and went away again. Now everybody who has a shooting wants a country house, and we have had to build them. They bring their families and visitors, and spend a great deal of money in the place, and all that has been to the advantage of the district. But the greatest source of future prosperity, to my mind, has always been the wood. I think, in time, when the forests as we have them get into proper order, the wood will be even more than it has been a great source of revenue and of employment in the district. I have a paper here with reference to these woods which may be interesting. This is the result; that, during the years from 1854 to the present time we have spent £83,000 in labour in these woods. Almost the whole of it has been spent in labour by the people of the district. We have sold timber to the amount of £200,000, and I am informed by the people who deal with this that it is our practice to sell the wood standing. We never manufacture or interfere with it. It is done by the purchasers, and I am informed the amount paid by them is about equal to the amount paid by us; that is to say, if they paid say £200,000 to us, they must have spent nearly as much again in the district. Now, the wood as a great industry in this district is only beginning. In old days they had these forests. The grandfather of the present Earl cut down a very great part of them. When I saw them first nine-tenths of the good trees were cut down, and they had done nothing to restore them. During that time I have no doubt a great deal of money was spent in the district; but that was a system which could not go on for ever. The sums spent by the late Lord Seafield on wood were, so far as he was concerned, practically unremunerative. What we cut down was what remained of the old woods; but they will all go on increasing, and I have no doubt that in future years the amount of money spent in that district, owing to the woods, will be very much in excess of all the rental otherwise; and it has always been my view that if we wish to make the best of

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Hon. T. C.
Bruce, M.P.

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Hon. T. C.
Bruce, M.P.

that place, we should encourage the production of wood as much as we can, not for the immediate advantage of the landlord, for it is not so, but for the future advantage of the landlord and the whole district, both his own tenants and the rest of the country in general. In coming to this question of the woods, I come to the question of the deer forests. I found that the lower part of the forest of Abernethy was entirely fitted, with the exception of a few morasses, for the production of wood. But wood is more or less growing on a large proportion of it, and a very large proportion of it would also grow it, so that if I had cut off from the forest all that is valuable for wood—which I certainly would not have done, for I would not have left it to be destroyed as it was before—I should only have left for grazing the higher ground above the 2000 feet line, a great part of which is barren, and is not suitable for any grazing except for a very short time of the year. To have attempted to do that would have cost an immense sum in fencing and trying to separate the different portions. I found that this very high grazing was really not of very great value, and that the wintering of the lower ground, as I was informed, was more valuable when taken by foreign sheep than it was for the sheep that had been grown there principally, as they were obliged to be kept for a very short period of the year on the hill pasture; and that the common rights that existed in some of the tenants up there were not of very great value, and under the new lease they were excluded, and the new rents were formed upon that estimate. Then, having done that, it naturally followed, having cleared the upper part, that the deer came in, and I can assure your Lordship and the Commission that the forming of the deer forest up there was not my original intention. It was the consequence, not the cause, of the enclosing of that forest, and the results financially you have before you. But I wish to explain on what ground we took that course. The same applies to the forest of Duthil, which has been enclosed in the same circumstances, though it is not adjacent to other deer forests in the way the forest of Abernethy is. Now, as to the land which Lawson talked about, the whole of that was a sea-bed of natural trees. We enclosed and planted a good deal of it, and the rest of it was coming up with trees. We enclosed it, and put up an additional wire to prevent the deer coming out again; but the upper parts of the hills are perfectly barren and it was impossible to make a sheep grazing there if the woods were enclosed. We have, as I say, a certain number of these small tenants—not very small tenants. We have a great many under £30. I think we have something like two hundred and forty. We have not very many of the very small crofter class; and I confess I am not very much inclined to increase that class. We tried that by improving land in some places, but it did not answer very well. I think, in a country like this, where you have easy means of communication, and where there are centres of population, the men do better as labourers altogether than as half labourers and half farmers. It struck me very forcibly in connection with another matter which does not concern this country. I have seen a great deal of what occurred before you as to the fishermen on the west coast wanting more land. I don't give an opinion about the west coast, but we have a great number of fishermen on Lord Seafield's property. They have houses on a tenure as if they were freehold. There are lotted lands which they can get, but they don't want them; and their idea is that the business of a fisherman is to fish, and they have built fishing villages which compare favourably with any villages in Scotland. They are very well off. They stick to their work, and do nothing else. All they ask is better harbour accommodation, and they stick entirely to their business. I don't think the class of crofters is a very desirable class to increase in a country like

this. The number of tenants paying £30 and upwards is eighty-five, and the number we have under that is three hundred and forty. Then we have, in addition to that, a number of tenants in villages like Grantown who occupy pieces of lotted lands, which are given from year to year to tenants of the houses there. In addition to that, we have about fifty-three tenants who occupy sites on which they build houses and pay 10s. a year for the house and garden. These people have one hundred years' leases, and seem quite contented with things as they are, and don't seem to be afraid of being turned out. In addition to that, we have a certain number of cottars who hold from the tenants themselves. We have no control of them except this, that no tenant can discharge a crofter without the consent of the landlord. I may add, with reference to emigration, that in this district the young men have been in the habit of going out of it. They used to go very much into the army. I remember being told, fifty years ago, that most of the farms were occupied by old half-pay officers, and the young men went greatly into the army and into other professions, and a great many of them have risen to eminence in all professions. There is a certain amount of migration of that nature which goes on now. We don't interfere with it in any way, but we don't promote it. However, some of them go and some come back, and the state of things is sufficiently healthy in that respect. I don't think I have anything further to say. I wished to explain generally how I had acted with reference to this locality, and what the results generally had been, and particularly in regard to the question of deer forests, how it came that we had any of them, and the reasons we had for taking those steps.

43791. I understood you to say that, when the estate was re-lotted and the rents were fixed, it was about twenty years ago?—It was nearly twenty years ago.

43792. Then a new order of things having been established about twenty years ago, the people have been living under leases since at the same rents?—Yes.

43793. But with advantages gradually growing up around them such as you have described?—Yes.

43794. I suppose it was a nineteen years' lease?—Yes.

43795. Then the leases are about to be renewed?—Yes.

43796. There has been, then, upon the small tenantry or agricultural tenantry generally no increase of rental since that period?—None.

43797. What system do you intend to pursue in the way of revaluation at the end of the lease which is now about to expire?—I shall pursue the same system as I did before. I shall get some competent person to examine things, and to report to me what he considers to be a fair and easy rent—not a pressure rent, as we would never think of that. We shall then negotiate with the tenants, and shall see if they will accept it, which they probably will.

43798. Dealing with every case individually?—Yes.

43799. In the course of this long lapse of years there must of course have been some accidental vacancies?—Yes.

43800. When these vacancies have occurred what course has been pursued in re-letting the holdings to new tenants?—When a vacancy occurred from a man wishing to go away and give up his place, it has been our usual practice, almost universally, to say—‘If you can find anybody to ‘take your farm up, do so,’ and as a matter of fact, in many instances where that has occurred, they got a premium from the person coming in, which is what the last witness called a grassum. That represents his idea of the value of the holding.

43801. Then, any increment of value which has accrued has gone into

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Hon. T.C.
Bruce, M.P.

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the pocket of the tenant who goes away, and not into the pocket of the landlord?—Certainly, up to that point.

KINGUSSIE.

Hon. T. C. Bruce, M.P.

43802. But, as a matter of fact, have small farms, in case of vacancy, been re-let at an increase of rental or not?—There have been very few of them re-let. Most of them have been handed over from one tenant to another at the same rent. In a few instances where we have taken offers, I think I may say we have always had offers beyond our present rent.

43803. Always had offers?—I think so. I would not be too sure, but I know we have had it in several instances.

43804. Have you had considerable competition to obtain a footing on the estate?—Yes.

43805. So, judging by the market value of your holdings, they have not been re-let above their value?—No, I don't think so. There have been very bad years. There was one year when we made a reduction of 15 per cent., and there have been, as there are always in those large bodies, men who work and men who don't, and the men who did not work sometimes got into arrear, but the amount of the arrear is not so large as it was under the old system.

43806. With reference to the system of buying up the tenant's interest in his buildings, of which you spoke, the tenant's interest in the old building has been entirely extinguished by gradual repayment on the part of the proprietor to the tenant; was that system of repayment to the tenant introduced at the very beginning of the lease, or has it been introduced more recently?—It was introduced when the farms were re-let. The agreement with the tenants was this—‘ This is the rent; we deduct so much a year from it,’—that so much representing the amount of his claim for buildings.

43807. Was that a contemporary arrangement? These arrangements were made together?—They were made together.

43808. I think you may have heard a question I asked a previous witness about an improved house, when an improved house is constructed on the estate what element in the house is contributed by the landlord and what by the tenant?—I really cannot give you the money value of the two. The idea we have is this, that the tenant can generally get his walls built very much cheaper than we can do it, but what he has to pay money for, such as wood or slates, we can do better than he—at least we can do it with greater ease—and that is the way we divided the expense. As I said, on the large farms where we erect new steadings altogether, our practice has been to build the steadings and charge interest; but there, I say, is the great difficulty with small farms. It is the expense of buildings, which increases every year in course of time as the breed of cattle improves.

43809. But what I point at, and what I think I see, is this, that whereas you have with one hand extinguished the proprietary right on the part of the tenants in the old buildings entirely, you have allowed the tenants to acquire a new interest in their buildings?—No, because, as to the new interest, the tenant does that under the condition that the building belongs to the proprietor when he goes out.

43810. Is that a written condition, or is it just the custom of the estate?—I really cannot tell you. It is so habitual that I suppose it is a custom.

43811. But still the tenant does practically seem to have sold his buildings to the incoming tenant in a certain measure in connection with this grassum?—No, because practically the incoming tenant was the same person.

43812. But suppose he was not the same person?—If he had not been the same person, in all probability—that is what we have done in other

cases—we should have bought up the outgoing tenant's right ourselves at once, and then we let the thing free to the new tenant.

43813. Then the system of indemnifying or compensating the outgoing tenant has been, in exceptional cases, attempted and practised?—It has been practised on other parts of the estate much more largely, where the tenants don't remain so continuously as they do here. I cannot call to mind whether there was any instance of its being applied on this property, because I don't at this moment remember anybody who went out. In fact, at that re-letting nobody did.

43814. But, the compensation for improvements being an interesting point at this moment, may that question not be raised in connection with the new leases? Supposing—which I don't believe to be the case—there was any considerable number of tenants at the end of the present lease who really wanted to shift and move off, would not the question of the value of their houses arise?—No, they have no interest in the houses.

43815. That is distinctly understood?—Distinctly.

43816. Yet you say upon other parts of the property the interest has been recognised?—On other parts of the property, where we have more changes of tenants, we bought up the right of the outgoing tenant, on this ground, I may say, almost universal in this country and all through the north of Scotland, that a man who goes into a farm has not more money than is necessary to stock it, if so much, and if you call upon him to pay meliorations to his predecessor you cramp him at the very beginning of his lease. That is why we were not doing it.

43817. Suppose a case should arise of a man having spent in labour or value £50 or £60 upon a new house, you of course spending your own proportion—say £20 or £30—and suppose he died, and did not leave a family capable of retaining the holding, and the family expressly desired to go, and went, the proprietor would have some difficulty, would he not, in a case of that kind, in declining to recognise his claim to compensation?—I don't think we would have any difficulty in declining to recognise it. I think in a case of that kind we should do something for him, but I don't think there would be a legal claim upon us. I say it has very seldom occurred.

43818. With reference to the woods and the introduction of this great branch of industry, had the woods generally, as a mass, been formed upon ground which did produce woods naturally before?—Well, the forests, of course, were the old wood forests, and besides, a great part of the ground which we planted had some trees on it. I mean we rather took that as an indication that it was a good place to plant—not universally so—but the growth of trees is so common about that district that the bare places which we took to plant, as a general rule, had some few trees about them, although we planted them up with fresh ones.

43819. Then the large values obtained for wood which you mentioned, I presume, were for the trees as planted and grown long before your own time?—Of course. There were three or four large plantations made towards the beginning of this century. Thereafter there had been hardly any till within the last few years, and there had been certain parts of the old forest that had not been cut away which were ripe and available, and these were sold. We have still some. We have not got the thing, and we shall not have it for several years to come, into the condition in which it ought to be, where there would be a regular rotation of different woods going on simultaneously to be cutting down in regular rotation.

43820. You don't cut down in regular areas completely, and re-plant?—In the plantation we do. In the forest we don't, because things are too irregular, and we must take the trees as they are.

INVERNESS.
KINGUSSIE.
Hon. T. C.
Bruce, M.P.

INVER- 43821. But in the plantations you mean to cut and plant—not to
NESS. depend so much on gradual thinning, but cutting the whole?—That
KINGUSSIE. depends on their ages. I suppose these plantations will be thinned every
Hon. T. C. five or six years from the time they are twenty years old till they are
Bruce, M.P. eighty or ninety. They probably will not get to complete maturity till
they are eighty or ninety. It varies with the constitution of the trees.

43822. Then, as to those trees planted on pasture grounds or lands, at
what age can the grounds be rendered available for pasture grounds?—It
is not a question of age. It depends on the rapidity of the growth of
the trees. The trees must be 12 or 15 feet high before they are safe, and
what we would do with them then would be to let the woods to the
neighbouring tenants as a general rule as pasture, and they are more
valuable than they were, partly because they give shelter, and partly
because they are fenced.

43823. Then the practice of pasturing is admitted as early as when they
are 12 or 15 feet high?—Yes; I am speaking from memory, but I think
that is so.

43824. Under what sort of tree do you find the grass best for the
purpose of sheep pasture?—Well, the best grass, I think, is in the birch
woods.

43825. These I presume, are natural woods?—These are all natural.

43826. And in the planted woods?—I really can hardly say—I think
the fir, perhaps. The great majority of our woods are fir. We have very
little planted larch. We have some natural larch, which is a curiosity.
Otherwise it is only the fir and the birch.

43827. You mentioned that, in connection with the system of felling
wood of the older race of trees, you felled the wood and did not manu-
facture it?—We don't fell it even. It is sold standing; that is to say,
when there are pieces cut clean away we always sell it standing. When
they are thinned we do nothing else than knock them over, in case people
take the wrong trees.

43828. What kind of parties are employed in the work at the trees?
Where do the contractors come from who do that work?—There are
certain large merchants who come from the south who do that work—firms
from Glasgow, Paisley, and other places.

43829. Do these firms bring people with them or employ the people of
the place?—I don't know. I think they employ a good many of the
people of the district. They bring their machinery with them and horses;
and whoever they bring must be fed here, and it creates a market.

43830. So there is local employment and local purchase or local sale
created in connection with the wood industry?—Yes. We employ, of
course, entirely natives of the district, and when we fell or thin trees we
employ natives. We have men accustomed to that work, who take it on
contract, and do it at so much per dozen. The purchasers, I think, them-
selves employ a certain number of people, but I never inquired carefully
how they did it; but they bring their own machinery. The wood trade is
now run so close that you cannot make any good of it unless you get large
quantities.

43831. You have no saw-mills where boarding is cut up or rafters are
prepared?—There are several in the district, and they are let.

43832. You have devised this system not to manufacture, but to leave
that to others?—I have deliberately adopted it, and I had before me what
happened on this property before when they cut down a large proportion
of the wood and never got anything for it after all the expense had
been incurred. Of course, the railways have improved the market very
much compared with what it used to be.

43833. During the course of your administration, has there first and last been a sort of rent got for the land occupied by the older timber?—There has been a considerable rent for the surface of those plantations which were old enough—I mean those which were forty or fifty years old when I first saw the country. There has been a considerable return out of them. As to the forests, I cannot say there has been a large return on the whole area, because the forests have been almost entirely denuded; at least three-fourths of them were destroyed. But I can give you an illustration of what may happen. I don't say it will, but I say it might. There was a wood of Lord Seafield's down the Spey in the district of Rothes, which is thirty acres in extent, about eighty years old, and in very good order. It had been always kept in order by the late Mr Brown, and it was sold all standing at the rate of £120 an acre, which, if you capitalise it, would be a capital of £5 an acre for that ground which was not worth 1s. otherwise.

43834. Was it larch?—Fir. That was a very exceptional price. I never heard of anything so high.

43835. That was old natural timber?—No, it was planted timber about eighty or ninety years old.

43836. Is there no regular income or what may be called rent derived from the natural copsewood and brushwood of the country?—There is an uncertain income derived from that, and we sell a good deal from time to time, but we have not a very great deal of it. The worst of the natural birch is that it has been all pastured, a great deal of it, and the trees have grown into bushes, and it is only if they are trained and the sheep kept off them that they grow into regular trees, but they are valuable when they are so treated.

43837. When you cut the natural wood do you do it in regular areas, or do you thin it?—It is generally thinned out.

43838. Do you fence it afterwards?—Not in these birch woods. We have some, but not generally speaking.

43839. Is there great dilapidation of the old birch woods?—We only take out thinnings where they are thick. We preserve them more for the beauty of the country than for anything else.

43840. With reference to the deer forests on the estate, I understand you to say the deer forests grew up by a sort of necessity, but having grown up as a sort of necessity they have been administered, I suppose, for profit?—I mean they have been let.

43841. Since they have become in that way a source of profit to the proprietor, has the area of deer forest been, at any period, studiously enlarged?—No. The area is the same as it was originally made for the wood, and it has never been altered. There was a division fence put round against the farms, but otherwise the area was not altered. I believe there was a small addition with which I had nothing to do in one part of the forest of Abernethy where a village of crofters bounded upon it, and the late Lord Stamford got from them by private bargain a piece of their pasture which he paid them for, and I fancy, paid them **very well**; but that was entirely an agreement between them.

43842. I understand that, in your time, and for many years past, no tenant has been removed in connection with the deer forest?—There were some removed from the forest of Abernethy into the other districts when it was enclosed for wood.

43843. But not specifically appropriated to deer?—No.

43844. Had they any arable ground?—They had little patches, and they lived principally on the sheep which they grazed in the forest, and when we stopped the grazing of the sheep in the forest we offered them other places.

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**Hon. T. C.
Bruce, M.P.**

43845. Then no sheep farm has been cleared and appropriated to the use of deer?—No, we had not another.

43846. Have you any sheep farms out of lease now?—No, we have practically no sheep farms on the property. We have one or two larger grazings, but the grazing is so bad that we never can get much for it.

43847. So, in connection with this estate, the question of clearing men and clearing sheep for the purpose of deer forests does not arise?—No, we only cleared the sheep for another object, as I explained.

43848. And this was rather in the form of summer grazings, not regular sheep farms?—Yes. They were summer grazings, and there was the wintering in the woods, which was the object for which I put an end to the whole thing.

43849. Has the general population of the estate increased or decreased in your term of administration?—It has slightly decreased. The number of farms has increased, but the general population has done what, as I take it, it has done in every rural district of Britain—it has decreased.

43850. There has been a slight decrease by voluntary withdrawal?—Entirely voluntary. A great many of the young men go away for a time and return.

43851. *Mr Cameron.*—What do you suppose one of the witnesses previously examined meant when he said there was a hardship in Sir John Ramsden taking the grazings?—I will tell you what that was. It so happened with regard to one of these woods, not very large, some years ago, that the tenant alongside of it refused to take it. I suppose he objected to the rent. Sir John Ramsden offered to take it for the winter, and he got it. It only occurred once. It was one of the plantations that we let regularly.

43852. I suppose you would have had no objection to let it to your own tenants?—I would have preferred to do so, but they did not choose to take it.

43853. May I ask, with reference to these old forests, do you sell any of the fir cones to the seedsmen?—We don't sell them, but some of the nurserymen in the south collect them for themselves.

43854. You allow them to collect them in the woods?—Yes. I think the late Mr Gregor, Forres, used to collect a good many and plant them. The majority of our plants we don't grow from seed in our own nursery. We take them after they have been grown a year in the south, and put them in our own nursery.

43855. You buy them as seedlings from the nurseryman?—Yes; to a great extent. We do grow some.

43856. How do you guarantee that these seedlings are native fir?—We cannot be sure. We take our chance.

43857. I suppose most of these seedlings are native fir?—Yes, and we find that when the fir is put in this soil it generally grows well whatever it is.

43858. You don't attribute much importance to the fact of its being native seed or not in this soil?—That is rather a disputed point. I don't, but I know some other people have a different opinion.

43859. *The Chairman.*—Do you plant all varieties of hardwood trees systematically?—No, there are very few hardwood trees in this district that will grow. They keep in life, but they don't increase. The summers are not warm enough for them.

43860. What is the highest elevation at which you have got trees planted for profit?—The highest is about 2000 feet.

43861. I don't speak of the natural woods, but of the planted ground?—We have some planted ground in the forest of Duthil which is about

2000 feet, but I think they would grow perfectly well if they were sheltered. On the tops of the hills they will not do anything at that height.

INVER-
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KINGUSSIE.

Hon. T. C.
Bruce, M.P.**CHARLES J. BREWSTER MACPHERSON** of Belleville—examined.Charles J.
Brewster
Macpherson.

43862. *The Chairman.*—You wish to make a statement in consequence of something that has occurred elsewhere?—Yes. At Inverness, before this Commission, reference was made to something which was stated to have occurred on my property at Glen Banchor. The person who made reference to me on that occasion was unable to answer the questions which your Lordship then asked in reference to that, and I thought, as you had come into this neighbourhood, it would be courteous in me to attend and endeavour to answer any questions you might desire to put. I should like to explain one or two points in reference to these removals. The statement which was made at Inverness appeared to convey the impression that the removals had been made with the express intention of forming a large sheep farm. That was not so. The removals were effected because, in the first place, the houses were all ruinous and dangerous to live in, the place was unsuitable for the cultivation of crop, and in the event of any scheme having been devised by the proprietor for making houses for the tenants the interest of these buildings would have swallowed up the rent which might have been obtainable for the land. Seven were stated to have been removed from Glen Banchor. One of these was removed for reasons which I consider, and which were considered at the time in the management of the estate, as sufficient and good. I have no wish to enter into them now. One was allowed to give up his lease, and we forgave him £42, 10s., five years' arrears. This was a miller whose mill had fallen into disuse, and was no longer used by the people. Two were given crofts on the property elsewhere.

43863. Then all the number stated to have been removed were practically provided for in one shape or another, and compensated for their losses in removal?—I shall not go so far as to say they were compensated. I don't think they suffered loss.

43864. But one of them received five years' rental?—Yes, he asked to be allowed to retire before the end of his lease.

43865. And he received five years' rental?—He was forgiven between four and five years' rent. I may say as regards the general question of crofters, I have a very great belief in the capability of crofters to do well on crofts of a good size, and of the average kind. An intelligent, industrious tenant of my own told me he did not think a £20 croft large enough for a man and his family to do well upon. I have a farm on my estate which I intended to divide into three or four small farms, but I am assured by men who understand the subject better than I do that the expense of building, and the fact that there are buildings to the value of £1700 already on the ground, make the scheme impracticable, and I can only afford to carry it out on a commercial basis. In the evidence given to-day reference was made by a witness who presented himself from part of my property. I specially use the word witness, for I do not consider him a delegate for the rest of my tenants. Among other things, the witness mentioned that land had been taken from the crofters' low pastures for the purpose of plantation, and he also said that no compensation had been made to the tenants, and that the land so taken was amongst the best of the pasture. I admit that the land was taken, but the other thing I contradict entirely.

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Charles J.
Brewster
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In the first place, the land that was taken for planting was of a very inferior description for the purpose of grazing. The enclosure of these places for planting was done not for any profit that was likely to be derived by the estate from the timber which might grow in the parts enclosed, but solely with a view to afford shelter to the crofts of the district and to the village. In one case which has happened recently a small strip was enclosed at considerable expense, considering the size of the bit, solely with the view of protecting a small number of crofts of which the croft of the witness who appeared here to-day was one. In this case no compensation was allowed to the tenants. They fully acquiesced in the taking of this bit for planting. They understood the reason of it, and understood that the benefit derived from the shelter obtained from this wood would far more than counterbalance the small sum—perhaps 1s., a year—that might have been returned to them by this very useless bit of ground. The witness who made a statement here to-day, and who was kind enough to criticise the management of my property, has had but one year's experience of it,—his brother and himself having little more than a year ago entered into the joint tenancy of a farm the rent of which is £42, 10s. I should like to add that the witness stated that the remainder of my tenants would have come forward to-day only they were afraid to do so. Many of my tenants are old friends of my own, and I take upon myself the entire responsibility of denying that statement *in toto*. I shall be glad to answer any questions.

43866. There was a complaint made, I think, in connection with this case, that the common pasture was not fenced off from the adjacent ground? —Yes.

43867. Well, the witness stated that the pasture was run upon by stock from the adjacent farm, and that it would be a great benefit to the crofters if their common pasture was fenced by a wire fence, and he was asked whether they had ever applied to the proprietor for such a fence, and he said no; was your attention ever called to the expediency of putting a fence round this common pasture? —No, I may say that to-day is the first occasion on which I heard it. At the same time, I may state that any fence I have been asked by my tenants to erect I have always put up. I have recently put up one at the request of the witness who made the statement.

43868. Without any expenditure or co-operation on their part? —Except that they carted the materials to the ground.

43869. Was it not also in this case that a piece of ground had been given on the other side of the river? —I imagine that must have been at the time the plantations were made.

43870. But do they actually enjoy a piece of ground on the other side of the river? —I accept the statement of the witness to-day. I was not aware of it.

43871. *Mr Cameron.* —Was this plantation we have heard spoken of made before the witness came to your property? —Yes.

43872. Then you mean to say that when he came, the plantation was there already? —Yes, and about four years old.

COLIN MACKENZIE, Crofter, Grantown—examined.

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MacKenzie.

43873. *The Chairman.* —On whose ground are you settled? —Lord Seafield's ground.

43874. You have heard the previous delegates from other parts of the

estate. Do you agree substantially with what they stated?—Well, I differ from them in some things.

43875. Will you make your statement? Have you brought a written statement?—I have a few notes. 'I was elected a delegate to represent my 'own district of Braes of Castle Grant, and to make a general statement. 'The holdings in my immediate neighbourhood vary in extent from six to 'thirty acres, and are rented at from £5 to £29. They were improved by the 'present and former occupiers entirely at their own expense, unless in one 'or two instances, where a leading drain and a few others were put in by 'the proprietor. I take the croft which I hold as a specimen. In my 'grandfather's time, seventy-four years ago, it was rented at £5, 5s. 5d., 'and contained about six acres of arable land, with a run of the hill pasture 'then commony. In 1848 about thirty acres of birchwood pasture were 'added, and the rent raised to £11, 10s. My father then began to improve 'or rather trench, so that at the setting of the last lease sixteen years ago 'the arable acres were brought up to twenty, and the present rent is £19 on 'account of improvements; that meant a yearly tax of £7, 10s. on his own 'labour. The privileges of the hill were very much curtailed, being restricted 'to the keeping of seventy-five sheep. The run of a strip of fir plantation 'was cut away by the wood manager, but let to him at the sum of £3 from 'year to year until six years ago, when it was raised, double which I have 'since paid. That is £25 yearly now, and just £2 more than double what 'it was during the previous lease. During the first four or five years of 'the current lease my father turned his attention to the building and slat- 'ing of dwelling houses and outhouses, on which he spent much labour and 'expense. The proprietor gave the wood in a rough state and £38 for the 'slate; £64 would be about the value. On my father complaining that 'that sum was too little, the factor passed him off with the remark, "You 'will yet find that you have got enough." We could only infer from 'that remark that we'll be charged on our own industry as usual. We were 'justified in making this inference, from the fact that he was asked eight 'or nine years ago to sign an agreement of contract of lease. By so 'doing he would have discharged all claim for compensation whatever. 'The buildings, if they were in Grantown, are said to be worth over £600, '—after the buildings were finished or three more acres were trenched and 'thousands of loads of stones thrown up in dykes. The land is hilly, being 'the slope of the ravine known as Huntly Cave. My father died six years 'ago, at the age of seventy, leaving a family of nine sons and two daughters, 'all of whom are alive with the exception of the eldest son, who was a 'surgeon and dentist in Edinburgh, where he died of typhus fever twelve 'years ago at the age of thirty. On the death of my father, I took up the 'lease, binding myself to educate and bring up respectably two young 'brothers and a sister. Owing to insecurity of tenure and the experience 'of the past, I gave over all expensive improvements. If I got compensa- 'tion I could employ my spare hours trenching and draining the little bits 'that are yet between me and the rocks—that done I could clothe the very 'rocks with verdure. At this high elevation, 1149 feet, crops in bad years 'cannot ripen. In 1877 we had neither meal nor seed; 1879 was little 'better. This year the crop is still uncut and green. If I had a silo I 'think I would consign the whole to it. I hope silos may turn out a suc- 'cess. What I would like, and most of those with whom I come in con- 'tact is—a fair rent, security of tenure, and compensation for unexhausted 'outlay. Some say go back to the rents of the previous lease, and give us 'back our hill privileges. The crofts away from the foot of the hill are 'surrounded by plantations enclosed, and are thereby put on the same 'footing as a low country farm, with which there is no comparison. The

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' cattle on such crofts are compelled to pick on the same bare leas from ' morning till night. When I see starving cows, the mothers of the ' creatures that the rent depends on, looking through the fence in a very ' thoughtful mood at the conserved grass lying rotting, I am grieved and ' angry. To show how much we are at the mercy of landlords and factors, ' I will enumerate a few cases of dispossession of crofts or farms. The ' Aitendow grazings contain two farms, each of which maintained large and ' respectable families, and were made up of the hill pasture taken from the ' Braes crofters together with the said farms sixteen years ago. The com- ' bined rent of the two places was £38, 5s. The grazings are £100. ' William Paterson was eighty-three years of age when dispossessed. He ' brought up a family of nine. The youngest son, then thirty-two, wished ' to take the place in company with another man M'Donald, who was ' seventy years of age, with a growing family of eight, but got no chance. ' Both were good men, and the present tenant was not the favoured one. ' Another, at or about the same time, the late Mr John Grant of Lagg, ' was dispossessed for no other cause than his being not only a liberal but ' a leader and teacher of the people. Such is freedom. So we exercise our ' little brief authority. Still another was the previous tenant of Auchos- ' nich, turned off without meliorations, but recovered them by law. I ' could tell of many others within a radius of three miles, but I think we ' have enough to show what need there is for our country to interfere ' between the people and their extortioners. We feel insecure, depressed, ' and cannot assert our independence. We have none. Set us free, and ' do not let us be for ever the subjects of subjects. I have not been led ' by any one or from any other motive than the good of my class and ' country. I detest and abhor all class laws and privileges, and would like ' to see them wiped off the statute book.' I have here a list of farms that now contain two or three holdings. Those sixty-seven holdings, which presumably at one time supported sixty-seven families, are now in the hands of twenty-six families. That is just in my neighbourhood, in the parish of Cromdale.

43876. What document is that you are referring to?—It is the *Grantown Supplement*, published weekly in Grantown. I find there has been a decrease in the parish of Inverallan of ninety-five, and an increase of fifty-two, or a total decrease of forty-three.

43877. In what period has this decrease occurred?—In ten years from 1871:—Total population, 1530 in 1871, 1752 in 1861—decrease, 222. Decrease since 1861, 398. Cromdale and Advie, decrease since 1871, 129; since 1861, 142. Duthil, population in 1871, 160; decrease since 1861, 239. I think I heard Mr Bruce say he did not know of an agreement of lease or set between the proprietor and the tenant. I have got a copy here.

43878. I did not understand Mr Bruce to say there was no agreement or lease, but give it, and say what you like. Do you mean that is the lease under which you yourself hold?—That is a copy of the agreement between Lord Seafield's tenants and himself.

43879. Is it a printed document?—It is a written document.

43880. Are there any particular articles of which you complain as unreasonable or oppressive?—By signing this agreement, our claim to meliorations is destroyed.

43881. Will you read me that article if you please? Is this the form of lease which was imposed or which was prescribed in the year 1864?—In 1867, I think.

43882. Is that the original form of lease to which Mr Bruce referred?—This is a copy.

43883. Then read the article which refers to meliorations?—The article is to the effect that whereas by the leases held by the tenants in Strathspey, dated October 31, 1807, the tenants were entitled to certain meliorations for houses and land, and the said farms of Strathspey having been let at rents which imply a discharge of all such claims, and the rents of the subjects hereby let having been adjusted on this principle, the said farmer hereby discharges all claims for meliorations on account of the houses and land occupied by him, and all enclosures.

43884. This is the clause by which the tenants have abdicated all claims to meliorations. Then you don't think you have, under that lease, any claim to meliorations which you have executed during the lease?—No.

43885. What other clause or article do you particularly complain of?—There are no others.

43886. Then your principal complaint is, I understand, that you have no claim to compensation for improvements which you have executed by your own labour in the course of the lease?—That is my complaint.

43887. But then you or your predecessors voluntarily—it may be unfortunately—abdicated all claim, in the terms of their leases?—Well, I think that the rents were high enough.

43888. You think they made a mistake in signing that lease?—Yes.

43889. But now you are going to have new leases, you will be able to make new stipulations. Is there any other statement you wish to make?—No.

[ADJOURNED.]

GLASGOW, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1883.

Present:

Lord NAPIER and ETTRICK, K.T., *Chairman.*
 Sir KENNETH S. MACKENZIE, Bart.
 DONALD CAMERON, Esq. of Lochiel, M.P.
 C. FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Esq., M.P.
 Sheriff NICOLSON, LL.D.
 Professor MACKINNON, M.A.

THOMAS GRAHAME, Glasgow, General Agent for Scotland of the Dominion Government of Canada (43)—examined.

43890. *The Chairman.*—Have you a statement which you wish to read to us?—I have. 'My Lord, I beg to submit a statement regarding 'the people in the West Highlands and Islands, chiefly in connection 'with emigration to Canada. In the first place, I may state that I was 'born in Canada, and lived a great part of my life adjacent to a large 'Highland settlement, and that I have on three several occasions gone 'through considerable portions of the West Highlands and Islands, the 'last occasion being this autumn, for the purpose of seeing the people, 'and obtaining information regarding the likelihood and advisability of 'large numbers of them emigrating to Canada. I have found in the 'course of my visits to various portions of the districts referred to, that 'there is a very great surplus population in some parts; that the lands 'are sterile, and poor in general; the quantity of the land too small for 'the people to do any good upon; and, in many parts, the soil depreci- 'ating in fertility from a variety of causes. A large farmer in the South 'Hebrides told me that in his time the land has become much less fertile

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' than in his younger days. The people are far too numerous, and from a quarter to a half might advantageously go from many parts which I have visited, to a country like Canada, where there is any quantity of fertile land to be got, up to 160 acres for nothing, and by acting in this way they would very quickly be far better off than they could ever expect to be in the Highlands. Even though more land was got for them where they are, the same evils would, in a short time, accrue on a larger scale than those which at present exist, from the greatly increased over-population which would be attendant upon this, as they are a wonderful people for increasing rapidly in numbers. In the part of Canada where I have chiefly resided there is a large Highland element, the settlement having been effected over forty years ago. The people when they arrived had, in most instances, nothing at all, and now they and their descendants have got into positions of such affluence and comfort as they could never have anticipated as possible in the Highlands, many of them being large proprietors of valuable lands, and others having succeeded equally as well in other ways. One has only to take note of the names of great numbers of our public men in Canada, such as Macdonald, Mackenzie, McPherson, Campbell, Cameron, McLean, &c., to see how well people from the Highlands have succeeded in the past, and there is no reason why they should not succeed as well, if not better in the future—better, as a rule, from there being more fertile lands to go upon than those which the settlers of former times took up. During my last visit to the West Highlands I met in various parts with large numbers of people who were quite prepared to go if they only had sufficient assistance. These people, in several cases, met me by special arrangement, and, in one instance, over one hundred crofters had an interview with me at the same place, with the view of getting information preparatory to going out. I also saw and learnt of a great number of young women who were inquiring as to the rate of wages in Canada; who were most anxious to go out if they were only provided with sufficient means to do so, and who told me they have nothing to do where they are, whereas there is a very great demand for domestic servants in all parts of Canada at very good wages. I may say that during my trip I met with Lady Cathcart, and had several conversations with her regarding the people on her estates. She has been taking a great practical interest in their welfare, and has obtained and diffused a very great deal of information entirely of her own accord, and without assistance in any way from legal agent, factor, or otherwise. She has in fact devoted a great deal of her time to this subject, and has been most generous and kind to them in every respect. In regard to the reclamation fields on her estate, she employed the crofters at good wages in draining and fencing the land, in putting in the crops, taking them off the ground, and in many instances gave large quantities of the potatoes produced for seed to the crofters, which this year has turned out about the best crop they have had for forty years. This improvement is, to a great extent, to be attributed to the quality and new varieties of potatoes which Lady Cathcart provided from the original seed planted upon these lands. In reference to the emigration of the crofters from her estate last spring, I think she has set an example worthy of being followed up by the Government. I may say I was from the first consulted by her Ladyship on the subject of the emigration of the people upon her estates, and advised her as to the mode of carrying out her plans. Her people went out last spring from Glasgow, when I saw them off by Allan Steamship from Greenock to Pipestone Creek, Moosomin, N.W. Territory *via* Quebec. They have got on in the most satisfactory

' way since their arrival, and have been writing to their friends strongly
' advising them to follow as soon as possible. I was shown by Lady
' Cathcart copies of a number of private letters of this character. These
' letters show clearly how much better they are off than their brethren
' whom they have left behind; and from later ones I understand they
' mention that in Brandon, the only town of any size near their settle-
' ment, every third person they met speaks Gaelic; and more homesteads
' have already been taken up for those intending to go out next year. I
' would suggest that the Home Government could not do better than
' follow in the lines adopted by Lady Cathcart, by which they should
' advance £100 to each family going out to a similar district of Canada
' to settle on the same description of fertile lands on the security of the
' Act of the Canadian Parliament to amend the Dominion Land Act, viz.,
' 44 Vict. cap. 16, sec. 10, by which they have the first lien upon the
' land, and are entitled, if they think fit, to charge interest up to the rate
' of 6 per cent. In fact, this would simply be a loan of £100 to each
' family on the very best security, and at first-rate interest. In order to
' place this matter clearly before the Commission, I put in with this a
' copy of the Act, several maps of the Dominion, and other documents
' which may be thought of use in the consideration of the matter by the
' Commission. In such a case the money should not be advanced till the
' people were on the spot, and prepared to take up their lands, and even
' then it would be advisable for some competent person to see that they
' were comfortably located, and that the necessary articles were purchased
' for starting them upon their farms. Then the Canadian Government
' would act in the same way as in the past in regard to assisted passages,
' free grants, and our agents being ready to do all in their power to see
' the people satisfactorily to their destination. Next comes the question
' of how they are to furnish the cost of going out for themselves and their
' families. In some instances, though they would be few, by the sale of
' their stock and implements they would have sufficient to take them out;
' but in the majority of cases that would not be enough. One suggestion
' is that the Home Government should advance this sum in a similar way
' to what was done in Ireland; another is that the landlords should ad-
' vance it when necessary; and a third is that at any rate a great part of
' the requisite amount might be obtained from the Mansion House Fund.
' If what was necessary in this respect was not fully forthcoming other-
' wise, I think, it would only be the bounden duty of the Home Govern-
' ment to see that this was accomplished, as what is proposed to be done
' on their part in an early portion of this suggestion would simply be a
' loan. By the above means, so far as the finances are concerned, I can
' see no difficulty in the way of a very extensive emigration to Canada
' next year, and in following seasons, on a very satisfactory basis to all
' concerned. Now, under the circumstances above narrated, and from
' the most reliable sources of information which I could obtain, I should
' estimate, and I place it at the lowest calculated on all occasions, that
' there should be an emigration of at least several thousands from the
' West Highlands to Canada next year, viz., 500 from Lady Cathcart's
' estates, 400 from Harris, 500 from Lewis, 600 from Skye and Tyree,
' several hundred from the other small islands, besides those who may go
' from the mainland, to be followed by many more in the succeeding
' seasons. If a start is made, there is no saying, in fact, how many may
' go. In many cases I have learnt that the ministers and priests object
' to emigration. This is easily understood, as in most instances they have
' a natural desire to have as many of their flocks about them as possible
' in their own interest, though no doubt many of them conscientiously

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GLASGOW.

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GLASGOW.Thomas
Graham.

' believe that the people are best where they are, from their want of knowledge of other and newer parts of the world. What I would suggest in regard to this is, that a due proportion of the ministers and priests should go out along with their people. Although it would be advisable for Highland people going out to be close to each other, I do not think it would be essential for them to be so close together as to exclude entirely other nationalities, as I think by mixing with others a spirit of emulation would be engendered among them, which is much wanted, from their former experience of life, and that they would be none the worse on this account of being interspersed to a certain extent among, and intermarrying with, English, Lowland Scotch, and other people. This matter I speak of from personal observation. There are several other matters to which I may refer, as I see they have been attracting the attention of the Commission, and upon which evidence has been given. As to the advisability of emigration, in a national sense, I would simply say, that those going from the Highlands to Canada still continue to be a source of strength to the empire, not as is too frequent in the case of those going to foreign countries from other portions of Her Majesty's dominions, when they become inimical to our country. There is no more loyal people than the Highland Scotch and those of Scotch descent, and this is saying a great deal, because, as a rule, colonists are proverbial for their loyalty. Whatever the local political differences may be, they are united in their determination to preserve the connection between the mother country and the colony. I may also say that there is no fear of emigration not leaving enough of people to find defenders for the country in time of need, as seems to be anticipated by some, as, from the experience of the past, there will be any wanted quantity of increase of numbers in a short space of time. In fact, I consider the carrying out of the scheme I have suggested would be a national benefit all round,—in the first place to those who go; in the next to those who remain,—as they will have more room and scope for their energies; and to the nation generally, as well as the landlords, in having a source of trouble and aggregation of evils of many kinds finally disposed of. If, as I have no doubt, large numbers are prepared to go out next spring, I fully anticipate special arrangements could be made by which ocean steamers would be sent to important places in the West Highlands, such as Stornoway, Portree, Lochboisdale, &c., and this would be a great saving of expense to those emigrating. Another point which has struck me as of importance is this, that whatever may be accomplished in the way of emigration, it would be a great mistake in the existence of those who remain to have so many of them continue in the state of life in which they are at present; neither one thing nor another, dragging out a miserable, lazy, and uncleanly existence; and this is to a very great extent, doubtless, from having no certain fixed mode of occupation. They are fishermen at some times, crofters at others, gillies on some occasions, but without sufficient continuous occupation to steady them in life. What I would suggest in this respect is, that if they are fishermen they should have nothing to do with the land. Let them have their houses for their families, their cow's grass, and a little garden each, and attend to the prosecution of their duties as fishermen. If they are crofters, let them have a sufficient amount of ground for themselves and their families to live upon in a satisfactory way, say three or four times the general amount as at present held in a croft, and then let those who are superfluous in numbers emigrate to the colonies, where they will be the best off of the whole lot. At the same time, by this process being adopted, it gives a chance for those who are

* left behind to obtain a decent livelihood, and not exist as at present in a worse shape in many cases than the people of semi-civilised tribes.'

LANARK.

43891. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—You mentioned a settlement that was made forty years ago, and turned out very successfully; in what part of the dominion was that?—In the county of York, near the city of Toronto.

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43892. To what part have these settlers of Lady Gordon Cathcart gone?—To the north-west territory, just adjoining the territory of Manitoba.

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43893. Is there not a great difference of climate between Toronto and the north-west territory?—No, I don't think there is any very great difference. The winters are a little colder in the north-west, but they are clearer and there is nothing whatever prejudicial to health, or worse in any respect in the north-west than in Ontario. I have many friends who have gone there, and they prefer the climate to that of Ontario.

43894. How long have they been settled there?—In some instances ten or twelve years.

43895. You think there is no likelihood of severe winters occurring which would be dangerous to life or prejudicial to health?—No, not at all. I think the winters there are very much preferable to those of the Hebrides.

43896. What is the length of the winter in the north-west territory?—The winter usually commences in the beginning of November and lasts till April, and it is clear, steady cold, with occasional snowstorms. There is not the amount of snow that there is in the eastern provinces. In Quebec and New Brunswick there is a far greater amount of snow than in the north-west.

43897. What is the temperature in these months?—The temperature runs very low in these months, but from the clear nature of the climate, people do not feel it at all as they would do in a damp climate.

43898. Do they require to dress in any special way?—They require to dress with very warm clothing in winter, especially when going long distances, but the winter is never so severe as that they cannot work out on almost all occasions. There may be a day on which there is a very severe 'blizzard' or snowstorm, but that seldom occurs.

43899. Would they have to procure special clothing on reaching Canada?—They would be the better of warmer clothing than here,—great coats and caps probably, but that would be all.

43900. At what employment could they engage in these very severe winter months?—A great deal is done in the winter months. On the Canadian Pacific Railway, which is in course of construction, there are large numbers of people employed all the winter.

43901. And the snow is not so deep as to prevent work going on?—No, not at all.

43902. You mentioned that at one part of the Hebrides or west coast of Scotland you met over one hundred who were anxious to emigrate?—There were one hundred who met me with the object of getting information as to emigration if they could get assistance to go.

43903. Where was that?—It was in the north portion of South Uist, adjoining Benbecula.

43904. Have many gone from that place already?—A good number have gone. Several of those crofters whom Lady Gordon-Cathcart sent out last spring went from that district, and the reason why the people were so anxious for information, I suppose, was that many of them had been receiving letters from their friends in reference to the country.

43905. The expense of Lady Gordon-Cathcart's scheme of emigration

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.Thomas
Grahame.

seems very considerable. I understand she advanced them £100 apiece, and gave them nearly £100 a piece in addition as valuation for their improvements and stock?—Yes, in some instances the latter.

43906. Do you think that with a less outfit than £200 they could go to the north-west with a prospect of settling successfully there?—I think £200 is quite sufficient for each family. Less in fact might do if they go upon this principle which is frequently adopted by the poorer people who settle there. The poor settle close to each other on free grant lots, and the same yoke of oxen may serve for two, and the same implements for four, and there would be a very great saving by people going out together.

43907. If two families united in purchasing those implements, would that be sufficient to provide them with subsistence into the coming season?—There would be enough to provide them with sufficient subsistence in the coming season and purchase all the implements they required. There can be no doubt of that, from the experience of the past.

43908. I understand you to suggest that the Government of this country should do the same as Lady Gordon-Cathcart has done with regard to a large number of persons?—Yes.

43909. In what period do you suppose that £100 could be repaid?—I should say it could usually be repaid in five or six years. I have not the least doubt that those people settled in Pipestone Creek will be worth in a few years from £500 to £1000 each.

43910. How is their profit made?—Their profit is made in this way. They get free grants of land—land that would cost 30s. in the same district. Then it costs 30s. an acre to back set, and put the prairie land in fit shape to produce crop. Then the cost of their buildings, fences, and so on, would be very considerable; so that would of necessity make the land at the end of five or six years worth the amount I spoke of, besides the increase in value in other respects as the settlement gets populated. As the settlement gets populated the lands adjoining those settled upon increase in value and their lands increase in value also.

43911. You mean that if they sold their land they would be able to repay the loan. What I want to arrive at is, what produce they will have which will enable them to pay off their debt?—They would be making money each year for their crops. After the first year was over,—and they would have sufficient to tide them over that,—they would make money every year by the proceeds of the crops upon their lands.

43912. The sale of their crops?—Yes.

43913. What distance are they from centres where they can dispose of these crops?—These crops can be disposed of at the railway station adjoining. They are within six miles of the railway station; and a great deal of their crop could be disposed of locally for the purpose of supplying new settlers with seed, and for the supply of their families. For a considerable time in the newer districts, there will be a considerable demand for whatever is produced in that way.

43914. I suppose the land near the railway is being gradually taken up?—It is being taken up very rapidly.

43915. For how long do you think there will be available land within six miles of the railway?—It depends on what portion of the railway you refer to. The railway extends more than 1000 miles west of where they are settled,—that is, to the Pacific Ocean. In the poorer districts and near the mountains such land will be available for a considerable time, but in the fertile districts it will be taken up very quickly.

43916. Will you give it three years?—I should say on this side of the Rocky Mountains particularly, the fertile lands within twelve miles of the railway will be taken up within three years.

43917. But at the present time fertile lands can be got within six miles of the railway?—Yes, at the present time.

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.Thomas
Grahame.

43918. What is the proper time for emigrants to go out to Canada, to the north-west?—Much the best time is the end of April, when navigation is open in the St Lawrence. At the same time, you get more satisfactorily up the country by going in the end of April and beginning of May. The temperature is much better for people travelling, especially women and children.

43919. That is, of course, too late to lay down crops for that season?—Not too late to put in a little crop. Those who went out last season went out in the end of April, and put in a considerable quantity of crop, and a large quantity of potatoes, and these potatoes turned out splendidly.

43920. Was the land prepared for them?—No, it was not. They prepared it themselves, and they had very considerable delays in selecting their lands, from being the first who went out, whereas if others went out the lands might be selected adjacent to where those people are settled. They lost two weeks at least in that way. In a climate such as the north-west, crops can be put in much later than one would anticipate. I think a great deal of their potatoes were put in from the first to the middle of June, and they were fit for use that season.

43921. You mentioned that 3000 ought to go from the West Highlands next season; that means persons, not families?—Persons.

43922. Are there any other parts excepting the north-west available for emigration?—Yes; considerable numbers go to Ontario, Nova Scotia, and other parts; but the north-west has a great attraction from the lands being so fertile and easily worked, and that is the reason why the great rush is to the north-west. They could go to Ontario, where they have friends located, and where there are Highland settlements in the counties of York, Huron, and Bruce, and Glengarry.

43923. Is that not entirely occupied?—Glengarry is chiefly occupied. There are not the same facilities for people doing well in the older districts that there are in the north-west,—getting lands so much cheaper and easier.

43924. Are there any free grants given in Nova Scotia?—Yes, and in Ontario as well.

43925. To what extent?—Varying from 100 to 200 acres,—100 in Nova Scotia, and 200 in Ontario. In these places, however, it must be remembered that all the free grant lands are covered with timber, and there is a great deal of work necessary to be done before the land can be cultivated, and that makes a very great difference. Of course there is this, that in the older provinces men can get very good wages, and save a little money in that way preparatory to taking up their free grants in Ontario, or going to the north-west.

43926. *The Chairman.*—I think we need hardly seriously consider the project of Government emigration for next summer. Before Government can move, it generally takes a good deal of time, and it would be perhaps more prudent to speak of the summer of 1885 than 1884. Now, in what state do you think in the year 1885 the lands adjacent to the railway beyond Brandon will be found? Will there be any of the squares beyond Brandon still available as free grant land, or will the free grant land all be taken up, either by settlers or speculators?—Only settlers can take up free grant land. Speculators cannot take up free grant land.

43927. It must be all taken up by actual settlers?—*Bona fide* settlers.

43928. But I suppose they can sell it?—They cannot sell it till they have occupied the land for three years at least.

43929. But you think all the squares immediately touching the railway

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Thomas
Grahame.

will be occupied by 1885, for several hundred miles west of Brandon?—I would be inclined to think that by that time a great deal of them must be occupied, but it should be remembered there are branch lines of railway going north and south, and there are free grant lands upon them.

43930. How far do the square mile lots laid out by Government go back from the railway on either side? Is the country all lotted out in these squares?—The whole north-west is allotted in that way. The alternate sections are homestead lands for settlers.

43931. And the other sections?—They either belong to the Canadian Pacific Railway or to the Government. The Canadian Pacific have alternate sections for twenty-four miles on either side of the line, and where they think the land is not suitable for their purpose they can take other lands suitable for their purposes.

43932. How far do you think in 1885 the people would have to go backwards from the railway within 300 or 400 miles of Brandon?—Of course one is only forming an estimate, but I imagine they would not have to go further than ten or twelve miles at any rate to get free grants of land not more than 300 or 400 miles west of Brandon.

43933. Well, a square mile lot contains 640 acres?—Yes.

43934. We generally hear of a 160 acre lot as being an eligible lot for a family to settle upon, but do you think, that in the case of those Highland settlers going out in groups, they might be content with smaller lots than 160 acres? Would eighty acres be a provision for a family, in the first instance?—Well, it might be sufficient in the first instance, but I do not see any reason why if they are taking up any portion they should not take up the whole 160 acres, because they are under no greater obligations in taking up the 160 acres than in taking up the eighty.

43935. If they went out from the same township in the West Highlands with their relations and families, might they not like to settle nearer together?—Yes, being close together might be an advantage in that way. Eighty acres would be quite sufficient for a limited sized family to work upon. Of course, as the families grow up, they can go to more distant parts and take up other free grants. Any male over eighteen is entitled to take up a free grant.

43936. And if you go on the basis of eighty acres you get eight families or forty souls established on the square mile?—Yes. Of course, it must be remembered that of the 320 acres only 160 acres are free grants, and the rest are pre-emption lots. A settler with 160 acres has the first right to an additional 160 by paying a certain sum varying from 8s. to 10s. an acre, depending on the locality of the free grant.

43937. How long will this pre-emption grant be kept waiting for him? Must he purchase it the first or second year, or is it kept longer?—It is kept for him for about three years.

43938. But if the people were settled a little closer together than the 160 acre lot would afford, then the cultivation might be carried on more economically by an interchange of animals?—Yes, there might be that advantage. They might be closer together, and the animals would not have to go long distances.

43939. It strikes us, having heard a great deal of this benevolent action of Lady Gordon-Cathcart, that her plan, so honourable to her, is so expensive that she herself cannot go on with it, and nobody else could adopt it. So far as I see she provides them with £200, or in one form or another it costs her £200 to emigrate every family?—Well, that meant, in the case of those who went, it would cost her for the improvements they had made, and one thing or another, sums ranging up to £100 outright, and £100 was advanced as a loan to each family on the security of the land on which they settled.

43940. I think we may set aside so generous a scheme as that and find out how it can be done more economically. You speak of Government advancing £100 to each family. That I understand to be for their settlement in the country itself?—Yes.

43941. Besides their transport?—Besides the cost of their transport.

43942. To whom do you propose the English Government should pay this sum? Is it to be paid to the Dominion Government or to the family, or to some middleman?—What I suggest is that an arrangement should be made between the British Government and the Canadian Government, and some agent should be appointed as arranged between them to be with the people when they went in large numbers, to see the money was applied as they wanted it in the purchase of implements and provisions sufficient for the first year when they went on the land.

43943. No intermediary company, or anything of that kind?—No, I would not think of anything of that nature.

43944. Then the Government is to advance £100 to the Dominion Government, who are to provide agency for settling the people; who is to pay that agency? It might come to be rather an expensive agency—the parties employed to look after the people?—I think the Canadian Government would undertake that through their own agents so far as the settlement is concerned.

43945. You think the Canadian Government would appoint agents and pay them?—The Government have already agents giving every advice and assistance to people going out, and settling them satisfactorily, and no doubt they would provide anything that was wanted in that way in case a large number went out.

43946. They would provide other agents; they would extend their agency?—Yes, they would extend their numbers if requisite.

43947. Well, supposing the square mile was adopted as the basis of a settlement, and filled at once with Highland emigrants, that would be according to my calculation eight families; would you propose to take those eight families from the same island, or the same part of an island, or would you mix them from the first?—Well, I have never thought over that. I think it would be well for those who go from the same locality here to take up their abode in the same locality there. You must remember they would not be altogether adjoining each other. There are only alternate sections eligible for free grants. The Canadian Pacific Company have a section between each which is not available for free grants at all.

43948. But if eight families were on the square mile they would be all on the square mile?—There would be this difficulty, that there are two 160 acre free grant lots and the other two are pre-emption lots.

43949. I propose to set aside that arrangement?—Well, an arrangement might be made to do that.

43950. To put eight families from the same township in Scotland on a square mile there?—Yes.

43951. Suppose such a settlement placed ten or twelve miles back from the main railway, what is the provision for fuel? That would be the first difficulty of an emigrant in winter. Is there any fuel on the ground?—There is no difficulty about that. There is plenty of fuel,—any quantity of timber in many districts,—and people would be very foolish if they settled where there was not abundance of fuel in the neighbourhood. I may say there have been large discoveries of coal in many districts, and that coal has been used on the Canadian Pacific Railway, and in the engines there.

43952. We must trust the Dominion to make these settlements on places where they would find fuel?—Yes, that would be the object of the Government.

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43953. I suppose there are places where there is no fuel, or very little? —There are portions of the prairie land where there is no timber at all, but I cannot advise people to settle there.

43954. But it is not matter of advice. They must be taken there and settled there by the Government. You mentioned that the temperature is very low; what do you consider a fair average winter temperature? Is it below 20° below zero in the north-west, beyond Brandon? —It is below 20° below zero at times.

43955. Would the temperature on a fine working day in December or January be between 20° and 40° below zero? —Occasionally—very rarely—it would be below that. In all my experience in Ontario I have rarely seen it below 10° below zero. I have occasionally seen it between 10° and 20° below zero, but even then I have seen people working without the least trouble. I have often curled with the thermometer between 10° and 20° below zero.

43956. Curling is a pleasant sport; but the temperature west of Brandon is lower than in Ontario? —At times it is lower in winter.

43957. Do you think it is often lower than 20° below zero? —Not frequently. It may be in occasional cold snaps below that, but not for any continuous length of time.

43958. I am bound to say that my impression is rather different from what I have heard, and that I think it is from 20° to 40° below zero. At any rate the fact is, according to your account that the railway works are continued through the whole winter, except on exceptionally bad days? —Yes, the railway works are carried on the whole time with very few exceptional days.

43959. In the case of families going out, you were asked how the people would get money to pay for the land,—whether it would be by the sale of crop or otherwise. Don't you think the people would be more likely to get money to pay for their land, from auxiliary sources,—by some members of the family working out? —Yes, a great deal could be done in that way. They could be working out when there was no great amount of work to do on the land in harvest or seeding operations. When these were completed a very considerable number of the members of a family, if there was a large family, could be working out, and that is the way a great number of the new settlers do from the start. If there are three or four of them, two will manage the farm and two are out working on wages.

43960. Supposing a block or square mile with eight Highland families upon it, how do they feed their cattle in the first instance? In summer do the cattle run out on the grass, or are they all fed in houses? —In summer they are allowed to run out on the prairie until there is a large amount of settlement; and in the winter, in Manitoba, where there is a considerable quantity of trees, cattle and horses have been wintered out in these forests without any shelter at all.

43961. But in summer they have no difficulty in running out. The grass is never so burned up that there is no pasture on the ground? —No, it is never so bad as that in any districts. Of course, where the prairie is very open the grass is burned by fire being set to it occasionally, but this is only the case when the lands are not settled upon, with very rare exceptions.

43962. But it is never so dry from the effects of the sun as to burn up the grass? —No; there is always good grazing during the summer.

43963. Then, if you can imagine a square mile with a Highland colony upon it, they would have no difficulty in having a common run like their common pasture at home in the middle of it? —Yes, they could easily have that.

43964. You spoke of sending out a clergyman with them, and the clergyman must, in the first instance, have some provision. Do you think you would be inclined to give the clergyman a lot, or two lots perhaps?—Certainly, he would have his lot too in the same way as the others.

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.

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43965. Provision might be made for endowing the minister with a glebe from the first, or with a farm for his family?—Of course he could get his free grant the same as the others, in the first place.

43966. Speaking of the old colonies with which Highland emigration was associated, these in early times were Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island?—Yes.

43967. You see the Highlanders are fisherman as well as agriculturists; are there any of these old colonies in which the Highlanders could practise their fishing industry with advantage and have grants of land too, or is the whole margin of the old colonies now taken up?—All the most available portions of the old provinces are taken up as far as land is concerned. There are free grants in these provinces, but the land has not the same advantage as further west. Undoubtedly there are good fisheries adjoining these provinces.

43968. You do not advise the Highlanders then generally to stop short of Brandon?—Well, I would say, going out with the intention which they usually have of getting land of their own, undoubtedly the north-west is the best place for them.

43969. If they went out in the month of April, and got on to the ground in the month of May, would they be able to put up some kind of shelter themselves for the first year or two, or would the Government provide them with houses?—The Government has never done anything of that nature. I cannot say whether they would do anything of the kind in the future or not, but it is a very simple matter putting up houses that will suit in the first place. Frequently, the settlers camp out under canvas until they have time to put up some temporary residence of wood. Then in the autumn they improve upon this, and make it stronger, and warmer, and larger. That is the usual course pursued.

43970. You have personally been up among those new settlements beyond Brandon?—No, but I have been in Winnipeg and Manitoba.

43971. Do you see the children running about in winter?—Yes.

43972. They are not obliged to keep to the house?—No. Little children in very cold weather keep inside, but the larger children run out in winter.

43973. Do the children go to school in the dead of winter?—Yes, they go to school the same as in summer.

43974. How are these settlements provided with schools?—Well, at first there is a difficulty in that respect. There is no school accommodation at first, but the school accommodation is brought about very rapidly. Two sections in every township are set apart for school purposes by the Government. Therefore, there will be a large fund for school purposes in time to come, and the local Government does everything in its power to promote education as quickly as possible. Of course, in the new settlements, where there are only a few people, it could not be expected there would be a school for a little time. But the whole of Manitoba was a wilderness ten or twelve years ago, and now there is a very good school system through the most thickly settled portion of it.

43975. When the people arrive at a place like that, such as we suggest, can they cut the natural grass in the first summer for hay?—Yes, it makes excellent hay. As much as from three or four tons an acre is frequently cut.

43976. Just as it stands?—Yes.

43977. What month can it be cut in?—They can cut it all the time from June to August.

LANARK.

43978. So there is no anxiety about the safety of the cattle in the first winter?—No, there is no trouble about them at all. Mowing machines can be used at the start.

GLASGOW.
Thomas
Grahame.

43979. If they arrive in May, can they still sow corn? I think, in Lady Gordon-Cathcart's letters, I saw potatoes mentioned. Can they, the first summer, reap a crop of corn?—Yes, they sowed a good deal of grain the first summer.

43980. *Mr Cameron.*—With regard to the severity of the climate in winter, most emigrants who go out and have farms, do not require to work on their own farms at all during winter?—There is not much work to be done on the farm proper during winter, but all the timber work is usually done in that season,—hauling the timber home for firewood and getting preparations made for the ensuing summer,—in fact, everything pertaining to working timber.

43981. So if they had sufficiently large holdings to maintain themselves they would not require to work on the railway or elsewhere?—If they once were fairly settled on their lands, and had sufficient to live upon. The only reason people would work on the railway or public works, would be to eke out a sufficient sum to carry them on in the world; but if they had work sufficient to occupy them, they would not require to go out to work at all.

43982. If these people were to go out and occupy a whole square mile, what would be their power of expansion?—Under the present system they have power of expansion by those blocks to which they have a right of pre-emption; but if they had a whole square mile, suppose some of them made money, and wished to become larger farmers, what would become of them?—They would require to go further back to the most available spot, or, if they had sons over eighteen, settle them on other lots as closely adjoining their own as possible. In the old settlements, such as York, people who wanted farms for their sons had to go thirty, forty, or fifty miles futher north or west. As a rule, the great bulk remained,—the old people and eldest son remained, and the younger ones went up to the new districts.

43983. The younger members lived off?—Yes.

43984. Supposing a project was entertained and taken in hand by Government, but delayed from causes pointed out by Lord Napier, you said you were afraid the ground might be taken up by others; of what other nationalities would those be; what other people go out to Brandon besides settlers from the Hebrides?—There are a great number going out there from the older peopled districts of America and Canada, English people, Scotch, and Irish, some from Scandinavia, Germany, and different parts of the world.

43985. Do many Irish go there?—I believe not a great number. The great bulk of the Irish have hitherto gone to the United States.

43986. But still the place is getting filled up very quickly!—Very rapidly indeed. A great number have gone to Manitoba and the northwest this year, and those who have gone out are writing most satisfactorily of the country, and wishing their friends to come out.

43987. With regard to the letters from Lady Gordon-Catheart's emigrants, you mentioned they spoke very hopefully of their prospects, and seemed rather to encourage their relations who were left behind to follow their example; have you found in the Hebrides any unwillingness to emigrate on the part of the people?—Well, of course, those who were not willing would probably not speak to me. I did not come in contact with any who expressed any unwillingness. Those whom I came in contact with wanted information from me, and thought of going, and were prepared to go, as many of them should, if they had a sufficient amount to go upon.

43988. In those letters from Lady Gordon-Cathcart's people was any surprise expressed that the people should be unwilling to follow their example; was any allusion made to reports unfavourable to the colony to which they had gone?—In their letters it was stated that the reports they had heard were untrue. In one instance, they said they were all lies. The reports that were circulated throughout the Hebrides, I don't know by whom, had been perfectly incorrect, they said, and they were perfectly satisfied in every way with what they had seen of the country.

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43989. Did they go into any details as to the comparison to be made between their position out there and what it had been before they left?—Yes; in several instances the statement was made that they were in quite a different position, when they were under no bondage to any person, that the land was their own, and that in every way they were much better off than they would be at home.

43990. In fact, they generally expressed their great surprise, after the reports they had heard at home, in finding what a happy life they were leading, and what good prospects were in store for them?—Yes, instead of finding the difficulties and troubles they anticipated, they found almost none. The chief trouble mentioned was that the mosquitoes were troublesome for a little while, but they were no worse than the midges in the Hebrides.

43991. Did they allude to any want they felt in having no minister?—Yes, the want of a minister was alluded to in one case.

43992. Of course, if the population was sufficiently large, that want could be supplied, as his Lordship pointed out?—Yes; but very probably they would like to have a minister from their own district.

43993. To come back home for a moment. In case emigration was attainable on a pretty extensive scale from the West Highlands, would you be inclined to recommend any restriction upon proprietors as to what should be done with the vacated crofts, so as to prevent a repetition of the same overcrowding?—What I would suggest in regard to that, is that these crofts should be added to those of others settled upon the land to enlarge the amount of each croft. Instead of a £3 or £4 croft, let there be a £20 or £30 croft, and there would be a chance of a man doing something satisfactory for his family.

43994. And that would give a chance to the people. Those who preferred to emigrate might emigrate, and those who preferred to remain at home might have larger holdings, remaining where they were?—Yes.

43995. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You have told us that you were born in Canada?—Yes.

43996. Do you consider yourself more of a Canadian than of a British subject?—We are all British subjects. I am as much a British subject as any one born here.

43997. Do you look more to the interests of Canada or to the interests of the mother country?—Well, we want to make the interests as much identical as possible between the colonies and the mother country.

43998. You will not admit there is any difference in your mind or any bias in favour of Canada or in favour of the mother country?—Well, naturally I think a great deal of Canada, and want to do all I can for her interests.

43999. Of course, you are of Scottish extraction. Your father has left his name in Scottish poetry?—Yes, my father was a Dumfriesshire man.

44000. And he has left his name well known?—My father's name was well known in the county of York in Canada.

44001. To come to what you were stating about Lady Gordon-Cathcart. You seem to have been advising with her about these emigrants?—Yes; she

LANARK} consulted me three years ago on the subject of people going out from her estates to Canada, and since.

GLASGOW] 44002. You stated that a great deal of work was given by her in South Uist, and upon those estates?—So I was told.

Thomas Grahame] 44003. Can you say whether it is true that a great deal of the labour, on these parts of the estate was imported and not local labour?—As far as I can understand, the great bulk of the work was done by the natives, in the reclamation work. The imported work was simply for the work about Loch Boisdale, about houses that the natives were not so well-adapted for.

44004. Have you been through the Highlands a good deal?—I have been a good deal through the Highlands, the West Highlands particularly.

44005. Are you prepared to say whether or not there is a good deal of land still in the Highlands capable of profitable reclamation?—So far as I have seen, speaking more particularly of the islands which I have gone through to a greater extent, I do not think there is any great extent of land which could be reclaimed satisfactorily. I am afraid the cost would be so enormous, and the results so unsatisfactory, for so many bad seasons occurring as I have been told, that there would be very great risk of spending capital without any good results.

44006. You used the expression, I think, that *Lady Gordon-Cathcart*, in sending some of her people out at this great cost, set an example which the Government might well follow. Suppose they found that there is in this country, in the Highlands, a good deal of land capable of profitable reclamation, do you think it is the duty of the Government, in those circumstances, to diminish the Highlands by sending them away to another country?—That is the question. If there is sufficient land for improvement in the Highlands, I think it right that it should be improved, if it is of a character available for people to settle upon.

44007. Now, emigration has been tried on a very extensive scale in former times in the Highlands, has it not?—Yes, in many districts.

44008. But apparently the state of the people now is as bad as if no emigration ever took place; is it not so?—It is, I imagine, just as bad as ever it was in some districts.

44009. Is it not the fact that the population in several parishes of the Western Islands has decreased within the last thirty years?—I am not aware the population has decreased. I thought the population had increased as a rule.

44010. Very likely it has in some places. I am taking the whole Hebrides, North and South; will you say whether or not the population has, as a rule, decreased?—I have always understood the population had increased of late years, taking the Hebrides all over.

44011. Are you sure of that?—So far as my knowledge goes, I have always understood that to be the case.

44012. Suppose I am correct in saying that the population has decreased, notwithstanding the emigration, how do you think that further emigration would benefit the people?—The reason I think emigration would benefit the people is, that I think they are in too great numbers there, undoubtedly, and they have a far better country to go to, far better land to work upon, and far better prospects of benefiting themselves in the future.

44013. I quite agree with you that in certain localities there is a congestion, but take the islands all over, you will not say, I presume, that certain localities are not very sparsely peopled, and with very good land too?—Well, I never saw any places where they are so very sparse, excepting when the lands were almost unfit for cultivation of any kind, or any land I considered very good. I don't think any land in the Hebrides compares at all with the fertility of the land in the north-west.

44014. Take the case of Islay?—But Islay is not a portion of the Outer Hebrides, I understand.

LANARK.

44015. It is one of the Western Islands?—I thought you meant the Western Hebrides, from Lewis down the Long Island.

GLASGOW.

Thomas

Grahaime.

44016. You spoke about its being desirable that thousands should leave next year, and you mentioned the localities from which you would take them; now, is it or is it not a weakness to the country, that so many should be removed, and a power and strength to the country to which they go?—I don't think it is a weakness sending a considerable portion out to a colony which is part of the empire, and especially when we know that the increase of population is so rapid in this country. Increase of population is always going on.

44017. There is an increase over Scotland and over England, but generally the population of the Highlands and Islands is by no means on the increase. Now, I want to follow out a question put by Lochiel; will you tell me what is the use of sending people away from the Highlands, unless the condition of those left behind is bettered?—Certainly; I think that should be the object in having a large number to emigrate, that it should be better for those who remained behind.

44018. Hitherto has it benefited those who remained?—So far as my experience has gone, hitherto, emigration has not been on a sufficiently large scale. There have only been a few who have gone out at a time, and the number is inappreciable. In the olden days, thirty or forty years ago, I don't know what the results were.

44019. I suppose you do not deny there has been a good deal of distress in the Highlands last season?—I believe there has been a great deal of distress in some portions, and I suppose a great deal of that has been from the failure of the crops, and I am told it is too frequently the case that the crops are not saved in good condition.

44020. Are you aware that forty or fifty years ago, at the beginning of the century, between 1800 and 1820, the population in the Western Islands was very much greater than it is just now?—I am not certain about that. I have not studied the subject so far back as that.

44021. Supposing it were true that the numbers were then very much more, is there any reason why the same area should not support the same population that it did sixty years ago?—Well, I am told for one thing that the land has decreased in fertility in many parts. I was told by a large farmer in South Uist, that in his recollection the land has deteriorated very considerably, whether from want of manure or not, I cannot say.

44022. You think that is the reason why the district will not now support the same population?—That may be one reason.

44023. *Professor Mackinnon.*—You have gone over the whole length and breadth of Canada, I suppose?—Yes, I have been over a great part of Canada. I have not been much over the north-west beyond Winnipeg, but I have been all over British Columbia.

44024. And you can say that those who went out from the Western Highlands thirty or forty years ago are quite comfortable?—Yes, those who went out and went to the district where I lived have got on admirably, and are in most respectable positions now.

44025. Although they were quite destitute when they arrived?—Most of them quite destitute when they arrived. I know that many of them had nothing when they arrived in the district, and my father did a great deal to assist them.

44026. You went over a great portion of the Western Isles of late?—Yes, through the Hebrides and portions of the mainland.

44027. Places where those people went from?—Yes.

LANARK.

44028. And you found the people there in a most wretched condition. You state that they are in a worse condition than many semi-civilised tribes?—Yes.

GLASGOW.
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Thomas.
Grahame.

44029. And your sole remedy for this state of matters is to remove a large number of them away?—I think that would be the best remedy in many districts where there is such a congestion of population.

44030. And to give their lands to their neighbours who would remain behind?—Yes.

44031. In the form of £20 to £30 crofts?—Yes.

44032. And the way you propose, in order to provide funds for this purpose, is to get the Government to advance the money upon the security of the land?—Yes.

44033. That, of course, is asking us all to contribute our share in the shape of taxation. You want money to be provided out of imperial taxation?—It would only be a loan. The great bulk of the money would simply be a loan.

44034. But in the meantime to be provided by the British people?—Yes, in the meantime,—a loan on good security.

44035. What security would you take before you would ask the nation to provide funds to send away those people, that the land left behind should be given to their neighbours after they went away?—The security given by the people would be a paper executed by them, saying they were prepared to repay the money that they got upon the land so far as Canada is concerned.

44036. You know that in the past the land vacated by emigrants in the North Highlands was not given to their neighbours left behind?—I don't know whether that was the case or not.

44037. Did you go through Skye?—I was through a portion of Skye.

44038. Did you not see large waste places there, that forty or fifty years ago were occupied by people?—I saw large waste places, but whether they would be adapted for cultivation satisfactorily or not, I do not know.

44039. I don't say whether they are adapted or not, but were they not cultivated?—I don't know as to that.

44040. But you would wish that the land the people occupy just now should be given to their neighbours who would remain behind?—Yes.

44041. What security would you take before you would ask the country to provide money to send them away, that that would be done?—I should imagine that that would be arranged between Government and the landlords. The landlords should undertake that in case of a certain number of crofters going, the land thus left behind in crofts should be added to other crofts.

44042. Do you think that a £20 or £30 croft in this country would enable a man to live in comfort?—Well, not in the same comfort as he could live in Canada, but comparative comfort,—far greater comparative comfort than that in which they are living now.

44043. Then, supposing they were to live in comparative comfort, don't you think that part of the money that we would have to subscribe in the shape of taxation, and give to the people in order to send them abroad and settle them abroad, might not be given, and lent in order to settle them at home?—Well, that is a question for the consideration of the Government, but if there were opportunities for settling the people satisfactorily here by doing something of that nature, I see no reason why it should not be done.

44044. I ask you the question, because you have gone over both countries, and because you are advising that the one thing should be done in order to settle them in Canada; would you not also say it would be a wise thing to do in order to settle some of them in Scotland?—I do not see any advantage in settling them here. I think there are far greater opportunities

for the people in going out there, especially from those districts where they are far too numerous. If those who remained were given the crofts left, I think there would be some fair chance of the people doing well.

LANARK.

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44045. Don't you think that, side by side with giving them the crofts vacated by the people going abroad, some of the money that it would be necessary to give to emigrants might be expended in order to people some of the waste places in this country that are capable of cultivation?—Well, money might be expended in that way, but I think it would be far better expended in the mode I suggest.

44046. For the last twenty or twenty-five years, and it has been increasing evidently, there is a reluctance among people to go away. I was very glad to hear from you that there seems now to be a willingness among them to go away?—There was a decided willingness expressed to me by a very considerable number in Uist and some other parts.

44047. You would not mistake it for the natural curiosity of the people to get information?—No, I did not mistake it for that; because they came anxiously for the purpose of seeing me, and telling me they were quite prepared to go if they had sufficient assistance. There were a great number who were naturally curious and wanting information from me who did not express that opinion, but there were a great number who did express that desire and wish.

44048. Was that in South Uist?—Yes.

44049. You expressed an opinion towards the close of your paper, that of those who would remain behind some ought to betake themselves to the land as a livelihood, and some ought to betake themselves to the sea?—Yes.

44050. We heard a variety of opinion upon that question; might I ask you what your experience of such matters has been?—From what I have heard, the east coast fishermen, sticking to their occupation entirely, have succeeded and done very well, much better than the west coast ones, and it seems most natural that people would be much better by sticking to one fixed occupation than having several occupations.

44051. By those who advocated the combination of the two, it was stated that on the east coast there was fishing the whole year round more or less, and also that there is a market for fresh fish, but that on the west coast fishing in winter is impossible, and that as yet at all events there is no ready market for fresh fish; would that, do you think, make such a difference between the practice on the east and west coast as to affect your opinion one way or another?—My idea from what I have heard is that the fishing interest could be developed very largely in the west, and that will be done in the course of time when the communication between a large city like this and the populous parts of the Western Isles is developed more largely. As the result of that, I have no doubt the fisheries will be further developed.

44052. You look to that in the future rather than to things as existing at present?—Yes.

44053. How much money do you think it would be necessary to advance to each family upon an average, considering the little means they have themselves, in order to settle them in the north-west?—If they went upon their land with £100 clear, each family, I think that would be sufficient to make a start and get on. I know many have done so on that sum already.

44054. The Government of Canada is giving the land for nothing?—Yes.

44055. Do they give any facilities for going across?—Yes. Passages are assisted very much,—so much so that the through rate has been reduced from £6, 6s. to £3 for agricultural labourers and their families from Glasgow to Quebec, and of late it has been reduced considerably. By getting assisted passages through me in this country, as Government

LANARK.**GLASGOW.**Thomas
Grahame.

agent, I can send people all the way from Glasgow to Winnipeg—grown-up people—for £6, 8s. 5d., that is by the Lake route; or £7, 8s. 11d. if they go by the railway all the way.

44056. And I suppose, if a good number went away from one district, facilities would be given whereby they could be brought from that district without much expense?—Yes, extra facilities would be given both on this side and the other side if people went in some numbers.

44057. £100 on arrival, and such a sum as would take them across?—Yes, to their destination. That is for an average sized family.

44058. Do you think, from what you saw when you were there, that the means of the families when realised would send them across?—That is what I have thought a good deal of, and I am very doubtful about it. It would depend on the people who went. In some parts where crofters are a little better off than their neighbours that would be sufficient. It depends very much on the extent of their stock; I suppose the stock is the chief thing they could realise upon; and also upon whether they were indebted to any extent. Taking it all through, I don't think it would be sufficient.

44059. So you would contemplate a little more expenditure than £100 per family?—Yes, a little more than that.

44060. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Did not the Dominion Government make some proposal to the Home Government for promoting Irish emigration?—I think that proposal originated from the Home Government. There was some proposal between the two; I am not certain how it originated, but I think the proposal was made by the Imperial Government, that on a certain amount of security being given by the Canadian Government, a number of people would be sent out, but the Canadian Government would not accept that condition. I believe the Canadian Pacific Railway Company have done something with the Imperial Government, but what the terms are I don't know.

44061. I have seen in print, in a magazine, a copy of the proposal apparently made by the Canadian Government; you have not seen it?—No, I do not remember seeing the proposal to which you refer.

44062. Do you think it possible that among the 600 families whose emigration you think would be advisable next season, some might be unsuccessful?—Well, it is possible. It is highly improbable they would be, because from my experience of those who have gone out in the past, if they are ready and willing to work, there is no fear of their getting on all right.

44063. Some of them might suffer from sickness?—Of course, some of them might.

44064. Have you any idea what proportion of unsuccessful settlers there are in the north-west?—I have never heard of any at all who were ready and willing to work and healthy.

MALCOLM FERGUSON, Crofter, East End, Iona (46)—examined.

Malcolm
Ferguson.

44065. *The Chairman.*—Do you usually reside in Iona?—Yes.

44066. Are you personally occupied in tilling your croft?—Yes.

44067. Have you been engaged in that business all your life?—Mostly all my life.

44068. Where have you lived besides?—In the Ross of Mull, where my father and grandfather were tenants.

44069. Have you been elected a delegate by your own people?—Yes, by the people of Iona.

44070. To represent the whole island?—Yes.

44071. Have you a written statement?—Yes. It is as follows:—

' Statement of Grievances submitted to the Royal Commission by the LANARK
 ' crofters on East End, Iona.—That (1) in the year 1847 our rent
 ' was increased 50 per cent. That (2) in March 1872 the ground GLASGOW.
 ' officer and clerk of the late factor came to the island and made
 ' us sign a paper to the following effect:—"I will remove from house,
 ' crop, garden, and everything in my possession, at Whitsunday term
 ' next." Some time after this, we were called to the factor's office
 ' to sign another paper, to the effect that we would be liable to any
 ' rent he would think fit to impose upon us, otherwise we would not be
 ' to remain longer in our holdings; after that he laid an additional £50
 ' upon ten crofts, so that our rents are now more than doubled since 1847.
 ' That (3) we had a piece of land on the Creich common for grazing our
 ' horses during the time we were carting our peats; part of which was
 ' taken from us by the late factor, and put into his own farm. Seeing
 ' that we are now deprived of our peat moss, and allowed only £2, being
 ' the third of what is required for our fuel, we feel that our burdens are
 ' in no way lessened. To cart our peats from the moss to the shore, a
 ' road was made, for which we are taxed by so much extra being put on
 ' our rents; but although the road is now of no use to us, no abatement
 ' has been made. That (4) it was customary and compulsory on the
 ' estate to make us work with our horses and carts whenever our services
 ' were required, without either food or wages. That (5) the late factor
 ' was owing to some of us, and to other crofters and cottars in this island,
 ' from 30s. to £10 for kelp work, which he never paid either in money or
 ' in kind; he refused payment on the ground that the kelp did not pay.
 ' That (6) some of us did not send any grain to the mill for the last
 ' eighteen years, while in former times we could make as much meal as
 ' our families would need for the year through, but for a number of years
 ' past we require to buy seed for the ground, and food for our cattle as
 ' well as for ourselves. Our own produce will not support our families for
 ' more than three months of the year, particularly when there is a failure
 ' in the potatoes. The soil is so much deteriorated in value of late, on
 ' account of constant cropping and incessant rains in wet seasons, that it
 ' does not yield remunerative returns. That (7) were it not for the long
 ' credit we get from merchants at home and in Glasgow, we could not
 ' stand our holdings so long. Our rents must be paid regularly; the
 ' local merchants often lend us money to pay it when due, although we
 ' are heavily indebted to them for meal and other necessaries. That (8)
 ' our island is very bare, and exposed to storms, which cause much damage
 ' and destruction to property; owing to such occurrences, we suffer
 ' occasionally by the loss of boats, crop, &c. That (9) the extent of our
 ' holdings is about six or seven acres of arable land, with a summing of
 ' eight cows and one horse for each croft, and the average rent is about
 ' £20, which we consider fully double what the place is worth. Our
 ' request is fair rent, security of tenure, and compensation for improve-
 ' ment. The population of this island in 1847 was above 500, but at the
 ' last census in 1881 it was only 250.' A statement by the crofters of
 ' the west end of Iona, and also a statement of the villagers of Iona, were
 forwarded to the Secretary of the Royal Commission by post.

44072. You have alluded to two other memorials or statements from the crofters of Iona; did you see them when they were made?—Yes.

44073. Look at these two papers and see if they are the same?—Yes.

44074. This is a 'Statement of grievances by the cottars of Iona, to be laid before the Royal Commission. 1. We are crofters by rights not cottars. 2. We pay our rent to Mr Wylie, the Duke's factor. Our rent was raised to 10s. in the year 1853. We cannot keep any stock, because our crofts are limited to the one-eighth of an acre; we pay rent at the rate of £4 per

LANARK
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LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Malcolm
Ferguson.

' acre. 2. In the year 1855, 20s. was added to our rent for the houses which were built by ourselves or by our predecessors, raising the rent to the rate of £12 per acre. 3. In the year 1859 written summons of removal were sent us from the Duke's factor to be signed, and, if refused, we were served with summons from Tobermory from the sheriff, 22s. 6d. being the expense of the said summons ; that sum we had to pay. 4. In the year 1881, November 22, owing to the excessive high tide, we lost our boats, also our peats. We humbly submitted our losses to the Duke. We were informed through the chamberlain that he did not recognise our tenancy ; whereas others who were paying a higher rent got compensation for losses sustained. In the same year, some of us having failed to pay their half year's rent at Martinmas, letters to the following effect were received :—“ I hereby intimate, that unless your rent is paid you run the risk of losing your house.” 5. In the year 1882 we were prohibited from cutting our peats, which we were in the habit of cutting from year to year from time immemorial. Our allotted mosses are now cut by others in Mull, and we are allowed no compensation for same ; seeing that we live in an island in which there is no work to be had, and that we must now buy coals which we cannot do, we would require at least five tons of coals, which comes to £3, 10s. at the rate of 14s. per ton, the price paid for them this year. Our peats we prepared ourselves, and consequently we had not so much outlay of money ; coals we must pay on delivery. 6. In the spring of 1883, the ground officer had been going round the island inquiring of the crofters how much oats, barley, rye, and potatoes they would require ; we were told that we would get none. These seeds arrived, and were distributed among the crofters, but none to us.—

ALEXANDER MACDONALD, ARCHIBALD BLACK, LACHLAN M'LEAN, ARCHIBALD M'PHAIL. And here is another.—‘ Statement of grievances submitted to the Royal Commission by the Iona West End Crofters,

1. That in the year 1847 our rents were increased 50 per cent. 2. That in the year 1849, a bull infected with foot-and-mouth disease was bought in the south by the late factor for his own stock in Mull, but on observing that he was infected with the disease, was landed in Iona, by which our cattle in the whole island became infected, and some of them died by it. 3. That the late factor sent sheep which were infected with scab and other diseases on to the island to winter ; these sheep strayed on our crofts and common pasture, and infected our sheep with those diseases which were never known before on the island ; and fearing we might drive them away he ordered our dogs to be killed, and actually sent his gamekeeper to kill them. 4. That we were forced by the late factor to work for him with our horses and carts, without food or wages, any time he thought proper to ask us. 5. That in the year 1860, the hill contiguous to the schoolhouse was taken from us, by which our whole pasture was in a manner spoiled. 6. That in the year 1864 the late factor wanted each of us to pay 16s. for the common pasture of a croft belonging either to Duncan M'Phail or to himself ; this we refused to do unless he would allow us to stock it ; this he would by no means allow us to do, but sent a sheriff officer with a warning to each of us. We then petitioned the Duke, and whatever answer the factor received from his Grace, we were obliged for fear of losing our holdings to submit to an additional £5, by which our rents are doubled, and in some cases nearly tripled since 1847, so that our burdens are heavy indeed. 7. That for many years before the late factor came, and some years after, our crofts were so productive that we were going to the mill twice a year ; but being compelled by him to part with one of our horses, which is a great disadvantage in tilling our crofts, this and the change in the weather, and other causes perhaps unknown to us, makes our crofts

' less productive, so that we shall be glad if we shall have what will sow them over again, in bad years especially, so we must have meal and other necessaries all the year round, though rented about £20, and some above it, exclusive of rates. 8. That all this outlay and much more must be met by the produce of the stock that we are allowed to keep. 9. That being now deprived of the peat moss, which for generations was in our possession, though allowed a reduction of £2, which is about the half necessary for our fuel, we feel that this adds to our burdens. 10. Finally, dwelling on a sea-girt island, we suffer many inconveniences and hardships which cannot be specified in this statement; also, as far as we know since this present Duke came into possession of the estate, he remitted no arrears, unless he may have done so to those evicted, and those who may have felt compelled to leave for foreign land in the shape of assistance, and those of the crofters that remain did not, and do not feel any benefit to them for these clearances.' (Signed by twelve persons) 'P.S. We feel it right and just to mention that the Duke, four or five years ago, ordered potato seed to be distributed among us gratuitously; and two years ago, on account of that destructive storm and high tide, by which the people suffered so much, the Duke paid a share of those losses to us, but they were not paid in full; and last year we got seed potatoes, oats, and barley, which we promised to pay at first rent, but we did not pay it yet.' Then there are two statements from crofters, and one statement from cottars?—Yes.

44075. Are the two statements from crofters from substantially the same people?—There is a slight difference between them. The two places are, as it were, two townships.

44076. The two statements from crofters are from two different townships?—Yes.

44077. One is called East End?—Yes, and the other West End. That is the reason why two statements are given in.

44078. Well, the complaint is that in the year 1847 the rent was increased 50 per cent.?—Yes.

44079. And in the year 1872 a paper was sent round by which people were to bind themselves to pay any additional rent they were asked, and generally to do what they were told, or else they would have to go. Is that it?—Yes.

44080. Have you got a copy of that paper?—No, we had only just to sign the paper, and deliver it to the factor's clerk.

44081. In 1872?—Yes, but as far as I recollect, I gave the very words that were written in the paper I signed.

44082. Was the paper generally signed by the crofters of the East End?—Yes, they all signed it.

44083. And it was given back to the factor?—Yes.

44084. And I suppose it is in the factor's possession now?—I think so. I asked the clerk, was it imperative we should sign it, and he said yes.

44085. Did you sign it yourself?—Yes.

44086. In that respect you bound yourself to pay anything?—I did not sign. It was my father. He signed the other paper I refer to, the first paper I saw, saying he would remove from house, crop, land, and everything in possession, and so forth.

44087. The paper says—'I will bind myself to remove from house, land, &c., if required to do so.' It did not mean he was to go away at once?—I suppose so.

44088. Do you remember what it really meant?—What I understand is this, that it meant if we did not sign it, a legal process would be served upon us, and then we were under his power, and we had either to agree to his terms or to leave the place.

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Malcolm Ferguson.

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Ferguson.

44089. But did that first paper contain any other conditions? Did it say—"I agree to sign such and such conditions;" or was it just a general statement?—Just a general statement, to the best of my recollection and belief.

44090. Then there was a second paper; what was the nature of the second paper?—I did not see the second paper at all.

44091. How do you know it existed?—I know the people were summoned and called to the factor's office to sign it.

44092. Were you not summoned?—My father was alive, and it was his name that was to be subscribed to the paper.

44093. Did you ever hear what the second paper contained?—Not exactly the wording of the paper, but just what is stated in the statement I gave.

44094. 'That we would be liable to pay any rent he would think fit to impose, otherwise we would not be allowed to remain longer in our holdings. After that an additional £50 upon ten crofts.' Did they sign that paper in the factor's office?—Yes.

44095. And that paper, I suppose, was left in the factor's possession?—Yes. They did not know the rent at the time that they were to pay, but they bound themselves to pay any increase of rent.

44096. Then the privilege of cutting peats upon the Ross of Mull was taken away from Iona, but the people received a compensation of £2?—Yes.

44097. Was that £2 a remission of rent to each crofter?—Yes, a reduction of rent.

44098. But you say you did not consider it sufficient compensation?—No.

44099. Was any remonstrance at that time made to the factor about the amount?—Yes, to the factor's official.

44100. But when the people were in the habit of getting their peats from the Ross of Mull, did they waste valuable time going backward and forward, and was it accompanied by danger and hardship?—Most decidedly it was.

44101. Then not only they wasted time, but it was accompanied by danger?—Certainly.

44102. Were any lives ever lost?—Never, except the lives perhaps of horses in swimming them across. I remember one horse being drowned.

44103. But even the lives of horses were of material value to the crofters; may it not have been a better bargain for the crofters to get a remission of £2 and to save their trouble and to save their horses, and at the same time buy coals?—Yes, but by having the peat moss they were saving the price of coals. I would say they would require £5 for coals in the year, according to the price of the coals. They were saving that price, because they were carting and ferrying them with their own boats.

44104. Was the waste of time, and the risk perhaps, not worth £5?—The money was of more consideration to them than the time wasted. If there was any other employment, they could be at where they could take that money, it was preferable to give up the peats, but there was no other employment that they could be at.

44105. You think they did the peat work at a time when they had nothing else to do?—Certainly, they did.

44106. And do you mean that some members of the family might be profitably employed on the peats, and others on other work?—They cut their peats always when they were done with the sowing, and they were ready for drying as the season would turn out. Then whenever they got their potatoes weeded out and well set up, the peats were ready to be carted.

44107. Did the women go to cut the peats?—Yes.

44108. They went across in boats?—Yes.

44109. Where did they live when they were over there?—They came back at night. They left Iona at three or four in the morning, and got back from Ross or Mull at nine o'clock in the evening.

44110. Had they no shielings over there?—Nothing at all. They breakfasted at three in the morning, taking lunch with them.

44111. But it may have been bad weather with them sometimes?—Sometimes; and if the weather was not suitable they would stay at home.

44112. What was the nature of this compulsory work, by men and horses and carts, which you say was unpaid by the factor; was it work upon roads?—Any kind of work that belonged to the estate.

44113. What kind of work was it generally?—Supposing, for instance, that the proprietor was to put up a dyke or the like of that, the crofters were obliged to cart the stones where it was of no benefit to themselves. If it was to improve another place, it did not matter; or if a crofter would leave the place and the crop was in the proprietor's hands, the other crofters were bound to secure it when they were requested to do so.

44114. Do you mean that if the proprietor wished to get some work done upon one township, he would oblige the crofters upon another township to help to do the work, or were the crofters always employed on their own township, for work upon their own township?—Well, I don't know. All I know is this, that all the work that has been done by the crofters in this respect was done on the factor's farm.

44115. When they wanted work done upon the factor's farm they called the crofters to do that work?—Exactly.

44116. Was that regulated at so many days, or was it unlimited?—As far as I recollect, I think in the year 1876 we signed printed regulations, that we were to give six days' labour in the year if it was required.

44117. Was that for particular work or for any work?—Any work. There was no kind of work specified, so far as I remember, in the printed regulations.

44118. Has that sort of service or obligatory work always been exacted upon the estate from time immemorial, or is it a modern introduction?—I think it is since I remember.

44119. Always?—Always; but for a member of years past the people were not asked.

44120. Then it was an old custom of the estate?—I think it was an old custom.

44121. And the people held their crofts under that obligation?—Yes.

44122. And it has not been exacted of late years?—Not so far as I remember, at least in Iona; but I believe it was exacted in the Ross of Mull.

44123. Restricting ourselves to Iona, it has not been exacted of late years?—Not of late years.

44124. Well, since they ceased to exact the work, have they asked any additional rent instead of the obligation to work?—No, they have not.

44125. Now, there is a complaint that no grain has been carried to the mill for eighteen years; I want to arrive at the reason of that. Is there a smaller area cultivated with grain now than there used to be?—The same quantity, so far as I understand.

44126. You think the area is the same?—Yes.

44127. There has been no diminution of the arable area?—Not a yard, I believe.

44128. Then why is the grain not carried to the mill now? Is it on account of the inferiority of the quality of the grain, or less quantity?—

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Malcolm Ferguson.

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Malcolm
Ferguson.

Less quantity. It does not grow now the same as it did many years ago.

44129. Do you think the quality is inferior too, or is it the same?—The returns are much lower. In some cases there are no returns at all.

44130. Is that owing, do you think, to the exhaustion of the soil?—Yes, and to the wet weather. I have seen in wet weather, particularly in the winter time, the sea quite dark for fifty or sixty yards round the coast, with the substance of the soil washed away altogether with the floods that were coming.

44131. Then you think the weather has been getting worse?—Oh, most decidedly. At least I am told by older men that they used to see heavy falls of snow and frost for a long time in the winter time.

44132. If the soil is getting worse is it in consequence of less manure being put upon it; or in consequence of change in the way of cultivation, or is it that the soil is exhausted and washed away?—I think the soil is exhausted, and I think the weather has something to do with it as well.

44133. Had they, in Iona, the habit of bringing turf from the hill and putting it upon the arable ground in former times or not?—I don't think it, because I do not know any place they could bring earth or turf from.

44134. If they do not carry the corn to the mill, what do they do with it; do they thresh it, or do they give the straw and grain together to the cattle?—In some cases they give the straw and grain to the cattle as it grows.

44135. The grain in the straw?—Exactly.

44136. And if there is a good market for their cattle, may it not be more profitable to them to feed the cattle with this stuff, and sell the cattle well, and buy better meal for their families?—Well, I would think so. That is my own opinion. It is far more profitable.

44137. So, though they lose the grain for food, they may recoup themselves in selling a better description of cattle?—But there is not, I believe, the fourth part of grain raised now in the island, or the sixth part that used to be.

44138. Although the same area is cultivated?—Just so.

44139. You say that the population has decreased from 500 in 1847 to 250 now; are there only 250 now?—That was the number at last census.

44140. What has become of the others?—They emigrated in 1847.

44141. Where did they go to?—To America.

44142. Did you hear the previous witness, Mr Grahame?—Yes.

44143. Did your people succeed and prosper?—Some did, and some did not.

44144. What do you think they generally did?—A great number, I know, that were sent away at the time, died before they arrived at their destination, by fever and other complaints.

44145. How many went away; did they all go together in one ship?—I don't think they did. I was not in Iona at that time. I did not go there till 1851.

44146. Did you ever hear any number mentioned?—I have heard that in some cases about seven or eight died in one family.

44147. Then the whole family must have died?—Well, there might be perhaps eleven or twelve in the family.

44148. However, the descendants of those people are over in Canada?—Yes.

44149. Do they ever write to their friends in Iona?—Very seldom.

44150. Now, when all these people went away in 1847, what was done with their lands; were their crofts added to the other crofts, or were

they consolidated into some large holding?—Some were and some were **LANARK.**
not.

44151. Is there any large holding in the island?—There are now three
large holdings.

44152. How big?—What I mean by that is when three or four crofts
are put together.

44153. What do you call a large holding; a farm of £50 or £60 a
year?—Exactly.

44154. What is the largest holding in Iona?—I think £80 is the
largest.

44155. But, in general, was the land vacated by the people who emi-
grated employed in enlarging the other small crofts, or were they all put
into a large farm?—I think that no changes have taken place in the crofts,
because on many a croft at that time there were three or four families,
and when the people went away, the croft went to one family. In other
cases, in two or three instances, I know that two or three crofts went to
one family.

44156. Well, there were no people brought in from anywhere else?—Yes.

44157. What I want to arrive at is this, are the fewer people who
remained better off now? Have the 250 people larger crofts generally
than they used to have when there were 500?—The same size of crofts,
only that on the crofts before there were three or four families where
there is only one family now.

44158. Then each family has a larger area than it formerly had?—Yes.

44159. And in consequence of this emigration, the people who remained
behind are better off?—Well, I cannot say that.

44160. If they have more land, does not that do them good?—But the
land they had before was more productive. The land is now less pro-
ductive than in former times.

44161. But that is the result of nature?—Exactly.

44162. You don't blame the factor for that?—Oh, no; not at all.

44163. Well then, the chief complaint I find is that the rent is too
high?—Yes, that is the chief complaint.

44164. You mentioned eight cows and one horse,—any sheep?—Well,
there were no sheep allowed at one time. The late factor made us put
away our sheep.

44165. What have you got now?—I think now we can keep any stock
we like.

44166. But I want to understand what an active well-to-do crofter
actually keeps?—Eight cows, or a summing equivalent to eight cows.

44167. And one horse?—Yes, that is his summing.

44168. Any sheep, as a matter of fact?—A few sheep.

44169. Twenty?—No; perhaps half a dozen—from that to ten.

44170. Eight cows, one horse, and six sheep, and he pays £20. Giv-
ing a horse and six sheep for £4, the rent would be about £2 per cow?
—Just about that.

44171. Does the croft keep those cows all the year, or have the crofters
to buy provision?—Yes, and still the cattle are almost in a state of
starvation.

44172. But do they as matter of fact buy provision in for the winter?
—In bad years they manage to buy provision for the winter.

44173. But not in ordinary years?—Not in ordinary years. Last year
we had to get hay and bean meal from Glasgow for the cattle.

44174. When a man wants to hire the summer grazing of a cow from
another man or from a big crofter, how much does he pay?—Well, I am
not very sure. We have no grazing let on our land.

GLASGOW.

Malcolm
Ferguson.

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GLASGOW—
Malcolm
Ferguson

44175. That never occurs?—Oh, yes. When I remember, it was 30s. That was the rent for a cow for grazing for a year through.

44176. But if anybody wanted to hire grazing for a cow from another man or from a farmer, how much would he pay for the cow for the year? —That is for wintering?

44177. Yes.—They never let the grass that way in Iona.

44178. How much would a farmer charge in the Ross of Mull?—I have heard that £5 was charged.

44179. Then the Duke charges £2 for a cow, and a farmer in the Ross of Mull would charge £5. Is that about the difference?—I think so.

44180. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—You say the late factor was owing you cottars and crofters certain sums of money for kelp work, and that he never paid them; do you state that of your own knowledge?—Yes, of my own knowledge.

44181. Was he owing yourself anything?—Yes.

44182. How much?—I think all the work I ever did at that came to 30s. Others had £3, £4, and £5, and others above that.

44183. What year was that?—I believe it is about fifteen or sixteen years since. He had a man to look after the making of kelp in the place at the time, and of course some were paid for their work. Some were regularly kept at the work, but the crofters when they had time to cart the kelp were promised so much a day, and they expected to be paid, but when they went to ask payment, the factor told them he could not pay, because the kelp did not pay him.

44184. Was it for himself he was getting kelp made?—I don't think it.

44185. Was it for the Duke?—I believe so, but I am not sure, and I do not like to say anything I am not sure of.

44186. Are you quite certain then that these sums were never paid?—Perfectly certain.

44187. Were they asked for more than once?—No, there is no use asking them more than once.

44188. How long was it before the death of the late factor?—It would be about five or six years before his death.

44189. Was it mentioned to his successor?—No, never.

44190. Why did you not insist on getting it deducted from your rent? —Well, supposing we would ask that, there would be no attention paid to what we would ask in that respect.

44191. But if that money was due to you, you were not bound to pay your rent till it was deducted?—But I believe there were no accounts. I don't know if there were any. I know this, that since it was not settled in time, his successor would not recognise our claim. I am perfectly sure of that.

44192. I suppose you are acquainted with the circumstances of the cottars as well as your own. They say they are paying at the rate of £12 per acre for their ground. Is that so?—I believe they are.

44193. Their ground, I suppose, consists of a kailyard?—Yes.

44194. How do they support themselves?—By fishing and by working here and there. Of course there are some who are tradesmen among that class, but they are not all so.

44195. In saying that their rent is £12 per acre, can you say what is the actual amount of rent paid by each of them?—Thirty shillings, including house and garden ground. £1 is charged for the house, which they built and keep in repair themselves, and 10s. for the ground attached to the house.

44196. What kind of houses are they?—Thatched houses.
44197. Did they build them all themselves?—Yes.
44198. How long since?—I believe many generations past.
44199. Then the rent must be charged for the ground on which the house was built?—Yes.
44200. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Do you know if that second paper which the tenants signed, when they bound themselves to pay an unknown rent, was a submission to valuators?—Yes.
44201. It was a submission to arbiters, binding themselves to abide by the decision of the arbiters?—When the £50 was laid upon us it was submitted to valuators to divide that. It was not equally divided at all,—the £50 upon the ten crofts. It was left to themselves to see if they would lay the extra £50, so much here and so much there, according to the value of their ground. The people themselves did not agree, and three valuators were sent to Iona to settle the matter.
44202. And this paper which they signed was a paper agreeing to abide by that valuation?—No, but that they would be liable to pay any rent that would be laid upon them.
44203. Not that they would be liable to pay a rent which was to be fixed by valuation?—No.
44204. Had the factor a farm of his own in Iona? It was supposed he had a farm of his own in another man's name. That was believed to be the case, whether it was so or not.
44205. And when the tenants did work on the factor's farm was it in making march dykes?—Yes, they had to carry stones for building that dyke that was between that large farm and the land supposed to belong to the crofters.
44206. But was it for internal fences or was it for a march fence?—A march fence.
44207. There is a reference here to the factor having introduced disease into the island by having sent a diseased bull to Iona, but he sent this to his own farm?—It was brought from the south for his own farm, but it seems that when it was seen the animal was diseased it was landed in Iona.
44208. Had he no stock on his own land in Iona?—I am not aware he had at that time. It was not many years after he came to Mull.
44209. Is it likely he would have a farm without any stock upon it?—I don't think he had.
44210. You think he had a farm and had no stock upon it?—Not at that time. It was after that that some tenants or crofters left the place, and the place was made a large farm, when the crofts became vacant.
44211. He took the crofts?—Yes.
44212. And you think he was aware this bull was diseased when he sent it to Iona?—I think that was the object, so that it would not go to his own farm.
44213. It did go to his own farm, but it was a farm, you say, where there was no stock?—Yes. Of course, I cannot give any satisfactory answer about the bull, because the bull was in Iona before I ever was there.
44214. *The Chairman.*—Is there any foot-and-mouth disease there now?—No, I never heard of any foot-and-mouth disease in Iona since.
44215. Or scab?—Yes, the scab is very prevalent in Iona.
44216. Is it more prevalent in the Ross of Mull?—I don't think it is.
44217. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Are you the only delegate from Iona here to-day?—Yes.

LANARK.
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GLASGOW
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Malcolm Ferguson.

LANARK. 44218. Had the Commission been able to go to Iona, I presume several people would have come before us?—Yes, I think two delegates were to be appointed from the east end, and two from the west end, and one from the cottars. That was the arrangement if circumstances had permitted the Commission to land in Iona on 9th August last.

Glasgow. 44219. In all those papers there is mention made of a factor; what was the name of the factor?—Mr John Campbell, Ardfinaig.

44220. Will you explain a little more fully about this bull? Was the bull taken, in the first instance, to the farm of the factor in the Ross of Mull?—I was not in Iona at the time, but I understand it was in this way. The bull was bought in the south of Argyllshire, and was brought to Mull, and when it was found that the animal was diseased it was landed in Iona, so that the disease would not spread through Mull, or through the factor's stock there.

44221. So, to save the Ross of Mull, Iona was sacrificed?—Yes, that was the way we understood the matter.

44222. About this farm which you say the factor had, was it his own farm or was it an estate farm?—I think it was his own farm.

44223. He was paying rent for it?—Yes, and he had other two farms added to it in Mull.

44224. You have stated that the population has very considerably decreased since the time of the potato disease. Are the people as poor now as they were in your younger days?—They are not so poor as they were in 1847 and 1849, and perhaps 1850, but in my younger days the people were better off than they are now.

44225. Supposing the half of the population were put away, and even that the remainder got their lands, would those that remained be a bit better off if their rents also were doubled or trebled?—Well, I don't think it, because the soil is now less productive. It does not yield any returns.

44226. Is there much less stock now in Iona than there was in former times?—I believe it is the same, but the ground will not make so much stock as it did in former times.

44227. But you think the same number of head are there now that there were in former times?—I think so. I had always an argument with the people that they were keeping too much stock. They said—' Well, 'we have to pay such a heavy rent, and if we do not keep a full stock we 'are not able to pay the rent.' But it is my own opinion that it would be far better to have a less stock, and to have them always in good order.

44228. You said there were two or three largish farms in Iona; do these belong to natives of the island or to strangers?—One belongs to a native of the island and the other two belong to strangers.

44229. Are the smaller people that you represent here to-day, the descendants of people that have been long in this historic isle?—Yes, every one of them.

44230. Can you state anything that is regularly done by the proprietor in the way of encouragement to the poorer class of the people, to the crofters?—Well, I don't remember anything just now.

44231. You cannot charge your memory with any such thing, can you?—Not in the meantime.

44232. Are your rents pretty rigorously exacted?—Oh, they must be paid when the gentleman comes to collect them; but there are sometimes he may perhaps allow three months longer, if they promise to have them exact at that time.

44233. You got grace for three months at times?—Yes.

44234. Are there any arrears at this moment?—I don't think it,

but the people would prefer to borrow money rather than be in arrear.

44235. Is it the fact that they are obliged to borrow money very often to pay their rents?—Yes, I know that of my own personal knowledge.

44236. Do the authorities of the estate know that the rent does not really come out of the produce of the croft but out of borrowed money?—No, I don't think they know it, and they would not believe it supposing it were told to them.

44237. But you know it?—Yes, I know it from my own knowledge and experience. For the last fourteen or fifteen years, I did not put a shoe on my foot, a shirt on my back, or a bonnet on my head, with any profit I derived from the croft.

44238. What rent are you paying yourself?—£14, 18s.

44239. With regard to the paper that the people were asked to sign that they would pay whatever rent was chosen to be put upon them, there is a reference in that paper to valuators; but the business of the valuators was not to fix the total rent?—No.

44240. They merely allocated among the crofters whatever the proprietor chose to put upon you?—Exactly. That is just what was done.

44241. Did you and the small people agree to those terms, because they could not help themselves, and because they had a pretty good idea that if they did not agree, out they would go?—Oh, there was no alternative; and that was always the answer they would get—'If you are not satisfied, 'just go away'—if they made any complaint.

44242. Do you think that some of the people who are now in Iona were there at the time it belonged to the Macleans of Duart? Were their forefathers there from time immemorial?—I don't know. I believe one of the oldest families in Iona is an uncle of mine, whose forefathers were there from time immemorial; and I think there is a family called Black, that is said to be the oldest in Iona.

44243. Were they there in the time of the Bishops of the Isles?—Well, tradition says they were, and that they came from Ireland along with St Columba.

44244. I hope they may continue there?—I don't think it. There is only an old man there, and he has only one son who is a doctor in South Uist.

44245. *Professor Mackinnon.*—I suppose, although there are two statements from Iona, and although you belong to the one side of the island, you know the other side quite as well?—Yes, in most cases.

44246. The whole island is not so large but that one person can know it well?—Yes; but anything that took place before 1851, when I came to Iona, I am not prepared to answer a question satisfactorily about.

44247. Your father removed to Iona in 1851?—Yes.

44248. And you succeeded him in the croft?—Yes.

44249. And you have been paying the rent ever since?—Yes.

44250. Now, both papers state that the rent of the island was increased 50 per cent. in 1847. This was before you went, but I suppose you are quite satisfied it is a true statement?—Yes, because I have heard it often represented by very old men in the place.

44251. What was the year of the potato disease?—1846.

44252. And the year after when its effects began to be seen and felt by the people, the rents of Iona were increased 50 per cent.?—Yes.

44253. Who was factor at that time?—Mr John Campbell.

44254. Do you know any other place where the rents were raised that year?—No, I am not aware of any other place.

44255. Your own rent is £14, 18s.; what is your summing?—The summing is the same as the rest, but the place will not carry a full stock.

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Malcolm Ferguson.

- LANARK. 44256. You would be allowed to keep the same stock as a £20 crofter?—Yes, the very same.
- GLASGOW. 44257. Only you don't keep it, because the croft is either not so good or not so large?—Yes.
- Malcolm Ferguson. 44258. Eight cows and one horse, or their equivalent in sheep; what is the equivalent in sheep of a cow in Iona?—Five sheep.
44259. Is your summing eight cows bare, or eight cows with followers?—Eight cows bare, or what is equivalent to them.
44260. You are certain it is not eight cows with followers?—Yes. There is no one in Iona, with one croft, that keeps eight cows with followers. From five to six cows, and the rest in heifers, is what they keep.
44261. What do 'followers' mean in Iona?—Young animals under three years, heifers, stots, and queys.
44262. An heifer counts as a cow when it is over three years of age?—Yes, or when it has a calf.
44263. But at present your cows are not allowed followers in the summing?—Yes.
44264. Your summing does not include followers?—Not at all; just eight cows, or what is equivalent in other beasts to eight cows.
44265. You say the soil has deteriorated very much of late years; is that entirely owing to the change of climate?—Yes, I believe it is the constant cropping.
44266. Are not your crofts large enough in Iona to give the land rest?—I don't think it.
44267. Are not the bigger crofts that pay £40 or £50 big enough to give the land rest?—Yes, when two or three are put together. They give the land rest then.
44268. But I suppose in the old times, when the crofts were smaller than now, the land must have had less rest than now?—That is true enough, but I would think that by having it all under crop the soil must be quite exhausted now.
44269. I suppose your own memory is quite distinct since 1851?—Yes.
44270. And you are yourself convinced that your own land is less productive now than it was then?—Yes, I remember thirty years ago when they would put six or seven quarters of barley and bere and oats and rye to the mill to make into meal, and perhaps would sell in the market three or four quarters besides; but now, supposing they would thresh every sheaf they have in their ground, in some years they would not take more than two or three quarters off it altogether.
44271. But taking an average year, how many returns on an average do you take from your barley crop?—An average crop in general will give a return of from one to four or five.
44272. In an average year, it will give four or five?—Yes, some parts of the land will, because some parts are better than others; and in some cases I have seen there was no return at all.
44273. But you are convinced there were greater returns thirty years ago, than can be had now out of the same soil?—Yes; I don't think the average return would exceed two or three.
44274. With respect to the peats, you used to cross over the sound of Iona and cut the peats near the shore on the opposite side?—Yes.
44275. And you did this in the early summer before you began to work?—Yes.
44276. And you got a reduction of £2 of rent in return for the deprivation of that privilege?—Yes.
44277. If you had other work during that time,—supposing you could

be usefully employed during the period you were in the habit of being employed at these peats,—was it not, on the whole, an advantage to make the change?—Yes, if there was any other work where we could be employed profitably, it was certainly an advantage; but, seeing there was no other kind of work, we are so much out, the outlay is so much.

44278. How many weeks did you work at these peats?—One family would cut their peats in four or five days. Then they were left to dry, and they would be employed one day in lifting them up, and would cart them to the shore in four or five days.

44279. And for the corresponding days and weeks, since you have been deprived of that privilege, I suppose the whole population are doing nothing?—Very little.

44280. With regard to this work that you were obliged to do on the estate before 1876, was it always upon the estate that you were obliged to do it?—Sometimes on the island, and sometimes we were called from the island. I remember a long time ago, when we were called to the factor's farm of Fidean to work in digging potatoes the whole day; and although he had plenty potatoes growing, he did not offer us a dinner of them. That was in connection with the farm of Ardfinaig.

44281. And I suppose Fidean is a very good place for potatoes?—Yes, as good as in Mull.

44282. When you did work on the estate, what work was it that you used to do?—When some of the houses down in the village were vacated and had to be pulled down, we had to carry the stones away to some place or other. Sometimes we had to work about the Cathedral in clearing away rubbish, and works like that.

44283. There is no doubt that, as compared with twenty years ago, the Cathedral is now an object of beauty?—Yes.

44284. And that was done at very great expense by the Duke of Argyll?—Yes.

44285. And the Cathedral is now well preserved and in very good order?—Yes.

44286. And under the charge of a native of Iona?—Yes.

44287. Apart from that, can you tell me what amount of actual work, in the way of improving the land in Iona, was done during your and your father's tenure of the croft?—Well, I don't know.

44288. What amount of money was expended by the proprietor on your own father's croft since 1851?—Not a single penny.

44289. And all over the island, in improving the crofts,—in the way of fences or trenching or draining or the like of that?—Well, two years ago a fence was put up, for the march between us and the tenant who took the lease of the farm that was marching with us. There was then a fence put up at the Duke's expense between us, the east end crofters and that farm.

44290. Before that time, how much do you remember of that kind of work being done in Iona?—Nothing of the kind. That was the first thing I knew of.

44291. Do you have leases of the crofts?—No.

44292. Do you want leases?—Not at the present rents.

44293. But if you got your rents reduced to what you consider a proper amount, you would wish to have leases then?—We would wish security of tenure, that there would be a law passed that would not allow any proprietor to put a tenant away, as long as he would pay his rent, and as long as he would behave himself.

44294. Now, to come to the actual practice on the estate, ever since

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.

Malcolm
Ferguson.

LANARK. you came to Iona in 1851, has there actually been a tenant removed during the whole of that time?—Yes.

Glasgow. 44295. Was he able to pay rent?—I don't know whether he was able to pay rent or not, but a good many left since I went to Iona.

Malcolm Ferguson. 44296. But you don't know whether they were in arrear of rent?—No.

44297. There is no insecurity of tenure in Iona at present when one pays one's rent, is there?—I don't think there is.

44298. It is not the removing of you from your crofts, but the raising of your rents that you wish security of tenure against?—That is what we were afraid of. I believe the feeling was through the whole estate, that if any one expended money and labour on his croft, they would be sure to put more rent upon it. So there was no encouragement to industry at all in that way.

44299. Do you attribute to that the fact that the crofts have gone back in value rather than increased in value of late years?—They did, without a doubt.

44300. Well, in addition to the constant cropping and the climate, do you attribute the backward condition of the crofts to the discouragement people have in making improvements, and the fear that their rents may be raised?—Well, they could make improvements; but still, as to those improvements I refer to, I don't mean it would make the soil to yield better returns, but I mean improving their houses and building dykes and the like of that.

44301. But that would make the croft more valuable and desirable?—But perhaps it would not make the croft more productive. It would make the holding more valuable.

44302. Before 1876, when you subscribed a paper for six days' work, were you sometimes obliged to work more than six days and sometimes less?—Yes.

44303. You were obliged to work when you were asked?—Just when we were asked. There was no number of days mentioned.

44304. But as a matter of fact, of late years there has been no work?—We are not asked, but still we are under the obligation the same as before.

44305. But because the greater portion of the work was done upon the factor's farm, and the present factor does not farm, there is no chance you will now be asked to do the work you were asked to do before?—That is the very reason.

44306. You stated the late factor was tenant of the farm of Fidean, was that actually the case?—Yes, he added that to Ardfinaig shortly after he came to Mull. He was also tenant of two farms in the island of Tiree at the same time.

44307. Was that upon the same estate upon which he was factor?—Yes, upon the estate of the Duke of Argyll.

44308. Do you pay poor rates in Iona?—Yes.

44309. Have you any paupers there?—I think there are only three in Iona.

44310. That shows the people are in good condition?—Yes, but we are rated all the same, and have been rated all along.

44311. Some years ago the rates were very heavy!—Yes.

44312. Were there more paupers in Iona at that time?—No. The number of paupers in Iona since I remember was just about the same. They were not decreasing or increasing.

44313. Does not the fact that the rates have decreased of late years show that the condition of the people has improved?—Not for the last few years, but between twenty and thirty years ago the rates were very high then.

44314. Don't you think then, as between that time and now, it is one

proof that the people are better off now than they were then?—There are LANARK.
less people now, I believe.

44315. That accounts partially for the reduction, does it not?—There might be more paupers then than to-day; and there is another thing too, the rates are better managed, I believe, now than they were in former days.

44316. Who managed them in former days?—There was the board and the inspector of poor, but people are perhaps getting better up to political economy than they were then.

44317. The factor is not at present chairman of the board?—No, he is not.

44318. Who was chairman at the time you considered the administration of the poor was not so well managed as now?—I think the late factor was a long time chairman of the board. I don't know if he was chairman at the time the rates were very high, but I believe he had full control over the affairs of the board.

44319. Who was inspector at that time?—One Graham, and one of the name of Boyd succeeded him; but I believe the inspectors then were not very well up to keeping accounts very regular.

44320. You are quite satisfied with the efficiency of the administration now?—Yes.

44321. Have you a member of the poor law board from Iona?—No.

44322. Why does not Iona claim a member?—They could put in a member if they liked.

44323. Have you a member of the School Board?—No.

44324. It is the same School Board you have for Iona and the Ross of Mull?—Yes.

44325. But you don't claim a member for yourselves?—Sometimes they thought of returning a member for themselves, but there is not one that would be willing to go the length of Bunessan. There would be some expenses connected with it.

44326. There would be a ferry to cross?—Yes.

44327. Your crofts are of the size that the people throughout almost all the islands we have been visiting wish their crofts made up to?—Yes.

44328. And still you have your grievances?—Yes.

44329. What would be your remedy for the whole matter?—My remedy is this, that if we had encouragement from the Duke that we would not be removed, and if we would get the ground at a reasonable rent—at a lower rent,—and that if we were able to build very nice cottages in Iona we would take the rent out of the place, supposing we had not the croft at all, by keeping lodgers in the summer time.

44330. You think that, if you had security, you would build houses, which you could let in summer, and make an income out of these?—Yes.

44331. Has the place of late years been becoming a favourite resort for summer visitors?—Yes.

44332. Is the hotel always full?—Very few stay in the hotel; but the other class of people, that are not in such a high position as to stay in the hotel, were taking up a good many houses in the island.

44333. Those who come to Iona seem to prefer living in private cottages?—Yes.

44334. And you think, if you had a good lease of the place, the tenants would be encouraged to build such houses as would let?—Yes; I think it is the best way the place would pay, in my opinion.

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Malcolm
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Malcolm
Ferguson.

44335. Do you remember what was the rent in 1847 of the present croft you occupy?—Well, it would be up to £8 or £9.

44336. And it is now £14?—Nearly £15. Crofts that in 1847 were paying £8, 10s. and £9, were raised to £15 that year.

44337. And are they at £15 now?—No, some of them are above £20.

44338. They say themselves that the rents have been doubled and sometimes nearly trebled; is that actually the case?—I don't know but it is true enough, because I believe there were crofts that were very cheap in 1847 that were raised since to the present rent.

44339. And during that time, so far as your croft is concerned anyhow, there was no expenditure by the proprietor upon improvements?—No, and some of the crofts I do not think could be improved, because there is no earth or soil to be got that would deepen the ground. In most of the one we occupy ourselves there is not more than two or three inches of earth altogether, and in wet seasons the grain I may say is almost dying. If the season is too warm again, there is not depth in the soil, and it withers up and does not grow.

44340. *The Chairman.*—When the rent was raised in 1847, did you understand that that was done in consequence of expenditure of money upon famine works and relief works in connection with the scarcity of those times?—Well, what was supposed was that it was the intention of the proprietor to put on so much rent that they would not be able to pay it, when they would be under such a burden they would leave the place of their own accord.

44341. Did you ever hear there had been expenditure on famine works at that time on improvements which might justify an increase of rent?—I never heard of any improvement that was made on any place except the factor's own farm. There was a great deal of money expended upon his farm or upon his farms.

44342. But the people may have got employment there?—Yes, but they got very poor wages. I remember when they were paid at the rate of from 8d. to 1s. a day, and getting meal in exchange at 3s. per stone of 17½ lbs., or at the rate of £2, 8s. per sack of 280 lbs.

44343. But none of this expenditure was done upon the crofts' properly speaking?—In some cases or in some crofts there were some drainings made, but they were, I believe charged for the expenses at the rate of 6½ per cent.

44344. Besides the general rise?—Exactly, at least I was told so by the people themselves. On the croft we occupy there was never a penny expended in my day.

44345. Now, in connection with the alleged high rents for small cottars, you say 30s. is paid for a small cottage with a quarter of an acre of ground?—Yes.

44346. And that the people built their own cottages?—Yes.

44347. Is there no assistance given by the proprietor towards the erection or improvement of those buildings?—Not that I am aware of.

44348. You don't know of it?—No, I don't know of it.

44349. Have the people who live in these cottages some great advantage from the position of the cottages for fishing or for any other branch of work?—There is no other work that they can get in Iona, unless they get a day's work here and there from some of the larger tenants in the harvest time. They get a few days' work now and then; but as for fishing it is not a place fitted for fishing, because there is no proper landing place.

44350. What like is the cottage for which they pay 30s.; is it a black house or a white house?—It is whitewashed anyhow. I know the Duke was giving them lime at times to whitewash them.

LANARK.

GLASGOW

Malcolm
Ferguson.

44351. Did he give them any timber or any lime to build them?—I have no doubt the Duke would give them timber or lime to build, or assist them in building.

44352. So that the increase of rent may in part be looked upon as interest for the Duke's expenditure for the cottars?—Well, I don't know. I am not aware of much expenditure.

44353. But if he gives them materials, is that not a kind of expenditure?—I only say that I believe he would give it if it were asked, but I don't know of any cases where it was ever asked, where the demand was made.

44354. When a man improves his house on a croft, or builds a cottage, has he any security for reimbursement if he leaves the place?—None whatever.

44355. Is there any rule?—There is no rule.

44356. But what is the practice? I suppose the people sometimes leave their houses. Do you know any case where reimbursement has been made?—No, I can say that my father, before I went to Iona, built a dwelling-house, barn, and byre, and got no compensation when he left the place. When we came to Iona, we found the houses in a dilapidated condition. We built the dwelling-house, and built a new barn and a new byre at our own expense; and such was the custom throughout the whole district.

44357. And if you emigrate now, you have no security that any portion will be repaid to you?—No; at least we have no claim whatever to it, unless it would be the proprietor's own free-will to do it.

44358. Is there any article in the regulations of the estate by which a tenant is bound not to ask for compensation?—I cannot say, because we were never served with a copy of the regulations.

44359. Did you ever see the regulations?—Yes, I saw the regulations one time when I was made to sign them. That was the first and last time I saw them, and it was such a long statement that, though I went over it, I did not remember all that was in it.

44360. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—With regard to the services that you and others had to give in former times, did you get anything in return for them?—Nothing whatever.

44361. Did I understand you to say that some of the Iona people were employed in clearing rubbish out of the Cathedral?—The last time the rubbish was cleared out, the Duke expended a large amount of money, and every one that was working then was paid. It was regular paid work; but any time before then, whenever we were required or requested to go out with the horses and carts, we had to do it, and got nothing for it.

44362. So whatever credit there is, if there be credit in clearing the rubbish from the ruins of Iona, a certain portion of that credit must be given to the crofters who did it gratis?—Yes.

44363. Do you know whether that has ever been known to the public before?—I believe it was not known to the public before. But when the last work was done, which continued for two or three years, every one working then was well paid.

44364. Will you repeat more distinctly what you said about some destitution works and meal; did I understand you to say that many of the people were paid at the rate of 8d. and 1s. per day?—I say, when that improvement was done that I was referring to on the factor's estate, people were working at the rate of from 8d. to 1s. a day, and they were getting meal in exchange.

44365. At the rate of how much per boll?—Say 24s. Meal was very dear at the time. But I remember another thing. I remember that men in a place called Caraich, were employed in carting sand from Fidean to Ardnraig at 6d. per cart, a distance of four miles, and it was only three carts

LANARK

GLASGOW.

Malcolm
Ferguson

that they could manage to perform in a day. That was 1s. 6d. per day as wages of the man and horse and cart, and they had to do that in the famine so as to get meal from the factor.

44366. Do you know that the paupers used to be paid occasionally in meal?—Yes, that was the custom at first.

44367. Whose meal was it?—I cannot say.

44368. Was it any of the meal grown in the country?—No, it was meal got from the south country, so far as I remember—Indian meal and oatmeal.

44369. What kind of meal was it that the workmen got that you refer to?—Oatmeal.

44370. Which was sold by the factor?—Yes, at 24s. per boll. But the factor was selling the meal then as cheap as they could get it anywhere else.

44371. In answer to a question from Lord Napier as to what money was expended, you said a good deal was expended on the factor's farm; but that was not in Iona?—Not in Iona. Nothing was expended in Iona since I remember, except two years ago, when a wire fence was put up.

44372. And when you said a good deal of work was done on the factor's farm at the time of the destitution, it was in Mull?—Yes, in Ardsinaig. There were a great number of Galloway dykes put up, and deep ditches made, and sheep drains in the hills. That was all made on the factor's ground, and roads as well.

44373. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—What was the common wage in the country at the time you were paid 8d. and 1s. a day?—From 1s. to 1s. 6d. The price of labour was very low at the time.

44374. Had you the opportunity of going and getting this labour elsewhere?—No.

44375. You were not allowed to go elsewhere to get it?—I believe they were, but they were so poor that they could not afford to leave the country. They had not the means of taking themselves away from the country at that time.

44376. They would have had to go away from home to get 1s. and 1s. 6d.; they would have had to go south?—Yes.

44377. But were the wages in Mull given by farmers and others higher than the Duke was giving?—At that time there was scarcely anything given by farmers at all, because they would get plenty people to do the work for them without wages.

44378. In fact, they were glad to get 8d. or 1s. a day?—Well, if they did not get money, those who worked for the farmers, they would be paid in some other way.

EDWARD CHARLES STANFORD, Manufacturing Chemist, Dalmuir
(46)—examined.

Edward
Charles
Stanford.

44379. *The Chairman.*—Have you got a statement you wish to read?—I have. ‘The question of kelp, and the value of the shores of the Outer Hebrides, has been often alluded to at the meetings of the Royal Commission. It may be desirable, therefore, to place on record some authentic information on this subject. It may not be uninteresting if I attempt also to give a short description of the introduction of a new industry in this direction in one of these islands, over twenty years ago,—especially as in the recent conduct of this work I have some charges to refute; and I would here premise that the whole responsibility rests with me, and if blame can be laid on any one, I must bear it. The difficulties

' met with, may give a good idea of the position of the crofters and cottars of that time. I shall speak more particularly of the island of Tiree, where this undertaking was first carried out; but other islands, particularly North and South Uist, will be referred to. It is impossible to cultivate an acquaintance with sea-weed without becoming familiar with our wildest shores. My experience of the outer islands is considerable, for it includes them all, from Ireland to the Channel Islands. It is also unusual, extending from a night in the shipwrecked mariners' bed in Shillay Lighthouse, within sight of St Kilda, to a compulsory residence of several winter days in the little island of Sark, off Guernsey. Indeed, I scarcely like to remember how much of my time has been occupied in waiting the will of the winds and waves in one or other of these storm-bound islands. I claim therefore over twenty years of somewhat exceptional experience.

Kelp.—In the early part of this century, kelp formed a most important addition to the income of many of the Highland lairds, in some islands far exceeding the rental from all other sources. The kelp then realised £20 to £22 per ton. M'Culloch states that the shores of North Uist alone let for £7000 per annum, that the Hebrides yielded 6000 tons per annum, and the total produce of Scotland was 20,000 tons. It was then employed in making carbonate of soda, for use in soap-making. It soon had a competitor, however, in imported barilla, and during the twenty-two years ending 1822, the average price was only £10, 10s. The duty was then taken off barilla, and kelp fell to £8, 10s. per ton. The discovery of the Le Blanc process, for the manufacture of carbonate of soda from salt, because, however, a far more formidable opposition, and in 1823, on the removal of the salt duty, kelp fell to £3 per ton, and in 1831 to £2 per ton. From then till 1845, the small quantity made was still used in the soap and glass factories of Glasgow. A large chemical work was established by General M'Neill in Barra for soap making, but it failed; two ornamental octagonal chimney shafts were the standing relics not long since. Iodine was discovered in 1812, but it was not till 1841 that it was made in Glasgow in any quantity; in that year 2565 tons of kelp were imported into the Clyde, and used for soap making; the iodine was extracted from the soapmakers' leys. In 1845 there were four makers of iodine working kelp, the import of which rose in that year to 6086 tons. In the following year there were twenty makers, tempted by the high price of iodine. Soon after this the potash salts became valuable, and the trade was prosperous. The discovery of the Stassfurt mineral, however, reduced the value of the potash salts to one-third, and the discovery of iodine in the caliche of Peru gradually brought down the price of this article to a figure at which its manufacture from kelp is now unremunerative. The kelp thus used for the manufacture of potash salts and iodine is not the same as that formerly made for recovering soda, at least it ought not to be. The kelp was made formerly from the various kinds of fucus, or beach wrack, cut from the rocks while growing in the extensive lochs of the west coast. It was burnt at a high temperature, and raked into a molten slag. The kelp now required is made from the deep-sea tangle and bardarrig, or red wrack, thrown up by the storms on the west shores. It will not stand rain, and should not be burnt at a high temperature. Nevertheless, it always is, with the result that half its most valuable constituent, the iodine, and much of the potash salts, are dissipated and lost. In 1862, I published some researches on this subject, showing the great losses thus occasioned, and proposed a new method of carbonisation or destructive distillation in iron retorts. It was brought before the Society of Arts in an evening lecture, and the

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

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Charles
Stanford.

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Edward
Charles
Stanford.

' council awarded me their silver medal. In reference to this award, the '*Chemical News* said—"We do not remember that the Society of Arts ' has ever given a medal where it was so well deserved," and the editor ' strongly advised its prosecution on the large scale. Thus encouraged, I ' determined if possible to carry it out. The Duke of Argyll was the first ' proprietor to see the value of this discovery, and it was ultimately ' arranged that the process should be worked on a large scale in his island ' of Tiree, a lease having been entered into. Some time after a lease was ' also arranged with the late Sir J. P. Orde for North Uist, and works ' erected there. In Tiree the estimates made by the factor as to quantity ' were very large. It was calculated that 30,000 tons were annually ' collected mostly for manure, and that four times that quantity were ' annually lost. Our calculations were based on recovering 16,000 tons ; ' and if ever that quantity could have been obtained, the works there would ' have had a very great success, and turned out much more iodine than all ' the rest of the Highland shores put together. It is impossible, however, to ' estimate the quantity of sea-weed thrown up in a storm ; and the sea has ' an awkward habit of calling again and removing a good deal of it, or ' covering it over with sand. Moreover, this sea-weed is much injured by ' rain which if continued long will render it useless for kelp purposes. It ' is also a highly nitrogenous substance, and is quickly devoured by maggots, ' which become flies, and the material, like some other riches, literally takes ' to itself wings and flies away, so that once when I carted a large quantity ' to the works for experiment, it was remarked that the Sassenach had taken ' a great deal of trouble to put in the material, but it wouldn't give him any ' kind of pains to put it out, as it would leave him of its own accord. ' Such then was the nature of the material to be dealt with, and in 1863 ' I left London for Tiree, to put up the necessary works. For eighteen ' months I was off and on this island—I say off and on, because this move- ' ment presented the first difficulty. Tiree is almost the only western ' island which has no good harbours, and steamers would not visit it then. ' Moreover, it is an extremely difficult island to make in winter darkness—to ' see where the white surf ends, and the low-lying white sandy shore begins. ' There are some fishing harbours, none of them safe, and some Highland ' quays. A "Highland quay" is usually a quarter of mile from the water ' at low water, and completely submerged at high tide. For the purposes of ' landing large iron tanks, boilers, &c., they were useless ; so that all the ' heavy plant was got ashore with the greatest difficulty, and dragged eight ' miles over no roads, with still greater difficulty. I had the best ' encouragement from the proprietor, who with the late Sir J. M'Neill ' visited the island when I was there, but the difficulty in getting the ' people to work was considerable. Very little English was spoken, and ' of course an interpreter was always by my side. Then the most extra- ' ordinary rumours were set about ; some thought the Sassenach was a ' Frenchman, and their ideas about Napoleon were still very warlike ; ' indeed, every nationality claimed me in turn. Others thought my object ' was to dig up the dead bodies, and boil them down for the fat (there was ' little of that to spare then amongst the living) ; others, the majority, took ' a violent hatred against me, because they thought I was an excise officer ' sent to look after the illicit stills. They would do nothing for me ; they ' would sell me nothing. Bread and meat could not be got ; and much ' fine turbot and halibut was cut up for bait, but not for me. However ' this did not last long, and I soon got on very well with them ; for I had ' promised his Grace to employ the people as much as possible. The ' promise has been kept, and after a long experience I can speak highly of ' their faithful service when their confidence was gained. And I may

' mention that men who were with me from the first are still in our employment, and have become good bricklayers, smiths, and fitters, so that both in Tiree and in our works at North Uist, with the exception of the manager of each, no stranger whatever is employed. A volume could be filled with the history of these works alone, but it will be sufficient to say that the buildings were finished at last, after several large roofs had been carried off by the storms. I may add that no one who has not witnessed them can have any idea of the extraordinary violence of the winter gales in this island, as with the exception of three small hills it is extremely low-lying and flat. During the following winter, the collection of the tangle commenced. There was at first great difficulty in inducing the people to begin, as there has been at all the other Highland shores, where it is now in full operation; it was a new thing, and they did not believe in it. They soon find out, however, that it affords a winter employment for a family, as children can work at it. It consists simply in stacking the tangle out of reach of the tide. They are paid 6d. per cubic foot for this work, and have no further anxiety about it. The collecting, restacking, and carting cost as much again, and for this they are not responsible. Ever since 1863 that collection has been going on, and from that time not a penny that can be made in this way has been lost. About 300 cottars families were then said to have no regular means of subsistence; I was told they lived on the strong air. The amount of money thus introduced into the island has exceeded £50,000; and the whole of this has been found money, which at first they refused to pick up. Any attempt to stop the collection now would raise a considerable outcry. In comparing this price with kelp-making, it is well to remark that the manufacture of a ton of kelp involves the collection, or cutting, drying, and burning of 20 tons of sea-weed, and it also involves the possible loss of the whole by exposure to rain. The price per ton to the kelper, in North and South Uist, even in the good old days, seldom exceeded 35s. to £2; yet, small as this sum appears, it amounted to a considerable aggregate; it paid their rents, and the loss of it is much felt in these islands. It is, however, a poor employment; and wherever agriculture increases, as in Kintyre, kelp making is given up. One of the greatest difficulties in Tiree was in getting a supply of cash to pay the people; the nearest bank was at Tobermory, only thirty-four miles distant. This seems a convenient distance, but it proved to be actually, in point of time, very much further off than California in the winter. I had a most important telegram waiting me there for nearly a month, when in Tiree, where I was weeks without communication. The sums to be paid were often so small, and so distributed, that silver was required, and there were no means of getting it except from Tobermory. At imminent risk of life, I had frequently to go there in a smack; I have been delayed for weeks, I have paid £5 for this trip, and been two days between Tobermory and Tiree. I must record, even at this date, my great obligation to that most obliging and most attentive of bank officials, the then agent of the Clydesdale Bank there. He seldom had the chance of cashing my cheques during bank hours, but at any and every other time, indeed he was sometimes roused from his bed to give me the cash, and let me away. After I left the island the difficulty increased. On one occasion a clerk sent out from Glasgow in a steamer, in the winter, with £300, returned with it, about three weeks afterwards; he had made an extensive trip, and seen almost every other island except the one he was sent to. The occasional steamer refused the responsibility. In fact, it was almost impossible to keep up the supplies, and therefore our manager was obliged to give the people lines on the stores of the island. The people complained of the

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LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Edward
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Stanford.

' prices charged, and that they could not get supplied, and petitioned me to open a store for them. Pressure of circumstances compelled me most reluctantly to consent to this. The principal store in the island, moreover was eight miles distant. It was arranged, in fairness to the storekeeper there, that the prices should be the same, which, as far as I know, has always been the case. The greater population live near the chief kelp store, and near our works. Having thus fixed the prices, the most respectable firms were selected in Glasgow, one only for each department, and told to supply the very best articles—their names are a guarantee—and the manager there sends his orders direct to them. Since the establishment of this store things have gone smoothly, and I am not aware of any complaints; having visited the island regularly, I always found the people contented. The only effect on others that the store appears to have had was to do away with a number of very small storekeepers, who set up for a time, and then failed. It is true that some years ago a letter appeared in the *Oban Times*, and an article about the supposed truck system in Tiree, but the editor took the pains afterwards to inquire into the matter more particularly, and with full evidence placed at his command, handsomely published an ample apology, and admitted that he had been misled by interested parties. In fact, until the evidence taken before the Royal Commission, I was always under the impression that in all our proceedings the people had been most fairly treated, and that many of them had been raised from abject poverty; indeed, that no one there had any hard words to say of us. With these ideas then, I am astonished to find that according to an article in one of our daily papers, the best years of my life have been expended in the "spoliation and robbery of the poor." Well, outsiders are said to see the best of the game; but that statement implies that they know something about it, and that they are near enough to see the moves. With such critics, I can only repeat the remark made by Job to his uncomfortably and mistakenly candid friend, "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." I can only say that the work will be kept up in Tiree as long as it can be carried on without loss; and the store is entirely in the hands of the people. They desired its establishment, and when they wish it disestablished they have only to say so; but the demand must come from within, and not from without their circle. In taking evidence, however, it is rather important that there should be some guarantee of the reliability of the witness. The Royal Commission, in the vast amount of evidence, and the innumerable witnesses they have had to listen to, probably have not had the time to verify their statements, or detect their motives. The single day devoted to Tiree, at any rate, made this impossible there. There are only three witnesses whose evidence I have to answer. Two of these are men that our manager refused to trust with an advance; the former collects tangle and makes kelp; why does he do that, if it doesn't pay, when he is a joiner, and can work at his trade? The latter says the goods are dear and bad, and I meet both these statements with a flat denial. The third, the elder, convicts himself if his evidence is correctly reported. He says that we got two crofts from him; this is untrue, as only one croft formerly held by him is now held by us. It became an absolute necessity that our holding, which was nearly all at great expense reclaimed from the blowing sand which often covered the roofs of our works, should be increased, to keep our stock of horses; two small crofts, each about ten acres, were added; neither of these were more than half cultivated before, and on one of them was a deep marshy loch, which we drained and claimed, and which now forms the best part of the farm. As for his statement about the sum paid for the croft, I understand that for this par-

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.—
Edward
Charles
Stanford.

ticular croft he paid nothing whatever. I happen to remember him well, however, for at the time of executing the works, when stone was scarce, he sold me a lot of old stone walls for building purposes, in which he had the advantage of me, and then waited me to put "elder" on the cheque; but I thought it unnecessary to make the Church of Scotland a party to that transaction. He also was a small local storekeeper, and I shall be glad to hear what claim he has for greater consideration than myself, and on what principle of justice he demands to have the croft back at less than half the present rent, because he paid that thirty years ago. One other complaint I will allude to; that is, that the price of tangle has been reduced from 6d. to 4d. There is some colour in this. On account of the liability to rot, we prefer it to be stretched two feet high, instead of three feet; but the hardship of receiving 4d. for two-thirds of a cubic yard, instead of 6d. for three-thirds, is quite invisible to me. With regard to the use of ground for spreading sea-weed, about which so much has been said, and by which the proprietor is supposed to exact two rents, we have of course nothing to do with this, but I have never before heard this right called in question. The spreading of sea-weed on pasture land has, ever since kelp was made, been held to improve it. The first shower of rain gives the pasture a good dose of valuable manure as top-dressing. The kelper can never remove the whole of the sea-weed; he often has to leave a large portion, and sometimes to leave it all. I have seen thousands of tons rotting in this way, all of which was left for manure. In North and South Uist it was usual for the farmers not only to allow this, but to afford grazing for the kelpers' horses as well. And yet this has been compared by one of our daily papers to letting "a farm to one person for farming purposes, and to another for a bleaching green, to be occupied by them both simultaneously." Where is the analogy? With regard to the payment of the kelpers in goods, I have endeavoured to show that a store in Tiree is absolutely necessary, in the winter, if the people are to be kept in food, or the work is to be carried on at all. We have never altered the price of kelp to the burner in Tiree, and whatever may have been said, our manager assures me that he has never paid less than £4 per ton for good kelp. Among necessitous people, in such an outlying island, the difficulty is to prevent the kelpers from greatly overdrawing their advances, as it is absolutely necessary to advance them considerable amounts; and we cannot always avoid debts which can never be recovered. In Tiree, there has been a small profit made, which, however, without the greatest care on the part of the manager, would soon become a loss. In North Uist, where there was also a store, this actually occurred, and the losses became so serious that we had to close it; but as there is a bank there, we have no difficulty in paying the people in cash; and the same applies to South Uist. In both these islands the money is distributed in the winter, when it is most wanted. I notice, in looking over the North Uist account for last year, not a favourable one, nine crofters or cottars who received over £12 each; and in the little island of Monach, west of North Uist, as much as £20 has been made by one man. These sums are far in excess of their rents. Payments are made in sums varying from 6d. to £3. In Ireland, where all are paid in cash, very large sums are advanced—but not in the winter—many months before the kelp can reach us. In North Uist, where much kelp was made in the lochs on the east coast, the kelpers came from the west side, and lived in temporary bothies for a few weeks; but they would never leave their homes until we had sent them out meal. It was necessary to charter a steamer and send out about 600 bolls of meal before they would move. About three years ago, there was a fuel famine in Tiree, and several superior crofters, who had not made kelp

LANARK.

Glasgow.

Edward
Charles
Stanford.

' before, told our manager they would do so if we sent them out coal.
 ' This was done, and the kelp was made. Here again, goods, if of the kind
 ' they wanted, were more potent persuaders than money. The question
 ' of fuel brings me to notice one of the complaints about cutting of peat.
 ' There is no peat in Tiree. The complainant probably refers to the cutting
 ' of peat in the Ross of Mull, and boating to Tiree. This was done in
 ' 1863, and has been very properly stopped. The service is one of extreme
 ' danger, and has caused the loss of several lives, the boats having
 ' to encounter one of the wildest seas on the west coast. Moreover,
 ' if time be reckoned, the fuel was very costly. I have little doubt they
 ' would have charged me as much freight per ton for peat from Mull as
 ' for coal from Greenock or Ardrossan. On this subject I have had con-
 ' siderable experience, and it may be interesting to give the result. In our
 ' works at Locheport, in North Uist, we used peat for heating our
 ' iron retorts. The peat was of good quality; it gave a good satisfactory
 ' red heat; but compared with coal, it required three times the quantity,
 ' which adds enormously to the cost of firing. We cut and stacked 600
 ' tons per annum, and it cost us 2s. 6d. per ton. There was no royalty
 ' or rent, and the bog was close to the works. I am satisfied that, on the
 ' small scale, it cannot be done at anything like this price; and adding the
 ' freight from Mull, it must be a very expensive fuel at Tiree, when coal
 ' can sometimes be landed in a sailing vessel at 12s. 6d. to 13s. There
 ' is this peculiarity about peat also; that if a manufactory requires a large
 ' supply, the cost will necessarily increase with the quantity required,
 ' because a larger area must be worked. The peat distillery in Lewis,
 ' started under Sir J. Matheson, by my friend Dr Paul, although very
 ' well laid out, was no exception to this universal rule; although it had
 ' great prospect of success, peat too being an excellent source of some
 ' kinds of paraffin. One of the advantages of our operations in Tiree
 ' has been the chartering of steamers to bring coal to the island. There
 ' was no difficulty about the erection of the works in North Uist, because
 ' they are situated on a good harbour; but precisely the same difficulty was
 ' experienced in starting the tangle collection, and precisely the same
 ' complaints would be made if it were given up. Most of our ground
 ' there was reclaimed from the peat, and fine crops of oats have been
 ' grown on it. It was pretty expensive, and I have no doubt the pro-
 ' prietor would be glad to let the crofters have a considerable quantity of
 ' this land on the same terms. I regret very much that the Royal Commis-
 ' sion had so little time to spare in Tiree; their experience, however, was
 ' quite unique; no one has ever had to complain before of want of air in
 ' that island, and they landed far too easily. Had they remained one
 ' more day, the probability is they would not have got ashore, or having
 ' got ashore, they would not have got aboard again; and then we should
 ' have had the benefit of their powerful advocacy for what is the great
 ' want of the island, a substantial pier in Gott Bay. I regret, too, that the
 ' Royal Commission were unable to visit the populous part of the island,
 ' and see for themselves our works and farm, and investigate on the spot
 ' the improvements made. The Royal Commission could not have landed
 ' or spent the day in any part of the island where they could have seen so
 ' little. Had they driven over to the west side, they would have gone
 ' through an island which is very different to any other in the Hebrides;
 ' without a tree or shrub, it has a beauty all its own. The green plain of
 ' reef in the centre has four square miles of level turf, the sea visible
 ' like a wall on both sides of it. Once covered by the sea, even now it
 ' is difficult to resist the impression that it must flow over it again. The
 ' bold headland of Renavara, with its sea caverns, quite unequalled in the

Western Islands ; the deep blue of the bays in summer, the wonderful panorama of mountains and islands, almost completely encircling it, and leaving only room in the west for the setting sun to dip into the ocean ; the long plains formed by the shell sand, covered with sweet-scented clover, and possessing a flora wonderfully like that of the chalk downs of Sussex ;—all these must be seen to be appreciated. Ozone, of course, is never absent. Moreover, there is a purity in the air which is not found to the same extent in the other outer islands. Perhaps I ought to add, outside the church where the Royal Commission sat, there is a very distinct change of air coming from any of them ; the reason probably is, that there are no large peat bogs, and no large fresh-water and brackish lochs, which affect the climate in the other islands. The winters, though very stormy, are mild in temperature, frost and snow being uncommon ; the facilities for bathing are excellent, all natural at present ; and there are links which would bring golfers from all parts, were they known. I have no doubt whatever that this island will some day be the marine sanitorium of the west. It is only about seventy miles from the Oban railway, and need not be more than eighteen hours by an ordinary steamer from Greenock ; but there are no good harbours, and therefore no certainty of getting there at all times, or of getting away. Moreover, there is no better fishing ground on the west coast than the rocky reefs between Tiree and Skerryvore lighthouse ; but the boats have no harbours to run to, and the island itself is often very badly supplied with fish, because the boats cannot get out. There are no better boatmen anywhere than those of Tiree. The Tiree smacks are well known all over the west coast ; and it is a remarkable fact that, before the steamers were introduced, they ferried all the cattle, and did all the carrying trade for the other outside islands. Although they have no life boat, some daring rescues of lives have been made from the numerous wrecks that have dotted their coast. A Government yacht was lost in the naval survey there, and one of our steamers is now a refuge for lobsters off Thainish Point. It may be well to remark that the captain lost his certificate, because the old Admiralty sailing directions warned us not to go within three miles of the island ; I regret to say we still find it necessary to infringe these old-fashioned regulations. The steamer was on the way to a harbour, which was discovered by the captain, and which we have made safer by rings, and used ever since in the summer for several years ; and now at last this year some of the Tiree smacks have gone there for our trade. There is a splendid pier at Thainish, built of granite, and said to have cost £14,000 ; but the position chosen was a bad one, and it sanded up. Then a dock was excavated out of the hard whinstone at the end of it, but though in the shelter of the pier, and closed with a double set of large iron-bound booms, the force of the sea sometimes breaks them, and it also was soon closed with sand ; it was intended to be flushed out by a head of water above it. This pier, unfortunately, is now almost useless ; it was intended for the vessel to supply the lighthouse, but the large establishment there is now removed to Mull. It was designed by the great engineer who, in Skerryvore lighthouse, has left the most magnificent monument that exists to the memory of any engineer anywhere. Engineers, however, are often at fault where the sea is concerned. We need only refer to Wick harbour, and the useless millions thrown into the surf in the Channel Islands. There is no heavier sea on the west coast than that between Tiree and the mainland, where the Atlantic comes in, on comparatively shoal soundings ; and any one who has crossed that sea in a smack on a stormy day in the winter, is not likely soon to forget it. Dr Johnson, who stayed so long in Coll, and enjoyed it so much, never got

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Charles
Stanford.

' across the narrow stormy sound between the two islands, though it is only three miles, and the boats used were about the same—perhaps the very same. This ferry is often impassable for weeks ; it is very dangerous, and many lives have been lost here. The most remarkable instances might be collected of the difficulties of shipping attendant on the want of regularity of steamers in the winter. I remember one farmer driving some fat pigs daily to the harbour about Christmas, for such a long time, that when at last they were shipped,—well, it was not Christmas, and the pigs were not fat, that had disappeared on the road. I remember a very clever supervisor, who wanted to prove that our iodine sublimers were stills, and required a licence, and paid me a visit from Mull, expecting to get back next day ; he had, however, to stay several weeks, and was severely reprimanded when he got back, for enjoying himself (poor fellow) so long. When I was there, I was glad to run for any part of the mainland or Mull that could be made out, and Arduamurchan was a haven after Tiree. As I have referred to the strong objection to the introduction of anything new, I may relate two circumstances that occurred to me, which well illustrates West Highland and Lowland character in this respect. Some years ago, when a large quantity of black wrack kelp was made in North Uist, I tried hard to get some improvement made in the direction of burning the weed at a lower temperature. The people were assembled in great numbers, and the Sheriff kindly harangued them in Gaelic for me. Their objections were threefold—it would not yield so much, it would not be so good, and it would take too long. The late Sir J. P. Orde was present and the late factor, and it was agreed at last that the most experienced kelper and I should try the experiment, each to have a certain quantity of weed weighed out, and each to burn it his own way. As I expected, my lot was finished first ; the yield was about 25 per cent. greater, and the product was, weight for weight, also 25 per cent. more valuable. Any one can understand this result, seeing mine was only burnt to ash, and not to slag. The old man, my opponent, was offended too, and his exclamation in Gaelic was translated for my benefit ; it was rendered thus—"I have been making kelp for fifty years, and am I to be taught by a young Sassenach, with no beard on his face to speak of?" That was the only result of the experiment. The other instance occurred at Coll, at the house of my very lamented friend the late John Lorne Stewart, for whose great knowledge of agriculture and sterling good sense I had the highest esteem. His introduction of the making of cheese, by the Cheddar method, is only one of the many improvements for which we are indebted to him. He even imported a Swiss, and made Gruyere cheese of excellent quality in Coll. At his home farm in Coll, he had a most intelligent and active hard-working low-country couple, who made the cheese for which the dairy was celebrated. I casually asked them if they were aware that, in giving the butter-milk away to the pigs, they were also throwing away the sugar of milk, which was a valuable marketable article, and which was largely sent over to this country from Switzerland, and that it only had to be evaporated down, and the sugar would crystallise out. To my great astonishment, the next morning I was called pretty early to see the first crop of crystals. They had lost no time ; and although they found afterwards that the pigs paid better, it was not the novelty that deterred them from increasing their profits if possible. Some time afterwards I met the man, and he told me, "Man, it didna pay ; but I whiles make it, to show I can dae it." The eyes of the island fishermen have been opened by the large fleets of fishing boats coming from all parts, and taking the herring off their shores ; these men don't bring the fish, they were there before, they only bring the means and the ability to catch

'them. The contrast between the winter and the summer is nowhere so extraordinary as it is in the Hebrides. And I would wish particularly to call the attention of the Royal Commission to the wretched postal service, common to all these islands, in the hope that something may be done to improve it. Tiree is by far the worst; there is no telegraph here, where it is so much required, and where, I believe, it would soon pay. In 1870, the Commissioners of Supply of Argyllshire presented a memorial to the Marquis of Hartington, then Postmaster-General, and published at the same time part of a voluminous correspondence which had passed between myself and the post office authorities, to which I beg to refer. In the course of that correspondence, I wrote to Mr Abbot, in March 1864:—
"As the manager of the British Sea-weed Company, I received December 11, 1863, a notice, dated November 17, to pay the annuity on our French patent before December 3, or it would become 'null and void.' Now, this property was irrecoverably lost to us, and for that loss I hold the post office morally, though perhaps not legally, responsible. When I add, that this letter was brought by the steamer to Coll, and by a friend across the ferry, and that the (very) regular 'mail packet' was not in till the 18th, and that then she left my private mail-bag behind at Tobermory, I think I have stated an instance of gross postal mismanagement which could not be paralleled in any country in Europe. I frequently correspond with a brother in the Pyrenees; will it be believed that my letters generally take four times as long between this and Tobermory (thirty miles), as in traversing the entire length of Scotland and England, crossing the British Channel, and going through France? Yet such is another fact. I received December 26, 1863, a notice, dated November 18, from the collector of taxes, to pay my income tax, 'stating that' if I wished to appeal, I 'must' do so to the surveyor at Oban 'within fourteen days from that date, in writing.' Two days after I forwarded a cheque for the money, and intercepted the receipt on my way to England, at Tobermory, January 21, 1864. On my return here, February 20, 1864, I found a letter lying at the post office, stating that 'if my income-tax were not paid within four days, it would be recovered with the statutory addition of 10 per cent. for costs.' Now, Sir, you may think that this instance does not refer to your department; but I wish to know on what principle does the Government condescend to collect my money for its support on the one hand, and refuse to carry my letters on the other; and by what right do they detain for several weeks a letter demanding instant payment of my taxes, and containing a violent threat in case of non-compliance!—as if our Government were conducted on the highwayman's terms, 'your money or your life.' The absurdity of any permission 'to appeal, in writing, within fourteen days,' when H.M. mail doesn't deliver the letter for five weeks, will be evident to all, though any Englishman would be loath to acknowledge that such a scandalous anomaly could be suffered to exist in any part of Great Britain. In fact, to be consistent, our judges should hang their convicts first, and try them afterwards." The reports there about the Tiree Post Office appear incredible now, and yet I cannot say that there is much improvement in the winter. Now, that Oban and Strome Ferry are accessible by railway, all these islands ought to have their letters delivered by a steamer, calling three times a week in summer, and twice a week in winter. All should be thoroughly connected by telegraph; this is not an expensive thing to keep up, not much more than the first outlay, and would be very useful to the country generally, in reporting wrecks, or in time of war, besides the commercial advantages; and I do not think these services should be delayed until each petty office pays. The grants

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Edward
Charles
Stanford,

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Edward
Charles
Stanford.

' allowed to the Western Islands compare most unfavourably with those of the Orkneys and Shetlands. I would point out also that some experiments should be made in planting of trees; I believe, judiciously done, this would be successful, and must improve the outer islands. In Lewis, the late Sir James Matheson has set an excellent example. It would require to be done somewhat in the same way as the shores of the Bay of Biscay. Even in Tiree, where there is good clay, trunks of trees have been found. One thing, which is much in the way of older men in the Highlands, is the want of English; that, however, is daily improving, and I am satisfied the younger men now growing up will not object so much to leaving their homes. Wages are a matter of supply and demand, and there is no doubt a small wage at home is preferred, and perhaps is better. Therefore any industry introduced into one of these islands is productive of food, and becomes popular. I claim to have introduced an industry which has contributed to the welfare of thousands, a statement never before called in question, and on which I am sure the workers themselves are unanimous. No one who knew the island of Tiree twenty years ago will hesitate to admit the great increase in the prosperity of the crofters and cottars there. Having, however, had to defend myself even for conferring this benefit, I say little at present about further development, merely predicting that new applications will be found, that new discoveries will be made, and that sea-weed will yet become commercially valuable. A paper containing the latest information on this subject has already been placed in the hands of the Royal Commission.'

44380. Before asking you any questions about your own system, as practised in connection with the manufacture in the island of Tiree, I wish to ask you a question about the harbour. You have dwelt very much upon the want of a good harbour in Tiree; do you think it possible at some point on the coast, at a tolerably moderate expenditure, to construct a good harbour for small steam vessels and fishing vessels?—I think there is only one place in the island where any attempt might be made, and that is in Gott Bay. There is no other place large enough for a vessel to get in or out. Gott Bay, although it is somewhat open, is very stiff clay, which makes a capital holding ground.

44381. It is very wide?—Yes, but at one side of it, on the south side, there is considerable shelter already, from some outlying rocks. These rocks require to be connected with the mainland. I have no doubt a pier can be made there.

44382. Then you think a low tide harbour could be made there—a harbour in which vessels could float at low tide?—Certainly.

44383. Has any estimate ever been made of the expenditure required? —An estimate was made some years ago by Captain, now Admiral Bedford Pim, who was conducting the naval survey, and it was thought then that a small pier could be made for £5000 or £6000; but I believe a more recent estimate puts the cost for a pier accessible to a steamer at all times of the tide at a very much higher sum.

44384. I think we heard the sum of £8000 mentioned, but perhaps you point to a larger sum?—I think, probably, even larger than that.

44385. What sort of estimate do you make?—Perhaps half as much again—from £10,000 to £12,000.

44386. And that is, you think, the only point on the island where a harbour could be formed?—I think there is no doubt whatever about that.

44387. I think the Free Church clergyman of the island mentioned another place to us?—There is no other place I know of where there is anything like the room or the shelter.

LANARK

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GLASGOW.—
Edward
Charles
Stanford.

44388. But would it be possible anywhere to form a smaller harbour available for the best class of fishing boats?—All the harbours might be improved by increasing the quays. There are several of them all round the island, but none of them are harbours that they could run into in bad weather; and taking the experience of the Lighthouse Commissioners at Hynish, they had a splendid pier there, but it was impossible to get in and out of the dock, though it was under the shelter of the pier; while they might easily have landed at Skerryvore lighthouse.

44389. What is the size of a smack?—A Tiree smack is 25 to 30 tons. Some run from 50 to 60 tons, but the Tiree smacks run from 25 to 30.

44390. What length of keel?—I cannot tell.

44391. Is it a full decked boat?—Half decked.

44392. Are there any fishing boats of that class in the island now?—These Tiree smacks are not as a rule useful for fishing. They are not fishing boats. They are used for carrying a good deal.

44393. But, are there any boats of that size used for fishing now out of the island?—I don't think there are.

44394. Do the people feel the want of the large safe fishing boat of the east coast there?—I should think they do, but I am not prepared to answer that.

44395. Where do these smacks run into for shelter at present?—In the winter they are obliged to be hauled on shore.

44396. With reference to the island, has any serious outlay been made upon pier or harbour works by the proprietor within the last thirty years?—I think not.

44397. There has been no attempt by the proprietor to form a harbour?—I think not.

44398. I hope it will not be thought indiscreet on my part if I ask you whether your kelp manufacturing establishment is moderately remunerative at present, so that you look forward to maintaining it?—I have mentioned in my statement that it will be carried on as long as it can be carried on without loss.

44399. But you have not stated whether it is in danger of being condemned as a losing concern?—Well, we have yet to wait to see what the opposing source of iodine can make.

44400. During the course of your work there has your rent been reduced by your proprietor under your present lease?—It has been.

44401. You spoke of the great utility of the work to the native population, and of the fact that the people employed are almost universally people in the island. Of the utility we make no doubt, but are you not under an obligation in the terms of your lease only to employ the people of the island?—There is a promise in the lease that we will employ, as far as possible, people of the island, and as an actual fact no others are employed.

44402. With reference to the payment of wages in goods, or the payment of the people in goods, we make no doubt that the custom originated in the cause which you state—the difficulty of obtaining facilities for payment in any other form—but does the same difficulty exist at the present moment? Do you at the present moment maintain a system of paying in goods, under the belief that you are conferring a benefit on the people, or is it in any degree maintained for the purpose of profit by the company or by the proprietor of the works?—It certainly is for the benefit of the people, so far as I know.

44403. But I mean, do you carry it on for that purpose, or do you regard it, in short, as a source of profit to the company?—No.

44404. It is no material source of profit?—It is no material source.

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Edward
Charles
Stanford.

44405. With reference to the difficulty of effecting cash payments, does that difficulty still exist, or is it now superseded?—I think it still exists.

44406. You think you would have great difficulty in keeping a sufficient amount of specie in the place to effect your payments?—Very great difficulty.

44407. With reference to the practice of payment in goods, is it noticed at all in the lease? Is there any provision or stipulation concerning it in the lease?—No.

44408. Has this practice ever been a subject of correspondence between the proprietor, the Duke of Argyll, and your firm?—I don't think so.

44409. You don't think the Duke of Argyll has ever censured the practice, or expressed a desire that it should cease in any form?—I don't think so.

44410. There was a statement made in the island, and which I am bound to say I personally did not understand, to the effect that when wages were paid in specie they received much less wages effectively than when they were paid in kind—that you paid higher wages in goods than you paid in specie—that the goods were made to represent a larger amount than the specie. How is that?—I cannot explain that. I saw it for the first time in the report. It has never been done with my knowledge.

44411. The goods you issue represent the money value, according to your belief, fairly, with what may be called some ordinary profit?—Certainly.

44412. If a man applies to you or expresses a desire to be paid in specie, would you do your best to pay him in specie? If you had the money would you pay him in specie on his demand?—Certainly.

44413. In fact, your desire would be to pay in specie if you have the money?—Certainly.

44414. Do you ever pay in specie? Are there any wages, practically speaking, paid in specie, or are all wages paid in goods?—I think some of the wages are paid in specie.

44415. It is your desire to pay in specie if you could do it?—Certainly.

44416. I think some humble witness on the island stated that when you or your firm effected a purchase in the island of small commodities—such as eggs and things of that kind—you paid in goods and not in specie. Do you know anything about that?—I believe it is a common thing for people in the island to bring in eggs and pay in eggs instead of money. I believe they have a rate at which they hand over eggs instead of money.

44417. Then there is a general system of barter?—With eggs I believe there is, or there was. It is not much now, I believe.

44418. What do you do with the eggs? Do you eat them or export them?—They are sent to the markets in the south.

44419. It is a branch of trade?—Yes.

44420. Then I see there is a general system of barter for commodities connected with your establishment, which you think is for the good of the people?—I don't think it is so much in our establishment, but it is done all over the island, I believe.

44421. It was said in evidence before us, though I did not understand it—I think by the manager—that the price paid per ton for the kelp was £4 in goods, but only £2 in cash, or that he had stated to the people that if they insisted upon being paid in cash they would only get £2 in cash?—I cannot understand the statement. I never heard of such a thing.

44422. I did not understand it myself, but there was a statement made to that effect. But I understand you to deny that absolutely?—Certainly.

44423. Or that any pressure is put upon the people at all to take

goods in preference to money?—I am not aware of any; in fact, the question has never arisen, so far as I know.

44424. As so much allusion has been made to this question of drying kelp upon the land, I would just desire to understand it a little more clearly myself. In your lease do you hold that right to spread your sea-weed or dry it upon the land, upon any particular portion of the land?—I am not sure if that is expressed in the lease. At any rate it is a question with which we have really nothing to do, because the weed is purchased from the people, who themselves put it on the land, and that has been done, so far as I know, from the beginning of the century, wherever kelp has been made.

44425. I understood you to say that the people stacked sea-weed above high-water mark?—Yes.

44426. Then you said the sea-weed for another 6d. was carried; by whom?—By ourselves.

44427. And then where do you put it when you cart it to the works? Do you spread it out?—No, that sea-weed is what is collected in the winter, and is known by the name of tangle. That is what I referred to as never collected before, and that is simply stacked above high water mark, and there is an end of it. But the kelp which the witness must have alluded to is the other weed collected in the summer and spread over the fields to dry, and they then burn it into kelp. We have nothing to do with that, simply because we buy the ash; but that is the sea-weed they refer to.

44428. But it is not you or your firm who spread any portion of this sea-weed at all?—We have nothing whatever to do with it. I mentioned it in my statement simply to explain the matter, because it seems to me to be a very simple one, and to have given rise to some very extraordinary remarks.

44429. Then you don't pay the proprietor any rent whatever for the liberty to spread this variety of sea-weed upon the shore?—None whatever.

44430. And, in fact, if it was not spread upon this complainant's pasture, it would make no difference to you at all?—None whatever.

44431. You are not interested in spreading it on that complainant's pasture at all?—Not at all.

44432. Then who spreads it there? It is not the man himself. He would not have complained if he spread it himself?—I am not sure about that.

44433. But who, as a matter of fact, spreads the kelp on that complainant's piece of ground?—I cannot say I know. I understand the complainer to be a crofter, and therefore he cannot have very much land upon which that could be spread. I am not familiar with the particular instance alluded to, but I know that in the outer islands, where it was very largely done, and upon very large farms, it was never complained of. It was always looked upon as an advantage.

44434. But this crofter complains that somebody comes and spreads sea-weed on his pasture; you don't know who does it?—I don't know anything about it, but if he complains he should prosecute the man who does it.

44435. Now I want to ascertain how far spreading kelp upon a man's pasture is advantageous and how far it is not. It is taken there and spread on the grass or on the pasture?—Yes.

44436. How long does it occupy that area?—If the weather is fine they would have it out of the way in two or three days. If it comes on wet and showery the rain would injure it considerably, and the result would be

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.

Edward
Charles
Stanford.

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Edward
Charles
Stanford.

that it would leave a very large portion of its substance to benefit the land. If the rain kept on for a day or two they would have to leave it all.

44437. But while it is on the land can the cattle and other animals come and eat on the spot, or does it occupy the whole pasture?—Well, it necessarily occupies only a small portion that is near the sea coast.

44438. But the area it does occupy is for that time destroyed as pasture, and beasts cannot eat while it is lying there?—Certainly not.

44439. But you are not concerned in the matter?—Not at all.

44440. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Do I understand you to say you pay £4 per ton for the kelp?—To the burner.

44441. Do you pay that at Loch Eport?—No.

44442. What is the difference between the Tiree kelp and the Loch-Eport kelp?—The Tiree kelp is very much better. It is made by hand, and on rocky shores alone. The North Uist kelp is sandy, and not worth more than half as much.

44443. It was stated to us at North Uist that the people who worked the kelp got 35s. a ton for manufacturing it?—I believe that is the price there.

44444. But there is no question that at Tiree it is £4?—Certainly. Perhaps I should explain that the North Uist kelp was principally kelp got in the lochs, and a different kind of kelp from that which we use—the most of it.

44445. *The Chairman.*—One of the witnesses, I think in Tiree, made a rather painful but picturesque statement to us that the kelp was gathered at midnight by torchlight in some places, and frequently by women and children, and that the people—especially the young people and the women—were exposed to very great hardship in the practice of the industry. He spoke of stacking kelp in winter, with the snow on the ground, by torchlight. Have you ever heard of such an incident, or do you think it really occurs?—I have never heard of it.

44446. Do you think it might occur in connection with the tides and seasons?—I am not sorry to hear it, because it shows that the price they get makes them work at it by night, which was not the original intention.

44447. But if their condition is, perhaps, so poor that they are obliged to work at the sacrifice of their health and comfort, that would not be a source of gratification?—That would not certainly.

44448. But you never heard of such a thing?—I never heard of it certainly.

44449. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You stated that during the time the sea-weed was spread upon the small part of the pasture by the sea-shore it prevented the cattle from making any use of the pasture?—Yes.

44450. And you also stated it did not lie on the ground sometimes above a day or two?—That is so.

44451. But is the operation going on almost the whole summer? The moment you take one supply off is there another supply going on?—No, that is scarcely the case. Kelp that is burned on the sea-shore comes usually at a certain season of the year. As a rule, it comes on in May. We don't if we can help it take any kelp except what comes in May.

44452. But truly, for some months of the year, is not the use of this piece of pasture land lost to the tenant?—I don't think so. The fact is that the sea-weed rots so very quickly that it cannot remain long, and if it remains long the farmer gets the benefit.

44453. But you are collecting sea-weed all the season?—No, we bind them down not to collect it after the 1st July, if we can manage it.

44454. And when do you begin?—Towards the end of May. Practically June is the only month.

44455. Suppose you employed your own servants, your hired servants, and not the people, to collect the kelp and spread it, have you not power to put it wherever you choose on the sea-shore, under your lease?—No, certainly not.

44456. You cannot place it anywhere under your lease?—No.

44457. Supposing you were not there at all, and that the company did not exist, in that case the crofter would have the full use of his pasture all the year?—Yes, unless he preferred to collect kelp and spread it on it, which very likely he would do.

44458. By what authority then do you understand that the people you contract with go and spread it upon other people's land?—Well, I can scarcely answer that question. It really is not a thing with which we have anything whatever to do; simply because we buy the kelp after they have made it, and if they spread it on another crofter's land and spoil it, I suppose he can get damages. I don't see any reason why he should not. There is nothing in our lease to protect them.

44459. There is nothing in your lease to give you any power to place this sea-ware upon any place?—Certainly not. Our power extends simply to the stacking of the tangle, which is not the sea-weed referred to, because that is only stacked outside of high tide, and does not come on the crofters' lands.

44460. What object have you in leasing the lands you have? Is it entirely to give pasture to your horses?—Entirely, and to grow corn for them.

44461. *Mr Cameron.*—What amount of money is spent in wages in Tiree in the course of a year through your agency?—I cannot tell the exact amount of money spent in wages, but the amount which has gone into the island for the last six years will average very nearly £3000 a year.

LANARK.
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GLASGOW.
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Edward
Charles
Stanford.

JOHN MURDOCH, retired Supervisor of Excise, Carmunnock, Glasgow
(65)—examined.

44462. *The Chairman.*—Have you a written statement to make to us?—Yes.

John
Murdoch.

44463. Do you appear as a delegate?—I appear as a delegate. ‘Besides having much myself to lay before the Royal Commission, I have been requested by the Islay Association in Glasgow to appear for the people of Islay, who have had no hearing at all as yet. I appear for the people of Uist, of Lochbroom, of Assynt, Eddrachilles, Durness, Tongue, and the Ross of Mull, who, from want of time and preparation, were unable to state their whole case. But instead of making separate statements for each of these constituencies, I shall draw upon each merely for facts bearing upon points which, as I believe, have not been adequately enforced. By way of apology to those whom I represent, and who may think my statements too brief, I desire to say that one thing, and the first at which I have always aimed, has been in some measure gained; the people themselves have been heard. Not only have numbers of them stated their grievances, their disappointments, their hopes, and their own ideas as to the redress of what troubles them, they have revealed a good deal of the character of their minds, and given the Commission and the nation besides a glimpse of the sort of men who have been lying so long

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.John
Murdoch.

under the burden of wrong which has at last compelled them to make their voice be heard. Chief among the agents at whose hands the complainants have suffered are the factors ; and so, the chief difficulty which you, my Lord and Gentlemen, have in attaching the proper weight to the evidence of the crofters, has been made by these agents and their co-labourers, in most of the things complained of. At Portree, at Glendale, at Ullapool, at Inverness, and even in Edinburgh, it has been alleged that the crofters have been moved and primed from without to prefer charges against factors, landlords, and others ; and that thus the Royal Commission has, to a large extent, been employed, not so much in gathering the genuine testimony of the class to have been inquired of, but the opinions and creations of what the young man writing in Edinburgh to the *Scotsman*, called certain "cowardly and unscrupulous agitators." Now, it so happens that I am, from direct personal knowledge, in a position to remove much of this difficulty ; and one of the best services which I can render to the Commission and to the crofters is to show how little reliance is to be placed upon the allegations which have been employed to raise the difficulty. I have the additional reason for dealing with this difficulty that I have been mentioned as if I were one of those who were engaged in getting up a fictitious case against factors and landlords, and in inciting the people to violence. I mention this, not that I have any idea of vindicating myself, but as giving me a standing as a witness in the case. The first thing to be noticed is, that these gentlemen do not say exactly what we did, or what we said to influence the people ; they, as if a mere sweeping assertion from one of them were enough, merely say that the delegates and those who chose them are our mouthpieces, without specifying what particular words we put into their ears or when or where we made the attempts. This, to say the least, is suspiciously vague ; and might, if I did not happen to be better provided with an answer, be swept away with a counter statement equally vague. If these gentlemen do not make concrete statements on this point, they have made them on the same broad subject ; and from an examination of their alleged facts elsewhere, you can judge of their less palpable statements to you. When the disturbance broke out over the refusal of Mr Alexander Macdonald, factor, Portree, to restore Ben Lee to the Braesmen, that gentleman issued a circular in which he excused himself by conveying that their demands were unreasonable, inasmuch as their total rent in 1882 was only £200, 12s, whereas in 1829 it was £280. And so successful was the factor in making the impression that the above reduction made up for the taking of Ben Lee from the crofters in 1865, that when a question on the subject was put in the House of Commons, the Lord Advocate quoted that reduction in justification of Mr Macdonald's refusal to let the tenants have the hill back without an increase of rent. The word of the factor was of such weight that it swept away the testimony of the tenants, and the absurdity of supposing that a reduction of rent made in 1830 and in the lifetime of a previous proprietor, was meant to cover the taking of the hill thirty-five years later, and the keeping of it from them fifty years later still, in the time of the second succeeding proprietor. Among those who were attracted to Skye by that disturbance was myself, and, not to be carried away by the statements of the crofters, I made a point of going first to the factor. Among the points on which I sought enlightenment was the relation in time between the reduction of rent and the taking of the hill ; could be explain how a reduction made in 1830 could be held as being in consideration of the taking of Ben Lee from the tenants in 1865. He

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

John
Murdoch.

' tried to raise a cloud of remoteness between us and the reduction, he could ' not be expected to be clear about what occurred so long ago; and he ' began to express himself as not being clear that the Braesmen ever had ' possession of Ben Lee. And, when the case went before the Lords of ' Session it was on the latter plea, and the pleas in the circular, and the ' explanation given by the Lord Advocate were cast to the winds, as were ' the leading articles in the newspapers which stood by the factors—although ' there is positive evidence that the father of the present Lord Macdonald ' made an abatement of £3 a year in the total rent of the Braesmen in con- ' sideration of his Lordship's having built a cottage, and taken a croft for a ' gamekeeper, within the bounds of Ben Lee; and an abatement of £4 ' when the place, no longer required for a servant, was let to another man. ' The records of Parliament and of the Court of Session furnish proof of ' these facts and of the misleading character of the matter-of-fact statements ' made by this gentleman in an attempt to make little of the testimony of ' the crofters. The Lord Advocate himself is employed to make a mislead- ' ing statement; and then his Lordship is put in the humiliating position, ' by the same factor, of giving his sanction to a practical contradiction in ' the Court of Session; and the Court is made use of to give effect to a ' plea which is contradicted by the facts of the case. So long as these ' things are remembered it will take other than the evidence of such men ' to set aside the testimony of the crofters. I shall have to return to this ' gentleman; but meantime, I go to Glendale. There I seek an interview ' with Mr Donald Macdonald, Tormore, the factor, up to that period, on ' the estate. I am sorry that I must appear so personal in this little ' narrative, as I wish to avoid even the semblance of a vindication of my ' own actions. But I have to give personal testimony, and cannot hide ' myself. I said to Mr Macdonald, "It is so difficult to arrive at the truth ' in regard to what has been going on in these quarters that I have come ' to inquire on the spot." "Yes," said he, "and you have come to do ' more mischief." I pray you mark the readiness with which he makes ' this statement. "Stop," I said, "you have known me for some years ' now, did you ever know me even to attempt to do mischief?" "Well, ' no," he said at once. Of these two contradictory statements of Mr ' Macdonald's, Mr Macpherson Macleod and Mr Edward MacHugh are ' living witnesses. Calming down, he entered into conversation with me ' on the troubles with which he was beset. Having dilated on the great ' change for the worse, which had come over the people, he took down a ' revolver from the chimney piece, saying, "So bad have the people become ' that I am obliged to carry that with me." Having remonstrated with ' him on the folly and wrong of resorting to deadly weapons or to violence ' of any kind, I asked him, "How have the people become so bad?" "Oh, Irish Land League literature," he said, just as readily as previously ' he alleged what he had so soon to retract. "I am glad," I said to him, ' "that you have mentioned Land League literature, for I have been on ' the lookout for it ever since my visit to the island in the end of April, ' and I have not been able to discover a trace of it. You will be able to ' give me the information I require. You have, no doubt, read some of ' this literature?" "No?" he said. "Have you seen any of it?" "No." ' "Has any one who has seen it told you about it?" "No." "Then, ' can you tell me anything at all about it?" "No." I need not say on ' this more than that in these particulars Tormore did not consider himself ' under obligation to be sure of his facts before he made his statements; ' and I bear this in mind when reading what he said as to the evidence ' borne by the crofters. To connect the crofters' action with Irish Land

LANARK. ' League literature was to damage them in the eyes of the country, roused
GLASGOW. ' as it was by certain crimes abhorrent alike to Irish and to Scotch. No
 John
 Murdoch. ' doubt, subsequently to the disturbance, Irish and other literature on the
 ' land question had been conveyed to Skye; but that afforded no foundation
 ' for Mr Macdonald's statements. I pray you, bear the revolver scene
 ' in mind, while I go back to Portree before leaving Skye. A report of
 ' what passed between Mr Alexander Macdonald and myself regarding the
 ' Braes had appeared in an English paper; and on this, my second visit to
 ' Skye that season, I found the factor in such a state of fury that he said
 ' he would knock me down if I did not retract, and apologise for, what I
 ' had written about him. I told him he need not be afraid to strike me,
 ' for I never struck back; I had been a strict peace man for forty years,
 ' and never, even in putting down smuggling, resorted to offensive or even
 ' defensive weapons. These are the two men under whose factorates
 ' violence broke out in Skye; and they are the only men whom I met, in
 ' the course of those two visits to Skye and of my long tour this year in
 ' the west and north, who showed any disposition to spill blood or to use
 ' any kind of violence. It is quite clear that the crofters did not require
 ' to have men sent in among them from without to put ideas of violence
 ' into their heads. I shall here dispose of Mr Alexander Macdonald's
 ' cousin, who writes that the Uist crofters were made use of by "unscrupu-
 ' lous agitators" to malign his grandfather, Dr Alexander Macleod, at one
 ' time factor in the Long Island. Here again, the charge preferred is loose,
 ' though so sweeping. I, on the other hand, will speak definitely and
 ' give facts. In so far as I am concerned, I left Uist, holding the "Doctair
 ' Ban" up as a hero; and wherever I fancied there was a chance of learn-
 ' ing something of the doctor's principles, maxims, or plans as a rural
 ' economist and agricultural engineer, I made an attempt to learn it,
 ' and it was in the hope of learning, thus, from one of my hero's daughters
 ' that I made the first acquaintance with Mr Alexander Macdonald, his
 ' grandson, at Portree. It will thus be seen that I was not on the look-
 ' out for faults, far less was I likely to invent accusations against the man
 ' who had taken such possession of my admiration. The fact is, that I
 ' never heard a whisper against the Doctair Ban until an attempt
 ' was made more than a year later by a clever gentleman in Uist, in
 ' intimate friendly and family relationship with the present factor, to get
 ' me to help in screening the modern management, by publishing state-
 ' ments injurious to the good name of my hero. It is exceedingly
 ' probable, even, that the young man whose letter has been serving as fuel
 ' for the *Scotsman*, heard from his own brother, Dr Kenneth Macleod, how
 ' pleased and surprised he was to hear me, at a soiree in Glasgow, speak
 ' enthusiastically in praise of his grandfather. If there has been any
 ' priming in the case, the charge is to be laid at the door, not of agitators
 ' at all, but of persons who are afraid of, and bitterly opposed to
 ' agitation; and I am quite willing to abide by the result of inquiry into
 ' the matter. Were it not that I require so much time for other purposes,
 ' I would devote a few pages to holding the Doctair Ban up, as an example
 ' for present factors to imitate. I happen to be in a position to give
 ' positive evidence in regard to what Mr Gunn said regarding the Coigeach
 ' delegates—who, according to him, were no delegates at all, there having
 ' been, as he said, no meetings worthy of the name, at which they could
 ' be elected. I was told that, before I went there, there had been several
 ' meetings. That is only hearsay. But it is a matter of personal
 ' knowledge, that the first day I was there the Free Church was three-
 ' quarters full, and that delegates were then elected. I went back again

LANARK.

GLASGOW.John
Murdoch.

and found, that so far from grievances having been exaggerated in the statements actually submitted, so strong was the influence of the ex-deputy factor and his friends at subsequent meetings, the general case was greatly understated, and several very telling things were kept back entirely through fear. So thoroughly did I master the whole mechanism of the management—by “wheels within wheels”—that I can say with confidence, that Mr Gunn himself, who tries to operate at such a distance from his office, and who has to contend with so many countervailing forces, can, in reality say very little, of his own knowledge, about the things on which he has taken upon him to speak and write, and is very liable to say much at the instigation of others. I am quite willing to allow, that if Mr Gunn has sinned in what he has been doing before the Royal Commission, he has been sinned against in a greater degree; and his own and his noble employer's case is another variation arising out of an attempt to do the impossible in land administration. I am aware that objections have been urged against persons being out at all to prepare the crofters for the advent of the Royal Commission. I will not take up much time with this. I take it that, the Crown and the Government having, after mature deliberation, determined to make inquiry, the wise, proper, and loyal thing for sincere friends of truth and righteousness was to lend all the assistance they could to those intrusted with the difficult task. Factors and landlords were well provided in their offices with books, statistics, clerks, and so forth; and they had ample time and ability to make the utmost use of all these resources. What a contrast between these advantages on the one side, and the utter absence of aids on the side of the crofters. To have placed these poor people in a position at all approaching the preparedness of the other class, would have involved a vast expenditure of money and of time, and the sending out of men to act as advisers, and clerks, and spokesmen. These were out of the question, unless the Government had undertaken the preparation as well as the inquiry; and all that was done was the sending out of two or three men in a very hurried manner; and all they could do was to give a few words of encouragement and of advice, and move the people into co-operation for the time being, so as to prevent crowding and confusion, and have the most competent men put forward to give evidence. The weightiest part of the work of these pioneers was mitigating the adverse influences of the men who had for so long kept the crofters in a state of unworthy fear; and it is but right to say, as I can do, from coming as I have done in some cases after, as well as before the Commission, that the warping influences which have operated to defeat the objects of the Government and the Crown in any measure, are those exerted by the very class who have objected to all preparation on the part of the crofters. But the most effective preparation is traceable to these same objectors and their friends. The agitation in Braes and Glendale, for instance, actually set on foot by the doings of the two factors, did much to prepare the crofters for the Commission; and certain vigorous attacks made upon the crofters and their friends, by Mr Thomas Purves in the *Northern Ensign*, proved most effective; they led to a correspondence which was most beneficial, not only in bringing grievances out so as to be seen from every point of view, but also in shaking off the fear of the factors for all time coming. It would be unfair not to mention the services rendered by these gentlemen. For myself, I have such confidence in the truth, that I have no desire to warp it; and I was so sure of the good sense and good feeling of the mass of the people, that the height of my desire was to have them speak

LANARK. ‘ out their own minds in their own native way. I went out in the sincere desire to help the Commission to as full a knowledge of the crofters’ case as was possible; and it is with the self-same desire, that this and the following papers have been written, and are now submitted. Serious defects in my statements were inevitable. With so much to say, I have had to write abruptly, and run the risk of appearing to be devoid of courtesy. Then my care, in regard to facts, that they should be easily referred to by others, has made me appear too minute in detail, and sometimes very personal. I have had to deal with very hard materials, and it would have taken time which I had not, and great skill indeed, to put anything else than a rough and even an ungracious face on matters. And now, with regard to the island of Islay, a few figures, to begin with, will help the Commission to understand not only what is to follow, but also some things which were stated elsewhere. They are taken from the Blue Book of 1874, from the valuation roll of the county of Argyll, from the Registrar-General’s Returns, and from the great three-volume Report of the Census Commissioners for 1851:—

Estate.	Proprietor.	Acres.	Feu to Crown.	Agricultural Rental.	Feus and Public Buildings.
Kilchoman Parish— Bolinaby .	Jas. H. Campbell,	1,800	£ s. d. 2 9 9	447 10 0	
Coul .	A. M’Indoe		8 7 5	400 0 0	
Cladville .	Mrs Baker .	5,509	14 13 7	599 15 11	1,245 19 0
Sunderland .	Mrs Smith .		12 15 0	645 0 0	
Islay .	C. Morrison .		.	8,253 16 3	
Killarow Parish— Islay .	C. Morrison .	67,000	299 6 2	10,262 9 7	
Dunlossit .	K. Finlay .	17,676	48 0 0	3,041 5 5	2,078 6 0
Part Kildalton .	J. Ramsay .		.	598 13 0	
Kildalton and Oa Parish— Kildalton .	J. Ramsay .	54,250	121 0 0	8,513 9 0	1,319 4 0
		146,235	506 11 11	32,761 19 2	4,643 9 0

Parish.	Population in					
	1831.	1841.	1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.
Kilchoman and Portnahaven,	4,822	4,505	4,142	3,427	2,861	2,547
Bowmore and Kilmeny .	7,105	5,782	4,882	3,969	3,012	2,756
Kildalton and Oa .	3,065	3,315	3,310	2,956	2,283	2,271
	14,992	13,602	12,334	10,352	8,156	7,574

Poor Rates was in 1846 less than £200, in 1852 over £2000.

‘ So far as I can gather, the rental in 1831 was about £15,000, certainly not more. In 1847 it was officially stated that the rental of the portions now in the possession of Messrs Morrison, Finlay, and Ramsay was £19,712, 19s. 3d. To put in a small space as many of these statistics as I can, I will go back so as to make a more comprehensive comparison.

Year.	Population.	Rental.	Authority.
1750, . . .	5,344	...	James Macdonald.
1771, . . .	7,500	...	Dr Walker.
1772, . . .	...	£2,300 0 0	...
1779, . . .	...	2,700 0 0	...
1791-8, . . .	9,500	...	Sir John Sinclair.
1801, . . .	10,500	...	James Macdonald.
1808,	11,000 (well paid)	Do.
1832,	15,000 0 0	...
1847,	19,712 19 3	...

LANARK
—
GLASGOW.
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John Murdoch.

Thus it will be seen—1. The population is now just what it was 110 years ago, after rising to double. The fact is that the population was really up to 15,500 in 1832, the year before the decline began. I notice that Mr Malcolm, in his valuable paper, makes, in the items of population, the incomplete and misleading statement, that the population of the counties mentioned by him had gone on increasing down to the year 1831, but he does not mention the fact of the decreases which have taken place. In the smaller area, with which I am dealing, the population was nearly at its highest, and the next ten years show a decrease, and so downward till we reach the last census, when we find the number at 7574 as compared with 15,500 in 1832. Thus, we have the melancholy spectacle, in the eyes of the lover of humanity, of a falling off in fifty years to the amount of 50 per cent. in the population, while the mere financiers have the cheering fact of a rise in rents of more than 100 per cent. It will be seen by a closer comparison, that fifty years ago the rent was about £1 per head of the population; while now it is, between agricultural rent, £32,761, 19s. 2d., and feus, &c., £4643, 9s.—total, £37,405, 8s. 2d., or within a fraction of £5 per head of the people—that is, rental per head has gone up 500 per cent. It is a wonder the Duke of Argyll did not quote Islay as a good exemplification of his favourite idea of the beneficence and felicity which are indicated by that blessed factor—rent. Mr Ramsay, when putting his brake on that car of progress which was moving in the autumn of last year in the direction of our having you, my Lord and Gentlemen, out on your agitational mission, said that the decrease in population was not the result of evictions but of education. There would have been no need of a theoretical explanation if the honourable gentleman had quoted the rise in the rental. Mr Ramsay compared Islay and Lewis, and we had the curious fact that, while the former fell 50 per cent. in population in fifty years, the latter went up 73 per cent. in the same period. Now one of the great feathers in Sir James Matheson's cap, as proprietor and benefactor, is his very great expenditure of money in furtherance of education. Of the £329,409 which he is said to have expended in improving his property and the condition of his people, the sum of £10,000 is debited to education. It is a pity that Mr Ramsay did not state how much that intelligent educationist, his predecessor, laid out on schools and school-masters. I hope he will tell us yet, as there are few men who are at all

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

John
Murdoch.

' likely to be so able as he is to supply the information. Of this, I am
 ' sure, that the late proprietor, with all his good and liberal intentions, had
 ' not it in his power to do one-fourth or one-fifth of what Sir James did in
 ' that direction. But let us say that the expenditure was half Sir James's.
 ' Well, here is a sum for the honourable gentleman—£5000 applied to
 ' education in Islay, reduce the population by one-half; how much of a re-
 ' duction should be effected by a similar application of £10,000? If £5000
 ' applied to education in Islay reduce the population by a half, £10,000 in
 ' Lewis should have reduced the population to nothing. I will not take up
 ' your time with the corresponding statistics of Lewis, but state briefly that
 ' there was a much greater inducement to clear Islay of its people than
 ' was found in Lewis. Mr Ramsay himself told us that Islay was the
 ' most valuable of the Western Isles. This lies at the bottom of the
 ' business, and agrees with the facts that in Skye, in Farr, in Durness, and
 ' even in Lewis, the best lands are as a rule cleared of their people, and
 ' those which are less easily consolidated and which are least valuable are
 ' left to the native people. The first farm which was cleared in Islay was
 ' one of the very best in it—that of the famous Kilchiaran, from which
 ' the Campbells of Dunmore, Ormsary, and Rum sprang. There were six
 ' comfortable farmers, with the usual complement of cottars. These
 ' tenants in chief had a couple of working horses apiece, with a crop of
 ' young horses rising to maturity; from eight to twelve milch cows, with
 ' their followers; and about thirty or forty ewes. It is also a well known
 ' fact that they had money in bank at Campbeltown. The cottars had a
 ' cow or two, four or five sheep some of them, potato ground, and a little
 ' patch for what was deemed indispensable—flax. Among these cottars
 ' were such as weavers, joiners, tailors, and shoemakers; and their rents
 ' were paid with a few days of help in times of need. I am particular in
 ' giving this description at this point to save time and make things more
 ' pointed by and by. These people had a good many of the things which
 ' go to support a family without leaving the spot. The cottars had no
 ' difficulty in earning what would procure meal; and they had the sea to
 ' which they could go for fish for dinner, when the potatoes were put on
 ' the fire. This is a fact and not a fancy, I assure you. We have heard
 ' a good deal against the middlemen. They are a sort of universal factors
 ' for evil, to account, according to MacLeod of MacLeod and Mr Purves,
 ' for most of the ills ascribed to the mismanagement of landlords and
 ' the grasping of the sheep and cattle farmers. But the curious thing in
 ' connection with this business is that, in all the cases we have heard of,
 ' it was not the evil-doers at all that were removed, but their victims.
 ' The little community in question was devoured by a parasite; and, in
 ' the wisdom of the administrators, they remove the complaining and more
 ' important body, and leave the class of parasites to devour all. I do not
 ' think that there was one-tenth the harm in those middlemen that there is in
 ' the monopolists who have got the land entirely to themselves. But the
 ' term has been imported from Ireland with all the opprobrium attached
 ' to it; and Mr Purves seizes it and uses it as a weapon of attack and
 ' defence. This seems all fair in the war in which these defenders of their
 ' class are concerned; but woe betide the crofter or his friend who would
 ' insist upon such Irishisms as "fair rent, free sale, and fixity of tenure."
 ' These are like Samson's foxes with the firebrands at their tails among the
 ' corn of the Philistines. But middlemen! What are the Purveses and
 ' the Sellars and the Clarks, yea, and the proprietorial MacLeods, but
 ' middlemen in a far worse sense? The old middlemen let the humbler
 ' tenants have some share of the land with them; but the modern ones

' who run them down insist upon coming in on the one hand so completely
' between the people and the laird that they must have it all to themselves ;
' and they come in on the other hand between the people and their God,
' by saying that the land is their own. The middlemen obtained all over
' Islay as well as over Sutherlandshire. In 1751 there were, according to
' the valuation of the county, four proprietors and eight wadsetters.
' Among them was Colin Campbell of Ardnahow, the father of Lord
' Clyde's mother. John, a brother of this Colin, was in Kilanalen, and it
' so happens that I have the names of the sub-tenants who were there
' under John and Alexander, his successors. At a later period, William
' Campbell, called William Buidhe, had Kilchiaran, and from this stock
' sprang the Ormsaries, Dunmores, and Aros Campbells, and the William
' whom I knew of them died a few years ago in Cladville in Islay, leaving
' a round sum of money. And what is noteworthy here is this, that,
' instead of the William Buidhe family swallowing all up and clearing
' Kilchiaran, the people were left in possession and the middleman cleared
' away. And not less worthy of notice are the further facts. There hardly
' was a more fortunate or successful family than the sons and daughters
' of this man, who did not grasp all and crush out the people ; while, on
' the other hand, there is not to-day a well-to-do descendant in the county
' of those middlemen who seized all for themselves, all which agrees to the
' letter with the fate of Charles Clarke, Glendubh, the Macdonalds of
' Cuileag, George Gunn, &c. And supposing the middlemen in Suther-
' land and Skye, &c., to have been the devouring elements which their
' successors in large possessions allege, surely the right thing would have
' been to apply the ointment to the parasites, instead of the handing over
' the sheep—as I may call the crofters—to the tender mercies of the crows.
' The justice, the practicability, and the good effects of doing this are seen
' in the case of Kilchiaran, and the folly and suicide of the reverse is seen
' in the fate of middlemen and sub-tenants elsewhere. Let me, before I
' dispose of this gone class, say that the middlemen of those days, although
' of the class of gentlemen, were right in the bosoms of the people who
' rented under them ; they were on the most intimate terms with the
' farmers and crofters, and there is no doubt that it was through the influ-
' ence and affection which they had among the humbler class of tenants
' and cottars that they were able to raise so many soldiers in Skye and
' elsewhere. How many crofters would follow Tom Purves, and William
' Mitchell, and George Granville Clarke to join the army ? But returning
' to my narrative—the Kilchiaran tenants, whom the middlemen left there,
' were removed against their will some years later, and one of them was
' reduced to pauperism in a trial of strength with the laird before the
' courts. I will make a present of this case to Mr Ramsay to support his
' educational theory of reduction of population. I believe that the proprietor
' had an idea that, by introducing Fife and Ayrshire farmers into the
' country, he would, by means of their example, educate the remaining
' tenants to be better husbandmen. A great many very disastrous things
' have been done from the very best motives, and the proprietor in question
' would have done nothing from any other motive, excepting in the solitary
' interest of the blood-loving divinity or demon of sport. He loved his
' people ; he was proud of them ; and there never was a proprietor who
' had a warmer place in the hearts of his tenants than Walter Frederick
' Campbell of Shawfield had in that of his Islay followers. But this was
' a blunder, educationally, socially, and economically. It broke up an
' excellent little community which had lived in humble unambitious
' independence, and which worked out the two problems of individual

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.John
Murdoch.

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

John
Murdoch.

' enterprise and cooperation. Mr White, the Fifeshire tenant, had a new house and an extensive steading built for him, and he had the farm at less than the rent which the native tenants would have paid on a renewal of their leases. Everything seemed to favour the stranger. Among the very first of his farming operations he was generously found fault with by the neighbours. They told him he was doing what would not pay. One of these was in regard to manuring with sea-weed. He, a southern, a Saxon, and a favourite with the laird, spurned their counsel and went on in his own way. But ere he had a second crop in the ground he began to see the error of his way, and before the end of his fifth year he was fain to surrender the whole concern into the hands of the proprietor and quit the country. So-called high farming from Fife was only made ridiculous in the eyes of the natives, and education in agriculture was thrown back rather than advanced. This was the case conspicuously in Lewis. I knew Mr Smith, the famous thorough-drain agricultural engineer—a man full of fancies and speculation—having, like the Duke of Sutherland, a great predilection for new and improved machinery; and I have seen his farm-yard at Deanston so full of half and quarter made implements and machines that one would think there had been a war of implements, and that Deanston was an hospital to which the fragmentary survivors had been sent by a generous Government. Mr Smith had been successful in inventing a spinning machine, and he perfected a hydraulic contrivance, by which one portion of the water of the river Teith raised another so high that it crossed an intervening elevation and helped the moss-lairds to clear away what was called the Flanders bog from off the rich clay subsoil of Blair-Drummond Moss on the left bank of the river Forth. The three successes in the parishes of Kincardine and Kilmadock in Perthshire made a reputation for the man; and when Sir James Matheson intrusted him with the work of reclaiming Lewis and educating the Celts, the only things in which he was conspicuously successful were in spending Sir James's money and making, to some extent, real improvements in agriculture ridiculous by his blunders. There need be no attempt made to ascribe any other than good intentions to these four representative men. Yet Sir James Matheson's enormous expenditure, like that of the Duke of Sutherland and Lady Cathcart, might as well have been left at interest in the bank, in so far as the intended beneficiaries are concerned. And this opinion is confirmed by a previous Commissioner, Mr George J. Walker of Aberdeen, whose words will be found in the "Agricultural Interests' Commission" of 1881. He is cautious enough to avoid taking on himself the responsibility of averring that statements similar to those made at Bunessan in reference to costly agricultural improvements were to be accepted as beyond question. "Since 1845 the late Sir James is said to have trenched, drained, enclosed, and divided into farms and crofts about 900 acres . . . and drained, remodelled, and fenced another 1000 acres, most of which had previously been under rude cultivation. In addition, the extensive grounds which surround the castle have been thoroughly trenched, drained, and levelled, and within the policies large tracts have been laid out in pasture grass." Observe he has no reservation in regard to the Castle grounds. "A large number of the farmhouses and steadings on the estate have been built anew or added to, and repaired by the late Sir James." There is no reservation there, but note what he says next. "Not much has been done with the crofters." And then there is an excuse found for this. "When it is remembered that there are about 3500 crofters' houses on the island, including squatters, and that wood, lime, and slates have all to be

'imported, it can well be imagined what a large and expensive task the thorough improving of the crofters' holdings really is." The greatest good of the greatest number is here disposed of in less than a line—"Not much has been done with the crofters," and five lines are devoted to an excuse. £134,000 are said to have been expended on lands and houses, and all the farmers we can find in Lewis outside the crofter class, are at the very utmost thirty-six. I have gone a little further into the case of Lewis here to save time again, and I will only say in this connection that there is abundant proof in Lewis itself that if Sir James had simply given his word to the people that they would not be removed, and allowed them proper access to the necessary extent of land, they would have made at least as much progress in agricultural and domestic improvement as they have done in population. Their houses are one of the worst features in the dreary rural landscape of Lewis. But what is the fact? During the short honorary commissionership of Mr Hugh M. Matheson, who was put before the public for a short time after the retirement of Mr Munro, he gave the crofters his word of honour that if they built new houses according to the rules of the estate they would not be removed but get leases. On that mere word, without writing or specific contract, the work of building began and went on at such a rate, that the style and workmanship and number of the new houses which I saw finished and in hand during my run over the island were a positive marvel, and a striking evidence of what the people wished to do. And yet the leases have not been granted yet; and even the man whose word was given ceased to have any power when Sir James died. I am sorry I have not the actual number of houses which have sprung up under the magic of Mr Matheson's few words of encouragement, but I could get them for you. It is not by the expenditure of large sums of money on the part of landlords that the work of real improvement is to be done. The "much food is in the tillage of the poor," as the wise man said, and the poor will be nerved for the work by what Arthur Young calls "the magic of property" be the wand in the shape of ownership, in fact or in prospect, or in mere protection from confiscation. I was looking for the evidence of Mr Fowler, the farm manager for Lady Matheson, but I do not think he went before you at all. Speaking to me in 1875 on the subject of improvement in Lewis husbandry, he conveyed that the methods tried by the proprietor were a vast mistake, that the people themselves were on the right lines, although astray in many things, and that what was required was a combination of encouragement and protection to go forward on those lines. He said they had been impelled by experience, personal and traditional, to adopt the methods they pursued. Some of these methods were forced on them by adverse circumstances, but they were shrewd enough to reason their way out of the latter, and they were teachable enough to adopt hints generously given. The great blunder was setting aside all their ideas, and trying to force on them a system of improvements which went counter to their common-sense, and which events have proved to be what they saw them to be at the outset. This was exactly the case at Kilchiaran in Islay. The Islay farmers had their faults like other people, but they were in a sure way of correcting many of them; and they were not above taking lessons in Fife, Ayr, or Kintyre nearer home. This I know, that numbers of the young men left their homes, partly to earn a little money, and partly to learn some of the southern and eastern methods of farming. I could give the names of numbers of them. And some of them brought home with them improved ploughs, carts, and harness, as earlier generations of Islay men brought

LANARK

GLASGOW

John
Murdoch.

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.—
John

Murdoch.

' home better milking cows from the north of Ireland, to which they were
 ' wont in their time to go to service. They were on the right lines; and
 ' they were extending cultivation exactly as Mr John Hamilton Dempster
 ' of Skibo contemplated in those remarkable leases of his, which Mr
 ' Sutherland Walker tried to set aside some years ago—that is, projecting
 ' reclamations and homesteads from a parent centre towards a circumfer-
 ' ence. The same Kilchiaran might, in the course of time, have been so
 ' improved, and the area of cultivation so extended that, instead of being
 ' made over to one man, it might have afforded homesteads to as many
 ' more tenants, some of the crofters ascending the ladder. But the
 ' economic blunder was even more tangible. All the laird's expenditure
 ' was thrown away in the meantime, and the farm was on his hands for
 ' seven years. One Ralston from Ayrshire took it, and in the course of a
 ' few years he made a worse termination than his predecessor, for he
 ' became bankrupt, and left heavily in the proprietor's debt. To make a
 ' long story short, there have been four lowland tenants in that farm, with
 ' intervals between them, until now at last it has fallen to a native, who
 ' has not had time yet to prove whether he is to escape the woe attached
 ' to adding field to field. With the consolidation idea in the atmosphere,
 ' it was hardly possible that the first failure in a series should prove a
 ' sufficient warning where the land was so good, and so the work went on,
 ' and in its progress we shall see another factor operating to the same
 ' disastrous end. You have had a good deal of evidence already as to what
 ' factors have done on their own account in clearing people off the best
 ' lands. I was repeatedly reminded of Islay as I followed you up
 ' Strathnaver. Mr Purves says that Strathnaver is the best in Sutherland,
 ' but Islay is better than the best you have seen on your recent tour,
 ' excepting perhaps Cragraig and Easter Ross; and so Islay has suffered a
 ' far greater disaster than the county of the notorious clearances. There
 ' was a factor in Islay who did pretty much what George Gunn and
 ' Patrick Sellar did on a larger scale, and what Mr M'Iver did on a smaller
 ' scale. He worked, one way with another, until he got, by the year 1851,
 ' when I made the calculation, the farms of thirty-seven different comfort-
 able tenants into his own hands, not one of them nearly of so low a
 grade as the crofters we have heard of, some of them elders in the Estab-
 lished Church, and some actually going to that church in the true
 ' guarantee of respectability—a gig. And before the work of consolida-
 tion was nearly completed, or Mr Webster had been constrained to give
 ' up his office, he had a good many more. But for the regard which I
 ' have for your time I would illustrate the factorial methods and capacities
 ' in this respect by giving some examples, not only of dealings with
 ' widows, but with men who might have been deemed capable of taking
 ' care of themselves. Suffice it that in one continuous holding he had at
 ' least twenty-five of those better class farms, with a mansion and all its
 ' conveniences and adornments, in the very best situation in the island.
 ' And while he was feathering his nest thus, and elbowing and shoulder-
 ' ing out of his way those whose land he sought to possess, the liberal and
 ' trustful proprietor whom he had undertaken to serve was ruined, and a
 ' noble inheritance passed away from a family whose nobility was from
 ' God and not from the Crown. Thus Islay, the Queen of the Hebrides,
 ' found its way into the long list of valuable properties, with Sutherland
 ' at the head, which can be adduced to prove the disastrous commercial
 ' policy of placing large tracts of country and large numbers of people in
 ' the power of factors—yea, even, and of landlords with the best intentions.
 ' All the education, all the capital, all the benevolence to the contrary not-

' notwithstanding, the people were sent out of the country, and the proprietor
' did so badly for himself that the estate was sold to pay his debts. And
' there is even more than this moral rolled up in the case. If ever there
' was a case in which the perfection of ingenuity had been brought to the
' work of harnessing the business of whisky-making so as to make it an
' element of estate management, it was done in Islay. The trade was
' elevated to the rank of a local public industry. It consumed (I do not
' say utilised) the farm produce of bere and barley on the island, and sent
' the product mostly to be consumed by people in the lowlands; and yet
' the distillers, all, with the proprietor at the head, came to ruin, one after
' another, until there is not one to-day in the island, nor the descendant,
' I may say, of those I recollect in my early days, that did not come to
' ruin. The exceptions only prove the rule. Macneill Lossit, who never
' was but a minor distiller, had the good sense to give up in time. The
' rule was for the farming to be so managed that a fifth of the arable
' land was put under bere or barley; and when the farmer left his barley
' with the distiller the rent was assumed to be paid. But all did not do.
' On the contrary, the very attempt to link the demoralising traffic with
' the honest business of farming, raised a moral force against the manage-
' ment which produced the ruin. And yet with numerous facts before us
' this is only a sample. We are charged with putting complaints into the
' mouths of crofters, and we are abused as agitators because the peeled
' and evicted people are at last encouraged by their sovereign to state their
' grievances. I will now give you an example of the extent to which this
' sort of thing has been carried. Take what is called The Glen, which is
' not a narrow cut made through a mountain by a river now tumbling and
' leaping over boulders at the bottom. It is a strath, in the main, and
' part of it is called the Strath of Killenan. Well, before this work of
' desolation began, there were 227 families where now there are just
' nine tenants, no cottars, and a few paupers I found in fragments of
' houses which have not been pulled down yet. The most of this glen is
' on the estate of Mr Finlay, and the rest on Mr Morrison's and Mr
' Ramsay's. If you will look at the population table from 1831 to 1881,
' you will notice that the parish of Kildalton and Oa keeps up its popula-
' tion till 1851, but as soon as Mr Ramsay became proprietor and founded
' a residence for himself at the head of Loch a Chnoic, we see the same rule
' applied which Webster and the trustees applied so successfully to the rest
' of the island; and in a few years after his succession the population falls
' from 3310 to 2283, more than 1000 disappearing from the returns. But
' these figures do not tell the story in full. In the division of the estate
' called Oa, and which is outside entirely of the wretched village of
' Port Ellen, there are only fifteen farmers and twenty-three cottars, where
' there were ninety-seven farmers and sixty-six cottars; thirty-eight families
' where there were 163. Angus M'Cuaig, blacksmith at Gleann a Mhuiluin,
' told me that in one of the little townships he shod thirty-six horses where
' now he shoes four. And it is not merely that this land is not inhabited,
' but there is a covering of rushes on it which renders it incapable of
' supporting the stock which should be available for the feeding of the
' people elsewhere. It is not tilled, and the grazing, as elsewhere, is
' becoming too bad for sheep and cattle; and the chief use I saw it put to
' was yielding rushes with which to thatch the corn stacks of Cornabus
' and Lag a mhuilinn. And let me not forget to state that, so far from the
' land set free and at the disposal of Mr Ramsay being bestowed to enlarge
' crofts or farms said to be too small, the whole of the eighty-two holdings
' have gone in reality to augment the previously existing large farms of

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

John
Murdoch.

LANARK.

' Cornabus, Kinabus, and Kintra, and to form another large one. So that even so intelligent a man as Mr Ramsay is not to be trusted to make the best use of his possessions. Those three farms were large enough previously, and two of them occupied by two of the old class of gentlemen farmers, who were related to some of the leading families of the county.

' I have disposed of the education theory of depopulation in so far at least as the earlier emigration from Islay is concerned. I am quite ready to admit that education may be so perverted and applied as to promote emigration, to promote a taste for clerkships in the large cities, and make the pliable youth grow up into superficial creatures who think themselves superior to the husbandman who takes his living out of the soil. But this is a false education, or miseducation; and I admit also that under a London Department of Education, under School Boards composed of factors, sheep and cattle farmers, and others who are not in sympathy with the native people, young men are being miseducated into cosmopolitans, who care not for the things and the duties which lie nearest to them, and they are schooled into such mere verbalists that they do not think the language in which Fingal spoke and Ossian sang worthy of their study and care. This, and much more, I know are being done by means of the machinery of education; but that is not education. In so far as the means of education are thus perverted they are operating from the same source and in the same direction with all the other alien forces which have gone to set aside the instincts, the language, the intelligence, the common sense, the feelings, and the interests of the native people.

' Let me here pay a tribute due to the late W. F. Campbell of Islay in this connection. He showed so much regard for the people and so much respect for their ideas that he had his son taught to speak their language. And behold one of the results. The man whom a political opponent was paltry enough to taunt with not having a clod of land in the county, won the election for the rich man's son against the rich man's son. And how did he win it? By acting in such warm sympathy with the people that they could not but feel it, and by making use of their rich and euphonious tongue to call forth their enthusiasm and co-operation. Let me add that this bit of the education of a young laird has proved a title and an inheritance more glorious and more lasting than if he had been left with twice the estate which his father lost him; and when estates, as such, are no more, and when the world will have forgotten that the Campbells ever held a clod of land in Islay or in Kintyre, the title and the honour of having edited *The West Highland Tales* and *Leabhar-na-Feinne* will live in better form than those titles which are written on parchment, and those honours which are emblazoned on the most imposing escutcheons. But let me tell landlords and factors that there is a still higher honour and title. There was in the City Hall of Glasgow, on the night of the 30th October 1878, a gathering of Islay men and women, whose hearts were overflowing with the most loyal and loving feelings towards that landless votary of Gaelic lore; and Sir Kenneth Mackenzie will remember that night's demonstration with pride all the days of his life. And few men are likely to appreciate such a thing as this better than Sir Kenneth, because his own father pursued a somewhat similar course; and his uncle, Dr Mackenzie of Eileanach, in the same spirit, always regretted that expectant landlords were not educated among their people, and interested and instructed so as to be able to promote the good of the people intrusted to their care. I am not forgetting that the worthy doctor was at one time at variance with me on the subject of education in Gaelic, but I know that soon after the

GLASGOW.

John Murdoch.

discovery of this variance he presided at the best gathering ever the Gaelic Society of Inverness had, and ever afterwards co-operated with me in promoting the education of the people in the spirit of the race, on the lines of the old lore, and by means of the Gaelic language. A leading thought in this work was this—the language and lore of the Highlanders being treated with despite, has tended to crush their self-respect, and repress that self-reliance without which no people can advance. When a man was convinced that his language was a barbarism, his lore as filthy rags, and that the only thing good about him—his land—was, because of his general worthlessness, to go to the man of another race and another tongue, what remained to struggle or that he should struggle for. Every word that is said against the Highlander is really evidence against his so-called superiors. I will not dispute with the factor or the sheep farmer who charges some Highlanders with want of enterprise—with laziness, if you will. Everything has been done that could be done to paralyse their energies; and, in the light of what we know Highlanders to have done in every part of the world, if there are lazy men among them at home the blame to-day is to be laid at the door of those landlords, factors, sheep farmers, and others, who have done their utmost to stop the education of the race, and substitute for it the godless economies of "the greatest good of the smallest number." This idea of misusing the machinery of education for purposes which are adverse to the people and to the strength of the nation has such a hold in the country that it is entitled to rank among the foremost grievances. It is a systematic attempt, carried out with the public money, to distort and debase the minds of the people, and have the schoolmaster as the co-labourer with the factor and the ground officer in destroying all chance of the people ever raising their heads in their own country. The first utterance of Captain Orde, now Sir John, when I went to him some years ago to learn his side of the story which I had heard from the people, was—"I hope the educational machinery which we are setting up will rid us of a number of these people." I expressed my surprise at the sentiment, saying I thought he was going to say that he hoped the educational machinery would have the effect of fitting the people for turning the land and other resources to better account. And when I suggested the teaching of the first principles of agriculture, and of having a popular class-book on the subject in the schools, he was honest enough to confess that such ideas had never entered his head. The subject of education is too important to be passed over, as it seems to have been at all the sittings of the Commission, and I prefer bringing it in thus, particularly while dealing with an estate on which it is avowed that education is used as a centrifugal force to rid the country of its greatest wealth. Instead of this, it surely requires little more than to be said, that in school the children should be taught to love their parents, their homes, their country, instead of to fly from them as soon as they could know enough of other tongues and lands. They should be begun where the bards and the *seanachaidh* ended; they should not be taught to go counter to all the lore of the race; and among the more material branches of education should be such instruction as would not only help them to know all about the plants and birds and beasts in which their country is interested, but would interest them, in the cultivation of the soil, in the growth of plants, and in the rearing of cattle and sheep and hens. When the poor children are taught to think clerical work and all that sort of thing superior to husbandry, and when nothing is done to awaken the interest which all who have gone about the work of the field and the

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

John
Murdoch.

LANARK.
—
GLASGOW.
—
John
Murdoch.

' garden from a proper starting-point have felt, we have no right to expect
 ' good husbandry anywhere; and I have no hesitation in placing the sin
 ' of bad farming in the Highlands at the doors of the School Boards as
 ' well as of the factors and proprietors. It is well worthy of remark here
 ' —the smallness of the number of teachers who have shown any sympathy
 ' with the poor crofters in connection with the Royal Commission's inquiry.
 ' Everything is done to pervert the agency, and to withdraw the teachers
 ' from the circle to which their pupils belong. And thus education
 ' and its agents are to a large extent as if they were alien forces in the
 ' country. They do not prepare the children for home duties and useful-
 ' ness, but for foreign service. Education in the Highlands should be
 ' racy of the soil, and it should do all that is possible to preserve the
 ' sentiment of the race, and preserve the high tone which we find in the
 ' ancient lore; and foremost among the class-books should be the poems
 ' of Ossian, of Donnacha Ban; and, once-a-week at least, they should
 ' have a course from the new edition of Mackintosh's *Gaelic Proverbs*.
 ' Thus would I have them to *lean gu duth ri clu do shinnse*. But even
 ' Mr Ramsay had not patience to wait for the effect on the tenants of Oa
 ' of this perverting education. He had recourse to the expedient which
 ' we heard of last April as having been adopted in the Ross of Mull. As
 ' the time approached when the laird wished the people to leave, his factor
 ' went among them telling them that it would be better for themselves
 ' not to offend the laird by refusing to sign a promise that they would go
 ' when the time came. Numbers of them signed, thinking that it was
 ' only a form, and that they would get their lands as heretofore. The
 ' effect is what I have stated. But even this gentle pressure did not in
 ' all cases succeed. *Nial a Bhuachaille mhoir*, taking advantage of the
 ' failure of the sheriff-officer to serve the legal notice on him in time,
 ' refused to go, and he would not go even at the end of twelve months
 ' until force was applied. This was done, and, as if impelled by some
 ' blind power behind him, the great educationist of Kildalton placed him-
 ' self so far in the same category with the Sellars and the Gunns of
 ' Sutherlandshire, that, as soon as Neil was out, the place was set on fire,
 ' so that the rooks could not return to nest. In 1821 the village of Port
 ' Ellen was projected, and 130 houses were built on the promises of 57
 ' years' leases; two-acre lots in case of one story houses and four acres
 ' for two-story houses, together with peat mosses and grazing for cows.
 ' Port Charlotte started in 1828, and eighty houses were built on similar
 ' expectations. Before giving an idea of their present condition, I will
 ' direct attention to what the fact of the erection of the villages demon-
 ' strates with regard to the condition of the population when it was twice
 ' what it is now. In these two villages there were 210 houses erected in
 ' a very few years, and if we estimate them over head at only £80 apiece,
 ' we have £16,800. I put the question repeatedly when in the island—
 ' Could that amount be raised to-day for such a purpose in the two
 ' parishes which contained them? The answer was that it could not, and
 ' I am sure it was correct. If to these we add the curious facts of which
 ' I happen to have a record for more than thirty years, that in 1847 there
 ' was a loan by Islay people to one gentleman of £20,460, and that, it is
 ' worth while saying without any security, we have a clear capital disengaged
 ' from business of £37,000. Not one penny of this loan was from
 ' the distillers. It is true that one of the houses was built by a gentleman
 ' who erected a distillery with money taken out of a farm. But the
 ' matter of the villages is more instructive than that. The most of the
 ' 210 houses were built without money by small farmers, joiners, masons,

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

John
Murdoch.

weavers, shoemakers, &c. They are a monument of the magic of property spoken of by Arthur Young. These people jumped at the prospect of having a permanent hold of even two to four acres of land that they could call their own; and they left us proof to demonstration of what can be done with next to no capital, when there is a fair prospect of fruition before the workers. You will ask how on earth they could do such things without capital. First, they could do it all the better when the people were numerous in the island, and when 60 per cent. of them at least were of the farming class, and when even the cottars were possessed of some stock and had access to some land; and where the people are, as now in Lewis, in battalions, we see similar work in hand. The mason built for the joiner, and *vice versa*, and both built for the slater; and, meanwhile, numbers of them went to the homes of their parents nightly or weekly, as the case might be, and got their share of what was going. Self-reliance, self-sacrifice, hope, co-operation, on the part of 210 persons without capital produced what would to-day be worth more than £22,000 of property in these two villages. This is my matter-of-fact answer to much of the speculation as to how the landless people are to stock the land and provide houses when the chance is given them. As to the money value of the houses, it is a fact that in Port Ellen numbers of them were sold, and with the ready cash the vendors emigrated. Here then were 210 families with a house each, a lot of ground, a field for grazing a cow or two, and access to a peat moss free of charge. The uses which I have made of these facts are in no way affected by the opinion, in which I quite concur, that it was a mistake to build those villages at all. It would have been quite different if the houses now in ruins in Port Ellen had been built in the middle of suitable lots on long leases on the small patches laid out by nature for the purpose to the north of the village. Whatever the villagers might have done, had the population gone on increasing, the villages could not but decay and go to ruin as the surrounding population lost possession of the land and left the country. The time before last that I was in Port Ellen I counted thirty houses utterly unfit for occupation, and at the present moment, out of the 130 village cottars, there are only 14 who have lots, the possessions of the rest having been consolidated into parks and farms for a few persons. Bad and all as the county is, offers have been made to repair the houses; but the proprietor, Mr Ramsay, refuses leases, and the cancer eats its way into the wretched framework of the village. And so bad are the houses in every way that the wonder is that one-third of them are not deserted. Some of the poor people have been praying to be allowed more room; but they have been refused; and, not long ago, fever broke out in a house in which two families occupied one room apiece. One of these consisted of six members and the other of ten. Flora Logan in the one room and James Mackintosh in the other—the two bread-winners among the sixteen—were carried off. Eight years ago things were so bad that the schoolhouse had to be closed repeatedly in consequence of the breaking out of epidemics. H.M. Inspector of schools, the late Mr Donald Ross, was constrained to report upon the insanitary state of the place to the Education Department, and lay the blame at the feet of the great educationist, Mr Ramsay. The matter was all the more awkward that Mr Ramsay was one of the Commissioners of Education at the time, and all the less creditable to him that he actually denied some of the statements made, and tried to run Mr Ross down as meddling in an affair with which he had nothing to do. The best proof, however, of the accuracy of Mr Ross's report, and the best thing that can be said of

LANARK. ' Mr Ramsay in connection with the matter is that, when the villagers got
' up a subscription to remedy some of the evils complained of, he contributed one-half of the entire amount required. This whole affair shed a
' strange light on Mr Ramsay's claim to be regarded as a patron of education. Let me add that these villages are dependent upon such employment as they can get at the distilleries and on the few farms about, and
' that they have to travel three, four, five, and even eight miles a day in going to and coming from their work. A few years ago Port Charlotte
' was about as bad as Port Ellen is now, but I gladly report an improvement; and I have little doubt that if the fear of the factor would allow the villagers to approach Mr Morrison, the proprietor, things would be still further improved. Five years ago there was a general complaint of want of milk. I urged the villagers to petition Mr Morrison on the subject, and now I am told that by simply letting them have among them some land previously held by the distiller, they have among them sixty milch cows, and some yeld beasts in a hill and a glen beyond. I cannot help mentioning that the improvement in the village from this, and from the regranting of fourteen lots, of about four acres apiece, to as many of the inhabitants, was so marked, that I had fresh confirmation of the opinion, that the redress of many of the people's grievances is a much easier matter than factors and sheep farmers would have us suppose, and is much more a matter of fair consideration for the people, and of deference to their views, than it is of spending money on them. As certainly as in times past the people have made wealth for the proprietors, with little to begin with but the capital of their strong arms and willing hearts, they will in the time to come make enough for themselves out of the land, if they have scope and a fair start. It is not for me to say what exact plan should be adopted for the redress of the grievances of the people of Islay; but unless there is a very great deterioration in what remains of a noble stock, they will soon recover themselves, and increase and multiply once more, if they are allowed an opportunity. The simple fact, that outside those poor villages there are only about 230 tenant farmers, tells a terrible tale. This gives an average of about 630 acres to each, 180 of them assumed to be arable. I have said very little about Bowmore, the principal village. The first grievance there is that the lots have been taken from the householders and given to augment larger farms and the like. The next in this connection is that, although the feuars were entitled to cut peats and to send their cows to grass at a low charge, now they cannot get nearly the grazing they require even at the exorbitant rates exacted, and they go to other men's lands to cut their peats, and then they have to pay the factor, not the tenant, for cutting up the ground. I do not say that Mr Morrison knows this, but there is the fact, as attested publicly by villagers and by the men on whose ground the peats were cut. A public as well as a local grievance is the want of a pier at which the steamer can take in and discharge cargo; and a similar complaint comes from the fishermen of Port Charlotte, who cannot launch or moor such boats as they require for their vocation. This matter will be better understood in connection with the complaints from Port-na-haven. It should be mentioned that with proper piers, and with such a numerous population as the island is capable of supporting, the fishing out from Port Charlotte would be of considerable importance, and would add materially to the prosperity of the village. Besides these things, the villagers are too poor to equip boats of the size and in the number required. There have been extensive and elaborate statements laid before the Commission in regard to the expenditure of large sums of

' money by proprietors in improving their estates, accompanied in most of these cases by suggestions and even positive allegations as to the expenditure having gone to improve the condition of the crofters. With the exception of the cases of Sir Alexander Matheson and Lord Howard of Glossop, there is not one instance in which the above allegations are not strongly denied. In most of the cases there has been a concomitant if not a consequent deterioration in the condition of the people as a whole. The expenditure in Sutherland, in Lewis, in the Long Island, in Ross of Mull, Iona, and Tiree, can not be shown to have done any good to the crofters. On the contrary, it has done them harm in many cases, in that it has helped others to add the crofts to their own farms. The expenditure, as has been seen, in Kilchiaran, went to induce a stranger to come in and take the land, and to make room for him the native tenants were removed and their holdings consolidated. And there is no evidence that the expenditure has been of profit to any one except to engineers, and superintendents, and persons like that. If there is one thing more likely than another in this connection it is that the most of the outlay is to be taken as the measure of the incompetency of the head managers of estates rather than of the good done to any one at all. The outlay of the Duke of Argyll is credited with a large increase of rent, but the great cloud of witnesses, the greater number of the population, complain of this as one of the causes of their sorrows. A landlord may play at ducks and drakes with his money, if he has it, but the law of the land enables him to recoup himself by simply raising rents, and that, as a rule, on those who have not benefited at all by the expenditure. Sir Alexander Matheson has laid out vast sums of money in improving land, but there is not undisputed evidence that the expenditure has been of great and general use to the humbler tenants, and no proof at all that it has been wisely laid out. No one has ever reported on the subject excepting those who have been interested in making the improvements appear to advantage. There is no end to the credit which rich men can get for their expenditure. What commendation was heaped by myself among others, in anticipation, on the Duke of Sutherland in connection with his doings at Shinness ! He had the *Times* at his command ; the *Scotsman* and the *Courier* were eager to praise him for what he was doing ; and even the *Highlander*, glad to have a good thing to say, actually led the chorus of praise. Still, admitting the genuine usefulness of the Ardross expenditure, I have no hesitation in saying that if much more encouragement had been given to the people, and more left to their own judgment, the good results would have been vastly greater. It is said that the rental of the estate has gone, year by year for a long time, in improvement. Mr Loch is reported to have said in the House of Commons, in 1845, that the entire rental of the Sutherland estate for twenty-two years, and £60,000 besides, had gone into those "improvements," by which he could obtain no credit for his chief, and for which the above was his best apology. No mere estate management could stand that ; and the most striking and superlatively excellent results (and not mere hypothesis) would be necessary to satisfy the common sense of mankind. But supposing now, that Sir Alexander Matheson, instead of expending all this money himself, had taken the tenants into his confidence, and given them, even conditionally, security of possession, and then remitted half the rent, on the distinct understanding that they improved their possessions, I have not the least doubt that the result would have been vastly superior to what has been secured. The crofters know their own circumstances better than any one else can know them, and they can oversee every penny of outlay. But even this

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LANARK. ' is only a consideration minor to that of the free exercise of their own
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GLASGOW. ' gifts by the tenants. No expenditure of mere money by an outsider,
John ' and no result on houses, fields, cattle, or even on the food or raiment of
Murdoch. ' the people, can compensate for the cramping effect upon them of their
being kept in leading-strings, and curbed and cowed as they are under
all but the very best landlords and factors. The first thing wanted in
the Highlands is the revival of the spirit of the people. The second, the
calling forth of their intelligence, common sense, and enterprise. The
third, definite legislative protection from interference with them by such
petty deputies of absentees and aliens as have kept them so long in a
state of slavish uncertainty and fear.

[ADJOURNED.]

GLASGOW, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1883.

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—*Present:*—

Lord NAPIER and ETTRICK, K.T., *Chairman.*
Sir KENNETH S. MACKENZIE, Bart.
DONALD CAMERON, Esq. of Lochiel, M.P.
C. FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Esq., M.P.
Sheriff NICOLSON, LL.D.
Professor MACKINNON, M.A.

JOHN MURDOCH—examination resumed.

44464. *The Chairman.*—A considerable part of your statement yesterday evening was devoted to an argument against the improvement of land by the rapid operation of capital on the part of proprietors, and by the statement of your view that land could be more profitably and successfully improved by the gradual agency of small tenants. Now, have you got any distinct scheme or project for the encouragement of land improvement by that agency?—I was going to hand in a plan which I prepared and published in 1850, with reference to the admirable estate of Islay that I gave an account of, and that was to lay it out in small portions and to sell it, giving the people time to become the owners of it in fee. That is the plan which was proposed and which numbers of people say to-day is the one that should have been adopted with regard to Islay. But at the same time, I would say that I had no argument against the use of capital. I simply say that capital has been expended with comparatively little good to the people, but that where the people got reasonable encouragement they did improve, and if they got the encouragement which they ought to have they would improve. But I want to say this, that I don't insist upon any definite scheme. What I do insist upon is full scope to be allowed to the people themselves by exercising their judgment, but to be instructed, if possible, to make a better use of the circumstances in which they live.

John
Murdoch.

44465. There are two questions—occupancy and purchase. My first question was, assuming the people were not to become proprietors of their lots, have you any distinct project respecting an improving lease, with provisions for compensation for improvements and security of occupancy, and so on?—No, I have not. I have no scheme, but I was going to give you a fact. In Orkney I was sorry you did not fall in with Colonel Balfour. Colonel Balfour told me himself five years ago that when he went into possession of his estate there were only about 500 or 600 acres under cultivation, and the people were very poor. He commenced a plan of operations, and at the time he was speaking to me he had 6000 acres under cultivation, and that mainly done by the tenants. The method in which that was done was this. When he saw a deserving man, whether he had land or not, he would offer him land. If the man said to him, 'I have no capital and I have no stock,' 'It does not matter,' he said, 'you have character,' and Colonel Balfour went to the bank with this man, and got a cash credit for him to a limited amount. If the man had too little land he said, 'Here is more land; I will give it to you on these conditions,' and the man went on. He added, that he had gone security for those tenants of his to the extent of £20,000 in those thirty years, and he had not lost £20 in that time. He added this to it—'My people came to know that character was capital. I knew my people and my

LANARK. ' people knew me, and they could trust me. The men whom I could encourage thus were men of character and men who could be trusted, and thus I operated morally upon the whole population, and they came to know that even prosperity in the present life was closely connected with excellence of character.'

Glasgow.
John Murdoch.

44466. That is a description of a very useful, and I daresay, paternal system, but I want to know whether the people had any security in the form of lease or security for compensation for the expenditure of capital and labour?—No, that part of the subject did not come up.

44467. With reference to the purchase of land, have you any distinct project for the purchase of land by the small class of tenants, the purchase of their own holdings or of other portions of land with Government assistance?—I have this project, I have not formulated it, except so far as I have it here, and that is not with Government aid, but when the question comes to be one of £1,200,000 being proposed to be expended in one year in removing 30,000 people, it naturally occurred to me that one-fourth part of that money would be much more advantageously expended in trying to obtain security of permanent possession to people at home in those lands that are now lying comparatively vacant, and that are always coming into the market.

44468. In connection with what you said about Islay, you gave two examples of considerable villages having been built by the people, as I understood it, on the promise of a long lease or receipt of a long lease; did the people get long leases?—Numbers of them got it,—a sufficient number to be fulfilment of a promise.

44469. What was the particular incentive or attraction which induced the people to lay their money out at these two spots?—The security that they were to be in the possession of the ground on a feu.

44470. But was there any particular attraction with reference to the labour market there,—facilities for fishing, facilities for mining, facilities for anything? Was it connected with the distilleries?—No, there was not a distillery at Port Charlotte when this began, but there was a good deal of fishing to be done, and there was a large population behind those villages in the country. I remember perfectly well when the farmers in the upper part of Islay used to go in autumn and bring home cart-loads of fish from Port-na-haven, and if the fishing business had prospered in Port Charlotte it would have been a great advantage to the people.

44471. Then the principal attraction which induced the people to lay out labour and capital on their own houses was the fishing?—No; the main thing was the security of tenure, and the other was the fishing.

44472. Well, do you think it is a desirable thing to encourage people to fix themselves and lay out their capital, build houses, and establish themselves, perhaps in great numbers, on small holdings in connection with so precarious a source of employment as fishing, considering that the fish have frequently left the spots at which they were once taken?—No. These people simply went there as a choice of evils, from want of security elsewhere, as I mentioned last night about Port Ellen itself. There is one of the most admirable districts for small fishing crofts between Port Ellen and Kildalton, where Mr Ramsay resides, that could be well imagined—little patches of land broken up by rocks and clumps of trees—that would have been admirable for these people, and, if that had been done, it would have been a model little community like Fortrose.

44473. What was the principal cause of the failure of these two villages?—The principal cause was the removal of the population behind them. The shopkeepers, shoemakers, and other tradesman had no employment. They depended upon—

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44474. A market that failed?—Yes.

44475. Can you tell me whether there was any subdivision of those little holdings? How long did those villages last?—They are in existence still. But as to prosperity I won't say exactly; I was out of the island at the time the greatest decay took place, and I came back and saw them in a ruinous condition.

44476. Did the people multiply on the ground?—I don't think they did materially.

44477. You don't think they suffered from subdivision?—No; what they suffered from really was consolidation. The lots were taken from them from some cause or other.

44478. In the case of people settling in that way on little possessions of their own, either by spontaneous purchase or by assistance from Government, do you think or not that an indivisible community should be created—I mean an area which could not be subdivided?—I daresay that would be advisable; but I think the common sense of the people, if they had scope to extend according to their own necessities, is quite sufficient to check subdivision. There has been no subdivision except from the pressure of the want of land. The subdivision is just the other side of the account of the clearing of the land; the consolidation causes the subdivision.

44479. With reference to the practice of purchasing the goodwill of the holding or existing improvements in the Ross of Mull, first upon the Duke of Argyll's estate, does that practice still exist in any degree to your knowledge?—I don't know if it is existing anywhere now.

44480. The incoming tenant does not pay the sitting tenant or flitting tenant anything for the value of houses or improvements?—I daresay there may be some places where they still pay for the timber or the like of that, but I don't remember any case of paying for the goodwill. I remember when it was the practice.

44481. How long is it since it was the practice?—Before I left Scotland first it was quite a common practice in Islay. The incoming tenant paid for the timber of the house.

44482. I don't refer to the timber, but for improvements and tenant right?—I am not aware of payment for improvements or tenant right. I heard of it in different parts of the country, but I have not of late years come upon any actual case except those I found in the Ross of Mull.

44483. But in the Ross of Mull, thirty or forty years ago was the practice recognised on the estate?—M'Cormack and several of those whose names are in the paper state distinctly that this was done with the cognisance of John Stewart, the factor.

44484. Then you think it was recognised. At what period was this practice extinguished, and how was it extinguished?—I cannot fix a date. I don't know when the last purchase was made, but simply the fact. I spoke to the men who had bought and the men who had sold.

44485. When the practice was extinguished do you know whether these rights were, as it were, bought up by the managers of the estate?—I was told by these people that they were not.

44486. On the other properties in the Ross of Mull and elsewhere, do you know at this moment any place where it is the practice for the incoming tenant to pay the arrears of the outgoing tenant, or to buy the goodwill or to pay for existing improvements?—I did not inquire into that.

44487. You don't know whether such a practice actually exists?—No, I do not. I will hand you in a copy of the plan I published, and while I am talking of it I will send you a report on the change that was effected in Prince Edward Island, and also Mr John Hamilton Dempster's leases.

LANARK.

Glasgow.

John
Murdoch.

44488. I want a copy particularly of the Dempster leases?—Yes. The leases were not uniform. The lease was adapted to the particular locality in which it was granted, and consequently you will be the better of having more than one. I happen to have two, but I notice one of them is *minus* a very important element, such as I referred to last night, namely, granting practical perpetuity of tenure to persons who improved, and who were not in existence at the time of the granting of the lease.

44489. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—In your paper you mentioned that some time previous to your first visit to Skye you had been in South Uist; at what period was that?—I think it was in 1875.

44490. What was the impression you formed of the Doctor Ban's character at that time?—My impression of him was such that I became quite an enthusiastic admirer of him.

44491. Did you find that the people there regarded his memory with esteem and almost with affection?—Any person who ever spoke to me about him spoke in that way; and I should like to mention that the only question that was ever raised to me with regard to the Doctor Ban was at the time we were finding fault with some of the doings of the present managers. A gentleman of Uist wrote a letter to me to print in the *Highlander* making unfavourable reflections upon the Doctor Ban, as if by way of relieving the existing administrators of the odium which attached to them, but so far from lending myself to that purpose I took the liberty of suppressing such a statement.

44492. And you think the people do really regard the doctor's memory with respect?—That was my impression.

44493. Had you opportunities of forming a proper opinion?—Well, I must tell you it was not easy forming a very perfect opinion of the people's views, because the people of Uist were in such a state of terror absolutely that I had difficulty in having a conversation with two of them together. One man was afraid that another man would see him in my company, and I never had a meeting in Uist except an exceptional one. I found a whole lot of people at Loch Boisdale, and talked to them there, and another meeting at Iochdar where they were repairing a fold, and I got in among them like a wolf, and we had a very pleasant conversation.

44494. You refer to the fact that you preceded us at several places with the view of rousing the people to a sense of their duty. You will not think it offensive if I ask you if you were sent?—I was sent by the federation of Celtic societies.

44495. You have had some connection, I think, with the leaders of, shall I call it the reform party, in Ireland?—I don't know whether you would call it a connection, but I have never hesitated to go with them or be with them or meet them where I had an opportunity, but there was never any engagement and never any league or membership or anything of that kind.

44496. You accompanied Mr Parnell in his tour in America?—I accompanied him part of the time. I went to Canada and America to canvas for the *Highlander*, and when I was ready to come home, in Toronto, I received a telegram from some of the Irish friends saying that Mr Parnell would be in Philadelphia on such a day, and asking 'will you "come"?'. I said I would, and when I got to Philadelphia my name was on the programme to appear on the platform along with the hero, and I did so.

44497. You had no connection with the Irish American party who are in such disrepute in this country?—Oh, no, no.

44498. You had no connection with O'Donovan Rossa?—No, just the

the opposite. I am obliged to you for mentioning that. It has afforded me an opportunity of throwing a bit of light upon what the *Scotsman* would like to make a very dark passage in my history. When I went to America the second time I knew that O'Donovan Rossa was a sort of scare in this country, and I wrote back that they need not be afraid of O'Donovan Rossa, because he was a man who had no repute even among the Irish. That was the impression I had of him, and his boasting and threatening I regarded simply as a method of obtaining funds. In fact, he had not the funds to do the things he said he was going to do. Some kind friends sent this paragraph to O'Donovan Rossa, and you may imagine the result. O'Donovan Rossa and Pat Crow, who, I suppose, was the only follower O'Donovan Rossa had in America, got up a story not exactly against me, but they dragged me into it, that certain funds which were in charge of other persons who had also denounced them, had got into my possession, and then the *Scotsman* got hold of this, and made use of it to show that I actually did this skirmishing work of blowing up ships and houses, whereas it was an accusation partially against them, and partially against me of my not having done it.

44499. You had no share of O'Donovan Rossa's funds?—Oh, no.

44500. Yet you do share the opinions of the Irish party against landlords, do you not?—I share the opinion of the Irish party; I say that landlordism and factorism are a great curse to Ireland.

44501. You would like to do away with landlordism?—Decidedly.

44502. And in the Highlands as well as in Ireland?—Decidedly.

44503. And in the course of rousing the people I presume you have given vent to your opinions on this subject?—I have not done much of that. I told them what the Bible said about the land. My attention was directed mainly to themselves, to get the people to give expression to their own opinions. I told you what my own idea was, but the practical thing I say is this, to give the people a fair opportunity of expressing and exercising their own convictions. Things will come all right according as you allow the force of the public opinion of the country to bear upon the legislature of the country.

44504. Have you formed any definite plan as to the proper means of getting rid of landlords?—The plan I would adopt is this. As estates become vacant and get into the market, let us be men enough to buy them; and if that had been done in time there would have been plenty of land in Scotland in possession of the people to accommodate all the rural population of Scotland. I have a pretty good idea of the number of estates which have been sold within a comparatively short time.

44505. You would buy them with national funds?—Well, I don't know how that would be. I am not very fond of getting national funds. There will be a method found when we are intelligent enough for it. I am not very definite on that subject.

44506. You don't know where the purchase money is to be found?—I am not very definite on that subject, but I have no doubt it could be found.

44507. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You are a native of Islay?—No, I am a native of the north country. My father was one of the aliens who were introduced into Islay.

44508. But you have a great attachment to that country?—Yes, I feel myself as if I were an Islay man.

44509. You have been in Her Majesty's service for a considerable period of your life?—Yes, thirty-four years.

44510. In the excise department?—Yes.

44511. And have retired upon a pension?—Yes.

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44512. I understand that, for a long period, your attention has been directed to the state of the Highlands, and your Highland countrymen in especial?—Yes.

Glasgow.
John Murdoch.

44513. How many years is it since you first began to devote closer attention than formerly to this subject?—I began in reality in 1843, but I was in England at the time, and when I came back to Scotland the late Archibald Sinclair and the late William Livingstone, and the late Captain Donald Campbell, and a number of men of that kind, were always moving, and thinking, and writing on the subject. That would be about 1847.

44514. But of late years did you find matters pressing themselves so much on you that you resolved to start a newspaper in the interest of the Highlanders?—I had the project of the newspaper in my head as far back as 1851.

44515. And, in point of fact, you did start a newspaper devoted to the interest of the Highlanders and of the Gaelic language?—Yes.

44516. So your opinions upon the matters that are now so much discussed are not those of yesterday?—Oh, dear, no.

44517. Had you any pecuniary interest in any way whatever when you first took up this matter, or even to this day?—No.

44518. You can say you have entirely taken it up from the strong feelings you entertain upon the subject?—Yes. I had this selfish view of it, that it was my duty; that was all.

44519. You have been asked what you did with regard to your recent proceedings in the Hebrides; are you able to state that on all occasions when you did address the people there, you addressed them with moderation?—Yes, surely. I addressed them particularly to give forth their own ideas.

44520. I presume the issuing of this Commission, and the giving an opportunity to the Highlanders of stating their grievances, if any, was so very novel that it was thought by some friends that it was wise they should be instructed as to what the nature of the Commission was; was that so?—Yes, but what they wanted most was that they were in such fear—I must repeat that—were in such fear that they required to have that fear thrown off them if possible.

44521. You know the Highlands pretty well?—I think so.

44522. And you have probably watched with interest the proceedings of the Commission up to this date; what is your own opinion of the evidence given by the delegates in the different localities? Do you think they have been telling the truth?—I think so, decidedly. The only thing I find fault with them for—and it is not a fault exactly—is that they did not tell the whole truth. They had not time, and some of them were afraid to tell it.

44523. Are there a great many matters that have pressed upon the people that have not come out in the evidence?—I believe so, decidedly. But you have got hold of the main thing, namely, first that the opinions and views and feelings of the people have always been kept down; secondly, that they have too little land; thirdly, that there is plenty land for them to have, and that is what they want. These are the main things.

44524. You were here when Mr Grahame was examined yesterday?—Yes.

44525. I put a question to him whether he thought there was a considerable quantity of land in the Highlands capable of reclamation, and he said he did not know; is that consistent with your knowledge?—In the islands of South Uist, Barra, and Benbecula, along the west side, there are no fewer than thirteen big farms. One of these has been vacant even since the kindly John Gordon and the kindly Lady Cathcart began

their schemes. That is Ormicleit; and I said over and over again—'Here is an opportunity for extending the lots of the people.' Instead of that, it was taken up by the factor.

44526. Do you think it unreasonable, so long as people themselves see there are such lands, that they should have a disinclination to emigrate?—The people are reasonable in objecting to such a thing.

44527. Supposing the time should come when all these lands that could be profitably reclaimed are filled up, I presume that you and others who hold views like yours would have no objection to emigration?—None whatever; and I would hold the people always free to go. The rule is that when people have had an opportunity of cultivating enterprise at home they are most likely to exercise the enterprise of going abroad. The fact is, if they get on at home, they will be all the more ready to hive off.

44528. In some places in the islands there is, I presume, a congestion of the population?—Yes.

44529. If the people were relieved by migration and otherwise, do you think, seeing the miseries that subdivision has brought upon them, they would allow subdivision themselves hereafter?—I don't think it. I take it as a fundamental fact that the subdivision has been forced upon them by the consolidation upon the other side. That is their universal complaint. These people had the instinct of acquisitiveness like other people, and the Highlander will choose more land rather than less, like everybody else.

44530. Going back to Islay, the condition of the whole island of Islay is something like this, is it not, that the population has very much decreased, the rental has very much increased, but there remains a considerable deal of poverty; is that the state of matters?—Yes, there is far more actual poverty in Islay to-day with 7500 people than there was when there were 15,000.

44531. There are three large estates, I believe, in Islay?—Four or five. Mr Morrison's, Mr Ramsay's, Mr Finlay's, and then there was the Sunderland estate, which is now divided into three.

44532. Have the people been removed from all those estates, or has the operation of removal been greater upon one than upon another?—The best lands, of course, have always been most cleared.

44533. Then I ask whether the removals of the people have been general over all the estates, or have there been more removals in proportion from one of the estates?—There have been more from Mr Morrison's and Mr Ramsay's and from Mr Finlay's than from the others. But I must tell you that the island was under trustees for a number of years—I am not sure how many, but possibly twenty,—under the same trustees who had charge of Lord Macdonald's property for so long, and during whose administration numbers of those removals took place on the Macdonald estates, of which you could not get a very clear account during your visit. I know that Brown and Pearson were trustees, and Webster was factor under them, and during that administration there was a fearful clearing of the country.

44534. That was before the island was sold?—Yes.

44535. And you say the same people were instrumental in clearing Skye?—Yes.

44536. At all events it was done under their administration?—It was done while they were in charge. So I was told by Mr Mackinnon of Strath. I was pointed out stretches of country in Skye that had been cleared during their administration.

44537. Does not the reduction of the population in country localities have a most prejudicial effect upon trade and commerce within that dis-

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GLASGOW.

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LANARK. strict?—Oh, yes. You can simply imagine the one little locality I mentioned, where there were two hundred and twenty-seven families, and now there are only nine.

GLASGOW. — John Murdoch. 44538. That is because they are cleared away?—Cleared away. There was a good, sturdy, peasant population. Will you allow me to refer to the emigration business, with regard to the probability of the Government getting back the million and a quarter of money that would be advanced for removing the people? I was in Ontario, the best province in Canada, and the indebtedness of the settlers there is an enormous fact. They went away without capital, a great many of them, and they struggled through, getting land, of course, and building houses, and so on, and they have plenty to eat and drink and to put on, but great numbers of them are heavily in debt. Money lending goes on there from Britain, and I need not say any more about that. So striking is this, and such is the effect of this indebtedness and of the ambition to go to the north-west, that I found thousands of farms to let with steadings, crops in the ground, stock, and everything. I suggested to a friend of mine in Toronto to open a book and an agency for the disposing of these farms to people in this country. In a very few weeks he had thousands of them in his books. That is the place to which to send the big sheep farmers, and leave the land clear for the people at home; but to send the people away again, as was done before, is to subject honest citizens to treatment which is only applicable to downright criminals, because the penal servitude which those people went through that I saw myself in Canada was such as to make the flesh creep when you think of consigning any appreciable number of people to the same ordeal.

HUGH MACKAY, Merchant, Greenock (60)—examined.

Hugh Mackay. 44539. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement to make with reference to the recruitment of the 93rd (Sutherland) Highlanders?—Yes.

44540. Will you read it?—It is an extract from a speech delivered by Mr A. M'Leod in Aberdeen on 12th December 1843.—‘I now beg leave to correct a mis-statement in Mr Hugh Miller's pamphlet, *Sutherland as it was and is*. It is very strange that such an excellent scholar and gentleman as Mr Miller could make such a gross mis-statement, as that the 93rd regiment come down to the number of five hundred or six hundred to Dunrobin Castle to volunteer their services. This was not the case; but it was not that gentleman's voluntary mistake; he was misinformed by factors and others under the name of respectable, who were concerned in the matter, and none but those respectable gentry in that quarter are capable of giving false statements, as I stated to some of those factors at their own tables last year. The real facts connected with the raising of that regiment are as follows:—“The 93rd never was a Fencible regiment, more than I am a Fencible regiment. The fencible regiment alluded to was disbanded in the beginning of March 1799, and they were also forcibly enlisted. But the general was sent to every parish, and called every tenant with their sons to the parish minister's parlour, where they were met by the Countess's factor with his rental book on the table, and every tenant who would not give one of his sons to the general had his name scored out of the rental book. This general got in this way in Sutherlandshire about 500 young men, thus forcibly enlisted rather than see their parents and relatives reduced to beggary, so the 93rd was embodied in the latter end of March 1800. But I never knew a father

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Hugh
Mackay.

' who consented to give his son to the army for his land, but the sons themselves, rather than see their parents and relatives, as I have already stated, go to ruin, enlisted, having been promised that the leases were to endure for ever. But, besides the clearing system in 1807, their houses were burned about their ears. In the year 1816, when Napoleon, late emperor of France, was secured prisoner in St Helena, another clearing took place, and several thousands from the county of Sutherland were forced into exile, and none of those soldiers on return to their native county, where so high promises were held out to them, found their parents and relatives they so fondly expected to meet, neither would they get one foot of land whereon to rest their weary limbs; so much for the boasted promises of nobility. It may be said that it was too simple of this loyal people to leave security of this kind to chance. But it is to be recollect that the people of whom we speak consider it a point of honour to place unsuspected confidence in their chief, if needing security of their rights to be maintained on the soil which their own and their forefather's sword had won and defended. But what shall we say of the house of Sutherland coming forward and taking advantage of the unguarded state in which the honourable feeling of this loyal people had left their dearest rights, to expel them from the fields, mountains, and houses of their forefathers, convert their very virtues into instruments of their destruction, turning their confidence in the honour of the house of Sutherland to their ruin; what shall we say too of the Government which could lend the sanction of its name and support of its power to the performance of such a deed as the sweeping away of a people that stood so high in the estimation of those who were best able to judge both of their civil and military worth?" The result of land monopoly throughout the Islands and Highlands of Scotland is not altogether confined to the crofter population of the country; that is too narrow a view to take; it affects the nation in a great variety of ways. It immediately affects the trade of a country, to have its resources locked up under stringent laws from being developed and utilised by the inhabitants to their own benefit and the general good of the country. When this inquiry that is so thoroughly and exhaustively compiled will be analysed, we expect the Government in their wisdom to find sufficient ground to warrant them, under any circumstances in which the land may be tied up in certain individuals, to make such alterations in the law as will relieve the land from any trammel that may be a hindrance to the development of the resources of the country and productive power of its soil. Keeping the best of the lands of this country a dwellingless waste, on the plea that few can derive a larger income from a wilderness, is a system, as it seems to me, that cannot be justified on any moral principle, short-sighted as the policy may be. River fishing, game, the land and its proper and legitimate use, are of the utmost importance to the nation, therefore it is the most important duty the nation can do for itself to press on the Government for a speedy and satisfactory settlement of these burning questions. It is universally admitted that all lands let for game preserves are virtually lost to the country—in fact, it would have been better to have it an ocean. Therefore, as a matter of public policy, I hold that it is competent for the Legislature to interfere and say in future that no lands in this country capable of cultivation, cattle or sheep farming, shall be let for game preserves, as it has a tendency to great evil and discontentment.'

44541. *Professor Mackinnon.*—Is there any other point on which you wish to speak?—Nothing more.

44542. It is all in the paper?—It is all in the paper here. It is an extract from a speech delivered by a pensioner who had enlisted in the

LANARK. 93rd, against Hugh Miller's pamphlet in 1843. He had the greatest respect for that gentleman, but he knew the source from which he got his information.

Hugh Mackay. 44543. This pensioner was a Sutherland man?—He was an Assynt man who enlisted in the 93rd.

44544. Under the conditions he describes himself?—Yes.

44545. He was one of the people who considered themselves defrauded?—Yes, he was one of the people who enlisted under these engagements at the time. I remember of seeing the man at different times. He was just harrassed out of his country when he was trying to speak of it, so much so that on one occasion when he happened to be at Eddrachilles seeing a friend at the time his pension fell due, the parish minister, who was drawing the pension money, returned it back to London. You know what it is when a pensioner's money is returned. He is considered a dead man. He was obliged to go to London and represent himself as a living soul before he got his pension, and that was done by factors and people in Sutherland.

44546. He had to go the whole way to London?—Yes, only to show he was a living man, before he got his pension.

44547. I suppose the feeling has been universal in the county all along that this transaction which is described here was an actual *bona fide* transaction?—Yes, that is the clear opinion.

44548. And you got this direct testimony to it from a party to it?—Yes.

44549. You remember the man yourself?—I remember seeing the man himself at times.

44550. And he was, of course, quite a reliable man?—He was too much of a man.

44551. He was a man whose statement upon any subject whatever would be received?—Yes, he gave his speech in Aberdeen, and it was never contradicted. Surely if Hugh Miller could have contradicted him he would have done it. He was a living man in those days.

44552. The belief all along has been quite uncontradicted throughout the whole land?—Yes.

44553. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You have been examined already at Lochinver?—Yes.

JAMES WYLLIE, Chamberlain of Argyll, Inveraray (52)—examined.

James Wyllie. 44554. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement to make in connection with something that occurred yesterday?—Yes. ‘With reference to the ‘complaint of the Iona crofters regarding their rents being high, the small ‘farm of Culburgh was open for offer lately and was taken by Peter ‘M’Innes, one of the Iona crofters, at the old rent. Several of the crofters ‘in Iona offered the present rent for the croft vacated by M’Innes, and it ‘was let to Malcolm Cameron, who formerly possessed half a croft, his ‘half croft being let to Lachlan M’Lean, who held the other half at the ‘old rent. The Duke considers the true value of these crofts is the rent ‘which is offered for them when they became vacant. *Peat cutting.*—This ‘privilege had to be withdrawn from the Iona crofters owing to the mosses ‘getting exhausted, and to the repeated complaints of the Creich crofters ‘of the damage done to their pasture in consequence. For this reason ‘£2 was deducted from the rent of each crofter in Iona. Considering the ‘waste of time, labour, and risk connected with the making of these peats,

' I am of opinion that it is a desirable arrangement for the crofters to dis- LANARK.
 ' continue the system even had they received no abatement of rent. The
 ' Duke restored the ruins of Iona entirely at his own expense. Crofters
 ' were paid full wages for any work done by them. No portion of the James Wyllie.
 ' credit for restoring these ruins is due to the crofters. The cottars of
 ' Iona pay 30s. of rent for their cottages and a potato patch, being little
 ' more than 6d. per week, very different from the rate paid in towns for
 ' lodgings. They are purely cottars. The privilege of peat cutting, so
 ' long as this can be arranged, follows crofts only. The proprietor gives
 ' wood, lime, and sometimes straw in deserving cases for building and
 ' repairing houses. The Duke has given leases of three successive nineteen
 ' years' duration, to parties who have built houses of a permanent character
 ' in Ross of Mull and Iona. The Duke has expended £400 in fencing
 ' within the last three years in Iona. *Evidence of Mr John Murdoch.*—It
 ' is not correct that Lachlan M'Phail succeeded to his brother's croft. The
 ' Duke does not recognise succession to crofts. When his brother died
 ' Lauchlan M'Phail lodged a written offer for the croft of his own accord.
 ' Several others also offered, and the croft was let to M'Phail, the Duke
 ' considering that, taking everything into account, he had the best claim
 ' and would prove the most suitable tenant. As a member of the Parochial
 ' Board of Kilfinichen and Kilvicheon, I dispute the accuracy of the
 ' statement made regarding certain paupers and paupers' houses in Ross
 ' of Mull. Malcolm Ferguson, the delegate from Iona, gave evidence
 ' yesterday, in reply to a question put to him by Professor Mackinnon,
 ' that the poor law is administered in a very satisfactory manner in this
 ' parish.'

44555. The principal complaint, I think, in regard to Iona, resolves into a complaint of high rent. It came to that, I think?—Yes.

44556. Can you give me the rental of Iona at three different periods?—I cannot just now.

44557. There was a specific allegation that the rental of Iona was raised 50 per cent. in the year 1847; can you give any explanation of that?—No, that was before I had anything to do with the management of the property.

44558. But you might know something by tradition?—I have heard it was raised; that is all I can say.

44559. Can you suggest any reason why the rent was raised at a period which is certainly reputed to have been one of distress and penury?—In saying I have heard it was raised in 1847, I mean that I heard it yesterday. I don't know it of my own knowledge, and I don't know any reason for raising it then.

44560. With reference to the question of rent for those cottars' houses, we are told the houses with a small portion of ground are rented at 30s. per annum, and it is alleged that that rent is too high for so small a piece of ground and so poor a description of building. You state, I understand, that the Duke made some contribution to building that class of houses in wood, lime, and so on?—He does.

44561. I suppose those cottars houses are built very much together in the form of a village?—Yes.

44562. Are there any of those houses in their primitive condition, which have not been rebuilt by the co-operation of the landlord and tenant?—I am not aware of any.

44563. You think they have been all renewed?—I think they have been almost all renewed to a certain extent.

44564. But some have been more perfectly renewed than others?—Yes.

44565. Do they all pay the same rent?—All pay the same rent.

LANARK. 44566. When a house is renewed with the co-operation of the landlord.—
GLASGOW. can you give me any idea what proportion of the value of the house is contributed by the tenant, and what proportion by the landlord?—It
James Wyllie. depends very much on the size of the house. I could not give the information.

44567. What I want to arrive at is a clear conception of whether those houses are substantially built by the tenants or substantially built by the landlord?—Well, the materials form a very large proportion of the expenditure.

44568. What are the materials contributed?—Lime, wood, and sometimes straw for thatch.

44569. That is, they are built of stone and lime, or are they merely plastered?—Sometimes built of stone and lime, and sometimes pointed with lime.

44570. Then, as to the wood, is that wood for the roof of the house?—Yes, and for the internal partitions and windows and doors.

44571. Is the wood supplied in the manufactured state or in the rough state?—In the manufactured state.

44572. When a proprietor in the Highlands supplies the wood in the manufactured state, and lime for plastering or building, do you think that is half the value?—Yes, and fully more, with the straw for the thatching.

44573. I presume the houses are all thatched?—Yes.

44574. How do the people who have no land for crop get their thatch?—They either get it from some of the neighbouring farms or they use sprouts.

44575. Do they purchase it?—They will not purchase it if they get it on the neighbouring farms.

44576. They purchase the straw for thatching?—Yes.

44577. How often is the cottage thatched in that climate?—If it is well thatched with straw it ought to last for six or seven years fully.

44578. What do you suppose to be the value of the straw for the thatch of the house?—It is difficult to say. It depends on the size of the house, and the coating of straw you put on.

44579. We know pretty well what a but and ben house is in the Highlands; how much does it cost a man to buy straw to thatch his house?—To thatch it well requires possibly a ton.

44580. And what is the value of it?—£5 of late, more than that before it gets to Iona.

44581. Then if a tenant is obliged to purchase straw it would add about £1 a year to the cost of his house?—Well, it does not cost them that.

44582. Do you mean the farmers give them straw for nothing?—They use sprouts or rushes that are grown upon the ground.

44583. I understood you to say they are thatched with straw?—I mentioned that also. They have it both ways. It is thatched with straw when the proprietor provides the straw, but very few of them buy straw from the south for it.

44584. Have they liberty to cut rushes and hay upon the hill with which to thatch their houses?—I think the tenants give them liberty. I know they do.

44585. Then when they pay 30s. of rent, am I to understand that that is really not only all the rent for the soil, but rent and interest for the money which the Duke contributes to building the houses?—Yes; just a thatched cottage.

44586. What do you think such a cottage costs; is it worth £60?—The building of it?

44587. Altogether?—Not one-third.

44588. You mean the whole house is not worth more than £20?— LANARK.
Certainly not. I have got a good black house put up for less than £20
within the last two years.

44589. You call these black houses?—Yes.

44590. Well, in regard to these houses of which we are now speaking,
worth about £20, the Duke's contribution to the house would be about
£10?—I should think so. That is a rough estimate.

44591. I only want a rough estimate. Therefore the 30s. of rent is
the rent of the piece of ground *plus* the interest for £10 supplied by the
Duke of Argyll?—Yes.

44592. Then I want to know, in explanation of the rent, which appears
rather higher than the usual Highland rent, whether the situation of these
houses is really valuable to the people? Are they built in such a place as
to afford the people peculiar access to labour, or fishing, or something?—
Yes, there is plenty of fishing if they would take advantage of it.

44593. The goodwill of the situation is worth something?—Yes, I
should think so.

44594. Are there leases on the island?—Yes.

44595. Is the whole island held under leases?—No, the whole is not
held under leases.

44596. But are there not leases to the small agricultural tenants?—The
small farm of Culburgh is let on lease, and all the crofts are let under an
obligation that there will be no revaluation of the crofts for ten years.

44597. Is that in the regulations of the estate?—It is in the minute at
the end of the regulations.

44598. Is there in the regulations of the estate a stipulation to the effect
that the tenants shall have no claim to meliorations or no claim to com-
pensation for improvements?—So far as I recollect, there is nothing of
that kind.

44599. There is no clause of that kind?—Not so far as I recollect.

44600. Can you give me any information respecting the alleged practice
of purchasing the goodwill in the Ross of Mull? At what period did the
purchase of the goodwill or the value of the improvements in farms exist?—
I know nothing about that; I never heard of it before.

44601. You don't know when it existed, or how it was extinguished,
or when it was extinguished, or anything about it?—I never heard of it
before yesterday.

44602. You stated that £400 was expended in fencing in Iona in the
last year; what was the nature of the fencing?—Wire fencing.

44603. Was that expenditure for the benefit of the crofting class, or for
larger farms, or indifferently for all purposes?—There are only two small
farms besides the crofters. It was for the benefit of all.

44604. It was expended on the crofts as well as on the farms?—Yes.

44605. When wire fences are put up is any interest paid by the tenant?—
No interest is paid for that class of fencing that has been done during
the last two or three years.

44606. That is a gratuitous improvement?—Yes, a gratuitous improve-
ment.

44607. Do the crofters do anything in the way of fencing themselves?—
Nothing.

44608. No fencing between the different holdings or the different fields?
—They have to keep up the existing fences.

44609. What are these fences?—Generally rickle dykes.

44610. Low imperfect dykes?—Exactly.

44611. With reference to the alleged neglect of paupers and the in-
sufficient character of paupers' houses, extracts from Mr Murdoch's paper

—
GLASGOW.

James Wyllie.

LANARK. will be made and will be referred to the Board of Supervision or to the Parochial Board for explanation. Mr Murdoch described a particular building allocated to the use of paupers; do you know the building?—
GLASGOW. —
James Wyllie. Yes.

44612. He gave a description of it from personal inspection. What have you to say about the character of the building?—I have been in the building myself not very long ago, and it is very superior to most of the other cottages that paupers are lodged in in the Ross of Mull.

44613. Is it quite satisfactory to your own judgment?—Satisfactory if the paupers will only keep the houses clean. That, of course, we have no control over.

44614. Have any of these alleged distressing cases of neglect of aged people, and their miserable death, or the neglect of their bodies after death, come to your knowledge or have you ever heard of them?—Never.

44615. The cases will be noted, and will be referred to the Parochial Board for inquiry?—Yes. Your Lordship asked a question about compensation being in the heads of lease. In the more recent heads of lease there is a clause—I cannot give the exact words of it, but it is to this effect, that the tenant will have no claim for compensation for improvements unless there has been an arrangement made with the proprietor about the execution of these, and unless they have been approved. But that does not bar compensation for improvements which have been authorised and agreed upon.

44616. Is that in the case of specific leases, or is it inserted also in the general regulations of the estate?—I think it is inserted in the Mull regulations. It is one of the more recent clauses. I don't think it is in the Inveraray ones.

44617. *Sheriff Nicolson.* —It was stated yesterday that there were only four cottars in Iona; is that correct? What is the number of cottars in Iona?—There will be about eight or ten, I fancy.

44618. Do they all pay the same rent?—No, they don't. There is one man who, I see, signed that petition. He keeps a beer shop and a grocery shop, besides his dwelling house, and he has the ordinary patch of land, for which his rent is £6, I think.

44619. Was the statement correct that an eighth part of an acre is the amount of ground that these cottars have?—I daresay it is about that.

44620. For which they pay £1, 10s.?—10s., and £1 for the house.

44621. The houses which they built themselves?—I am not prepared to admit that at all.

44622. You were asked whether there was anything in the situation that was taken into consideration in fixing the rent, and you said there was?—Well, they are convenient for fishing.

44623. But has not every other Hebridean cottar the same convenience?—No, some cottages are inland, at some distance from the sea.

44624. Where do they get a market for their fish?—I cannot say as to that; I suppose lots of the people buy them. They get a market in the island.

44625. Are they able to live by their fishing?—Well, I think they might do a great deal more than they do.

44626. We might all do so. But are they able to make a living out of it?—I cannot say. I suppose they do to a certain extent at present.

44627. Then you don't consider £12 per acre a high rent, because it includes a house, the greater part of which the man himself built?—I don't admit the man did that. The Duke looks upon the houses as his.

44628. So they are, by the law of Scotland. Whatever is built on the

soil belongs to the owner of the soil?—If it is the eighth part of an acre, which I am not prepared to say, it is let at £4 an acre. LANARK.

44629. Is it fair to compare the rent of the poor cottar of Iona with the rent of a lodger in the city of Glasgow?—Well, I suppose they are James Wyllie, the same race of people.

44630. Is the value of the ground to be compared with that in Glasgow?—No, I don't suppose it is anything like the value of the ground in Glasgow.

44631. Perhaps you put some value upon the historic and religious interest of the soil?—Perhaps.

44632. *Professor Mackinnon.*—With reference to this tenant right, we heard of it in Tiree, and I think it turned up in evidence there that there was in the mind of the people a belief from old times that they had something which was saleable between themselves. Do you remember hearing anything of that sort?—Yes, I have heard of that, but it has never been recognised, so far as I know, by the proprietor.

44633. You have not made any inquiry into the matter?—No.

44634. You did not inquire whether the statement of Mr Murdoch, for example, can be substantiated, that it was done within the memory of living people?—I have had no opportunity yet of inquiring as to Mr Murdoch's statement.

44635. But you knew it existed in Tiree?—I did, and I have ascertained since then that the proprietor has never been a party to any such arrangement.

44636. But you did not endeavour to inquire whether it was a practice within the memory of living people, upon which these people held their ground?—No, I did not make any such inquiry, as I know it was never authorised or recognised by the proprietor.

44637. There is a distinct statement that the proprietor's representative for the time was a consenting party to one transaction?—I am not aware of it.

44638. Your inquiries did not go to the extent of finding out whether there was such a thing or not?—No, these things were all before my time.

44639. Yes, but I understand there were other so-called conditions under which crofters are said to have held their land that could be revived at any time—such as that of which there has been so much talk,—using pasture ground for drying sea-ware. That practice can be revived at any time?—I don't understand what you mean by being revived at any time.

44640. Is it not said to be a condition under which the crofts are held that the pasture ground of the crofters can be used by other parties at any time?—No, I think Mr Stanford mentioned decidedly not.

44641. That he did not use it, but that cottars could use it?—Well, they do it of their own accord.

44642. I think it is alleged that this practice that came down from old time and ceased for thirty or forty years, but has been recently revived?—I don't know about that.

44643. Don't you think the practice of tenant right, if it existed, might have been inquired into, and that it might also be known whether that was an old practice upon these estates which might with advantage to the tenant be revived?—Exactly, if it was ever recognised by the proprietor, but so far as I am aware it has never been.

44644. Perhaps the other was not recognised by the proprietor either?—As to that I cannot say.

44645. You are unable to give any information on the matter?—Yes.

44646. With respect to compensation, are you aware of any case where

GLASGOW.

LANARK. compensation has ever been paid for improvements?—Yes, there has been compensation paid to several crofters in Tiree, who have left their possessions in recent years—for houses.

GLASGOW. James Wyllie. 44647. But not for improvements upon the crofts?—Well, I don't recollect any particular case of any improvement done upon crofts that have become vacant of late.

44648. With respect to the fences that were set up in Iona in recent years, on which money was expended, I think you stated that was divided between the crofts and the farms?—Yes, it was partly on both.

44649. Will you tell me what the fence is?—It is a wire fence.

44650. Between the common pasture the crofters and the arable ground of the crofters?—Yes.

44651. Is the croft of the delegate who was here yesterday included in that?—Yes, I think he mentioned there was part of their ground fenced.

44652. If I remember, he made the statement that there was never any money expended on his croft?—There was a fence put up that they are interested in. I am not prepared to say where it is at present. I am not prepared to say it is between their arable ground and their pasture; but it is a fence they are interested in.

44653. But you know it is between the arable ground and the pasture of some crofters?—Of the west end crofters.

44654. It is not a march fence between them and a leased farm?—Well, there are both. In the west end there is both a fence between the arable land and pasture land of the crofters, and between the farm of Culburgh and them.

44655. A fence between the particular farm and the pasture ground of the crofters?—And the arable ground of crofters too.

44656. It is between the arable ground of the crofters and the pasture ground of the farmer?—And the pasture ground also of the crofters.

44657. So that it is a benefit to both parties?—Decidedly.

44658. With respect to the rents, I see you state that the Duke considers that the true value of these crofts is the rent which is offered for them as they become vacant—the price in the market of the day?—Yes.

44659. That is actually what determines the value of the croft?—Yes.

44660. Not so much per cow or so much per acre?—Of course, I make my own valuation besides that.

44661. But the true value of the croft is what can be got for it?—Yes.

44662. In a great part of the places we visited, both managers of estates and others declared there was such a run upon these crofts that there were people ready to give a rent beyond what the true value was. You would consider that the value is not what might be called the real value, but what could be got for it?—Yes, what they bring when they become vacant.

44663. In that case, over almost all the places we have gone, if advantage were taken of the desire that exists for crofts, they would be taken at simply ruinous rates?—I don't know it follows that Iona is the same as other places.

44664. Perhaps not at Iona, but at the other places?—I don't know about these other places.

44665. You have no difficulty in letting crofts when vacant?—None whatever. There were several crofters offering for M'Innes's croft when it became vacant.

44666. So that even there the full market value can be got for a croft?—Yes.

44667. And the full market value is taken for the croft?—Yes, I suppose so.

44668. One of the complaints of the Iona tenants was that there was

never a remission of rent; is that consistent with your own knowledge LANARK.
since you came to the estate?—Yes.

44669. Was an abatement of rent ever asked for in your time?—Yes, I GLASGOW.
think it was.

44670. In some bad years?—Yes, the Duke gave a considerable sum in
the way of making up the losses for those years. James Wyllie.

44671. Was there any abatement given in reply to the request of these
people?—Not a general abatement.

44672. The statement of the Iona people is that there was no abate-
ment of rent?—Not a general abatement. The Duke said he was quite
prepared to consider any case of real hardship and loss, which he did, and
there were large sums given.

44673. Were you aware of any cases where there was an abatement
given to the Iona people?—Yes, large sums in the way of compensation
for losses.

44674. An abatement of rent to a sitting tenant?—Yes. You can call
it an abatement of rent or anything you choose. It was given in the way
of compensation for losses.

44675. The statement in their own paper is that they are not aware
of any abatement of rent being made at all. Now they asked, I suppose,
for an abatement of rent; did they get an abatement of rent?—I have
answered you as well as I can.

44676. An actual abatement of rent is what I mean?—I have answered
you, and I cannot give any other answer than I have done. There was
no general abatement of rent given. The Duke ordered me to intimate
that he was quite prepared to consider special cases of loss or hardship,
and considerable sums were given to make up for losses.

44677. You see it is with respect to the statements of these tenants
that I am asking the question. They state they are not aware of a case
where there was an abatement of rent. Now, are you aware of a case
where there was an abatement of rent?—I cannot give you any other
answer than I have done, and I think it is plain enough.

44678. I would like very much to test the accuracy of the state-
ment. Can you tell me whether any money was ever returned to those
people when they paid their rents?—I decline to answer further. I have
given a plain enough answer to the question, but I must decline to give
any further answer, and I appeal to his Lordship.

44679. *The Chairman.*—Will you have the kindness and consideration
to repeat what you stated?—The answer I was directed to give was that
the Duke did not intend to give any general abatement of rent, but that
he was quite prepared to consider cases of especial hardship or loss, and
he would deal with those cases, which he did, and considerable sums were
given in the way of compensation for losses.

44680. In special cases?—Yes.

44681. *Professor Mackinnon.*—Can you tell me whether any money
was ever returned to those people when they paid their rents?—I cannot
say of my own knowledge whether those sums given for losses were
returned at the time they paid their rents or not.

44682. You are not aware of any crofter having his rent reduced of
late years?—Reduced in what way?

44683. By the proprietor?—For what reason?

44684. For any reason at all?—No.

44685. They were raised within your time?—Yes.

44686. But there was no case of any reduction of rent?—I don't
recollect of any at present, with the exception of £2 that was taken off the
Iona crofters recently for the loss of the privilege of peat cutting?

LANARK. 44687. I presume you don't call that a reduction of rent?—Well, it is a reduction from the last rent they paid.

GLASGOW. 44688. Is it not an exchange for a privilege they lost?—It is still a reduction of rent.

James Wyllie. 44689. Is it not rather £2 in exchange for a privilege lost?—Yes, but I may say they had no right to that privilege, because the Tiree people had the same privilege, and when they gave up peat cutting in the Ross of Mull no compensation was paid to them.

44690. Do you know how long this privilege was exercised?—No.

44691. Do you think it has been enjoyed from a long time back?—No, I don't think so.

44692. But you don't know how long it was exercised?—No.

44693. There was a gentleman here representing an outside company—people not resident on the estate at all—who stated that he got a reduction of rent?—That is not for land.

44694. You are not aware of any other case on the estate?—It was not for land he got the reduction of rent. It was for the sea-weed on the shores of Tiree, because no other person would give more for it, I suppose. That was the real value.

44695. That is the only case of reduction?—I cannot charge my memory.

44696. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—With regard to the fence which cost £400, put up in Iona, who was it that asked you to put it up?—There are several fences. There will be three or four fences altogether.

44697. Did the crofters ask you to do it?—Yes; the fences that are put up. There is one fence between the arable land and the grazing land of the crofters of the west end. They applied for that, and it is a very useful fence for them. Then there is a march fence between them and the farm of Culburgh.

44698. I observe, when you are asked questions as to what occurred prior to your own time, you generally are unwilling to give an answer. Now, I want to ask you this. Can you say positively that at no period whatever crofters were ordered to work and did work at the ruins of the Cathedral without payment?—I cannot speak of any period except during the restoration of the ruins, when they never worked free.

44699. That is exactly what the delegate stated?—But that is not what is stated in this morning's papers.

44700. I have not read the papers, but it was particularly stated they were paid for the recent operations?—Yes. I think you made the remark yesterday that people had been deceived, and that part of the credit was due to the crofters, and not entirely to the Duke, but I wish to do away with that impression.

44701. But supposing they had at a former period cleared away rubbish?—There was nothing done in the way of restoring the buildings previously.

44702. No operations at all?—No.

44703. How do you know that?—Any old ruin may have fallen down, and there may have been some rubbish taken away in that way, but nothing otherwise.

44704. The delegate himself stated that at a former period, when this six days' work was in operation, at times they were employed without payment about the ruins?—Not in the way of restoring the ruins.

44705. Now, are the people of Iona, Tiree, and the Ross of Mull generally well off and in good circumstances?—Yes, they appear to be so.

44706. Did you or did you not apply to the Mansion House Committee

and the Destitution Committee in Glasgow for aid for the people on your LANARK.
estates?—Not for the crofters.

44707. I said the people?—No, I did not personally apply.

GLASGOW.

44708. Had you not communication with Mr Nicol, the city chamberlain, on the subject?—I had several meetings with Mr Nicol. He asked James Wyllie
me to distribute the funds.

44709. But you never applied yourself for assistance?—No, not that I am aware of. I am not very sure about some of the cottars. Latterly he asked me to let him know if there was any real destitution among the cottars, which I promised to do, and possibly I may have written him about that, but certainly not of my own accord—not unless I was asked to do so.

44710. Do you recognise this letter which I am now going to read to you? ‘Chamberlain’s Office, Inveraray, 28th April 1883. In a letter received from Mr M’Diarmid two days ago he says—“I find as the season advances that there is a likelihood of there being some destitution among the poorer class of cottars. I have formed a small committee who are to inquire quietly into any cases of ‘real want.’ If it is found that much relief is given, hundreds will apply who really are not in want, so that we must be very cautious. I am thankful to say that a lot of seaweed has come on the shores lately, and if the present dry weather continues the poor can make a lot of kelp, which will be a great boon.” He then asks if he should represent the state of matters to you on getting the committee’s report, and I wrote him by this week’s post, saying that he ought to do so. I also requested him to send me a copy of the committee’s report, as Lord Colin has held out a hope that the London committee may give some assistance if necessary. As it may be well that each committee may be made aware of what the other does, perhaps you will kindly inform me what you do after receiving M’Diarmid’s report, and I will advise you as to any action by the London committee.—Yours very truly, J. WYLLIE. P.S.—I have requested M’Diarmid to communicate with you direct, as there is so little time to answer letters by the same week’s post.’—Yes; that is my letter. I was specially requested by Mr Nicol to let him know.

44711. Did you apply to the London committee directly?—No, I wrote to Lord Colin. He asked me also to let him know. He had been requested, in the same way, to let the London committee know.

44712. Was there a sum of £300 remitted to you by the London committee?—There was not.

44713. Is this a letter or part of a letter from you, dated Chamberlain’s Office, Inveraray, 30th April 1883:—‘I have only received authority from the Duke to relieve the necessities of the crofters in Mull and Tiree as regards seed potatoes and oats. The Lord Mayor of London remitted me on 2d inst. £200 for seed potatoes for crofters in Mull and Tiree and £50 for meal for cottars in Mull. He had, however, forwarded the former sum under a misapprehension, not being aware at the time that the Duke had arranged himself to relieve the necessities of the crofters in Mull and Tiree; and as requested I sent back the money (£200) to the Lord Mayor. The only sum I have therefore received from the Mansion House Fund is £50, which, as requested by the Lord Mayor, I have arranged to have distributed in meal to the cottars in Mull during the next few weeks, according to necessity.’—Yes.

44714. How do you explain that letter with your answer to me that you did not get any money from the London committee?—You asked me about £300. I did not get £300.

44715. You got £250?—I did.

LANARK. 44716. And you returned £200?—I was ordered to return £200, which I did.

GLASGOW. 44716*. What did you do with the £50?—The Lord Mayor gave me orders how to dispose of it, and it was disposed of in meal to the cottars on the Ross of Mull.

44717. I have a statement here. I will first take the case of the Island of Tiree—‘Paid to Mr M'Diarmid in cash by the Glasgow committee for oatmeal or Indian meal, £75, 15s. 9d.; and paid John Stewart, per Rev. Robert Blair, £27,—in all, £102, 15s. 9d.’?—I don't know anything about Tiree.

44717*. As regards Ross of Mull and Iona, did you receive £20 yourself?—I think so.

44718. Then there is ‘Mr Alexander Macgregor, Kinloch, £15; Mr Charles Macquarie, £20; value of potatoes consigned to C. Macquarie, £171, 14s. 2d.; value of seed oats consigned to Mr Macquarie, £11, 2s. 1d.); total, £237, 16s. 3d.’ Is that correct or not?—I don't know anything about that. I can only speak for myself, and I may explain that the £20 was sent to me, and I was asked as a favour to distribute it, not as the Duke's chamberlain, but personally to distribute it as a favour to the Glasgow committee.

44718*. Can it be said that the people of Tiree and in Iona and in the Ross of Mull were in a prosperous condition when money was being distributed among them in form of public charity?—There is no doubt there was want among the cottar class last winter to a certain extent.

44719. Am I justified in putting this question to you, and in putting it I don't wish to give any offence. Do you consider it a right thing for a proprietor to ask or permit the distribution of public charity to the people living upon his estate?—I don't think that is a question for me to answer in the circumstances.

44720. Have you any reason to doubt the correctness of a letter I am now proposing to read, from Mr M'Diarmid, Tiree, to the city chamberlain;—‘*Island House, Tiree, 7th May 1883.* I am in receipt of your ‘favour of 3d inst., and beg to state that at a meeting held on 2d. inst. of ‘the committee appointed by me for looking into any cases of distress ‘likely to exist among the cottars of Tiree, the names of sixty-six house-‘holders were approved of as being cases in need of some relief. I enclose ‘list of these. As you will observe, there are a number of widows and old ‘maids on the list. The men are chiefly old married men and bachelors. ‘There are very few, if any, able-bodied men on the list. The existing ‘distress is exceptional, and arises from the failure of the potato crop?’— That is all right.

44721. I will read you another letter from Mr M'Diarmid, addressed to the city chamberlain, Glasgow;—‘*Island House, Tiree, 21st May 1883.* I wish to bring under your notice that since writing you on 7th inst. a ‘number of the fishermen here have complained to me that so far the ling ‘fishing for the season is a failure. If the fishing does not improve—and ‘there is little prospect of that now, as the ling fishing season is nearly ‘over—these men will have to get some assistance, and that without ‘delay, as the merchants are refusing to give credit owing to the bad fish-‘ing. Between twenty and twenty-five of these men have complained, ‘and a large proportion have young families. It trust that you will be ‘able to send some assistance soon. I fully expected to hear from you ‘last week in answer to my letter of 7th inst.’—That is all right.

44722. When you came to be examined here you stated that you were formerly on the Breadalbane property?—Yes, I was factor there, and had principal charge of the estate.

44723. Can you tell me what the origin or root of the word 'chamber- LANARK.
' lain' is?—I don't think that is a question I have any right to answer. I —
think it is quite foreign to the present matter. — GLASGOW.

44724. *The Chairman.*—Well, yes, unless you do it voluntarily by way James Wyllie.
of informing Mr Fraser-Mackintosh?—I beg to decline. I think Mr
Fraser-Mackintosh knows it as well as I do.

44725. The question does not bear, I think, distinctly upon the state
of the cottars or crofters. If you object to answer it, I don't think you are
bound to do so?—Then I decline.

Rev. JOHN M'NEILL, Minister of the Free Church, Port-na-haven, Islay
(39)—examined.

44726. *The Chairman.*—Have you got a written statement to make?— Rev. John
Yes. Before I read the written statement, will you allow me to make
reference to two letters which I have got here, bearing on the delegates
who have come with me from Islay. The delegates are from two different
estates. Two are from the estate of Mr Morrison of Islay and three from
the estate of Mrs Baker of Liverpool. I wrote to Mr Morrison's factor
about the men from Mr Morrison's estate, and he says—'I can assure you
that no action will be taken against the delegates from Port Wemyss on
account of any evidence by them before the Commission in Glasgow on
the 20th. The other letter is from Mrs Baker, the proprietrix of Cladach
and Port-na-haven, to the following effect:—'I am favoured with your letter
'this morning. I distinctly refuse to bind myself by any such terms as
'your ask for. I hope your delegates are not losing their brave spirits,
'and beginning to show the white feather. They shall have all the credit
'of their bravery, and shall not give evidence under shelter of any promise
'of protection from me. Your representatives seem to be chosen from the
'worst specimens in the village'—they are here before you—but I
'should not like to put much faith in the Highlanders, as I am afraid
'they are a little treacherous.'

44727. Was this letter intended to be read here by the lady who wrote
it?—That is what I meant when I wrote to her. I asked such a promise,
and she distinctly refuses.

44728. Yes, but you might have stated the fact without reading the letter
—I mean not particularly with reference to the assurance, but with reference
to the character she gives of the delegates. Do you think the lady, when
she wrote the letter, wished and understood that you were to read the
letter aloud in so far as the character of the delegates is concerned? Do
you think the lady would like that?—I don't know that.

44729. Do you think she intended that letter to be read aloud in a
public assembly or not?—Well, she did not desire me not to read it.

44730. Perhaps she could not anticipate you would read it. However,
it is read now, and I cannot help it. I am bound to say I regret it was
read, because I think you could have communicated the fact. The only
important thing to us was that this lady refused to give any assurance. I
think you might have stated that fact without reading the letter, another
portion of which is apt to destroy the confidence or kindly feeling between
the lady and her tenants, and which she did not probably expect to be
read. You have now a written statement to make?—Yes.

44731. Will you be so good as to read it?—The area of Islay is about
500 square miles, its extreme length is 30 miles and its breadth is
nearly 25 miles.

LANARK.	1. Acreage,	. . . . .	150,000
—	2. Gross rental,	. . . . .	£38,498 13 9 ; rental in 1872, £30,076.
GLASGOW.	3. Public buildings not assessable,	. . . . .	302 10 0
Rev. John M'Neill.	4. Deduction of 5 per cent. 8 & 9 Vic. cap.	. . . . .	88,196 3 9 1,909 16 2
	5. Net amount,	. . . . .	£36,286 7 7, or a rental of 4s. 10d. per acre
	6. Population,	. . . . .	7500 = 20 acres per inhabitant, inclusive of proprietor and pauper.
	7. Families,	. . . . .	1500 = 100 acres to each family.
	8. Ratepayers,	. . . . .	750 = 200 acres for each ratepayer; 1300 ratepayers in 1873.

' The 750 ratepayers comprise the half of the families in the island, and consequently the 150,000 acres must be all nearly in their hands. ' The other 750 families or non-ratepayers include all whose rent for land is under £4; these represent generally the landless class, who are ' wretchedly poor. Further, taking the present agricultural rental of Islay at £36,000, and adopting the ordinary mode of computing rental from produce, say that the half of the farms are dairy farms, yielding ' an amount equal to three rents; and the other half pastoral farms ' yielding two rents, it will be thus found that the whole agricultural ' produce of the island amounts to £90,000, so that again this sum is ' in the hands of the half of the families in Islay, the favoured landed ' class. These statistics clearly prove that Islay is not over-populated, ' but contrariwise that there is in it enough of land and to spare for ' a population fully twice as large as its present number. There is therefore no necessity in reason nor in policy for the adoption of a compulsory ' scheme of emigration with reference to Islay. If there are centres of ' congested population in the island, they are entirely restricted to badly ' planned villages, the receptacles into which have been unwisely compressed ' the capriciously evicted crofters, the helpless remnants of emigrated ' families. The cruel process of eviction commenced in Islay in the year ' 1831, under the so-called mild administration of the Campbells, whose ' ancestor, Mr Daniel Campbell of Shawfield, bought it one hundred years ' before that for £6080, sold at £450,000. This silent system of depopulation and consequent deportation was vigorously prosecuted all over Islay during the decennium terminating at census 1841. During the currency of that period a few emigrant vessels left Lochindaal, on board ' one of these were packed off 402 souls. During this decade from 1831 ' to 1841, 1300 emigrants sadly departed from the fertile shores of green ' and grassy Islay. The beautiful glens and the sunny bens were ruthlessly ' denuded of over 1200 native peasantry during the decennium ending ' with 1851. The two successive census periods of 1861 and 1871 show ' the hitherto unprecedented decrease of 4176 in the rural population of Islay. The census of 1881 exhibits a further decrease of 613. Fifty ' years ago the population of the island was 14,992, now it is only 7526. ' The family dispersal policy, begun by the Campbells, was bitterly ' intensified under their trustees, and was consummately perpetuated under ' the succeeding landlords till within a recent date. The various agents ' and agencies that co-operated to produce these woeful results might form ' a patriotic subject of study. The parish of Kilchoman, which includes ' the parliamentary parish of Port-na-haven, is the finest district in Islay, ' and presents a pleasing aspect of arableness and agricultural enterprise. ' Sir Walter Scott, with intuitive appreciation of scenery, refers to the ' most conspicuous natural characteristic of the island in these words "the ' green Islay's fertile shore" and "Islay's verdant coast." This description holds eminently true of the parish of Kilchoman. Its acreage is ' 50,000, the most of which is arable land. The population in 1831 was

' 4822; in 1881, 2548; decrease 2274. This decrease is mainly attributable to the grouping together of moderately sized holdings into large farms, thus gradually converting extensive tracts of arable land into a waste howling wilderness, and consequently inhumanely depriving the well-to-do tenants of their ancestral possessions, and the contented cottars of labour and of their happy homes. As no schemes of useful steady employment were devised by the landowners to benefit the expelled crofters and the houseless homeless cottars, those of them who could afford it left the parish, and the dispirited surplus was drafted into unhealthy poverty-stricken villages, the Bethesdas of the landless and the afflicted, where with nothing to morally elevate them, but surrounded with much fitted to enervate and depress them, they live a cheerless, hopeless life. The only village industries are whisky distillation, a kind of unsteady work which has a most ruinous influence upon the community. Another prolific source of poverty and misery are the insanitary distillery taps, the village dramshops, to whose pernicious effects the villagers are constantly exposed. I wish the sanitary principles so clearly stated and so ably discussed by Dr Richardson and Dr Carpenter at the sanitary congress recently held in Glasgow could be practically applied to every parish in Islay. In the parish of Kilchoman, exclusive of the parliamentary parish of Port-na-haven, there are only fifty crofters whose rent is under £20 each. These probably pay from £3 to £6 each. These are generally in straitened circumstances, and their crofts are too highly rented. There are fifty-five tenants whose rent ranges from £20 to £200 each. These are in somewhat comfortable condition. There are three large sheep farms and many smaller ones. Port-na-haven is the designation given both to a village and to a portion of the parish of Kilchoman for parliamentary purposes. The population of this parish is 859. Its extent is about 4200 acres arable land and about 2300 acres pasture ground. There are four large sheep farms, the tenants of two of these are non-resident, and have large farms in the other parishes. They are represented each by a shepherd in the parish of Port-na-haven. About 3000 acres of the ground now under sheep was once arable land. There are four small farmers, whose rents range from £20 to £200. These are fairly well off. The rest is a mixed population of crofters and fishermen. Ten of these crofters have holdings averaging from nine to eighteen acres each. The remainder, the large majority of the population, occupy most inadequately small crofts from half an acre to four acres each of those who have land, but some of them have no land. The rent of these poor patches is too high, and has been increased during the currency of the last forty years in some cases 50 per cent. and in other cases over 100 per cent. While some of the large farmers were allowed abatements of rent, I am not aware that any of the poor crofters have got any reduction of their rent. This policy with reference to the latter class is one-sided, discouraging, and oppressive. The village of Port-na-haven was formed on exposed, bare, barren rocks in the year 1818 by Captain Walter Campbell of Sunderland, Islay. It contains a population of 361 souls. The original idea was to make it a fishing village, but practically it has been a haven of refuge for the migratory individuals of rural families who had been dispossessed of their homes. They were allowed to erect one-storied dwelling houses, consisting of one room and kitchen as a rule, on the following co-operative principle—site for house and small plot of ground for garden, annual rent 13s., the tenant to build house according to proprietor's plan, the tenant to furnish all the building material at his own expense, except the wood and slates, which were furnished by the proprietor at $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum during the currency

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GLASGOW.
Rev. Jonh M'Neill.

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Rev. John
M'Neill.

' of the lease, a period of ninety-nine years. The tenant at the same time
' was bound to keep the roof in sufficient repair at his own expense,
' besides paying $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. yearly on the outlay on roof, amounting
' to sums varying from 19s. and 27s. in the case of each tenant who
' agreed to build on this principle. It is very significant that when
' the people of those days were granted a site on this co-operative system a
' vessel with a cargo of wood was wrecked in the immediate vicinity of
' this village, and no person was allowed to buy a log of it save the
' superior, who secured it all, and gave the use of it to the tenants on the
' above most unreasonable terms. This roof money was so oppressive
' that some of the poorer tenants fell into arrears, and thereby lost their
' houses. Others felt it so burdensome that after paying it for thirty,
' forty, and fifty years they bought the roof. One tenant, who between
' himself and his father has been paying about 20s. roof money yearly for
' his house (with liberty to keep it in repairs) for sixty years, is to his
' great satisfaction to be relieved of this exorbitant tax after this year.
' The lady who now owns the village being led to understand how ridiculous
' and unjust this last case was, granted the craved-for relief to this poor
' tenant, who in roof money alone paid as much as would purchase twice
' over his dilapidated domicile. This village lies unhealthily low, exposed
' to floods afore and aft. 1. Householders without crofts twenty-two;
' twelve of these have neither croft, boat, cow, nor house of their own.
' They are all in deep poverty. 2. Householders with most inadequately
' small crofts fifty-three, in all about seventy-five families. There are
' about sixty-six and a half of these crofts, each averaging one and a
' quarter acre, with rents varying per acre from 15s. to 30s. The number
' of families who have cows is under twenty, and only a few of these have
' grazing for their cows on their own small patches of ground; and as there
' is no village common, the other fourteen or fifteen cows have to be grazed
' on another estate, viz., Mr Morrison's. The people who formerly could
' secure peats on their own lots have now to cut them on a neighbouring
' farm, each family paying annually for a bad and insufficient supply from
' 5s. to 10s. The superior gets this money, but the people at their own
' expense have to keep the peat ground from being flooded with water,
' because having been in some cases cut twice and thrice it is irregularly
' hollowed out, and much water lodges on it. The fishing, which has been
' a comparative failure for some years, cannot be prosecuted under existing
' conditions for more than four months in the year; and as there are
' neither public works, agricultural industries, nor any other local
' remunerative employment, the ill-used, able-bodied fishermen, to keep the
' wolf from the door, are compelled to seek work outside the island. Some
' go to sea, others go to centres of trade and commerce, such as Greenock
' and Glasgow. I know the islands well from the Butt of Lewis to the
' Rhinns of Islay, and independently of their earnings outside Islay, the
' villagers of Port-na-haven are the poorest class of fishing crofters ever I
' saw. Those of them who have neither crofts nor cows are constantly on
' the verge of starvation. As the landlords take little interest in them,
' were it not for their proximity to the Clyde shipbuilding yards, where
' they get work in winter, they would absolutely perish with hunger on a
' productive wealthy island. A district called Balmeanach, with a goodly
' number of comfortable and thriving crofters and cottars, was cleared out
' by Captain Walter Campbell, although none of the crofters were in
' arrears of rent. This township was added to a neighbouring farm, and
' the capriciously removed families sought shelter in the neighbouring
' villages. Remedies—More land, to all the fishermen who are anxious to
' have it, and are willing to pay a reasonable rent for it, as they are con-

' vinced this would benefit themselves and their families ; or from four to six acres for cropping purposes, and a common grazing ground capable of carrying a cow and follower for each family ; Balmeanach added to the village lots would nearly serve this puprose. Perpetuity of tenure ; they are at present tenants at will. Reduction of present rents in cases where they are too high ; this done by arbitration ; title-deeds to house property. Peat ground paid for according to the perches of it cut and kept drained by superior. The village of Port Wemyss, projected by Mr W. F. Campbell of Islay early in this century, has a population of 263 souls, or about fifty families. The houses were erected by the tenants at their own expense, slate roofed, and mostly consist of one room and kitchen, with plot of ground for garden. Annual rent for site of dwelling-house and garden, 15s. With very few exceptions, the tenants possess neither building leases nor title-deeds for their house property. They are fishermen. Thirty-eight have crofts, average two acres each ; rents, lowest 7s. 6d., highest 27s. per acre. There are twelve fishermen without lots. These are poorer than those who have a small piece of ground. Peats were free at first, because secured on village crofts which originally consisted mainly of peat moss. Now each family pays 5s. yearly for peat ground on a neighbouring farm. They do not grudge to pay this sum, on condition a proper road is made to the peat moss. When the season is wet the want of a proper road to this ground is felt to be a great drawback. About the half of the fifty families have no cows. The fisherman without lot or cow is very poor. There is a village common, designated characteristically Cladach dubh, mostly the bottom of used-up peat ground, a coarse, barren space, where the cows have to be hand-fed during the summer season, or else they give no milk. This park is even a help, as it keeps the cattle together while the lots are under crops. To have a cow and follower in Cladach dubh costs 28s. yearly. If all the families had each a cow and follower there during summer, if not otherwise fed, they would absolutely starve. There is a class of crofters who about thirty-two years ago got money advanced them for draining purposes at about £6 per cent. per annum, on condition that at the termination of twenty-one years the interest should cease ; but as it is now part and parcel of the rent, the crofters are still forced to pay it. There is another class of tenants who never received a farthing for reclaiming, draining, or improving their crofts, but who, with much persevering labour and personal inconvenience to themselves and to their families, and entirely at their own expense, converted boggy peat ground into arable land, yet these and others forty years ago, to their great dis' courage, had their rents raised by Mr William Webster, factor. In some cases this increase of rent was 50 per cent., in other cases over 100 per cent. This rise of rent when clapped on was not known to the crofters for two years, and then it had to be paid as arrears in addition to the original rent. These high rents they still pay. But the most of these grievances are of long standing, for the crofters have been subjected to these excessive exactions before the present proprietor bought the estate. When Mr Charles Morrison of London purchased the Islay estate a large number of the crofters were deeply in arrears, but to their credit let it be stated that with very few exceptions they have paid them up. When the late proprietor, Mr Campbell, planned the village of Port Wemyss, he personally pointed out to the people all the land that was to be attached thereto. On the strength of this promise, families secured sites for dwelling houses and settled in the village. This promise as yet remains unfulfilled. Only 104 acres of Cladach dubh out of the large stretch of land promised them were ever given them. Remedies

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Rev. John
M'Neill

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Rev. John
M'Neill.

suggested—Reduction of rent to a judicially fair amount in each case, average value of each acre from 7s. 6d. to 12s. 6d. The ground is but soft, porous, and generally underlaid, and dotted with rocks. It by continuous cropping yields but a most scanty return to its tillers. The whole of Cladach dubh, in proportion to what the large farmers pay for the same kind of land, is to the villagers worth about £5 yearly; larger holdings at least to the extent of the original promise, or from six to thirty acres to each crofter as he is willing and able to pay for it. The discontinuance henceforth of the interest on the drainage money; perpetuity of tenure; title-deeds for house property; the formation of a road to the peat ground; and the abolition of the system of competition, compelling the occupying tenant to bid on his own industry. The Port Wemyss crofters are hopeful that their landlord, whose management of the village has been on the whole humane and considerate, will take the earliest opportunity of redressing their grievances. The erection of a pier between the villages of Port Wemyss and Port-na-haven, and the construction of local harbour accommodation for the fishing boats, would tend to develop the fishing resources of the district and to create trade. The scheme to build a pier is in my opinion quite practicable. The old "Pharos," of the Northern Lighthouse Commissioners, periodically for eight years called at the very point where it is proposed the pier should be erected. Depth at low water, fourteen feet; distance from two opposite islands which are like a natural breakwater to protect it, about 800 feet; distance from the current of the sound intervening between the villages and the lighthouse, one hundred feet. From either village a horse and cart can almost get to the water edge of this contemplated pier rock. It would command the whole trade of the parish of Port-na-haven, as the nearest pier is from six to nine miles from the most of the parishioners. The poor fishermen are compelled to haul ashore their luggers in winter. A proper harbour would be an immense boon to them, as they could have their boats sheltered and ready for use if required during winter.

Cladach. Complaints—The population is sixty-six, tenants ten, six have eighteen acres each, and four have nine acres each; rent £12 for each eighteen acres, irrespective of the quality of the soil, whether good, bad, or indifferent. About fifty-six years ago Captain Walter Campbell, the proprietor, deprived the tenants of the use of a common grazing park capable of grazing eight horses, and for this deprivation no abatement of rent was allowed. The original rents ranged from £7 to £10 for each croft of eighteen acres. During the last twenty-five years the rents have been raised twice; the last additional increase was made two years ago, varying from £1, 10s. to £2 per eighteen acres, so as to have a uniform rent of £12 each. The Cladach crops are often damaged by the northern and western blasts from the Atlantic Ocean; and as the soil is but soft and porous, it invariably yields but a scanty return to its most skilled cultivators. All these crofters are tenants at will, and receive neither inducements nor encouragements to reclaim or improve the land.

Remedies—Reduction of rent to a judicially fair amount in each case; perpetual leases, or reasonable security of tenure; larger holdings; compensation for improvements effected by the tenants themselves.

44732. *Professor Mackinnon.*—The particular portion of Islay from which the delegates are here to-day, along with yourself, is the portion over which you have charge as Free Church minister?—Yes.

44733. And it comprises two estates?—Yes.

44734. One small one and one very large one?—Yes.

44735. Are they all at the fishing—all those who have sent delegates here?—Yes, except the district of Cladach.

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.Rev. John
M'Neill.

44736. That is a crofting district?—Yes.

44737. And we will hear themselves upon that subject?—Yes; there is a representative here from that district.

44738. Going into the more general question of the island as a whole, from your knowledge of the island and the rents charged, and of other parts of the Highlands, what do you think should be a minimum croft? What should be the size or rent of a minimum croft in Islay upon which a family could be reared by hard work?—From forty to fifty acres.

44739. Arable and moorland both?—Yes.

44740. And as rents go, what would be about the rent of such a croft?—As rents go in our end of the island, that would be nearly £1 per acre.

44741. Would you make it a £40 croft?—Almost.

44742. Do you think that a family could be reared in Islay upon a croft of less rent than that, even as rents go at the present moment there?—Yes, I should think so.

44743. What is the minimum croft, of those you know yourself, where a family could be reared by hard work; what is about the rent of such a croft, as you know them yourself, in Islay just now?—I should think thirty acres.

44744. What would be about the rent?—Over £20.

44745. Do you think a croft under £20 of rent, as rents go there just now, could not bring up a family?—Not very well.

44746. What is the average number of a family taking them all overhead?—About five.

44747. I presume you would not ask, even supposing you got all the remedies you wish for, that all the crofts and holdings in the island should be of one uniform minimum size?—No.

44748. You would like them to go graduated up?—Yes.

44749. Well, supposing the place was rearranged as you would wish it in crofts from £20 upwards, do you think that the island could support more than its present population?—I think it could.

44750. What is its present population?—7500.

44751. What is its present rental?—£36,000 odd.

44752. That would be barely £5 per head of rental?—Yes.

44753. The minimum croft you would accept would be £20, and that would be £4 per head of rental?—Yes.

44754. Don't you think that, according to your own distribution of the surface as you wish to see it, it would be all taken up by its present population?—Yes.

44755. Of course I add to it this, that you consider the rents at present too high?—Yes.

44756. And that might make a very material difference. Then I suppose you would allow also that there would be a certain number of people in the villages in the future?—Yes.

44757. And that would also make a deduction?—Yes.

44758. You think then with these two deductions a considerable increase in the population might be made, and still that increase of population would be fully better off than those who are there just now?—Yes.

44759. Have there been any very great consolidations of smaller holdings into larger holdings within your own memory?—Yes.

44760. You are a native of the island, I think?—Yes.

44761. And your memory will go back near about thirty years?—Yes.

44762. Have you found the reverse process ever attempted in Islay at all—the breaking up of the large farm into small farms and big crofts?—No.

44763. You stated there was a decrease of rents in the bigger farms of

LANARK. late years; do you know, when crofts do become vacant, that there is a considerable run upon them?—Yes.

GLASGOW. 44764. There are more crofters than crofts?—Yes.

Rev. John M'Neill. 44765. Do you think that would be an inducement to the proprietors of their own accord to increase the number of these large crofts or small farms?—Yes.

44766. I suppose the crofts are nearly about as highly rented as the farms are?—I think they are more highly rented than the farms are.

44767. You think that is the general impression?—Yes.

44768. And there is a greater run upon them?—Yes.

44769. And I presume everybody who knows Islay knows that a very large portion of its surface is remarkably well adapted for small farms?—Yes.

44770. There is a due admixture of arable ground and of hill pasture?—Yes.

44771. With respect to the fishing population in the place, what is the remedy you would propose in order to make them more comfortable than they are?—To give them a little more land—to give land to those who have no land.

44772. And a little more to those who have?—Yes.

44773. It has been stated to us often that it might have been better for the fisherman to be a fisherman and the crofter to be a crofter; would you agree with that view, looking to the state of matters in Port-na-haven?—I don't think that would suit Port-na-haven. The people cannot prosecute the fishing all the year round, and they would require something to support their families over and above the fishing. The coast is so rough and the current so strong that when a succession of storms comes in winter they cannot go to sea, and unless they have some land to support their families they must leave the island to earn money.

44774. But suppose they had a croft that would support their families, would they require to stay at home to work the croft, and leave the fishing to its own ways?—No.

44775. Would they not have to neglect the fishing if they took up such a large croft as would support the family?—No.

44776. Do you think they could do both?—I think they could.

44777. At the present moment, in winter, they have to come to Glasgow in order to earn money?—Yes.

44778. Even supposing they had such a big croft, would not some of them require to do that?—I don't think they would.

44779. You think the croft would occupy them during the winter?—With the help of the fishing.

44780. Do they fish through the winter?—A little. If they had a harbour for their boats, they might go to fish sometimes in winter; but they must haul their big boats ashore in winter, and though they would have fishing they could not manage it with their boats.

44781. Do they keep them afloat during the summer?—Yes.

44782. And, of course, with the large size of boat they have, it would be impossible for the few days' fishing they have in winter to launch these boats?—Yes.

44783. Where is the fishing ground off Port-na-haven?—They go to Barra to fish.

44784. But at home?—A good distance from the shore.

44785. Right out?—Yes.

44786. What fish do they get—cod and ling?—Yes.

44787. And they dry and salt it and send it to the southern market?—Yes.

44788. There is none of it sent fresh?—No.

44789. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—I think you mentioned there were two properties over which you have charge; will you name the proprietors?—Mr Morrison of Islay is the proprietor of the village of Port Wemyss, and Mrs Baker of Liverpool is proprietrix of Cladach and Port-na-haven.

44790. Are you well advised in stating that about 3000 acres of the ground now under sheep was once arable land?—Yes.

44791. And now totally unproductive as a grain-producing subject?—Yes.

44792. You also state in your paper that the smaller people have got no abatement of rent, while the large farmers have in many cases?—Not that I am aware of.

44793. Is there a deal of poverty within your parish?—Yes, a great deal, especially in the village of Port-na-haven.

44794. Has the fact of removing a great number of people, or their voluntarily removing themselves, had a tendency to pauperise to a considerable extent those who remained behind, particularly those who were in villages?—Yes.

44795. So that the rent of a place might rise very much higher, but in point of fact the state of the people might be as bad as though there was congestion of population?—Yes.

44796. Is that to some extent the case with you?—Yes.

44797. Is there any encouragement given to the small people at all by the proprietors?—Not that I know of.

44798. Are they considered to be in the way?—Well, I should think so.

44799. No regret would be expressed if they took themselves off?—No, I should think not.

44800. Have you occasion yourself to observe, in the performance of your ministerial duties, a deal of poverty in that beautiful and naturally fertile island?—Yes. Sometimes on a Saturday night, if it is a stormy week, if there is a fisherman who depends entirely on the fishing and has no croft, we have to send him what will tide him over the Sabbath or a day or two after that. That has been done by myself.

44801. Really a case of living from hand to mouth?—Yes.

44802. And you, as a native of the island, no doubt feel very deeply the position of your fellow islesmen?—Yes.

44803. The remedies you suggest then are those you have stated in your paper?—Yes.

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GLASGOW.

Rev. John
M'Neill.

JAMES M'NAB, Crofter and Fisherman, Port Wemyss, Islay (50)—
examined.

44804. *The Chairman.*—Have you got a written statement to make?—James M'Nab. No, I have no statement except what Mr M'Neill brought forward.

44805. Will you be so good as to make a verbal statement?—I have only to state that we are in a poor condition, that we have too little land, and that little is not good. The fishing has done very little good to us for the last twenty years. If we had more land we think we would be better off. We are paying interest for drain money for the last thirty-two years, and we would like that remitted. There are twelve families in the village who built new houses, and they have no land at all. The park that we have to graze our cattle is not good. It is small—too small to pasture a cow if each had a cow, and then it is bad, so bad that the cows require to be hand-fed, and the getting of that hand-feeding takes up the services

LANARK. of one to look after the cow, when one has a cow. Mr M'Neill has said everything else that is necessary to be said.

GLASGOW. 44806. *Mr Cameron.*—What size of croft have you?—Two acres. James McNab. Some of it is very rocky. Probably about one-third of it is rocky. Some of it is very, very bad ground—ground where the peats have been cut off the surface, and where the people themselves have worked, and it is very unprofitable.

44807. What estate are you on?—Mr Morrison's estate—Port Wemyss.

44808. Do the two acres you talk of represent the whole ground, or have you any pasture ground besides?—This is the arable ground. There is a common park in which those of us graze our cows who have cows, and we pay separately for that park.

44809. What do you pay for the two acres and the right to graze the cattle in the park?—I pay 3*s.* for the two acres, and £1 for my share of the park.

44810. What beasts do you keep in the park?—A cow and a calf. The calf is allowed with the cow till it is about a year old; but we pay 8*s.* for the calf. It is 3*s.* for the arable ground, £1 for the cow, and 8*s.* for the calf.

44811. And you sell the calf at what age?—We sell the calf when it is a year old, and if we keep it longer we pay a higher rate for it.

44812. Are they black cattle you keep?—We are going into the Ayrshire cattle for the last few years. It used to be black cattle.

44813. Why do you describe this as a park; is it enclosed?—Yes, it is enclosed.

44814. How many crofters are in the same position as you yourself?—There are thirty-eight who have land, and each of them has the right to send a cow to the park, but they have not all cows, and if they all had cows the park would not feed them all.

44815. Then do those of your neighbours who have no cows pay only the 3*s.* for the two acres, or do they pay anything for their right to the park which they don't use?—They only pay for the arable ground in that case.

44816. Do you think that, putting aside the cow and the park, 3*s.* is too dear a rent for two acres of such arable ground?—I think it is too dear.

44817. By how much?—The first rent was £1. Then the late Mr Webster raised the rent by 1*s.* This addition was not known for two years, and it came upon the people in a lump sum, which bore rather hard upon them. I think that the original rent is quite sufficiently high, if not too high.

44818. When was the rent altered from £1 to 3*s.*?—About forty years ago.

44819. Have not a good many changes occurred in the value of agricultural produce in forty years?—That is the case in some places, but it is the reverse in ours.

44820. In any case, the rent has not been altered or raised for forty years?—No, except interest for drain money.

44821. What interest do you pay on the drain money?—Five per cent.

44822. Do you think you have paid it long enough?—Yes, we think we have paid it too long. We were told we would only have to pay it for twenty-one years, but now we have paid it for eleven years more than that.

44823. Do you know on what terms or conditions the drain money was borrowed by the proprietor, if it was borrowed?—I cannot tell that.

44824. Are the drains in working order now?—Some of them are; many are not.

44825. You state that you and your neighbours would like to obtain more land; is there more land in the immediate neighbourhood of your residence that would be available to give to you and your friends?—Yes, there is a piece that was promised to us by Mr Campbell when the village was built. LANARK.
GLASGOW. James M'Nab.

44826. How large a piece?—About eighteen to twenty acres of arable ground. There is a suitable piece of hill ground that is at present in the hands of the neighbouring tenant—the tenant that marches with us.

44827. Do you know what stock this tenant keeps on the hill ground you allude to?—He at present lets it to small tenants in the village adjoining ours, and they keep cattle upon it.

44828. Then that piece of hill ground would not be available to you and your neighbours, if the other small tenants have got it already?—That is true, but this is upon another estate. The other village is upon another estate, and the other estate ought to provide for the tenants of the other village.

44829. Then you would suggest that these small tenants who now occupy the hill should be removed, and that the small tenants in your neighbourhood should be placed in their stead?—Well, that depends upon the will of the proprietor; no doubt but that would be our wish.

44830. But would it be the wish of the people who occupy this hill already?—The people of the adjoining village would wish that they would get a park of their own for their cattle.

44831. Do you think an arrangement could be made by the proprietor of the other village which would be satisfactory to them, and which would compensate them for losing the hill ground which you are anxious to obtain?—That is a thing I can scarcely give an opinion about; but there is no doubt that the tenant who is now in the neighbourhood has plenty of pasture if it could be got for the tenants.

44832. And would you be willing to take the pasture which you say this tenant has got, and pay a fair rent for it in the same way as those villagers now pay a rent for the hill?—Yes, I think so.

44833. Then that process would be of some benefit to the crofters who have already got cows, but I suppose it would be of no benefit to the crofters who are possessed of no cattle?—Well, it may be that they may have a cow next year, though they may not have it this year. Some of them may have a son in a foreign land, who may be able to send home money to them to buy a cow.

44834. Do you think that the crofters, taken altogether, would be able to stock any considerable portion of the hill ground which you are anxious to obtain?—Some could put the necessary stock upon it. Others would do everything they could to stock it also, but while pasture ground is very desirable, additional arable ground is equally necessary.

44835. How are these eighteen acres you allude to now occupied?—The same tenant has them.

44836. And the land is better, I presume, than what is in the occupation of the crofters?—Yes, it is better.

44837. Has this tenant's lease got many years to run before it expires?—I cannot well tell, but I believe the greater part of it is run.

44838. Have you ever approached the proprietor with a view to endeavour to get some of the land now occupied by this tenant at the expiry of his lease?—We did not ourselves meet the proprietor upon the matter; but the man who manages local affairs in our village told us that the factor told him that upon the expiry of the lease he would endeavour to arrange matters so that we could get that ground.

LANARK. 44839. What rent does this tenant pay?—£240 or thereabout. It is over £200 anyhow.

GLASGOW. 44840. *The Chairman.*—You stated you have about two acres of ground, and that you keep one cow and a calf, and pay £1, 14s. for the arable, £1 for the cow, and 8s. for the calf; does the £1, 14s. include the rent of the house?—We pay additional for the house. We pay a feu duty of 15s. Our lease is for sixty years.

44841. How much do you pay for the site of the house?—15s.

44842. So your whole rent is £2, 9s.?—Yes.

44843. Who built your house; did your family build it themselves?—My father bought it from the man who built it.

44844. Can you tell me how much he paid for it?—£30.

44845. How do you dispose of the two areas of ground; how much have you under potatoes?—About half an acre under potatoes. We plant about four or five barrels.

44846. And the other half in corn?—Oats.

44847. Where does the cow feed?—There is a common park—an enclosed park.

44848. Does the produce of the croft feed the cow in winter?—Sometimes. I require to buy fodder from one of the neighbours who has no cow.

44849. Do you observe any rotation in the cultivation of the little croft?—No.

44850. Is any portion of it allowed to rest in grass?—Occasionally a small bit, but there is so very little of it that it is difficult to allow any portion to rest.

44851. Do you find that the soil is becoming less productive or not?—Yes, it is getting exhausted. Constant cropping has done that.

44852. Is there any general complaint in the place that the soil is becoming less productive?—That is the general complaint, and the general belief among the people. It is a very rocky place, and constant cropping has made the soil lighter and thinner upon it, so that the pieces beside the bare rock, although sown, are very seldom reaped.

44853. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Mr M'Neill mentioned there was a great deal of land once under cultivation which is now lying untilled under sheep; do you know that to be true of your own observation?—Yes, I know that.

44854. In other places we have been told that after lands have been in that position for a certain time the very pasture becomes deteriorated; have you observed that?—Yes. That is the case in Islay. It is getting under rushes for want of being ploughed up again.

44855. Is that going on and extending from year to year?—Year after year, every year.

44856. How much of the two acres of land for which you pay £1, 14s. is really capable of being turned over by the spade?—The third of it cannot be turned with the spade.

44857. Do you believe that the large farmers are paying anything like that rent in proportion to yours?—Nothing like it.

44858. Do you know what the rental of the island is?—I cannot tell the rental of the whole island, but I know some of it goes from 4s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. per acre, and some of it even at a lower rate.

44859. Have you any relatives who emigrated or were sent away in former times?—Yes, I have relatives in America.

44860. Do you hear from them?—Yes. There are some of them dead, but their families write now and again.

44861. Are their circumstances good?—Yes; they write that they are pretty well off.

44862. Is there a disinclination on the part of yourself and others like you to leave the country so long as there is any land that you might cultivate with advantage?—Yes, they are all of that opinion. There is a backwardness to emigration. They think that if they got the chance they might make a living in their own land without being asked to go to foreign lands.

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GLASGOW.

James M'Nab.

**DONALD STEWART, Proprietor of Kirkmichael, Perthshire (67)—
examined.**

44863. *The Chairman.*—You desire to read a statement to us?—Yes.
 As the last sitting of the Royal Commission in the Long Island took place at Tarbert on the 13th June, I have not had an opportunity of contradicting sooner the false statements made by J. M'Leod, the Ardhasing delegate, regarding my father, the late Mr Donald Stewart, who was one of an ancient and well-known family, viz., the Stewarts of Garth, Perthshire. He came to Lewis early in the century, and with some friends, viz., the Rev. Dr Downie of Lochalsh, Mr Lachlan Mackinnon of Corry, and Captain Reid, R.N., took the Park, each subscribing an equal share of the capital invested. After giving it up, he went to Luskintyre, Harris, where a life-long friendship was established between him and Mr MacLeod of Harris, who requested him to take the management of the estate. And so unfailing was the friendship that ever existed between them, that Mr MacLeod made Luskintyre his home when he visited Harris; and before leaving for the West Indies—where he was appointed to a magistracy—both he and his son were my father's guests for a considerable time. By looking over the books of the estate, it will be seen that instead of my father having ruined the proprietor and crofters, as alleged by J. Macleod, there were little or no arrears of rent at the time he gave up the management (see Ranking and Sale of Harris, page 61), and so satisfied were the trustees and creditors with all he had done that he was appointed judicial factor in 1830, and continued so until the estate was sold in 1834 (see Estate Book, page 48). As a proof of the farms being let at their full value, after putting them up to auction at Tarbert in 1833 (see Estate Book of that date, page 167), there was not a bid for any of them, with the exception of the forest of Harris, held by Mr Macrae, for which a little more was offered by a man who was all but penniless. I may also mention that in 1836, that is two years after the estate was purchased by the Earl of Dunmore, the late Mr Neil Maclean, land surveyor, Inverness, accompanied by Mr Charles Shaw, late sheriff of the Long Island, was sent to value the farms, and I know there was very little difference, if any, between my father's valuation and Mr Maclean's (see Mr Shaw's letter). Afterwards, when the farms were out of lease they were advertised with the same results (see Mr Shaw's letter). It can also be seen in book of ranking and sale, and Mr W. Mackenzie W.S., Edinburgh, the late Mr Duncan Shaw (who was factor on the estate for four years before my father took the management), Mr Robert Brown, commissioner for the Duke of Hamilton, and Mr John Bowie, W.S., factor for Lord Macdonald, depone the estate is let at its full value (pages 59 and 60 Ranking and Sale of Estate). In regard to the evictions spoken of by J. Macleod, they did not take place during my father's management of the estate. Mr Macleod's pecuniary difficulties arose from having to pay heavy annuities to relatives, having to borrow large sums of money on the estate to meet family expenditure, &c., &c. Also, from the great

Donald
Stewart.

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.Donald
Stewart.

' fall in the price of kelp, all of which show how irretrievably overwhelmed
' the estate was in debt, as shown by "Ranking and Sale of Harris," see
' pages 51 and 61. My father took great pleasure in improving the estate,
' in having roads made, marches drained and brought under pasture. He
' also introduced the planting of bent, by which large tracts of drift sand
' were reclaimed and brought under useful pasture, for which the Highland
' and Agricultural Society of Scotland awarded him a gold medal in 1822,
' which I have now in my possession. I may add, to show how scrupulous
' my father was, that although urged to purchase the estate of Harris, by
' the trustees and other friends who offered to lend him any amount of
' money he might require, he declined to do so.'

44864. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—The charge you refer to is, I think, in the evidence of John Macleod, who says that your father began to clear the land—that he began at Suishnish, and cleared seven townships at one stroke. You deny that?—I deny that, and I can show it is false.

44865. At what date was Suishnish taken?—About 1814. I think it was about 1816 when my father took the management of the estate. It was in 1814 that Mr Macrae took the forest, and it was in 1816 my father took the management of the estate.

44866. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Who was the factor before your father in the time of Macrae?—I don't know who the factor was, but I know Mr Shaw and Mr Brown were the factors before my father.

44867. Are you connected with the late General Stewart of Garth's family?—I am connected but not nearly.

44868. You have read his book?—Yes.

44869. Do you know he makes remarks in his book about the depopulation of the Highlands?—Yes, and the Sutherland clearances.

44870. May I ask what is your opinion?—I concur in his opinion. I have always been a friend of the people.

44871. *The Chairman.*—How many years was your father factor?—He became judicial factor in 1830, and had been factor for eighteen years before, and was so for years afterwards.

44872. Was he a large farmer?—Yes, he had several farms in hand.

44873. During the period in which he was factor and farmer at the same time, was he instrumental in making any clearances—I don't refer to those supposed seven clearances; was he instrumental in making any clearances of small tenants on the property?—The only clearances I remember in Harris were those on the west coast, and he was not factor at that time.

44874. You feel yourself justified in saying that while factor and farmer upon the estate he was not the instrument of clearing off any of the small tenants?—As far as I know, he was not.

44875. And that he took all the farms which he had in the open market, as it were?—I cannot say exactly how he took them. I was very young at the time. I may say there was a letter that appeared in the *Scotsman* some time ago from Mr Macleod's niece corroborating my brother's letter. It is regarding the crofters' evidence in Harris. She says—'I endorse every word of Mr Stewart's letter which appeared in your issue of the 9th. My uncle was not ruined by the factor. I read the evidence of the crofters' delegates with great indignation, and was delighted to see Mr Stewart's letter.' We did not know anything about her, till that letter appeared in the papers.

Rev. EVAN GORDON, Minister of Duke Street Free Gaelic Church,
Glasgow (59)—examined.

44876. *The Chairman.*—Your name appears upon our list among the delegates, as it were, of one of the Celtic societies?—Yes, the Glasgow committee of the Federation of Celtic Societies. I have been asked and consented to appear, but absolutely free to express my own opinions, and not committed to any beyond.

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GLASGOW.

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Rev. Evan
Gordon.

44877. How many societies compose this federation?—I don't know, for I am not a member. I suppose they asked me just from a general interest in the question, and general acquaintance with the condition of the Highlands for a great many years.

44878. Are you charged with any written statement on the part of a society?—No, I am not.

44879. Will you kindly make a voluntary verbal statement?—The point to which I wish to direct the special attention of the Commission is the one introduced here yesterday by an emigration agent. Perhaps I am not in order in giving an expression of any kind of feeling with reference to what occurred yesterday, but it is my distinct impression that the gentleman in question had no right to stand here in connection with a question that is exciting, as is well known, a very, very deep feeling throughout the country. Now that gentleman made a statement with regard to emigration—

44880. I beg your pardon. I think I must interrupt you for a moment. I understood you to say the gentleman had no right to stand here?—That is exactly my opinion.

44881. But he was authorised to stand here by the Commission?—Well, I have no doubt of that, but I have exactly my opinion about it.

44882. Very well, you can go on?—The question of emigration, I consider, is a very important question at all times. There has been, and there will be, and must be emigration; but there is a prior question, which I consider is of very great practical and imperial importance, and that is the question whether we have room in the Highlands for all the population we have, and for many more. Now, I maintain that when we consider the extent of deer forests, and the enormous extent of sheep farms in this country, there is full scope for the population in the Highlands and for far more. I suppose I am quite entitled to make reference to some statements previously laid before this Commission, for example, in my own native country. I was born in the parish of Kingussie. Well, I find that Sir George Grant of Ballindalloch made a statement something to this effect, that the best use was made of a deer forest which he mentioned in three parishes. He maintained also in connection with that, that if ground was higher than about 1800 feet, it was not fit for grazing sheep. Now I was very much astonished at that, for the fact is—and I believe any practical sheep farmer in the country will maintain—that a blackfaced sheep or wedder will stand and thrive where a deer cannot live. Of course, I am quite prepared to show that it is not a fact that the height he mentioned is the utmost limit suitable for grazing—that that is not nearly the height of Ben Lawers, not nearly the height of Schiehallion, not nearly the height of the Monadhliath, which was a common in the days when I was a little boy. My grandfather was a lieutenant in the 92nd, and my father and uncle, in common with some others, had the hill of Monadhliath as a common. It is admitted that even the Highland pony, what is called the garron, which I am sorry to find is scarce now, through one cause or another, even the Highland pony could thrive on the top; and it is well known in the country of Lochiel that Corriehoillie,

LANARK.

the greatest cattle dealer of Great Britain, used to keep droves of those Highland ponies in Glen Nevis and up the side of Loch Askaig all the year round. Not a hand was put upon them till they were driven to the Falkirk market. Then I hold, for this is really the pith of my argument, if there is congestion of population in Scotland throughout, of course we must resort to emigration; but I maintain that the question of emigration is beset with immense difficulties to the population, and I will take my own personal experience during a tour through Canada and a large portion of the United States in the year 1881. I went from Liverpool, and arrived in about nine days at Quebec, then took the Grand Trunk to Toronto; and one morning, when I got up at the hotel where I put up, I was very much struck, when I opened the columns of the *Toronto Globe* of 21st June 1881, to see column after column as long and as broad as those of the *Glasgow Herald* with literally nothing in them but farms for sale. I was prepared for a very different state of things in that country, and if the emigration agent is here I think he would render a vast service if he would state one fact; but that fact is omitted, and hence his whole argument in favour of emigration on the part of poor penniless people is null and void. The fact I wish him to bring out is this. How many of the tenants, or of the owners, if you choose to call them so, but I don't think they are so, have their lands free? Well, my belief is—I cannot give you the exact numbers, but my belief is that there is a very large proportion of the people occupying Ontario that have never freed their land. They have carried on and done wonders in the way of work. For a long time the money lenders extorted a very extortionate rate of interest; and if my memory is correct, some years ago the dominion Government put a check upon that by limiting the interest to 6 per cent. Well, then, the cultivators of the soil in Ontario now under that condition have a great advantage, but what is the meaning of so many farms appearing in one paper? I could not understand this. I could understand that a farm now and then in the ordinary course of things should be in the market, but why such an enormous stretch of country all in the market? Surely the owners had not all died? There must have been something, and this excited my curiosity, and when I went up through the country I asked the meaning of it. 'Oh, the reason is,' said they, 'that we were driven to put our land into the market.' I asked, 'Who drove you to do that?' 'Just the money lenders.' Now, my view is this, that in such a strictly agricultural country as Canada, a penniless crofter is one of the most helpless of human beings, and I will give you my reason. Your Lordship will understand that Canada is not like the home country. Farmers there as a rule do their own work; and then in a comparatively new country like Canada they go to the towns and to the cities. In a new country there are not so many industries as yet, and there are hundreds of young men who go to Toronto and Montreal expecting to get into offices and employment, and utterly fail. That is my view of the subject. Then I understood the gentleman to refer specially to Manitoba. Well, can a penniless man do anything there? Moreover, as regards the extremes of the climate, let them say what they choose, I will give this as a fact, that in the district of Glencoe, in the month of July, when I was there, the thermometer stood at 110° in the shade. I asked one of the most successful settlers there, and a relation of my own, 'If you got nearly the same chance in the "mother country" as you have in this, would you prefer it?' 'Decidedly,' he said. 'What is your reason for that? you could never grow in many parts of the Highlands such grand wheat crops as you have?' 'No,' he said; 'but there is this serious drawback about it,—first of all the intense heat, and secondly the intense cold, and thirdly the heavy labour of it, taking

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GLASGOW.Rev. Evan
Gordon.

'the pith out of the men in this country before they are old.' That is his experience, and he had been there for twenty years by that time. Well, the newest county in Ontario is county Bruce. I have the Government directory of that county, and I was looking over it, and there I find the name of every settler and the number of acres he owns, and the holdings range from $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres, but not one have I discovered in that volume up to 400 acres. Well, I consider that a very fair distribution of the land. But in our country again I think it becomes not merely an imperial question, but it is a question that our landlords should most seriously consider. What is the situation at the present moment? It is this. There are so very few having capital sufficient to be offerers for our large sheep farms. Some farmers in this country own as many as 35,000 sheep. There was on the property of Lochiel at the time I was in the Lochiel country one man having the north side of Loch Arkaig. He had 21,000 sheep. He was an absentee. There was another farmer at Strone, a Mr Kennedy; another at Fassifern.

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.Rev. Evan
Gordon.

44883. *Mr Cameron.*—It was the same one—another 20,000?—Very well. Then there is another large sheep farmer, Mr Milligan, a most estimable man, I believe, though I don't know him. He was before the Commissioners. Well, he has a farm here and there. He has one at a place where I spent two days' holidays, in the district of Ardnamurchan. I found he had the most of the south side of Loch Sheil, a most lovely country, shut up entirely from tourists and people who would circulate money; and I believe it would be a capital speculation to take a railway up the side of it, and I can assure you it would be a very popular line. Failing that, surely there ought to be a steamer there. There is a vast deal of land on the south side of Loch Sheil. Mr Milligan has an enormous farm there, stretching over to the head of Loch Sunart, a large farm in Glenelg, and a large farm in Dumfriesshire. I mention these things to show the situation of our landlords. I am a liberal conservative, and I have not a particle of the radical about me at all; but I say they have put themselves into a position in which they will be worsted in the end of the day, and my reason is this. They are bound to take stock over at a valuation. Well, in the case of Lochiel, I think this occurred in my time. Sheep were exceedingly high in the year 1866. Lochiel was bound to take the stock of these farms over, and surely that was a very great inconvenience in many respects. No ordinary tenant would ever venture it. Well, the capitalist can certainly settle his own question with the landlord, and I know there are plenty at the present moment paying £300 in the district of Ardnamurchan. One is a personal friend of my own, and I asked him if he meant to keep this place, and he said, 'No, unless I get £100 "reduction." There is a farm that will be thrown on the hands of the landlord unless he submits to the terms of the tenant. Then here comes the sportsman, and of course he can make his own terms; and unless the area of occupation is made wider than it is at present my impression is that many of the landlords, whom I would like to support and see living, and their descendants after them, will certainly lose their properties. I will give you an instance. I have very great reluctance to give the instance, just from my very high personal respect for the proprietor, Cluny Macpherson, than whom there is not a finer gentleman in broad Scotland. I don't know if there was any reference made here—yes, there was reference made—to the Benalder deer forest. Well, wild clover grows to the very top of that Ben, and the finest blackfaced wethers used to be sent from that Ben to the Falkirk market. I remember when Lord Abercorn got a long, and as I consider, a very foolish lease of the whole of that. What was the result? At that time rents were very low, but yet the

LANARK. finest parts of the Cluny property were locked up, and the result is it is no longer Cluny's—that is to say, it no longer belongs to Cluny. How was this? He lost pecuniarily immensely upon that transaction. Well, no man will take a lease of a deer forest without having a pretty long lease of it; but here is really the pith of the matter. The number of competitors for these farms and forests is fewer, and must necessarily become fewer according to the present policy, whereas if there were a better distribution of the land it would increase the number of competitors, and the interest of the landlord would be served. Of this I am perfectly confident, that facts are developing very fast, I believe, in the direction I indicate. Now I wish to say something—but really it is very inconvenient for me to be here to-night, and other witnesses have to be considered—about what was before the Commission in regard to the district of Badenoch. The half of the truth was not told before the Commission. Then there was nothing said about Lochaber at all. Can any person say there is congestion of population in Lochaber? No, there is absolute scarcity of them. Some gentlemen manipulate figures and statistics. I don't attach very much value generally speaking in a question of this sort to statistics; but there is a question of humanity as well as mere money making, and I believe that that is one of the great evils in our country—that the land is just set up like a bale of cotton or a railway share on the exchange—and I hold that that is lacking in the moral element which ought to mingle with the administration of the land. Moreover, it has a bad moral effect. I have noticed that. The crofter class feel they have no rights secured to them by law except the protection of their person, and a right to go to court to sue any person for debt. That is all the right they have, and yet they are expected to contribute to the wealth-producing power of the country, and to the defence of the country. Now, I mingle with Highlanders every day. Many of them are sent from the country here, and some of our newspapers, knowing nothing about it—for what can a man sitting on a three-legged stool in an office here know about the state of the people?—say 'Oh, let them come south to get work.' I will tell you how that matter stands. Thousands of them do come south; but how can a young man, however well he may be educated in the Highlands, have the least chance in Glasgow unless he has parents behind him to back him with money for a number of years? In all our best offices and warehouses every young man begins with £10. No man can live upon that. He must either borrow or betake himself to something else, and there is not a day in the week but parties are coming to me to use my influence to get them a day's work. That is really how it stands. There is another point closely connected with the present administration of the land of which I have thought and thought for years, and that is the question of pauperism. At the present moment we pay in Scotland, I suppose, over £900,000 yearly—close upon a million. In Glasgow here alone I counted the other day as many as 200 private charities, and the amount of private benevolence exercised in Glasgow can hardly be exceeded anywhere, for the Glasgow people are extremely liberal. Now, when I put all these items together,—I could find out the income of those 200 societies, but I cannot find out the private charity,—but put these two items together, whence comes this enormous mass of pauperism? No doubt a good deal may spring from evil habits, but I hold that the large proportion of it arises from what I consider the mal-administration of the land. How is this to be met? I cannot understand how it is to be met except by a proper distribution of the land. I cannot conceive of any other plan. To send those people to poorhouses is to me a very painful idea indeed. People who have been living comfortably in their own humble homes, when they come to Glasgow

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GLASGOW.
Rev. Evan Gordon.

have no other resources. These are my general sentiments, and I thank you for your patience, and I shall be ready to answer any question that is in my power.

44884. *The Chairman.*—I would like to hear you further upon the elevation at which sheep and cattle can grow; have you been familiar with agriculture yourself?—More or less.

44885. With reference to the blackfaced stock, up to what elevation do the blackfaced stock in Scotland run in summer?—Well, I do not know any hill except Ben Nevis, and perhaps some of those very, very barren peaks near Loch Inver, between the district of Coigach and Loch Inver, where there is no inducement for them to go; but they go, for example, on Ben Resipol, at the foot of which I resided for two months this summer. That is, by the Ordnance Survey, 2774 feet, and the sheep go to the very top of it, and black cattle go up to the very middle of it.

44886. You think then, that sheep are not deterred by elevation from going to any height, but are deterred merely by the nature of the soil or ground?—On the contrary, wedder stock, in my experience, love to go high; and the best wedder mutton is got from the highest elevation.

44887. Can you mention anything higher than 2700 feet?—The Monadhliath, stretching between Inverness and the district of Badenoch. The highest part of that is 3245 feet.

44888. They run all over that. What becomes of them in winter; where do they winter?—They must go down, but they are never sent out of the country for wintering. It is the hogg stock, I understand, that are sent to the low ground for wintering.

44889. But the wedder stock are not sent off the farm?—No, they are not. Then, there is Ben Alder, 3757 feet, and it is well known to natives of the district and to me that wedders will go to the very top of it, and they have as much inducement to go there as ministers have to go to Ontario. There is Schiehallion again, 3547 feet. I have had a summer house there for three or four years, and as I love to climb hills I go to the very highest of them, and I found wedders feeding there on the very top. Then there is Ben Lawers, and it is notorious, for they leave the evidence behind them—3934 feet. Now, these are in different parts of the country, not in the mildest climate, but in what I consider the very coldest part of the Highlands, except the extreme north-west.

44890. I am interested in hearing your personal statement to the effect that the sheep are found grazing in summer habitually at these great elevations, but I don't think that has ever been disputed. I did not understand Sir George Macpherson Grant to say that sheep were incapable of being fed in summer at those elevations, or to deny that those great elevations were used for summer grazing, and summer sheilings by the people of the country themselves in ancient times before sheep farming was introduced. But what I understood him to say rather was this, that the value for summer grazings of those regions and elevations was so small that if a very high rent could be secured for those tracts in the form of deer forest, they were more profitably used for deer forest with reference to the general interests of the country than as mere summer grazing for sheep?—I understand that was exactly Sir George's meaning, and I doubt not that a deer forest brings a greater revenue to the landowner. That is perfectly true. But I don't think that that question will settle it when viewed in an imperial aspect. No doubt wealth is made in that way, but then, if you make all the deductions from that, such as the growth of pauperism and many other things, I question if the national gain is at all what it seems to be from the mere figures.

44891. Let us put this case; supposing the lower ground towards the

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.

Rev. John
Gordon.

LANARK. strath is occupied by small farms, and that the middle elevation, say, between 800 and 1800 feet is occupied extensively by woods and plantations; in that case the upper ground cannot be used for sheep at all, because there is no ground left for wintering?—No.

GLASGOW.

Rev. Evan Gordon. 44892. Well, might not that union of land employment, small farms below, timber in the middle, and deer at the top, be a profitable and commendable distribution of the soil?—Well, however profitable it might be, I don't think it would work. That is my objection to it, because it is well known that deer don't live very long up on the tops. They come down amongst the people's corn.

44893. Might they not come down among the woods?—They come and eat up the crops of the tenant, and dig up the potatoes after they have been pitted.

44894. But might not that be corrected by imposing the duty of putting sufficient deer fences up?—I don't believe the deer could live through the winter there—most assuredly not.

44895-96. To what elevation have you seen cattle going on the Highland hills?—Well, the best evidence of the like of that is their droppings, and I have seen these at very high elevations. I cannot give the exact figures, but black cattle in fine weather do go very high, especially in hot weather, when they go for the cooler air.

44897. You mentioned there was the prospect of a great diminution in the number of competitors for sheep farms and deer forests?—Yes.

44898. Would you be so good as to state what is your ground for thinking there is a diminution and cessation of the demand for deer forests?—If you will allow me I will speak of the sheep farms in the first place.

44899. I admit that. But I want to know for information, do you think, and what ground have you for thinking, that there is a diminution of the demand for deer forests?—Because really I think the people are afraid to invest in deer forests now, and I think some gentlemen far better acquainted with that aspect of it than I am stated before the Commission that there is not the same demand for deer forests, or, at least, it will not be so great very soon, because really a very large proportion of the Highlands is turned into deer forest already. Mr Malcolm, factor for Mrs Ellice of Glengarry, mentioned there are two million of acres under deer. I don't know whether it is intended to turn the whole Highlands into a sporting ground or not, but it will be a sad day if it is.

44900. There were one or two persons who told us there was rather an apparent diminution of the demand for deer forests, but on the other hand there was another gentleman who told us he thought a good deal of the sheep pasture still was adapted to deer forests and might be let, and we had evidence before us of a proprietor who was on the point of forming a deer forest of 20,000 acres for the market?—I presume that is Sir Robert Menzies.

44901. I don't think it necessary to mention names. But do you think the Highland proprietors are under any apprehension that they will not be able to let their deer forests, or will not be able to let able to let any more deer forests?—I cannot say whether the proprietors themselves are under such an apprehension as that, but I think deer foresting has gone very, very far already, and I don't believe that our landlords in the circumstances that I look forward to will extend them to any extent now.

44902. *Mr Cameron.*—Did you read in the newspapers the account of the evidence given at Kingussie?—Yes.

44903. And that Sir George Grant had stated that he could obtain ten times the amount of rent for this high land as deer forest that he could if

it were let for sheep?—I believe he could, but then the question of meat comes in.

LANARK.

44904. You admitted to the Chairman that the higher rent could be obtained as deer forest, but you thought it would increase pauperism?—Yes, and looking at the whole question in the light in which I look at it I believe the policy is suicidal, and that it will end soon. The growth of pauperism is enormous in this country, and cities like this have the burden very grievously laid upon them.

GLASGOW.

Rev. Evan
Gordon.

44905. But with reference to the district of Strathspey and Badenoch, you probably did see in the same account a statement by Sir John Ramsden that he had spent £200,000 since he came to the country in connection with the forest and plantations and other works, which he would not have been in a position to spend had he not bought the property; how do you reconcile that statement with your belief that pauperism increases in consequence of deer forests?—Well, but there is a decrease of the population notoriously on Sir John Ramsden's property.

44906. Well, it has been stated, not only by Sir John Ramsden but many other proprietors, that deer forests, so far from decreasing the population taken from sheep farms, have been the means of increasing the population slightly over what existed when these lands were pastured by sheep?—That does not concur with my experience; but perhaps, Lochiel, I may refer to your own property. You will be able to correct me, but my understanding when I was in the Lochaber country was that your forest lay on the other side of Loch Arkaig; but I understand it stretches a little at the head of the loch towards the north end. Well, there was a large population by the north side of Loch Arkaig, and traces of their habitations are still there.

44907. That is exactly the point I wish to bring it to. It proves what I wish to suggest, that this population on Loch Arkaig side existed before the sheep farms were formed. But what is stated to us is that, granted the existence of large sheep farms, the change from sheep farms to deer forests did not diminish the population, but slightly increased it?—I cannot see at all however that can be. Sir John Ramsden has a large sheep farm there. That was in the hands of a tenant not long ago, and employed a great many servants, and then there were other farms on that extensive property without going out of the province of Laggan at all. I cannot see how the deer forest has increased the population, but the population may have temporarily been increased by the extensive plantations.

44908. What constituted the population of a large sheep farm? Take the two big farms of 20,000 sheep on my estate, and with non-resident absentee tenants, what constituted the population except a few shepherds?—There were tenants of Lochiel up to the very head of the loch.

44909. I must again remind you that I am speaking of the period after the introduction of sheep farms, when the two large farmers occupied the whole of that tract. I want to get from you what the population of these farms in the days of sheep farms consisted of beyond the shepherds?—Certainly, I say that the sheep farm tends to depopulation as much as the deer forest. They are pretty much on a par.

44910. I mentioned to you that the evidence we had was that if there was any difference in population it was slightly in favour of the deer forest. That being so, and Sir John Ramsden having stated he had spent £200,000 since his purchase, which he would not have spent if he had not come for the sake of the deer forest, how do you attribute pauperism to the afforesting of land formerly occupied by large tenants under sheep?—There were several tenants about the deer forest.

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Rev. Evan
Gordon.

For example, or the Loch Laggan side, there were a number of tenants—farms arable and grazing. Then towards Loch Ericht side—for Sir John's forest stretches along the banks of the two lochs—there were several farmers, and they cultivated the soil and employed far more, unless Sir John employs more than I usually see employed about a deer forest.

44911. Do you think, in spite of the £200,000 that has been spent by Sir John Ramsden in twelve years, the people are poorer than when Sir John went there?—I don't at all maintain that they are more impoverished, but the people are not there. That is the point.

44912. But if the land, when Sir John went there, was occupied by the same number of people, how can there be fewer people now?—What I maintain is that the people are not there as I have seen them.

44913. But were they there when Sir John went there?—Most decidedly, and many of them even after the Marquis of Abercorn got the lease and turned it into forest.

44914. But I am talking of Sir John Ramsden?—I say the population existed there when Lord Abercorn got the forest, and existed there after Lord Abercorn gave it up to Lord Bentinck, but they are not there now.

44915. But the £200,000 was spent by Sir John after the people had disappeared?—Precisely.

44916. Then how can you attribute pauperism to the fact of Sir John Ramsden coming there?—I do not attribute it in his case. I speak of the country at large. I don't believe there will be any great pauperism, and there can be none in a country where the population is so sparse, but I will give you a sample of the increase of pauperism though I cannot give you the figures. Take the parish of Kingussie. There is a wretched village there called Newtonmore, that is the haunt of all the poor people, and the land is laid waste. Reference was made to Glen Banchor, but that was only half the strath. There was another township cleared as certainly as Glen Banchor was—the township of Milton—so there are many miles where there used to be a great many people, who educated and brought up their families in the most respectable manner. In my college days no fewer than thirteen young men, mainly the sons of these crofters, received a university education in Edinburgh; and Sheriff Nicolson, whom I am glad to see as an old class fellow, knew some of them. One very distinguished man was Mr Rose, late of Poolewe, and Sir Kenneth will know about him. At present there is only one solitary individual receiving higher education out of that district. In my boyish days there was not an uneducated child in the district, and there was no need of the compulsory officer. The excellent minister's word was enough, and they were ambitious of giving education to their children, so that morally and physically, and I fear, religiously, that country is not what I have seen it to be.

44917. You have quoted Lochaber as a place where there was no congestion of the population, I don't quite understand what inference you wish to draw from that?—I stated that fact to show that emigration is not at all such an urgent thing as some money-lenders and loan companies abroad would have us believe.

44918. Supposing no suggestion was made that emigration should take place from Lochaber, but that migration should take place from those spots that are congested already with population, then your illustration will not apply, will it?—You will see that in proportion as education takes effect upon the youth of the country they will not submit to the conditions of life offered to them in their own native country.

44919. Well, when you quote Lochaber you don't quote that as an

illustration of anything but merely to show that emigration is not needed from that spot?—Precisely.

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.

Rev. Evan
Gordon.

44920. Have you any scheme in your own mind, or any idea, how the want of population of Lochaber and the over-population of any other parts of the Highlands may be made to equalise each other so as to spread a sufficient number of people over the whole country?—I have been very seriously thinking of that, but it is a very difficult question in relation to existing interests. That is the view I take of it. For example, much of the land on your property is bound up by lease just now. Now, I am certain Lochiel is a friend of the people, and I never heard during my ten years' residence in the country anything but the kindest word of him, but it may not be in his power to do what he would be disposed to do owing to these leases.

44921. But supposing it were in my power and also in my will, what, according to your view, should be done?—Of course the natural remedy, as far as it can be applied, is additional land to those who have too little.

44922. But you say there are no people in Lochaber who have too little. What I point to is this; do you mean that to places like Lochaber, where there is no congestion, crofters should be removed from places like Skye or Lewis where there is congestion?—No, I don't think there is any need for that.

44923. Then, in that case you would leave Lochaber and those places out of consideration in the meantime, and deal entirely with those places where there is congestion?—Yes, and as a rule, so far as my knowledge goes, I don't think in the main, and especially on your property, that these crofters are hard up. I believe you gave them some advantages during my own time.

44924. I want very much to get at your views about the places where there is congestion. We found it chiefly in the islands and Hebrides. What do you think should be done or might be done either by the Legislature or by individual proprietors to relieve that congestion and improve the condition of the people?—Leaving Lewis out of sight, for I never was in that island, I may say I am very well acquainted with Skye, and the solution of the problem there is that the Skye people should spread themselves better over the island. I was exceedingly pained and distressed last year, going through that noble piece of land included in the parish of Bracadale, and seeing the perfect desolation there, and I felt very much about the idea of wanting to send those penniless men away when they had waste land at their door. I do feel that as a patriot. Again, I will be told very likely that they have not the means to stock it. Now if the Commissioners will allow me to state my opinion upon that, I think that that question was pressed too hard, for this reason, that all those people, I believe, have rich relatives abroad, who are perfectly ready to come and help them. For example, there is one young man from the Highlands in New Zealand. He is a full cousin of your own tenant of Clunes, Duncan Cameron, a most successful man who farms 4000 acres of wheat, raises 21,000 sheep, and exports from that country ship-loads of wool and fresh mutton, which he says arrives in London as fresh as it is there. Now, that will bear down the value of land. It has done it already in the price of wool. I was simply going to remark, in regard to the question how these crofters, on the supposition that they get more land, are to stock it, that I believe many of your large sheep farmers now are kept up by borrowed money. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that, and I believe many parties would come to the help of these crofters at once, and you would see the result, and they would cultivate the ground.

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Rev. Evan
Gordon.

44925. Supposing a sheep farm to be out of lease now, say in the isle of Skye, and what is very likely, no one comes forward to take the farm, do you think that if the proprietor made an offer either privately amongst his own tenants or publicly by advertisement, the crofters would be inclined to come forward to take suitable portions of that farm?—Well, if they will not do it they are unreasonable in complaining. I have no sympathy with groundless complaints, nor have I sympathy with the indolent.

44926. You said just now, in answer to the Chairman, that you thought the days of making new deer forests were about coming to an end? —Yes, I should believe that.

44927. Don't you think the same remark might apply to large sheep farms?—Most certainly I do.

44928. Perhaps more than to deer forests?—Of course, there will be large sheep farms, and there will be large deer forests as well.

44929. So in all probability there will be plenty openings for proprietors who are so inclined to try the experiment to endeavour to settle some of their crofters upon some of these sheep farms which fall into their own hands, and which they have no means of disposing of unless they are prepared to farm them themselves?—I fully believe that that will be the issue, and that it will be the interest of the proprietors, considering the amount of foreign produce, and it is only beginning.

44930. I quite agree with you about the interest of the proprietors, but do you look forward with any degree of confidence to the chances of the crofters coming forward to assist the proprietors in taking these farms and becoming their tenants?—I think so, and if they will not do that if they get a fair offer, I say they should never have begun this agitation.

44931. So, in your opinion, the experiment, if things are left alone, is in a fair way of being very shortly put to the test?—I believe that—of course, not to reduce the whole country to mere crofts, no person would approve of that; but the enormously large holdings should certainly cease.

44932. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—You are a native of Kingussie, I think?—Yes.

44933. Have you observed much change in the course of your life in the condition of the people of your native place?—Certainly I have.

44934. Is it for the better or the worse?—Morally, I believe, for the worse, and even physically the most of the people are most decidedly poorer.

44935. To what do you attribute that?—That village of Newtonmore, and scarcity of land. The village of Newtonmore was built on a lease—I don't know whether it was by the son of the reputed author of Ossian or not. That village was built within my memory, and I may say it is a great haunt of pauperism. These villages without public works in connection with them are great evils, and should not be tolerated.

44936. And how was the village peopled?—Just from the country. It is the country people who built almost all the houses in that village. In my boyish days there were only four or five houses altogether, and it got up as by magic. I don't know what tempted them. They got what are called small tenements in connection with the houses, but the village was built up, and there it is at the present day, of no great use in connection with the country.

44937. Were most of them crofters before?—Yes, they were.

44938. Did they remove voluntarily or were they obliged to go?—Several of them were tradesmen, such as joiners, shoemakers, and masons. I think it was built mainly by those three classes, and some built also a little on speculation for letting, but these were all country people.

44939. Do you think the condition of these people is decidedly worse than it was before?—Certainly. The village did not exist in my younger days. It was only beginning, but I have seen the beginning, and I have seen what it is, and the money collected for the poor was simply the pence contributed at the church door, and I did not know anything like the abject poverty I come across in Glasgow every day.

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.—
Rev. Evan
Gordon.

44940. Is there anything else in the parish that you would particularly mention as an evidence of the deterioration of the people?—Well, they have not the church-going habits that they had in my day. It was thought a disgrace for any person not to attend the church in my days, but I suspect they absent themselves now in hundreds.

44941. You say that the people on Sir John Ramsden's estate have decreased very much; have you ascertained the state of matters?—I cannot tell how much, but the ruins of places show that they were there.

44942. But there were no removals of crofters by him?—I am not aware. I think he must have removed some.

44943. Are you aware of any?—I could not name it distinctly, but you have the places where the people lived. Take for example Gallavie—I would not call that an eviction at all. It is one of the best spots on the property of Sir John Ramsden, arable and grazing. There used to be a farmer there with a great number of shepherds and farm servants. I think Sir John must have that in his own hand now. That is one instance where the population has decreased. I should make this statement, that I don't know altogether the exact boundaries of Sir John's property. I know something of Alvie.

44944. There was a removal from there, but it could hardly be called an eviction?—No, they were put down just on the banks of the Spey, and planted down on one of the poorest pieces of land you could get anywhere, and the people had to trench the ground. No doubt Sir John has planted a great many trees, and that is a very valuable product of the soil, but then the people were deprived of what they had.

44945. Do you think their condition is worse than it was before?—Assuredly, these crofters. I don't know on what they can live.

44946. Do you say that from your personal knowledge?—Certainly. No doubt, when these plantations grow, they will afford a very great deal of work to the people, and perhaps their circumstances will improve then, but what will become of them between this and that?

44947. There was a very good character given to us, which I hope they deserve, of the whole class of gamekeepers and gillies. Have you any opinion on that subject from your personal knowledge?—I have known different characters belonging to that class, and I don't think they are a whit worse than any other people, taken as a whole.

44948. There is nothing in their occupation to make them worse than other men?—Well, I don't know but there is. They are exposed more or less to temptation when they go to the hills sporting. I suppose some mountain dew will be going there, and I am afraid some of them will come to be a little too fond of it. I have seen instances of that sort, but I suppose the Commissioners will not desire me to mention them.

44949. I suppose that would not be a novelty to the Badenoch gillies?—I am not referring to the Badenoch gillies. I am far better acquainted with gillies in many other places than in my own country, because I have been out of it for the last thirty-five years.

44950. Do you think, when men are employed as gillies only for a short time in the year, that is apt to lead them into habits not conducive to general industry? What will become of them the longer part of the year?—I don't know.

LANARK. 44951. It seems there is this difference between the men employed on Sir John Ramsden's property and those on many other deer forests, that he gives them employment all the year when not employed as gillies in the deer forest. He gives them occupation in the woods and elsewhere?—That is all right, so far as it goes.

GLASGOW. 44952. *Mr Cameron.*—That is fully as conducive to moral habits as any other occupation—to get good employment all the year round in plantations and other works?—Yes, that is what every one should desire to have, no doubt.

Rev. Evan Gordon. 44953. Then, as to the comparative numbers of men employed on deer forests and sheep farms, have you any knowledge of that? Which is most likely to give employment to the population?—I think sheep farms, on the whole, employ more. There is one element of advantage in connection with the sheep farms. I suppose they don't smear the deer. Very well, neither do they clip them, although they take the skins off them when they get hold of them. Now, it is well known that the sheep farmers employ a great many at smearing time and clipping, and sometimes sending men down to herd their hogs in the low country. So far as the question of labour or giving labour is concerned, decidedly the sheep farm has the advantage.

44954. You are perhaps not aware, as it is thirty-five years since you were in that country, that sheep farmers have to a great extent given up smearing. They dip their sheep?—Yes, but somebody must dip them.

44955. But you dip a great deal faster than you smear, and the shepherds who are permanently employed can manage the dipping?—Well, I suppose so. They plunge them in some sort of place, and take them out very quickly.

44956. *Mr Fraser Mackintosh.*—I believe you are well acquainted with the district of Badenoch?—Yes.

44957. I am sure you would not wish that anything you may say should not be entirely accurate with regard to any individual?—No, certainly not.

44958. Well, Sir John Ramsden, when examined before us at Kingussie, told us that pauperism had decreased in Laggan, and the population had decreased in Laggan, but he also told us the population on his estates had increased. I presume when you hear he said so, you have no reason to doubt his correctness?—Certainly; Sir John must possess better information than I do.

44959. He also stated he never evicted a single person from the time he took possession of the property?—Well, I am very glad to hear that.

44960. You also stated you were not quite sure of the boundaries of the estates, and you made use of the expression that there had been a considerable population on Loch Laggan side; which side of Loch Laggan do you refer to?—I presume Sir John's property goes to the north side of Loch Laggan, or is it solely on the south side? I don't know the boundaries. Now if Sir John's property embraces the public house called Cambuskillen, then I say Sir John did not send away the people that were there, they were sent away long before his time. There are the ruins of an old chapel, and everybody must see there had been a very considerable number of people there, but of course he is not to blame for that.

44961. Well, the great population you refer to were upon the north side of Loch Laggan?—But they were on the other side, on the south side of Loch Laggan, down about Gellovie, and all the way to Strathmashie. Any one will see the signs of cultivation there; but it was not Sir John who sent the people off.

44962. You spoke of the village of Newtonmore as being a very wretched place; have you seen it lately?—Yes. I pass through there every year, and stay for a while about Kingussie.

LANARK.

44963. Is it a very crowded congested locality?—Yes, the village, I think, is an unmixed evil.

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GLASGOW.

44964. Has not a considerable portion of the land close to the village been taken away for planting?—That is quite true.

Rev. Evan
Gordon.

44965. And still further compressing the inhabitants of that wretched village as you call it?—Yes. The only advantage I see in connection with the village, that is the only means of livelihood they have apart from mere stray days of work, is that they have two large parks down at the banks of the Spey, but the pasture has so deteriorated that, though some of them have cows, and liberty to send them down to graze, the grazing is completely run out. All that land belonged to my grandfather at one time, and he had the whole of Monadhliath, in common with some others, as a common, and my father and uncle had the common with him. The grazing on that park was completely run out.

44966. So, though they have the privilege, it is really so deteriorated as to be almost useless?—Yes. Of course, I don't blame the proprietor for that, but that is the fact.

44967. How about Glen Balloch and Glen Banchor? Was there not a large population up in those glens at one time?—I think there was within my memory, but there were more earlier than that, though I cannot go back upon it. Within six or seven years ago, I suppose there were seven or eight families there, and they were all well-to-do tenants.

44968. Had they not a considerable quantity of the glen under cultivation?—Certainly.

44969. Is there any one now resident in the glen at all, except it may be a shepherd?—Exactly; and I may add that when I was there about the month of June last I went up to the mouth of the glen, and taking out my glass I looked to the head of it, and I saw something like two chimneys smoking. That was all I saw in those two glens. There was another thing that was not brought up, namely, about the property of Sir George Grant.

44970. But stop a little. Let us finish this first. Were these places not cleared for summer grazings or sheep farms?—Clearly.

44971. Not for forests?—I am not aware they were. Sheep were put upon them at once.

44972. So you find upon the same estate, do you not, a congested village very much scrimped, and two glens in the immediate vicinity with nobody in them?—Precisely so. Then, about Ruthven, in my day there was a large population, and there was no reference made to them. Some of the most thriving tenants of that class that were known in Badenoch were sent off, and they went to Australia, and that was added to the farm of Ruthven. Then there was Knappach, where there was a small tenant, and Drumallavie. All these three are put into a farm that was large enough already.

44973. A sheep farm?—Arable and sheep.

44974. You know Glentruim?—Yes, very well.

44975. Were there not a very great population removed from Crubenveg and Crubenmore?—Yes, but the rest of the glen? I would not consider any temptation to any person to try and cultivate it. The grazing, it is true, would be valuable. As to the people I don't think they were forcibly evicted, but they are not there.

44976. Were not the Comyns, lords of Badenoch, very great men?—There is no doubt of it—perhaps too great.

LANARK.

44977. And I suppose their importance consisted very much in the number of men who were upon their possessions?—Decidedly. If it will be agreeable to the Commission, I will state a very interesting fact with regard to the last Duke of Gordon. The last time he paid a visit to the country, shortly after he sold it, they mustered the clans. They came down from the Lochaber country, and Cluny Macpherson and other chiefs led the men, and they were all dressed in the Highland garb and armed and placed in array on a piece of elevated ground on the east side of Kingussie. When the Duke appeared in his carriage and four, he was received by some of the officers and he looked at the men, and I can assure you he wept bitterly, and said, ‘If yesterday had been to-day, neither Badenoch nor my property in Lochaber would have been sold. ‘I have never seen such a body of men.’ Well, the most of these melted away after the Duke sold the property, and they are to be found now in every quarter of the globe.

44978. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—You said you thought it would be a good thing for proprietors that the large farms should be divided, in order to widen the area of competition?—Yes, within certain limits.

44979. In regard to this question of competition, do you think small tenants should be exposed to competition in taking their farms?—Not necessarily at present; but large farms are exposed to competition, and I speak with reference to them, and if that system is to be carried on it will end probably just as I have said.

44980. But you don’t contemplate, when the farms are made small, that they should be exposed to competition?—Not necessarily. I think there should be a reasonable valuation; and whatever notions about land some people may have in their head, my own impression is that while some legislation may be required, I can never see how the land question is to be settled without friendly co-operation between the landlord and the people. I therefore desire security of tenure, with a reasonable rent; and I think, if the landlords would come to see that, there might be a very useful and happy solution of the whole question. It cannot be solved without friendly co-operation on the part of the two parties.

44981. You have no scheme in contemplation for a forcible redistribution of the land?—No, I have never gone into theories of that kind. I think it is very much practically that the thing must be settled. It is very easy to cut out a theory that will suit the existing population, but then changes will come and you have to lay down a theory to suit another generation. I would not lay down any theories about it, but the thing is practicable by degrees.

44982. *The Chairman.*—Can you give me within your personal experience any single example of land being cleared of living tenants and crofters for the purpose of forming a deer forest, not a sheep farm?—The forest, of Glen Tilt, Blair Athole forest, was a very clear instance of that.

44983. How long ago?—Beyond my personal memory.

44984. But within your personal memory, say within the last thirty years, can you give me any single case of land being cleared of industrious inhabitants, small tenants, for the purpose of forming a deer forest?—I don’t recollect that at present, and I should not like to say anything but what I am perfectly sure of. I think it was brought out in evidence—but I am not so well acquainted with that region—that people have been sent off from the deer forest of Mr Winans. I think that came out in evidence if my memory is correct.

44985. I know one case, perhaps two cases, myself, but I wanted to know from you, as you have been much interested in this question, whether you could at this moment put your finger upon any single case in which small

Glasgow.
Rev. Evan
Gordon.

tenants have been cleared off ground for the purpose of making that ground immediately and directly a deer forest?—Well, I cannot say I am certain of that.

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.Rev. Evan
Gordon.

44986. You gave an interesting account of your own journey in Canada and the impressions which you there received as to the state of the small proprietors and their indebtedness, and you founded your impression of indebtedness, besides information, on the number of advertisements you saw in the newspapers, the number of farms which were offered for sale. Do you not think that the number of farms advertised or offered for sale might be in a great measure accounted for, not by poverty, but by the enterprise and restlessness of the people, who are constantly led to leave and sell cleared ground and go further west?—Yes, I am quite well aware of that, but the proper account of that, if it were thoroughly investigated, I believe, is this. There are plenty vacant farms in Ontario. The tenant begins without capital and borrows every penny he requires. He cannot pay up, and of course he sells out, and perhaps makes more or less of his interest in it. There is a considerable floating class in Ontario, and they just live by that rough sort of clearing, and go to other places; but the great body of the tenants, I don't speak of that floating class, the tenants with whom I conversed, tenants from Lewis and tenants from Skye, find it very difficult to pay up their loans.

Rev. MURDOCH MACASKILL, Minister of the Free Gaelic Church, Greenock
(45)—examined.

44987. *The Chairman.*—You have been so good as to send in a statement to the Commission?—Yes. It is as follows:—‘Before the appointment of your Commission it was my privilege to issue, at the suggestion of some friends of our Highlands, schedules to every district in the Highlands, from Dunkeld to John O'Groats House. These schedules contained the following queries:—(1) What is the extent of your parish, and what the relative proportion of arable and pastoral land? (2) Is there a large crofter population—what about the extent of their holdings, what their circumstances? Was there once a larger crofter population, if so, what has been the cause of the reduction in number? (3) What is the proportion of small farmers, say from £20 to £200 rental? What generally their circumstances? (4) Are there many large sheep farms, and what proportion of the land now under sheep was once arable land? What crofter population or small farmers have been displaced to make room for these? (5) How much of the land in your parish, if any, is laid out in deer forests, and how much of it could be utilised for crofters or small farmers? (6) What is the present population of your parish? What has been the decrease or increase since the beginning of this century? If decrease, state the cause or causes? (7) What special restrictions, if any, with regard to game, are placed upon crofters or small farmers—also with regard to the use of sea-weeds for manure? State any other special hardship to which they are subjected? (8) Are there any industries peculiar to your locality which could be more fully developed in the interests of the people? Give your opinion as to the best mode of doing so. These schedules were issued to gentlemen of the highest standing and intelligence in the several parishes. Returns have been made to the number of seventy, embracing such a wide area as to give a very fair representation of the general condition of the whole Highlands. Some forty of these returns were published in the *North British*

Rev. Murdoch
Macaskill.

LANARK. ' *Daily Mail* previous to the sitting of your Commission, and the evidence
 —————— they furnished fully confirmed the evidence afterwards given before your
 GLASGOW. ' Commission. Very few of the gentlemen who made these returns
 Rev. Murdoch ' appeared before your Commission, so that their returns contain a mass of
 Macaskill. ' confirmatory evidence of the highest value. They all confirm the miser-
 able condition for the most part of the present crofter population; the
 unjust exactions and restrictions, through laird and factor, law and
 tyranny, of which for long they have been the victims. How they have
 in many places been driven off the fertile part of the soil, they and their
 forefathers had reclaimed from a state of nature, and huddled together
 on the bleakest promontories and sea-shore, while their former holdings
 were given up to sheep and deer. They show how a large proportion
 of what was once splendid arable and pasture lands have become
 wretchedly deteriorated, by lying fallow for so many years under sheep
 and deer; rushes, bracken, moss, and even heather, covering lands once
 yielding splendid crops. They show how this state of matters is not
 only unjust to the people, injurious to the nation, but must very soon
 prove disastrous to the proprietors themselves, as a continuance of this
 system is yearly rendering their properties less valuable even for grazing
 purposes. One of the gentlemen making these returns observes in an
 accompanying note—"Was your attention ever directed to a fact in
 physics not generally known, that the earth-worm is the most extensive
 delimiter of soil in Great Britain; that there is an acid in sheep droppings
 inimical to the prosperity of this little underground delver, hence the
 reason why sheep walks deteriorate in grass yielding power? But where-
 ever the droppings of cattle fall, a colony of these useful creatures is
 produced, that so thoroughly delve and turn that spot, as to render it
 productive for thirty years to come. I see in the disappearance from
 sheep walks of these industrious underground colonists the Nemesis to
 avenge the removal of the people. I may observe that the fringes of
 land, in many cases the poorest in the country, have increased twenty
 times their original value under the hand of the industrious poor, whereas
 the sheep walks have deteriorated for the last fifty years, at least one-
 fourth or one-fifth." The fact of natural science to which this gentleman
 refers is most interesting and deserving of attention, and is, I believe,
 thoroughly well founded, though it escaped the attention of the late Mr
 Darwin in his interesting treatise on *Vegetable Mould*. I do not intend
 to enter more largely upon the mass of evidence in my possession through
 these returns, though ready to answer any question as to the evidence
 they afford on the subject of land laid waste for sheep walks and deer
 forests, but will confine myself in the rest of my statement to the case
 of the Lewis. In dealing with that case, I shall first call your attention
 to some of the grievances under which my countrymen suffer, and then
 point out the remedies that should be adopted. From the public appear-
 ances made by the poor Lewis crofters before your Commission one would
 be led to think that they had few if any grievances to complain of.
 That, however, is easily accounted for when, notwithstanding the pro-
 mise made to your Commission of non-interference on the part of the
 estate officials with the evidence of the people, it is currently reported
 that petty officials went among the people threatening them with serious
 consequences, if they complained or found fault with any of the officials,
 preventing in this way some of the delegates from at all appearing
 before your Commission, and rendering the evidence of others so defective
 as to be almost valueless. Let me specify one instance of a kind that
 was to be brought before your Commission, but the delegate appointed to
 represent the case withdrew at the last moment for some reason known

' to himself, but guessed by others, and so the case failed to be represented. LANARK.
 ' The case is the following:—Twenty-five years ago, when the boundaries GLASGOW.
 ' of the township of Knock, in the *quoad sacra* parish of Knock, were rearranged, a poor crofter present made the remark that the boundary Rev. Murdoch
 ' line did not look so straight as the old one. The ground officer took Macaskill.
 ' offence at this, and though the crofter at once retracted the statement, he was summoned, and had to pay a fine of £2, 10s. for a remark which implied offence to no one. An additional fine of 10s. was imposed to be paid annually along with his rent of £3. That fine has been paid up till now, so that already £15 have been paid for a remark which implied offence to no one, and which tyrants only could convert into a fineable offence.* The man is now in ill health and poverty, and had to sell his only cow last year to pay his rent and this iniquitous fine. I do not suppose the late Sir James Matheson was in the least cognisant of such unrighteous deeds being done by his officials, nor do I suppose Lady Matheson is aware in the least of her rent roll being disgraced by such an item wrung from a poor broken-down old crofter on her estate. But every penny of the unjust impost should be at once paid back to the poor man, with full interest for the time he has been deprived of the use of his money. Such an instance of estate official tyranny is only a glaring instance of many such in varied forms from which the poor people of the Highlands suffered in the past, and by which every principle of right and justice was thrown to the winds, and the people so cowed and crushed that they preferred to endure the inevitable rather than show any opposition, knowing that any attempt to secure redress would only subject them to greater hardships. Much has been made of the large sums spent by the late Sir James Matheson in improvements on the Lewis estate. Large sums were indeed spent by Sir James, but much of it in mere experiments that resulted in no permanent good; had a tithe of it been spent in improving the crofts and habitations of the people, the results to the welfare of the people, and the material interests of the estate would be very different from what they now are. After all the money spent, the fact still remains painfully evident and beyond contradiction that the condition of the people is now as bad, if not worse, both as to habitations and general circumstances, than when Sir James bought the estate. The whole facts of the case show a lamentable want of plan and aim to benefit and elevate the mass of the people. The whole tenor of the management has all along been, not towards encouraging, but discouraging, the poor crofter, and disgusting him with the whole situation, so as to get rid of him; the realisation of which purpose was rendered impossible only by the fishing industry of the island, for were it not for that industry the crofter population could never subsist upon their miserable allotments of the soil, and that generally the poorest and the worst part of the soil. The close upon 23,000 of a crofter population pay only about £8200 of the £20,000 of the rental of the Lewis, while the other £12,000 are paid by some twenty-five or thirty large farmers and sportsmen. The soil in possession of these large farmers is by far the best of the Lewis, and yields, considering the quality of the soil, a far lower rent than the portion in the hands of the crofters.* It was all very well for the factor of the Lewis to give the rental per acre of the land in possession of both classes, in order to show the higher percentage yielded by the land in possession of the large farmers, while he carefully refrained from giving any idea of their relative quality. There is, however, no manner of doubt that the crofters pay much higher rent than the large farmers when the quality of the land in possession of

* See Appendix A, xciii., p. 431.

LANARK. ' both is taken into account. It may of course be said that the quality
GLASGOW. ' of the land in possession of the large farmers is owing to their superior
 agricultural skill. But it is not so as a general rule. It is mostly owing
Rev. Murdoch ' to the fact, that the best of the land was taken for the purpose of forming
Macaskill. ' these large farms, while the crofters are huddled together on the inferior
 parts of the soil. The most of that land was brought under cultivation by
 the crofter population, from which they were driven without any compensa-
 tion or consideration for their own and their forefathers' labours. All
 the land now in possession of large farmers in the Lewis, with the
 exception of what was reclaimed by the late Sir James Matheson, was
 originally brought under cultivation by the crofter population, without
 any cost that I ever heard of to the former proprietors. That being so,
 is it just or fair that a few strangers should possess more than half the
 land, and that the best part of it, for rearing sheep and cattle, while the
 descendants of the original possessors of the soil, a race of hardy and
 industrious men and women, should be huddled together on the most
 inferior parts of it? That is the present condition of the Lewis. And
 it is impossible to keep the rising generation, with their growing intelli-
 gence and information as to what is right and wrong in this matter, and
 the sympathy their case evokes, from considering this state of things a
 grievous injustice, and cherishing on account of it a sense of wrong, which
 may be found far more troublesome in the future than it has been in the
 past, yea may break forth into social revolution unless wise remedies are
 speedily applied. True conservatism consists in wisely remedying the
 wrong, and so more firmly establishing the right in every condition and
 circumstance of life. Mere repression will not do any longer in the
 Highlands any more than in the Lowlands. Factor law and ground
 officer tyranny will not command the same submission in the future as in
 the past in the Highlands. And justly so, for the oppression and
 tyranny have been so intolerable, that only the influence of true religion
 could have kept our long-suffering Highlanders from having risen *en*
masse long ago, against the whole odious system. Among the grievances
 of the Lewis' crofters there are—(1) The people having been driven in
 many instances from the best part of the soil, and huddled together on
 the most inferior parts of it, while their former holdings have been given
 up to sheep and deer. This is notably the case in the parish of Uig;
 also in the parish of Lochs. A return in my possession shows that to
 form the farm of Park, in the parish of Lochs, it is calculated that 300
 families were removed, which at the rate of five for every family would
 represent a population of 1500 removed to make room for sheep. This, of
 course, was done before the late Sir James Matheson bought the Lewis.'

44987*. How long ago?—Between 1810 and 1820. (2) The over-
 crowding of the people in the crofter townships, resulting in the subdivi-
 sion of crofts, formerly too small; the consequent increase of poverty,
 and of poors rates. This is notably the case in the *quoad sacra* parish
 of Knock, when a crofter population of 3432 are vastly beyond the
 capabilities of the crofter townships to support. (3) The want of any
 fixity of tenure, discouraging the people from any attempts to improve
 their habitations and holdings. (4) The taxing of their former summer
 grazings, and other exactions from which till recent years they were
 exempt. (5) The want of suitable harbours for the proper prosecution
 and development of the fishing industry. Are there any remedies then
 for this state of things—remedies which, while largely ameliorating the
 condition of the people, will only enhance instead of injuring the interests
 of the proprietor? To some of these which occur to me, I humbly solicit
 your attention. First and foremost then, the people must have more

' land, if their present condition is not to deteriorate even into worse. In LANARK.'
 ' saying this, I am far from wishing that the system of middle-sized farms
 ' should be done away with, except where the absolute necessities of the
 ' population demand the change. These have always existed in the Rev. Murdoch
 ' Highlands alongside the crofter population, and the influence of the one
 ' class of tenants on the other had always been beneficial. From such
 ' middle class holdings went forth, in former days, many who occupied
 ' places of highest distinction in the British army and in other professions.
 ' Any one thoroughly acquainted with the history of the Highlands knows
 ' what an important factor in Highland life and prosperity these home-
 ' steads were at no remote date. In them were reared generations of
 ' industrious sons and daughters, who were initiated not only into all the
 ' details of farm life, but in many instances trained in refinements and
 ' accomplishments that fitted them for excelling in other spheres of life.
 ' They were a hardy, intelligent, and happy race, intensely patriotic, and
 ' producing men and women who distinguished themselves in every walk
 ' of life. In place of these we have now in many districts of the
 ' Highlands large sheep squatters—of whom you have had some notable
 ' instances before your Commission—men who are as destitute of the
 ' refinement and good manners of the old class as they are of their intense
 ' patriotism. These are for the most part non-resident in the country-
 ' sides they lease, for the most part utterly unconcerned in the welfare of
 ' the locality, and are therefore of immensely less value to these localities
 ' and to the nation at large than the race they have displaced. These
 ' ought certainly to be extinguished wherever there is a population needing
 ' to be accommodated with land, while out of these large tracts middle-sized
 ' farms could also be apportioned along with a crofter population. There
 ' is plenty land in the Lewis, with which I am now more immediately
 ' concerned, to accomplish both these objects. Let me begin with the (1.)
quoad sacra parish of Knock, which I know best. In that parish there
 ' are twelve crofter townships, occupied by 399 crofters and 175 cottars.
 ' On many of these crofts there are two, on a number even three families.
 ' Few of the crofters pay more than £4, and the largest number are under
 ' £4, while the cottars have no land at all. Is there any way then in
 ' which this can be remedied? In the parish itself there is not certainly
 ' sufficient land to afford each of these cottars a good-sized croft. But
 ' many of the people now in the parish are the descendants of people who
 ' were removed from other parishes in times past, especially from the
 ' parish of Uig, and that should be taken into account in dealing with the
 ' immense population now located in the parish. In the parish itself,
 ' however, there is first the farm of Aignish, now under sheep, and by far
 ' the best arable land in the parish. On that farm rushes and ferns now
 ' grow in parks once yielding splendid crops of every kind common to the
 ' district. That farm could accommodate some thirty or forty crofter
 ' families, and being contiguous to the sea is admirably adapted for the
 ' class of fishermen crofters inhabiting the parish of Knock. And to
 ' make comfortable homes for some thirty or forty families of the hardy
 ' industrious fishermen of the parish of Knock is surely of more import-
 ' ance to the nation than the grazing at a few hundred blackfaced sheep.
 ' The present rental of Aignish is about £110 (valuation roll of 1871).
 ' But some thirty or forty crofter families could give even a larger rental,
 ' while combining with it the active prosecution of the fishing industry.
 ' Contiguous to the parish of Knock are the two farms of Holm and
 ' Melbest or Gonniglet, paying an aggregate rental of £291, which along
 ' with the above-named farm of Aignish, would more than accommodate
 ' all the cottars in the parish of Knock. After doing so, there would st 1

GLASGOW.

Rev. Murdoch
Macaskill.

LANARK. ' remain around the town of Stornoway on every side nine farms of various sizes, of an aggregate rental of £905, 6s. 2d., with twenty-two larger or smaller parks and farms in the hands of single individuals, of an aggregate rental of £214, 3s. 10d. There is therefore plenty land in and around the *quoad sacra* parish of Knock to give land to all the people; and were the land given on proper conditions, the people would be made immensely more comfortable, the rent roll increased instead of diminished, and proprietor and people put in far better relation to one another. (II.) The same remarks are applicable to the parish of Lochs. This parish, with its large crofter population, has enough land to give the whole crofter population sufficient holdings, while leaving ample ground for several small farms. Within the parish there are ten farms in the hands of ten individuals, of the aggregate rental of £1349, which is within £340 of half the rental derivable from land in the whole parish. The whole rental of the parish, according to valuation roll of 1871, is £4320, 17s. 10d. Of that sum £947 odds are derived from shootings, salmon fishings, and feu-duties, leaving £3373, 17s. 10d. as the rental from land, of which the above ten farmers pay £1349, 2s., leaving to the thousands of a crofter population land only to the value of £2024. This surely is a most inequitable division of the land. The crofter families of the parish are about 500, but I have no means of knowing the number of cottars. I am, however, thoroughly convinced that the farm of Park alone could provide ample accommodation for them all, and that were it allotted to them they could pay the present rent, while the grouse and deer shootings would be as valuable as at present. I believe that this farm in the hands of two hundred crofter fishermen families would, after the lapse of a few years, be of immensely more value than it is at present, and yield a far higher rental. (III.) The same observations are true of the parish of Uig. The rental of that parish, according to valuation roll of 1871, is £3771, 10s. 6d., which after deducting £926, 8s. 6d. for shootings, salmon fishings, &c., leave £2845, 2s. as rental derivable from land. Of that sum fifteen individuals, including the proprietor, pay £1577, 12s. 6d., leaving only £1267, 9s. 6d. as the proportion of the thousands of a crofter population. In presence of such an unfair allotment of the land, is there any wonder though that population should often be on the verge of starvation. (IV.) The same is true, though to a limited extent, of the parish of Barvas. (1) The rental of the parish is £2718—one-sixth of which is paid by nine individuals. It is plain, then, from a review of the whole case, that there is plenty land in the Lewis to accommodate the whole of the present crofter population, leaving besides a large margin for a number of moderately sized farms. I believe also that, under such an arrangement carried out on wise principles, the present rental of the Lewis could be fully sustained, and the comfort of the people immensely enhanced. (2) That land should be given to the people on conditions fair alike to people and proprietor. Nor is there any insuperable difficulty in the way, if both approach the question in a spirit of mutual confidence and interest in the rights of one another. Let us suppose that one of these farms is taken and apportioned among so many families of the crofter fishermen of the Lewis; the first question that arises is what should be the size of the croft, so as to insure its proper working, while not interfering with the fishing industry. The extent in arable, or land that could be made arable, should be between four and five acres, with hill pasture to carry three good Highland cows and their followers and twelve sheep, for £4 rental. Leases should be granted for twenty-five years, with compensation for improvements. Models of a house, barn, and byre suitable to the holding should be

' provided, and insisted upon. All subdivision of crofts strictly prohibited. Any of the sons that chooses to succeed the father, all the rest made to understand that when about to settle in life they must make a home for themselves elsewhere. This would largely correct the evil of early marriages, direct the attention of the young either to learning trades or to emigrate, or to give their services to the army, navy, or merchant shipping service. For all these purposes no better class of men could be found than our hardy Highlanders. No finer set of men could be found anywhere than the hundreds now yearly trained in the Lewis in connection with our naval reserve. Under the present system there is no proper directing of the energies of our young men, and the result is they marry early, and settle down amidst their present miserable surroundings. Such an arrangement as the above would soon tell for the better upon the condition of the people. It would give them to feel that they had an interest in the soil, it would attach them more firmly than ever to their superiors, and would secure for us a large, contented, and industrious population on our sea borders, plying more energetically than ever their fishing industry, and pour into our towns and cities still larger supplies of so necessary an article of food. It would supply a basis of the best possible element for our army and navy, our merchant shipping service, and the shipbuilding and other industries of our towns and cities. We need such a basis to supply fresh vigour to the humanity deteriorating in the atmosphere of our large cities. Make the rural districts a waste, and you take the first step towards making the whole land so. (3) Another improvement absolutely requisite in the interest of the Lewis crofters is the making of suitable harbours for the proper development and safer prosecution of the fishing industry. The lack of these, there and elsewhere over the Western Highlands and Islands, has greatly retarded the fuller development of a most valuable industry. Along with the present harbour formed at the Port of Ness, other three should be formed without delay, viz., at Port-na-guiran, Bayble, and Greiss. These are the places most contiguous to the herring fishing ground, and also most suitable for the more active prosecution of the cod, ling, and haddock fishing. With the west coast I am not so familiar, but there are several places there standing in great need of such harbours. To the President of the Board of Trade, on his recent visit to Stornoway some eight localities were pointed out as most suitable for such harbours in the interests of the fishing industry of the island. Were these things attended to, the whole of the present population of the Lewis could be made comparatively comfortable, and such recurring periods of want as they have recently experienced utterly unknown. And physically and morally they are a class of people that deserve the utmost interest in their welfare. From some of the rash statements as to rental and population made before your Commission by some of the delegates in the Lewis, I wholly dissent, such as, specially, the reducing of the rental to one-half, which is such an unreasonable statement that no sane person would give the least attention to it, and the capabilities of the island for supporting something like double or triple its present population. I also deprecate some of the references to the late Sir James Matheson, who was personally a most estimable gentleman, and took very special interest in the education of the young. I remember his coming to my native place when I was a little boy and asking the crofters questions as to what they would have done. I remember an old soldier saying, 'We should like very much to have a good school in the place.' 'Oh,' he said, 'you are the most sensible man I have met in the place,' and the school was given. I should also refer to the Ladies' Association of Edinburgh, which has done

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Rev. Murdoch Macaskill.

LANARK. more for the Highlands than all the sheep farmers and all the sportsmen put together. Whatever some parties may say with regard to the Free Church, all I can say is, notwithstanding what she did otherwise, that one association of ladies in Edinburgh did more for the Highlands in educating its dark and out-of-the-way corners within the last forty years than all the sheep farmers and all the sportsmen put together, and to that association Sir James Matheson paid annually a matter of £100 sterling for the purpose of assisting education in the Lewis.

GLASGOW. 44988. I think it right to state with reference to the particular case of oppression and distress which you mentioned, that that case will be referred to the island for a report, and I accept it with reserve. I have no doubt for one moment you have made careful inquiry, and that you believe you possess the facts of the case correctly, but everybody is liable to error in those matters, and it may be that some feature may transpire with which you are not acquainted. Well, with reference to the improvement of the dwellings, I need hardly say my own experience showed us in the Lewis that there were a very miserable class of dwellings. So far as I am concerned, I saw the worst dwellings in the Lewis that I saw in the Highlands; but in justice to the administration of the estate it should, I think, be mentioned, what you have omitted to mention, that the people have not been entirely left to themselves. Are you aware there is a regulation in force in the estate now for co-operation between the proprietor and the people for the improvement of the dwellings?—I am aware of that. During the time Mr Hugh Matheson had the administration of the Lewis as commissioner I knew that that was done, and that encouragement has been given to the people; but it has not been taken advantage of very largely, for what reason I don't know. I have seen some of the houses built under the suggestion, but I don't think it has been very largely taken advantage of.

44989. You have made a very interesting statement, and one of a practical character, with reference to the size and division of crofts and so on, and you have stated that you would like to see portions of land of a certain size, crofts appropriated to the class of crofter fishermen. Now, you contemplate a croft of £4, carrying a stock, I think, of about three cows, two young beasts, and a dozen sheep. I am to understand, then, from you, that you don't agree at all with the opinion of those who think that the two professions or industries of fishing and agriculture should be rather strictly divided—that fishermen should be fishermen, with some very small patch of ground, and that crofters should live by their crofts alone?—No, I totally disagree with the statement that has been made about that, for the simple reason that in the west of Scotland, in the islands, the fishing is not continuous. It is only the herring fishing during a certain part of the season, and then the ling and cod during another certain part, and then they go to other places for the fishing, but still the fishing is not continuous as on the east coast. Besides they have no market for the fish. They have simply to fish for curers, and they get a wretched price according to the prices given in the south. These men can never live upon their fishing alone; but if they have a bit of land on the produce of which they can partially live, and the stock of which could pay the rent of the croft, they have a home and have that land to work upon when they are not at their ordinary industry. I don't think the other system would suit in any part of the Highlands that I know of, and I know the Highlands from Cape Wrath to the Mull of Cantire pretty well. I don't know a corner where that system could be adopted.

44990. Putting it hypothetically, suppose the creation of the harbours

to which you allude, and suppose a finer description of fishing boats to be supplied, and suppose the Western Islands brought into more immediate connection by steamers with the markets, can you contemplate a period when there might be fishing villages such as exist on the east coast, forming communities living solely by fishing, or do you think it is in the nature of the country and people that the two pursuits should be allied? —Where the fishing is carried on I don't think the two could be successfully dissociated. I believe the habits of the people and the requirements of the case would always demand that they should have land, less or more, and I think the smallest portion they should have is just what I have stated.

LANARK.

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GLASGOW.Rev. Murdoch
Macaskill.

44991. The crofter fishing population, we may presume, are to live in a ring round the coast, and chiefly in connection with the places where there are harbours. But are there any places—though the Lewis is not a very wide country—in the interior, where there might be crofts of a larger class than £4, and yet not so large as a small farm? May there not be gradations? —Yes, I quite agree with that, but the centre of the Lewis is for the most part a sort of morass, only fit for summer grazing, which could not be utilised for arable land. But still there are corners where they could not have access to the sea, and where the crofts ought to be larger than I have mentioned. I have only referred to the class of fishermen crofters living near the sea.

44992. With reference to this transformation of the social and industrial condition of the island, that must surely be a work of time. There are leases existing, and there is such a thing as the will of the proprietor. Do you contemplate that the law is to interfere to break leases, or to force the proprietor to do such and such things? —No, I never dreamt of such things, because the people in their petition specified it was only when the lease was out. They don't contemplate any violent breach of the law. They only want the land when out of lease, and the farm of Park happened to be out of lease, and an arrangement could have been made in that case.

44993. But keeping in view that proprietors have a will and some independence of action, and that farmers do possess leases, and that, therefore, the transformation of a country, however small, is a work of time, do you entirely repudiate the idea that the two processes of relief by expansion at home and emigration abroad could be going on together? —I oppose emigration, and I oppose emigration for the next century in the Highlands. I oppose it on principle. I know for a fact that there is plenty of land in the Highlands, if it could be utilised, for the present population; and secondly, I object to emigration because the strong are sent away and the weak are retained. I oppose it again, because these people are deprived of their religious privileges. According to the statement I heard here yesterday from the Canadian agent, I find they are so scattered and wide spread that access to means of grace and access to education cannot be had by the people as it is just now, and they prize those privileges more than anything else. I oppose it also, because these people, if forced to go away, will not retain the patriotic feeling towards our land that they should have in the colonies.

44994. So you repudiate any idea of emigration for the relief of the Lewis altogether? —Altogether.

44995. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—In the scheme for dividing the Lewis you propose to give some land to the cotters who have none? —Yes.

44996. But you propose to leave the crofters in possession of the same crofts they now hold? —I have specified crofts of five or six acres.

44997. You are not going to take any other farms to provide for

LANARK. the crofters, but a certain number of farms to provide for the cottars?—
GLASGOW. Yes, and for the crofters where they are too close, and the crofts are not of the size I have specified. I have specified the size I would apply to the whole island, and I would make that apply to the crofters as well as the cottars.

Rev. Murdoch Macaskill. 44998. Do you think it is a profitable thing to cultivate land by hand labour?—I believe in some places land can be far better cultivated by hand than by the plough. I myself have wrought the spade to some extent, and I believe the land can be cultivated far more thoroughly and better in some places by the spade than the plough, and I know in some parts of the Lewis it is so.

44999. You mean there are some places so rocky that a plough will not work?—Yes.

45000. But where it can be cultivated by the plough, it cannot be so profitably cultivated by the hand?—Of course it takes time, but in many cases here time is not such a consideration.

45001. In years of scarcity is there not always a danger of scarcity occurring in the Lewis?—I hold that if the people had the land in that way there would be no famine at all. I believe it arises from the present miserable arrangements.

45002. I have not the statistics by me, but when we were at Stornoway we had the figures before us, not of rental but of acreage, and we made out that there was not acreage sufficient for the people in the Lewis?—The acreage of the Lewis is 417,460 acres. The population is 25,000 over all, including Stornoway, and that would leave a pretty large acreage to each individual.

45003. It would give about 80 acres apiece to each of 5000 families?—Exactly.

45004. But 80 acres would not keep the stock you propose to give them—three cows and twelve sheep?—Well, say six acres of arable.

45005. It is calculated that it takes five acres for a sheep in better districts?—Let us take 22,000 of a crofter population, leaving out the people of Stornoway altogether.

45006. There is another question to which you referred. You said the rent should be payable out of the produce. Now, when an occupier of land holds only what gives him occupation for a portion of the year, can he expect to pay the rent out of the produce?—Although some members of a family don't work the land the whole year, there are some members who are always about it in some way or other. The head of the family might not be engaged, but some members of the family are always engaged about the croft.

45007. If the occupier has sufficient land to keep him in full occupation I can understand the rent should be payable out of the land, but otherwise he cannot expect to get both rent and living out of it?—I think Mr Mackay, the chamberlain, gave a case in which he let a farm last year to crofters, and in which the cattle were specified at one for every £1 of rental. I gave less, so far as I remember.

45008. Do you think it reasonable that a man who has not enough land to keep him in occupation should get both rent and living out of it?—He would not get both rent and living. The produce would not support him, but I hold it ought to pay the rent.

45009. A certain portion should be set apart for rent?—Exactly so.

45010. *Professor Mackinnon.*—You have expressed the opinion that under an improved system the present population in the Lewis could be maintained in comfort?—Yes.

45011. Doctor Macrae, in Stornoway, expressed the same opinion, and

you are probably both better qualified than most people to give a judgment on the matter. We were told that more than half the surface was under crofters just now, and I presume the figures are fairly accurate. Now, all those we examined wanted more than twice the land they already have. I was unable myself at the time to see how they could be satisfied?—To say that more than half the land is under crofters is certainly not a correct statement, because I know the farm of Park is fully a third of the whole surface of the Lewis, and there is not a single crofter in it. I know again that in Knock, the most populous parish, there are Dignish, and Gormiclete, and another, and I know these three farms are pretty nearly as large as what the crofters have. They are at least two-thirds of what the crofters have.

45012. If I remember well, from the present survey of the estate, it was given to us as a matter of actual figures that more than one half of the surface was under crofters. Your opinion is quite different?—My opinion is different certainly.

45013. Then you are not of opinion that the land which they have just now is, upon the whole, much too highly rented?—No. I hold this with regard to it. Mr Mackay, the chamberlain, made a computation of the rent per acre, and the land in possession of the large farmers and the land in possession of the crofters, and he maintained that the land in the hands of the large farmers yielded a larger rental per acre than that in the hands of the crofters; but he refrained studiously from giving you any conception of the quality of the land. I hold that the land of the crofters is in the meantime doubly rented compared with the land held by the large farmers, for this reason, that to form these large farms the best of the land was taken, as in all other places in the Highlands.

45014. The exact figures given to us were an area of 404,000 odds: forests 34,000 odds; large farms, arable and grazing, 124,000; glebes, 25,000; home farm and round about town, 1500; thus leaving about 240,000 acres in the possession of crofters. That is more than half?—But there is a question in connection with it. In connection with the large farms there is a far larger extent of arable ground, and I should like to know if the chamberlain included the bogs and moors which go under the name of grazing for the crofters?

45015. No doubt he did.—That settles the question. My answer would simply be this, ‘Yes, I will look at the question if you will give me ‘the kind of land, but I will hand you back 2000 acres of the land in the ‘hands of the crofters for 1000 acres of the land in the hands of the large ‘farmers.’

45016. My difficulty when we were in Stornoway was that every person who came before us declared that he required twice what he had, and some declared they would require three times as much, and when the surface acreage was looked at I had a difficulty as regards the result. It is partly removed by you when you specify the size of the croft?—Of course the demands of human nature are very unreasonable sometimes, but it is not what they would demand, but what they could properly use.

45017. A great deal of the difficulty is removed, but I cannot say it is removed altogether by the croft you have spoken of. A £4 croft, with three cows and two young beasts, may suffice in Lewis, but it is nothing like what would be required in the Southern Highlands?—Yes, I know it is very different from what would be required in the Knapdales and other places.

45018. Well, you would have the great bulk of the population upon crofts of this kind, and then others on small farms?—Yes.

45019. Would you contemplate no gradation between the two?—Yes;

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Rev. Murdoch Macaskill.

LANARK.

my idea is not the present farm of £100 rental, but in some cases away from the sea I would have crofts of £10, and that ought to include land and stock to keep a man engaged, and to support him also. I know in the past history of Lewis that crofts of that kind supported them in comfort, and enabled them to educate their families well.

45020. There are crofts in Lewis of the smaller size you contemplate?—Yes, a large number.

45021. Are there any considerable number of the crofters that are fairly comfortable, leaving out a bad year?—There is of course this in connection with it, as to their grazings which they used to have in summer. They used to go to the shielings in summer for two months, and let the pasture at home rest. There has been a tax put upon them for that of 2s. for every cow and 3d. for every sheep, and they have to appoint a shepherd. I don't know whether the factor pays the shepherd, and taxes them at the rate of 3d. or not, but that is done, and this in their state of poverty, with those cottars about them. There is a son married, and he gets a bit of the croft; a daughter is married, and she and her husband get a bit of the croft; and of course the croft is spoiled on the family, because of the wretched arrangement that has been going on for years.

45022. You would increase the rental considerably if you would maintain its present population and give each family a £4 croft, and leave a good margin for large crofts and small farms?—It would increase it considerably.

45023. You think that if the land which is at present under farms were given in a measure to crofters they could well afford to pay the figure they pay for their small places?—Yes. They could make it a far better thing. They could manure it better and work it better. By being at the fishing they might afford to pay £4 for a house and the comforts of a bit of land, while the larger farmer could not pay at the same rate when he has to take his living out of the farm.

45024. If harbours were in those various places you spoke of, do you think that all round the coast on both sides of the island there would be a reasonable prospect of the fishing industry being pursued with success?—I have no doubt of it. In Knock there are no less than 115 widows in a population of 3000, largely the result of drownings in consequence of there being no harbours.

45025. The people themselves stated to us at Lochs that the fishing had practically deserted that place of late years?—Well, with the present boats they have, they cannot go to a distant fishing ground. They have been fishing near the coast all the time I remember; but there are banks in the Minch where they could go in the spring and come back with boat-loads of fish, but they cannot go with the small boats they have. These small boats they have to haul up when they come home, and of course six men could not haul the large boats up the beach.

45026. I am speaking of the people in the Lochs district and not the people in the Ness district?—I am referring to them also. They stay too near the shore. If they went twenty miles out into the Minch they would get capital fishing, but they cannot on account of the kind of boats they have.

45027. You think there is equally good fishing within reach of the Lochs people?—I think so.

45028. And you are decidedly of opinion that the fishermen should have a small croft?—Certainly, and harbours to enable them to prosecute the fishing.

45029. Of course, there is very good fishing ground round about the Lewis, but the type of croft you contemplate for the fishermen is about

the type that prevails on the north of Sutherland?—But then the fishing there is not as good as in the Lewis, and they have no harbours there also. A Lewis man could live on that croft far better than a Sutherland man, if he had the advantages of good harbours.

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

45030. Of course, you look to the sea round about Lewis as the great source of livelihood for the population?—Exactly.

Rev. Murdoch
Macaskill.

45031. And by keeping the great bulk of the people on this type of croft you think the whole population at present, if not a larger population, might be maintained in comfort?—Yes; besides, they would be the best source of supply for the navy and merchant shipping, for our shipbuilding yards, and many other industries. Those stalwart fishermen, accustomed to the sea from their boyhood—you could not have a better class for the purpose.

45032. Probably in that way they would be less suited for emigration abroad?—They would not do. You might send them to Canada or Manitoba, and they would be just like sea-fowl out of the sea; they could not live there. They would break their hearts with home sickness before they would be half a year there. I know some of them who went and had to come back.

45033. Have you known the circumstances of a good number of the Lewis men who went abroad some years ago?—No, I cannot speak definitely of that, but I know the stories of those who came back are not so rosy hued as some we have listened to. I know some who came back, and their stories are very different.

45034. I presume that could be said about most of the emigrants from the west—that the report is more or less coloured by the party from whom it proceeds?—Exactly.

45035. The proprietors certainly allowed subdivision in Lewis, but I suppose it must be admitted that the people made it somewhat difficult for the proprietors to put a stop to it?—Yes, I quite allow that the proprietor had a very difficult task.

45036. But you would make a most stringent law on the subject?—A most stringent law that it should never be allowed again.

45037. Well, there is no doubt there would require to be a considerable outflow in the future?—No doubt of that, and they would find it in the navy and merchant shipping. They would go to the colonies when they are better educated, and they would go to shipbuilding trades as many of them have gone, and they would go to the learned professions. Sir James, by his schools, has sent away a large number of educated young men, and they would find an outlet here and there, I have no doubt.

45038. There are not many of them going to the navy just now?—There are some of them in the navy.

45039. Are there many, do you think?—I cannot tell you the number; I know some who are now retired on a pension in Stornoway. One is a cousin of my own, who was in the Crimean war and in the Baltic, and who is now at home after having served his twenty-two or twenty-four years.

45040. Is the naval reserve a body of recent creation?—No, it has been going on for the last twenty years. They used to go to Greenock for drill, but they are now drilled in Stornoway. There is a large proportion of the male population in the Lewis that have been trained in the naval reserve.

45041. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You told us you were a native of the parish of Knock?—Yes.

45042. And I presume you have taken a great interest in your countrymen for a considerable period?—Yes.

LANARK. 45043. The estate of the Lewis has been before the public rather prominently of late, has it not?—Yes.

GLASGOW. 45044. Is it the fact that the authorities of the island went forth to the Rev. Murdoch large centres of commerce wanting charity?—Yes, that is quite true.

Macaskill. 45045. I suppose I may take it that you as a Lewis man cannot look upon that without considerable regret?—That is so. I took part in it, but it was with very considerable regret.

45046. And I suppose you would not like that such a state of matters should continue?—Certainly not.

45047. You gave your opinion that the present population of the island was not too great for its capabilities. When you are asked to divide that into acres, I presume that is the only one way of putting the question?—Yes.

45048. You did not state, when you were asked the size of croft, anything about the number of acres of pasture?—No.

45049. I presume that was because one acre of pasture is very different from another acre of pasture?—Yes.

45050. And you think, upon reconsideration, that even leaving some of the large farms, which you say formed homes from which many good people went forth into the world, that there is quite enough land in the Lewis to support the present population?—Yes, that is my opinion.

45051. And you base that upon this fact, that so much of the good land of the island is occupied by so few people?—Exactly.

45052. *The Chairman.*—Before you leave I should like to ask whether you have worked it out as an arithmetical problem—have you ascertained what area would be necessary for the constitution of such a class of crofts all over the Lewis as you have alluded to?—No, I have not made it out for the whole of the Lewis. I have been guided mostly by my experience in my youth at home and the part I knew best.

45053. I hardly wish to discourage the idea of such a scheme as you have sketched, if it could be realized with justice to all parties, but so far as my limited arithmetical powers go I cannot make out that it would be possible, on the area of the island. You speak of twelve sheep. We have always understood that we must take an average of five acres for a sheep, and we have sometimes heard of eight acres, and sometimes of three, but it has been represented to us that five is a very fair average?—Yes, but I am referring to the kind of small sheep we have in the Lewis, and we must remember they are very different from the large class of Highland cattle and the best stock of blackfaced sheep; otherwise I might have modified my calculation.

45054. But even with reference to small cattle, a cow is reckoned as equal to five sheep. We could hardly take the area for a cow as less than twenty to twenty-five acres, and twelve sheep would be sixty acres. I don't wish to trouble you with an estimate at the present moment, but you will find that if you have 4000 families to be provided for in this way, striking off 1000 families for those who have less land and those who have more, if you have 4000 families each with a croft such as you have delineated, you occupy far more than the whole area of the Lewis. So it seems to me that you might reconsider the matter?—I only expressed it as my opinion. I have not entered into niceties of calculation.

HENRY WHYTE, Commercial Clerk, Glasgow (30)—examined.

Henry Whyte. 45055. *The Chairman.*—We have had the names of a good number of

delegates or representatives of different societies sent in to us, but it is impossible for us to take the whole of them. We have, therefore, asked you, who, I believe, are the secretary, to come forward as the representative of all. Are you prepared to make a statement?—No.

LANARK.

—
GLASGOW.

Henry Whyte.

45056. You do not desire to give evidence?—No, because it was understood at the meeting that each delegate was to submit evidence regarding something peculiar to the district from which he was, and therefore it was left to them. There was a sort of *résumé* of the evidence submitted at the meeting, but it was understood that each delegate was to give the evidence from his own particular district, and therefore I am not in possession of any of the facts of the other witnesses.

45057. And you don't desire to make a statement at present?—No. The only statement I would like to make is that an opportunity be given to those delegates at another meeting of the Commission, because there are very important delegates from districts that have not been visited by the Commission.

45058. Could any of these delegates come to Edinburgh?—Some of them might. Others have come considerable distances to Glasgow, and are here at the present moment.

45059. Have they all got written statements?—Some of them have. One or two are to be examined in Gaelic.

45060. From what part of the country do those come who are to be examined in Gaelic?—One from Skye and one from the neighbourhood of Oban.

45061. These are parts of the country which we have already visited. When we heard of delegates from the different societies we rather contemplated gentlemen who had general or speculative notions and suggested remedies. We did not look forward to receiving from these societies local crofters?—Some of those witnesses that have not yet been examined are of the kind you have specified, and others are from districts that either have not been well represented, or have not been represented at all in your visits.

45062. I think we bestowed more time on Skye than on any other place?—Yes, but there are districts or portions of districts which think they have not been so well represented as they might have been.

45063. That may be a subject for consideration afterwards. I cannot express any opinion upon it at this present moment?—There is one gentleman here whom we should like to be allowed to make a statement.

ANDREW Ross, Teacher, Paisley (61)—examined.

45064. *The Chairman.*—You have a written statement?—I have a written statement, and I may say it is entirely suggestive of remedies for present grievances.

45065. Then will you read your statement?—‘I am the son of a crofter, and from earliest years until the twenty-third year of my age I wrought on a Highland croft of about three and a half acres. I may say that for part of that time I was virtually a crofter, because I had to manage for my widowed mother. The croft held by her, and on which I was brought up and laboured, was at Brora in Sutherlandshire. I may state that my mother with her parents were evicted from Dunrobin Glen at the time of the Sutherlandshire clearances. They got a small space at Backies, in the neighbourhood of Golspie, to convert into a croft. At her marriage my mother settled in the village of Golspie. Shortly after the death of

LANARK. ' my father, she was, with a family of five, removed by the factor at the
 ——————
 GLASGOW. ' instigation of a stepson, to the croft at Brora. I wish in this statement
 ' and in my verbal evidence to refer to my personal knowledge and experi-
 Andrew Ross. ' ence of the life of a crofter, and to state briefly what, after a life-long
 ' study, I consider to be the best means for their improvement. In order
 ' that my position may not be misunderstood, I have to state that I hold
 ' no extreme or radical views on the land question. I am no communist.
 ' I do not wish to exterminate landlords. Only as a lover of my fellow-
 ' countrymen and as a patriot (for the question has a most important
 ' national aspect), I appeal to Highland landlords to remember that
 ' property has its duties as well as its rights, and to entreat them to attend
 ' to these duties ere it be too late. The discharge of their duties to the
 ' tenants will result in such advantages to themselves as will amply reward
 ' them. The path of duty here is plain and thoroughly practicable. It
 ' requires no legislation. The landlords have the means and ample power
 ' at their disposal for the discharge of their duty. I may state, without
 ' enumerating them, that the crofters have many real, substantial griev-
 ' aces. I consider the greatest of these grievances to be the painful,
 ' depressing feeling produced on their minds by the fact that they are
 ' mere tenants at will—that they are absolutely at the disposal of the
 ' landlord, or rather of the factor. The factor was monarch of all he
 ' surveyed, and with his right or rather power there was none to dispute.
 ' I have often analysed my own feelings as a crofter, especially in connec-
 ' tion with what transpired at and after the Disruption, and I always
 ' arrived at the same conclusion, namely, that entire dependence on, and
 ' being completely at the mercy of the factor, produced a feeling the most
 ' depressing, I might add the most demoralising. I desire to speak with
 ' the utmost respect of the Sutherland family. More kind-hearted and
 ' indulgent landlords did not exist than the members of that family who
 ' were in possession of the estate during my residence in the county. I
 ' am satisfied they were ignorant of most, if not of all the harsh treatment
 ' received at the hands of the factor and the other officials, but it was done
 ' in their name, and they must therefore be held responsible. I shall first
 ' refer to the extent of land held by the crofter. My own experience co-
 ' incides with the evidence given everywhere that the croft is far too small
 ' to enable a family to live in comfort. This brings me to one of the chief
 ' causes of all the grievances complained of. If the crofter is to be located
 ' in the Highlands, he must have sufficient land to maintain himself and
 ' his family properly. The amount of land held by him must be sufficient
 ' for his proper maintenance, independent of external resources, such as
 ' fishing, &c. A certain amount of stress is being laid on the fishing as a
 ' source of subsistence to the crofter. The fishing round our western and
 ' northern coasts is too important to be considered merely as supplemen-
 ' tary to the crofter's means of living. Besides the two industries, farming
 ' and fishing, are so entirely incompatible that they cannot be combined.
 ' Application to the one unfits the individual for the other. Not only so,
 ' but it must be evident that the one can be prosecuted only at the expense
 ' of the other. I mean, of course, continuous fishing, that during the year
 ' including the herring and white fishings. The herring fishing, as
 ' prosecuted in my early days on the east coast, can be prosecuted by the
 ' crofter, and that often very much to his advantage. The fishing then
 ' extended from the middle of July till the end of August. This involved
 ' an absence from his home of only six weeks, and at a season of the year
 ' when he can be best spared from his croft. The fishing, as a means of
 ' subsistence to the crofter, must be altogether excluded in considering his
 ' improvement. The land alone must supply all that is required for this

' purpose. If the crofter has to supplement the produce of his croft for
' the support of his family and that of his stock, he will come ultimately
' to bankruptcy, poverty, and ruin. My next proposition is, that unless the
' crofter holds as much land as will admit of a regular rotation of crops,
Andrew Ross.
the land will, in the course of time, become unproductive, the capital
' and labour expended will have no adequate return. Poverty and
ruin will be the result. Again, the crofter from his surround-
ings and his remoteness from the great centres of industry and
remunerative employment, must be independent of all external
sources of aid. His surroundings forbid him maintaining himself by
wages. From the very nature of things, the Highlands and Islands do
not, and cannot present such a field of employment as will enable him
to live exclusively by wages. This, as brought out in the evidence, has
been tried and failed. Sir Alexander Matheson settled several tenants
on a part of his estate. They had a home and a plot of land provided.
It was intended they should support themselves by wages. They found
employment for a few years in making improvements on the estate.
The improvements were completed. The men were thrown idle; in vain
they looked for other employment in the district. By such arrangements
the foundation of future famine and distress is being laid. The croft or
farm must be to the Highland crofter his only visible means of living.
I shall next refer briefly to the amount of land required for such a croft
as I have indicated. The land divides itself into arable and hill pasture.
If hill pasture for summer grazing cannot be had, the amount of land
constituting a croft should be at least thirty acres. On the other hand,
if hill pasture is available, twenty acres would suffice. The crofter, in
order to succeed, must be independent of the co-operative system so pre-
valent in the Highlands, in which neighbouring tenants combine for
ploughing and harrowing. This system is opposed to the proper cultiva-
tion of the land. To put it in another form—whether there are the two,
arable land and hill pasture, or arable land alone, the crofter must, in
either case, have a pair of horses. It will be noticed from the evidence
given before the Royal Commissioners that the crofters are modest in
their demands. I believe they are too modest. They ask a fair field
and no favour. But for reasons for which they are not to blame they
scarcely demand a fair field. The quantity of land they state as
sufficient for a croft is too small. The one horse idea is not compatible
with independence and complete success and comfort. There must be a
pair of horses, and as much land as will admit of a regular rotation of
crops. My conclusion under this head is, that it is not the duty of a
Highland landlord to assign to a crofter less land than will maintain him
and his family in comfort and leave at the year's end a balance, however
small, on the right side. Another subject I desire to touch on is, the
rent paid by the crofters. Are the rents too high, or in other words are
they rackrented? I think the evidence already given proves that in most
parts of the Highlands and Islands rents are far too high. Highland
estates, when brought into the market, command fabulous prices—prices
out of all proportion to their agricultural and pastoral value. The
unrivalled beauty of the scenery of the Highlands, their adaptability for
sport, and now the formation of deer forests have completely revolutionised
the value of landed property in the Highlands. The selling and letting
of these are not on strictly commercial principles. Grouse-shooting and
deer-stalking are for the pleasure of the few who can afford such an
expensive luxury. The prices paid for these ought not to form an
element in determining the rents paid for land in the Highlands for
agricultural and pastoral purposes. It has been stated in evidence that

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

LANARK.

GLASGOW.

Andrew Ross

' these forests are not suitable for sheep and cattle. Sheep and cattle will
 ' subsist during summer where deer can. The land is of some value for
 ' summer grazing for sheep, &c. What then is the value of these forests
 ' considered as sheep pasture? I have read somewhere of a deer forest
 ' containing 60,000 acres, or upwards of ninety square miles, being let for
 ' £3000. I may be wrong in the quantity of land given, I tried but failed
 ' to verify the figures. The error is not, I think, so great as to sensibly
 ' affect my argument. Such land is capable of maintaining at least one
 ' sheep per 50 acres. If this be considered too low an estimate, I am
 ' willing for the sake of argument to make it two sheep or even three per
 ' 50 acres, although I believe I am nearer the truth at one sheep per
 ' 50 acres. What then would be the rent of such a forest, as a sheep
 ' farm, at the rate of £20 per 100 sheep? At the rate of one sheep per
 ' 50 acres, the flock would be 1200 sheep and rent £240; at two sheep, the
 ' flock would be 2400 and rent £480; and at three sheep, the flock would
 ' be 3600 and rent £720, instead of £3000. This does not include winter
 ' keep, so that £720 is too high a rent. Truly the lessees pay too dear
 ' for their whistles, and landlords should remember that a whistle is not
 ' a toy that will always amuse. Pleasure and the sources of pleasure are
 ' always changing. The pleasures of to-day may not be those that will
 ' satisfy twenty years hence. The landlord, therefore, who resists the
 ' temptation, and who instead of enforcing his rights, kindly and faithfully
 ' discharges the duties which Providence has laid upon him, will in the
 ' end be the gainer. So much for deer forests and the influence of these
 ' artificial rents on lands in the Highlands. The rents paid by crofters
 ' may be tested in another way. Let us take the land held by them
 ' and place it alongside agricultural lands in the Lowlands, for example
 ' land in the neighbourhood of our large towns, and compared with these
 ' I will venture to say that any intelligent practical agriculturist will
 ' value them at less than half the value of the latter. Again, transfer the
 ' agricultural land in the neighbourhood of our larger towns to the remote
 ' Highlands and Islands, and it will be valued at least at one half its
 ' present value. From all these considerations, I think I am justified in
 ' asserting that the rent paid is, on an average, quadruple what it should
 ' be. In the matter of rent and holding, I might compare the condition
 ' of the Highland crofter with that of the Irish tenants, who have been for
 ' some time and are still verging on rebellion because of the land question.
 ' From a residence of some years in Connaught, and an intimate acquaint-
 ' ance with the tenants of that part of Ireland, I could show that the con-
 ' dition of the Irish tenants is much superior to that of the Highland
 ' crofter. My contention is that the Highlands, owing to the facilities for
 ' sport afforded by them, must be removed from the list of subjects that
 ' come under the ordinary rules of commerce. If they are to become once
 ' more the home of the Highlander, we must devise some plan of fixing a
 ' fair rent. With a fair rent and security against capricious removal, he
 ' will soon, by his conduct, disprove the charges of indolence and laziness
 ' brought against him by ignorant and interested parties. I must shortly
 ' refer to the fishing. It is too important to be ignored altogether. I
 ' only insist on the crofter's case being considered in relation to the land
 ' and apart altogether from the fishing. In determining his future con-
 ' dition, the fishing ought not to form an element. At present he is com-
 ' pelled to try the fishing to procure the means of subsistence which the
 ' croft denies him. Should the fishing fail, he is at his wit's end, and
 ' failure, as a rule, it is sure to be, for the simple reason that from his
 ' impoverished state he is not able to avail himself of the best appliances
 ' for prosecuting the fishing. The success of the fishing is closely con-
 ' nected with a right solution of the land question. Give the crofter

' sufficient land on favourable terms. Let him have inducements to farm LANARK
' properly, and there will grow up in the course of time a surplus popula- —
' tion—that is, a population whose labours will not be required on the GLASGOW.
' croft, or if required, only to a limited extent. This surplus will, in looking Andrew Ross
' out for a sphere of employment, naturally betake itself to the fishing
' which lies so invitingly at the very door. And this they will do all the
' more advantageously because they are not forced to it from necessity,
' and also because of the capital basis of operation they have in the com-
' fortable home on the croft or farm. They will engage in this industry
' not only free of debt, but with the very best appliances. By such a
' settlement of the land question as I have suggested there would spring
' up a class distinct from the crofters, a fishing population devoting itself
' exclusively to fishing. We would have soon on the west coast what has
' all along existed on the east coast of Ross, Sutherland, and Caithness,
' two classes, crofters and fishermen, each devoting its whole time and all
' its energies to its own proper work. With such inducements and with
' the aid of steam now so largely employed, the fishing on the west coast
' should soon outstrip that of the east. Farming and fishing cannot suc-
' cessfully be combined. I can see no objection to the fisherman having
' along with his house a plot of ground on which to grow vegetables or
' maintain a cow, but more he cannot profitably cultivate. But lastly,
' emigration is proposed as a remedy for the grievances complained of.
' Now emigration *per se* cannot be a remedy. Emigration has been
' tried once and again, and it did not cure the evil. The crofters
' remaining are no better off. Their circumstances have not in the least
' been improved in consequence of the emigrations that took place. The
' reason is evident. Those emigrations were not carried out in order to
' effect an improvement in the condition of the crofters. They were
' carried out in order to convert the land into sheep farms. If the country
' is prepared to completely depopulate the Highlands, emigration is the
' simplest and most effective remedy; but I do not believe the country
' will sanction such a remedy. Emigration may come in, but only as
' auxiliary to a properly devised scheme for the improvement of the crofters.
' If in carrying out such a scheme it should be found necessary to remove
' part of the population, emigration may be resorted to, although I believe
' the crofters can be improved without having recourse to emigration at
' all. There is abundance of land, either cultivated or capable of cultiva-
' tion, to meet the whole cases. All that is required is a proper distribu-
' tion of the land. The question has a national as well as a local aspect.
' What will most benefit the Highlands, and at the same time be of most
' advantage to the nation? We are bound to look at both aspects of the
' question. Can both be combined? They can, and I therefore oppose
' emigration, and plead for the immediate and permanent improvement of
' the crofters. We cannot afford to have the country drained of the most
' loyal and law-abiding part of the people. We greatly need such now-a-
' days, when treason and rebellion are preached and practised so boldly in
' certain parts of the empire. The nation is healthy and strong which has
' its urban and rural population well balanced. The physical, social, and
' moral well-being of a country depends very much on a fair proportion
' of its population being rural. The tendency at present is, and for some
' considerable time has been, to drive the population from the country into
' the town. This tendency should be checked, and the growth of a rural
' population promoted, a loyal and God-fearing people, which would be an
' honour to the country and its strength in the day of need. We may
' need their help sooner than any one anticipates, especially when we con-
' template the lapsed masses in our large towns, lying seething and
' weltering at the base of the social column, threatening every moment to

LANARK. ‘ pull it down and overwhelm society in ruin. There is another aspect. ‘ We greatly need a rural population, and especially the Highland portion of it, to supply labour for the various industries of the country. In conclusion, let me assure all whom it may concern, that the Highlanders, treated as they ought to be, are as ready now as in the past to fight our battles and defend our homes and altars. On the result of the present inquiry depends the attitude of the Highlanders to the throne and constitution. I do hope that they will not, by the continued neglect of the country to their cry of distress, be driven to sullen rebellion, but that by timeous and wise legislation their respect for law and their loyalty to the throne will be maintained and strengthened.’

45066. As you belong to the teaching profession, can you give us any information with reference to a subject that was brought very warmly before us yesterday, and that is the desirability of giving more prominence to Gaelic teaching in our elementary schools?—Well, I may say that all along I have not been in favour of that. I have felt the effects of being first brought up in my infancy and boyhood speaking the Gaelic language alone, so that when I came to use the English language, and was forced to use it, I had first to think in Gaelic and then translate it into English. In other respects, moral and religious, I am strongly in favour of the Gaelic language, but for those who have to leave the Highlands, and go to other parts of the world, it is desirable they should be accustomed to, and made to practise, the English from their very earliest days.

45067. Then you are not in favour of making instruction in the Gaelic language obligatory in the elementary schools?—No, further than that it is very useful, and indeed necessary, for the explanation of a phrase or sentence or word is better understood by a child who speaks Gaelic by giving it in Gaelic.

45068. Then, though you would not make the teaching of Gaelic obligatory, you would make a knowledge of Gaelic on the part of the teacher obligatory?—Yes, in order to enable him to teach the children more effectively in English.

45069. Then in the Gaelic-speaking districts every teacher, male and female, should be obliged to know Gaelic?—They would be very much better equipped for their duties if they knew Gaelic.

45070. You are still a Gaelic-speaking man?—Yes.

45071. Have you still pursued the Gaelic, and do you take an interest in it and read Gaelic literature?—Unfortunately, after I went to Connaught, where the Irish language is spoken, which is very different from the Gaelic of the Highlands, I got up the Irish language there in order to be able to speak to the people and instruct them, and the acquiring of the Irish and practising it for five or six years knocked the old Highland Gaelic out of my head. Of course, I understand it quite well and can speak it, but very clumsily.

45072. Then you are in favour of giving the children as perfect and complete an education in English as can possibly be done in the elementary schools?—Yes.

45073. With a view to their success in after life?—Yes.

45074. Are you not afraid that under that system the use of the Gaelic might gradually expire as a popular language?—Of course, that would be the tendency of it; and although I am a Highlander, and love my country and countrymen very well, I am not blind to the tendency for the last fifty years that the Gaelic language is dying out, and I am afraid it cannot be arrested.

45075. Then you think that is one of the things which may be lamented but which is unavoidable?—Unavoidable.

EDINBURGH, MONDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1883.

EDIN-BURGH.

Present :—

EDINBURGH.

Lord NAPIER and ETTRICK, K.T., *Chairman.*
Sir KENNETH S. MACKENZIE, Bart.
DONALD CAMERON, Esq. of Lochiel, M.P.
C. FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Esq., M.P.
Sheriff NICOLSON, LL.D.
Professor MACKINNON, M.A.

JAMES M. ANDERSON, Esq., S.S.C., Edinburgh (43)—examined.

45076. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement you wish to make?—
Yes. I appear for Mr Donald M'Raid, factor for the late Sir John Macpherson M'Leod of St Kilda, who requested me to attend and make a statement to your Lordship and the Royal Commissioners in vindication of his character as regards certain false statements made against him in a communication made to the Royal Commissioners at their meeting in Glendale in May last.

James M.
Anderson.

45077. Will you be good enough to make your statement?—I have just, through the favour of the Secretary, got the print of the minutes of evidence taken in Glendale, and the objectionable matter is printed at p. 404, and it occurs in the evidence of John Mackay of Colbost, who was appointed a delegate—and according to this evidence against his will also—to represent that township of Colbost, and who handed to your Lordship a statement signed by seventeen of the crofters in that township. It is in that statement which was quoted that the objectionable matter is contained. I may read it to your Lordship, p. 404. The statement goes on to say that 'on account of the poverty, &c.' Now, that statement, if true, represented Mr M'Raid as having wandered away from his duty to commit a gross cruelty and oppression upon those people, and I am instructed to say that that averment—these statements—are utterly devoid of truth. I have been instructed by Mr M'Raid to say so; and in point of fact, I have to explain that Mr M'Raid was not at that time—in the famine year 1846—in the island of Skye at all, but in St Kilda, engaged in distributing meal to the inhabitants of that island, as directed by Sir John M'Leod. I was requested by Mr M'Raid, who I may inform your Lordship is an old man, and has been unable to attend any of the meetings, to write to this man Mackay to withdraw the statement he made, and Mackay has written me a letter disowning whatever was contained in the paper he gave in, and with your Lordship's permission I will read the letter:—'Colbost, Skye, July 25, 1883.—Sir, your letter of the 14th duly received, and as there are so many charges against me on account of my being a delegate for the tenants of Colbost on the 21st May last, for which you wish me to apologise, and retracting all what was stated in the papers handed by me to the Royal Commissioners on account of the tenants, I may hereby state that all the tenants and delegates were left at free liberty by factors and proprietors to make their statements of whatever nature on the occasion referred to in your letter; and as to your charges against me, I can freely state that I was not

EDINBURGH. 'questioned about either potatoes nor seed of any kind by the Royal Commissioners, and if such were mentioned in the papers which were handed in by me, there was an ample opportunity granted by the said Commissioners to contradict such statements at their last meeting in Skye, where all delegates, factors, and proprietors were invited to meet to have matters being balanced. For my part, I deny of making those statements. If in writing by the tenants, I am not responsible. I am not a scholar, but an old ignorant man of 69 years, and whatever I have stated during my career I have no wish retracting.—JOHN X M'KAY.' I have made inquiry as to the party who wrote this letter for Mackay, and I am informed it was Peter M'Kinnon, postmaster, near Colbost.

45078. According to your statement, Mr Norman M'Raile was not factor at all?—No. I was instructed also to tell you that at the time in question (1846) Mr M'Raile was not factor of Colbost.

45079. The statement given in by Mackay allows that; it says he became factor in 1848. Was Mr M'Raile at that time employed in any capacity by the M'Leod family?—I am informed he had the charge of the island of St Kilda; but I have not any accurate information in regard to that. But I shall make inquiry if your Lordship wish.

45080. You are here simply to contradict a particular statement?—Yes.

45081. But not to give information in any other respect as to the employment, engagements, or deeds of Mr M'Raile at all?—His friends thought his character had been seriously attacked, and as he was an old man, unable to appear and give explanations, I was requested to appear to do so.

45082. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Are you aware that Mr Norman M'Raile has a son living with him?—I have, since I got this print, found Mr M'Raile has a son.

45083. Are you aware that he was present when the statements complained of were made?—I cannot say; I am not sure.

45084. Supposing he were, and that he is a man perfectly able to travel from one place to another, don't you think it would have been better, instead of asking an agent in Edinburgh, who cannot personally know about the circumstances, for the son to have come forward and contradicted the statement, and given the Commissioners an opportunity to cross-examine him?—I think it ought to have been contradicted at the time; but I may also explain that this matter was put into my hands in the beginning of July, the intention being to make Mackay retract and apologise; but he having disowned the statement, I ceased to have anything to do with the matter until the Commission came here, and I should have an opportunity of relating the circumstances.

45085. *The Chairman.*—Was the delegate here mentioned called upon to retract under threat of prosecution?—Yes, and he disowned the statement altogether, and his letter explains his reasons, and I thought it would be injudicious—as we wished merely to have the statement rectified—to have a Court of Session action upon the subject.

45086. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Will you hand in your letter of 14th July to Mackay?—I will. [The following is the letter referred to, by witness to Mackay:—‘9 York Place, Edinburgh, 14th July 1883. ‘Sir,—We have been consulted by Mr Norman M'Raile, late factor for the estate of St Kilda, which belonged to Sir John M'Leod, concerning certain statements you made to the Royal Commissioners at their meeting held at Glendale on 21st May last. You said that “During the famine of 1846, the proprietor sent a quantity of potatoes and

'seed to be distributed among the poor people, and instead of getting the same *gratis* as was intended, they were charged by Norman M'Raile, who had charge of the distribution, the enormous prices of £1, 16s. and £2 per boll. This they were unable to pay, and their cattle were seized and taken from them at half their value, so that they were left penniless, and a good number reduced to pauperism.' We are instructed to inform you that so far as Mr M'Raile is concerned, your said statements were false and calumnious, and that you have thereby slandered his character and injured his feelings and reputation. We therefore now call upon you, to instantly retract said statements, and apologise for having made them—the retraction and apology to be at your expense drawn up in a satisfactory manner to our client, and published also at your expense in such of the newspapers where the slanderous statements appeared as our client shall think proper. We have also to inform you that if you will not retract and apologise immediately we shall be obliged, for the vindication of Mr M'Raile's character and reputation, to serve you with a Court of Session action of damages for £500. We hope, however, to hear from you in such terms as will render that action unnecessary.—Your obedient servants, WATT AND ANDERSON. Mr John M'Kay, crofter, Colbost, by Dunvegan.]

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45087. *Professor Mackinnon.*—Do you understand this letter of Mackay as disowning the statement?—That was my construction of it; he denies having made such a statement. I attack him for making the statement, and he denies it.

45088. Our minutes bear it was a statement handed in by the people?—So I understand it. When this matter came into my hands at first, we were trusting to the reports in the newspapers.

45089. I do not see that this letter denies in the least anything in our minutes?—No. He says, 'I am an ignorant man, and am unaware of what was in the statement. I was merely the hand to give in the paper to the Royal Commissioners, and I am not responsible for what may be the contents of it.'

45090. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—The gist of it seems to be to blame the Commissioners for not contradicting it?—It seems to say that he is not responsible for it.

45091. *The Chairman.*—At any rate, you are here to contradict emphatically the specific statement that Mr M'Raile did so and so?—Yes, and to say that in point of fact he was not in the island of Skye at all during the famine year (1846), but at St Kilda distributing meal sent there by Sir John M'Leod.

45092. And that he became factor two years after that?—Two years after.

GEORGE GRANT MACKAY (57), Proprietor, Glengloy—examined.

45093. *The Chairman.*—You desire to make a voluntary statement, do George Grant you not?—I do. I should ask your Lordship's permission to occupy ten minutes in answering a number of people in three counties in the north of Scotland with which I have to do; and then I shall, if you will allow me, give my own views on the subject. Before making any statement of my own, I wish to reply to statements made by delegates from the island of Raasay, from Rosehall in Sutherlandshire, and from Strathkyle in Ross-shire; I shall do this in the fewest possible words. A complaint was made at Raasay that I had raised the rents. I intimated

EDIN- ' to them that I would charge them £1 each of an increase, seeing that
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EDINBURGH. ' produce were doubled in value within the last thirty years. I stated at
' the time I wanted no money from them, but that they should each have

George Grant ' to work eight days for it. There were a hundred able-bodied men in
Mackay. ' Rassay, but I could get very few to work. I had to get a large force of
' men from Easter Ross to carry on improvements, because they said they
' did not need to work, as they had made £12 at the fishing. They said
' "they were not in the reverence of working;" these were their words.
' In reference to the alleged increase of rent, I have to state that they
' never paid me any increase of rent, or indeed any rent at all except the
' first year. For the three years in which I knew anything of the islands,
' they only paid one rent. The year I entered they owed Mr Rainy's
' trustees a year's rent, but with the exception of one man, none of them
' paid it. I had the islands for two years, and gave employment to every
' man who chose to work. They paid the rent the first year. They paid
' nothing the second year, and I never prosecuted them—so that I cannot
' think they had much to complain of during these three years—and now,
' when my successor Mr Wood has been pouring in money among them,
' at a rate quite unprecedented in the Highlands (more than £5000
' a year), still they complain. At Rosehall, Angus Ross, crofter, gave
' evidence which is totally untrue. This man had been employed by me
' as superintendent of works, and I dismissed him from my service. He
' said when I bought the estate every tenant received a notice to quit his
' holding within forty days. That statement is not correct. In conjunc-
' tion with two gentlemen of repute, I bought the estate for the purpose
' of giving any one who wanted land perpetual fixity of tenure, and of
' course where feus were adopted, tenancy at will had to be given up.
' Ross says "that the township of Altas (where all the small tenants on the
' estate were congregated), which in Sir James Matheson's time yielded a
' rental of £200, under Mr Mackay was increased to £700, a sum which
' looked very respectable on paper, but which never could be got in." The
' statement is utterly untrue in every particular. I cannot find the rental of
' the crofts when I got possession, but the total amount of the feu-duties
' charged by me to the Altas crofters was £211, 5s. A fraud is suggested
' here on my part, when it is said the sum only looked respectable on
' paper, but never could be got in. I have to state that every shilling of feu-
' duty was regularly paid in my time, and I have been informed that
' it has been paid since. This man says, Mr Mackay "looked upon the
' crofters as ordinary stock, to be bought a certain price, and sold to those
' who would give a good enough profit." In reply, I have to state that
' the whole design on my part was to make the crofters independent
' of any landlord, and they are now independent. He says next that Mr
' Tennant was plucked as mercilessly as the crofters. Mr Tennant made
' an offer for the estate, which I accepted, and he was quite as able to
' manage his own affairs as I was. The Rosehall tenants begged of me
' to give them nineteen years' leases instead of feus, and that they would
' pay the same amount as rent. They wished this, as they did not under-
' stand feus. I declined to do this, entirely in their own interest, and to
' my serious loss. I should have £2640, 12s. more money than I now
' have, if I had given them leases instead of feus, because Mr Tennant's
' offer was 22½ years' purchase for the feus and 35 years' purchase for the
' ordinary rental. This man goes on to say that his own holding is six
' acres, for which he pays £17, 10s. as against £3, 6s. in the time of Sir
' James Matheson. That is certainly untrue, so far as I am concerned,
' because I let or feued no land to him. If he has such a holding, he

' must have taken it from somebody else. The next witness was John Sutherland, feuar, Rosehall, and his evidence in the same way shows the same utter disregard for the truth. He said I spent very little money on improvements. That is notoriously untrue. I never was anywhere that I did not spend a great deal of money in improvements. He goes on to say that the first thing Mr Mackay did was to cut down all the wood on the estate. That is not true, as any one can see who goes to Rosehall now. I cut a considerable quantity of wood, but it is still one of the most beautifully-wooded estates in the Highlands. I cut nothing but what ought to be cut. In conclusion, this man says, in answer to Lord Napier, "Greater improvements had been effected when they were tenants at will than since they got feus." If this is true, it is a sufficient answer to the present outcry for fixity of tenure. The feu I gave Sutherland for £20 made a man of him. He was a working shoemaker, who is now in greater comfort than he ever was, and he has time and leisure to be a member of the School Board of the parish. The next witness is Adam Mackay, crofter, who is a tenant of mine on the estate of Strathkyle in Ross-shire. There are twenty tenants there, paying rents from £30 to £8. This witness said he had no hill pasture; "it was all taken from them as the leases expired." He never had any hill pasture from me. He was not a tenant of mine until two years ago, and he was an utter stranger to me. I had a croft vacant, and he begged to have it, and offered to give £30 for it, which was the former rent. He says—"The crofters considered they were rented twice as high as they ought to be. In his own case he paid 10s. an acre for the meadow land. It was not worth anything like that amount. An ample price would be 5s. for the meadow land." Now, if this were true—if my land is not worth more than 5s. per acre, why did he take it at 10s. and entreat of me to give it to him, and use influence to secure it? I consider every acre of meadow I have to be good value for 12s. per acre. I never asked this man to take my land. Adam Mackay, in answer to Lord Napier, said the tenants generally would provide stones for fences if the proprietor would erect them. I feel specially aggrieved by this statement, because I have built more stone dykes for crofters in proportion to the size of my property than any man in the Highlands, and I charged no interest. Instead of these statements, the facts are these:—I gave nineteen years' leases of all these crofts at Whitsunday 1874, and the rents were regularly paid without a farthing of arrears until last December, when all the tenants suddenly found that the land was too dear, and each and all of them withheld part of the rent. This state of matters has been produced by this agitation. I found that the hill ground previously attached to those crofts was very little worth as a grazing, but that it was valuable for planting. In fact, it was not worth 4d. per acre as a grazing, but it will certainly yield 10s. per acre per annum under wood, and a considerable extent of it will yield 20s. per acre. But if it should only yield 5s. per acre, that is fifteen times its value to the crofters. I planted eight millions of trees on that ground, but it seems to be thought by this witness that I should have left it with the crofters yielding next to nothing. On looking through my papers I found a statement that, from Whitsunday 1874, when I leased these crofts, up to 31st December 1880, I expended £1002, 1s. 9d. on these crofts alone in trenching, draining, building houses and dykes, &c., being at the rate of £167 per annum for these six years, while their whole rental was £259, so that, whatever their rents were, I returned two-thirds of the money annually to themselves for their improvements, which will never be any benefit to me; and I never proposed to

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EDINBURGH. ' charge them with a farthing of interest, although I have myself been paying 4 per cent. interest for the money ever since. I have since then gone on spending more or less money in improvements, and very thanklessly, as it would now appear. The fact is that, while others George Grant Mackay. ' have been making speeches and talking sentiment about the crofters, I have been trying practically to work out this very problem under the consideration of the Commissioners. I have given absolute fixity of tenure in perpetuity on one side of the Kyle of Sutherland, and I have given nineteen years' leases on the other. I thought I was working in the interest of the crofters, for whom, generally speaking, I entertain the highest regard. But everything that is now asked for the crofters I have, during the last twenty years, proved to be a mistake. The only thing I have not tried was to let themselves be the sole judges of what the rent should be, but I am very sure that if even this were granted, and if the rents of the West Highland crofters were by any means remitted altogether, no greater mistake could be made, or greater ruin brought upon the crofters. A 50s. crofter cannot be more than 50s. too highly rented, and if these 50s. were made a gift to him, that, in my humble opinion, would not make a man of him. If that were done, the result would simply be that they would work for 40s. less than they do now. The crofters are a fine race of people and rapidly improving, and they would go on progressing if outside influences were withdrawn. The very worst teaching ignorant people could have is to impress upon them that such ills as they have is not their own fault, but the fault of other people.' That is the answer to the statements that have been made by the crofters, but in ten minutes I may state my own view, if you have no objection.

45094. If you please?—'I have written the above in reply to the statements made by the crofters with whom I am or have been connected; but if the Commissioners will allow me, I think I can show that everything that is demanded by agitators for the crofters would be injurious to them and to the owners of land and to the country. Whether my opinions are right or wrong, they are based upon the experience of my whole life. The demands put into the mouths of the crofters are—1. Fair rent; 2. Fixity of tenure; 3. Compensation for inexhausted improvements; 4. An extension of their hill grazings by cutting up the sheep farms. 1. Fair rent.—This means their idea of rent; in short, that they and their friends should be the judges of what the rent should be. They say that they want the rent to be fixed by Government valuers; but, however it is accomplished, they wish their rents to be one-half or less than they are now. Adam Mackay, who gave evidence from my property in Strathkyle, is a case in point. He was an utter stranger to me. Two or three years ago he offered £30 for a croft, which I accepted. He now says that he pays 10s. for meadow land, and that it ought not to be more than 5s. I believe the land to be good value for what he pays, and he must have thought so too before the agitation began, else why did he take it? I paid this year £7, 7s. for Highland year-old stots, which I could have bought some years ago for 30s. What would the crofter who reared them think if I had proposed to buy them at valuation? My experience has been, that when a croft was rented too low it has been managed in a more slovenly, careless, thriftless manner in consequence. I can state without fear of contradiction, that the crofters' rents throughout the Highlands are, generally speaking, extremely moderate. In proof of this, I would point out that a month's snow or frost in the Highlands does not send the people a-begging as it does in England.

' No crofter works half his time, counting ten hours in a day and six days
' in a week ; and in what other business, I would ask, can a labourer live
' by working half his time ? I have written about the crofters and High-
' land peasantry generally twenty-five years ago, and I expressed the same
' views then that I do now. 2. Fixity of tenure.—I have been an
' enthusiast for fixity of tenure, and have pretty extensively tried per-
' petual fixity and nineteen years, and I find both to be a mistake. I
' find a lease to be of no use to the landlord with this class of people, and
' that it hurts the landlord alone. The tenant does not heed its condi-
' tions, but he uses it as an engine against the landlord on all possible
' occasions. The delegate at Rosehall said that since the tenants got per-
' petual feus they have improved less than they did as tenants at will.
' No improvement of any kind can be made on an estate if the crofters
' are to have fixity of tenure. One or two illustrations will show how it
' would work. When I owned the islands of Raasay and Rona, I found
' things going on as they had done hundreds of years before. The tenants
' of Rona held their land in runrig. The arable land is only strips and
' patches among the rocks. No arable land could be had except in these
' long straggling strips. If there were ten men in a township, it might
' be thought absurd that every patch of land should be divided into ten
' pieces ! But that would be a trifling matter. The fact is, that if there
' was only one acre in a piece of ground the top of it would be divided
' into ten pieces, and the middle of it into ten pieces, and the bottom of
' into ten pieces, so that an acre would be divided into thirty pieces in
' all. The consequence was, that in the whole island there was not a
' piece of land bigger than an ordinary room. And, to crown the absur-
' dity of the whole thing, every man changed his lot every year, so that
' the ground a man had this year he would not have again for ten years.
' I divided this ground among them, and gave every man his own lot, and
' raised his rent £1, and he would be much better off by paying the in-
' creased rent under the new conditions than if he had got it under the
' old system for nothing. But what could have been done in that case if
' the crofters had fixity of tenure ? They abused me for what I did for
' them as heartily as ever they abused Dr Mackenzie for his labours among
' them at Gairloch, but I would not leave them as they were on that
' account. Again : The townships of Balchurn and Raasay was about
' 500 feet above the sea. The crofters there carried all the sea-weed up
' these 500 feet on their backs to cultivate the land by means of it. I
' saw the utter absurdity of the whole thing. I took the land from them
' (another case of howling), but I left them in their houses, with patches
' of potato land, and told them I would employ them constantly at 15s.
' a week, and that they would have to pay me 1s. a week for the holdings
' I left with them. I did it in this way as some pressure to induce them
' to work. I really intended that their wages should be 14s. a week, and
' that they should have their holdings for nothing. And that is practi-
' cally how it was. But if a man was too lazy to work, then he would
' have to pay me 1s. a week for his holding. They never made fourteen
' pence a week by the ridiculous work they had had previously. There is
' no horse in the islands (except the proprietor's), and no fan to winnow
' corn. I calculated that the whole value of the crop they raised would
' not pay for their time and expenses at Portree, when they went there and
' waited until the corn was ground into meal. If the crofters had fixity
' of tenure the landlords could not do anything to advance the people,
' and I could give any number of cases similar to those I have stated. I
' shall now explain how perpetual fixity of tenure is not successful.
' Feus used only to be worth twenty-two and a half years' purchase,

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BURGH, while ordinary land rents were worth thirty-five years' purchase. Highland estates won't now yield so much. Recent events have succeeded in driving capitalists out of the country, and already Highland land is almost as unsaleable as land in Ireland. If a landlord feus in perpetuity a piece of land for £10, for which he previously got £6, 10s. as rent, he makes no profit whatever by the transaction. On the contrary, he makes a loss, because superiorities are not so saleable as ordinary rents. Thus, then, unless the landlord's property is confiscated, tenants cannot have perpetual fixity of tenure for less than 50 per cent. above their present rents. Those waste lands at Rosehall which have been alluded to, which I feued at 5s. and 6s. per acre, were worth 3s. to 4s. per acre as an ordinary rent, including the shooting. But if the feuar does not instantly set to work to reclaim his land, the feu-duty must very soon ruin him, and I have always distinctly told them so. If, then, what the Rosehall delegate says is true, that they improved less than they did as tenants at will, that explains why the system does not succeed. Further, a number of the feuars took to borrowing money on the security of the feus, at a high rate of interest, amounting with expenses to about 7 per cent. (just as the Ryots do in India), and the interest of that money became heavier to bear than an ordinary rent would be. And land improvement companies in Aberdeen and elsewhere are much more inexorable creditors than Highland landlords. In fact, as long as land owning is considered a luxury (and it is a very costly luxury now-a-days), and men are found to be satisfied with 2½ per cent. for their money, it is impossible that poor people can afford the luxury. A feuar is, of course you understand, a landlord. The man who uplifts the feu-duty is called the superior, but he has no interest in, or rights over the land whatever, except to uplift the feu-duty. If even confiscation were attempted, and the lands were parcelled out among the crofters, rich men would gradually buy them out, and things would by-and-bye go on precisely as before, except that the present generation of tenants would profit by the transaction. 3, The next thing proposed is to give compensation for unexhausted improvements. Dean of Guild Mackenzie says—"He would have the present value of the land ascertained by independent Government valuers, and give it to the people at that valuation on a permanent tenure, and on such conditions that they or their representatives could never be removed so long as they paid their rents. In the event of their being unable to pay their rents, and having in consequence to give up their holdings, or in the event of their having of their own will, he would have the value of the land ascertained, and on the landlord refusing to pay the difference capitalised between its original and improved values, he would allow the tenant to dispose of his holding to the highest offerer. He would accept no leases on any condition," and so on. Now, a wilder scheme than this, or more unjust and tyrannical, was never concocted. The tenant is to be fixed in perpetuity; in short, be made a feuar, at a valuation. That is, the landlord cannot remove him, but when any whim seizes him he can go when he chooses. And he is to be called upon to pay the capitalised value of the difference between two valuations at any time. The tenant may sell to the highest bidder, but the landlord must not do anything of that kind. Now, land is not a thing that can be accurately valued. No man can do more than give an opinion of its value approximately. So, if the Government valuator values a croft at £10, and the tenant wishes to leave next year, and if the croft is then valued by another valuator at £15, the landlord will have to pay him the capitalised value of the £5 of difference, or £150.

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' This is the kind of thing that is euphoniously called compensation for ' unexhausted improvements. For my own part, I would have all com- ' pensation arranged for between landlord and tenant before the improve- ' ments are begun. If tenants are allowed to make what they choose to ' consider improvements without consulting the landlord, and then ' compel the landlord to pay for them, no man will care to own land if he ' can help it. Adam Mackay, who gave evidence on my property of ' Strathkyle, has two sons who are masons, and when they come home ' from time to time, when out of work or otherwise, they go on building ' without consulting me in any way. I have intimated to the tenant ' that these buildings are of no value at all to me, because when he leaves ' I mean to let his whole croft as a grass park, as I intended to do before ' I was induced to give it to him. It will be a grievous burden to me if ' I am some day held bound to pay for this work, which I not only don't ' want, but which I emphatically object to. Any idle fellow can in this ' way go on running up a bill against his landlord without his knowledge, ' concurrence, or consent, and I think that it will be an encouragement ' to unreasonable and designing people of all kinds, if legislation on these ' lines is introduced. The last thing demanded is to increase the hill ' grazings of the crofters by cutting up the sheep farms, and this demand ' has been emphasised all over the country. It is, however, a wild ' dream that can only end in disaster all round if it is attempted. I have ' had much experience in this matter. This is what the crofter would ' like, because, as I have said already, his great failing is an indisposition ' to work. If these grazings are given to the crofters they will have an ' excuse for going up the hill and idling away their time there, under the ' pretence of taking care of their sheep. That is work much more con- ' genial to the West Highland crofter than pick and spade work. But ' why not make shopkeepers and tradesmen of them? It requires much ' less skill and capital to keep a shop than to be a sheep farmer. It ' seems never to be doubted that any ignorant fellow can manage a sheep ' farm. Everybody thinks so except those who have tried it. It takes ' more brains and skill and capital to keep the wolf from the door in a ' sheep farm than in any other business or profession I know of. Where ' a skilled sheep farmer produces a sheep worth 60s, a crofter will produce ' one worth 18s. Whoever heard of crofters paying £20 for a good ' sheep to improve the blood? But the whole thing seems to me too ' absurd for argument. If this is done, it will ruin the landlords and the ' crofters too by one stroke. I have many years ago been employed in ' cutting off tens of thousands of acres of hill land from crofters and ' raising their rents at the same time, and these crofters have been ' enormously benefited thereby. Formerly the crofts were neglected and ' the hills were mismanaged, the landlord was robbed and the people in ' poverty. Now all that is changed, and from the districts I allude to ' there are no complaints before the Commissioners. What I would ' respectfully suggest for the amelioration of the condition of the crofters ' is this—1st, That the so-called friends of the crofters would let the ' crofters alone, and direct their attention to the grievances and dissipation ' and immorality of the lower orders in the towns, where there is ample ' field for any amount of patriotic effort. The Highland crofter, with all ' his drawbacks, is in happy circumstances compared with these people. ' 2nd, That landowners would direct their attention more than they have ' hitherto done to the condition of their crofters, and assist and encourage ' them. What crofters have had to complain of in many places is not ' oppression, but neglect. 3rd, That Government would take steps to ' assist and encourage emigration from those districts on the west coast

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BURGH. ' where the people have become overcrowded ; that it would direct the
— ' Post Office department to extend very largely postal and telegraphic
EDINBURGH. ' facilities throughout the Highlands ; that it would entirely do away
— ' with the law of entail ; and lastly, that it would adopt measures to
George Grant ' develope the fishing on the west coast. That Providence, which has
Mackay. ' laid down any amount of wealth all around the crofters in the sea, has
' denied them soil or climate suitable for farming ; and if the people are
' put in the way of taking their harvest from the sea, they will be
' prosperous and happy ; but no Acts of Parliament will ever make arable
' farming, or any kind of farming by crofters, successful in the West
' Highlands of Scotland. What is mainly wrong with the crofter is his
' dislike of hard work, and in many districts the want of constant
' employment. The very thing that above all things would benefit the
' poor crofter is, I fear, driven off for a generation by this unfortunate
' agitation. I mean the infusion of new blood and more capital into the
' Highlands,—the introduction of more men of wealth and enterprise and
' benevolence, like Lord Tweedmouth, who has enormously benefited
' Strathglass in every possible way. If one or two hundred more Lord
' Tweedmouths had come to the Highlands, this Commission would never
' have been asked for. But the native landowners have the interest of
' their people at heart, and are as desirous to benefit them as any stranger
' can be. I doubt if any other part of the world can show anything to
' equal the princely and benevolent and considerate rule of the great
' landowners in the Highlands who have crofting tenants ; such men as
' the Duke of Sutherland, the Earl of Seafield, Sir Alexander Matheson,
' Mackintosh of Mackintosh, two of the members of this Commission,
' and many others whom I could name. Where there are wealthy or
' resident landlords there are no difficulties with the crofters, but where
' there are landlords with a large extent of territory, and no funds to
' keep the people in profitable employment, it is in these cases that as a
' rule much poverty is to be found.'

45094*. I don't remember very accurately the circumstances under which this system of feuing was introduced upon your estate ; I should like to ask you a few questions about it again. What is the name of the property upon which this system was adopted ?—Rosehall, Sutherland, and Culrain, Easter Ross ; they amounted to 50,000 acres between them.

45095. But I think it was to Rosehall you principally referred ?—Yes.

45096. Which is occupied both as feus and as crofts, the crofts having leases of nineteen years ?—Yes.

45097. Would you kindly state with reference to the estate of Rosehall in what year you made the purchase ?—About 1870, I think.

45098. Who did you purchase it from ?—Sir James Matheson.

45099. In effecting the purchase, with whom were you associated ?—Two gentlemen in Inverness.

45100. Who may be regarded, in so far as they were co-purchasers with you, as your partners ?—They were—two of the principal solicitors in the north of Scotland in fact.

45101. What was your profession at the time ?—I was an engineer and valuator of land.

45102. And the other two gentlemen were solicitors ?—Yes.

45103. And you, in partnership, purchased the estate of Rosehall ; can you, in a few words, describe to me exactly in what condition you found it ?—I found the shooting let for £200, with the mansion house, which, I may say, cost £10,000 to build ; and there was a large sheep farm, rented about £600. I think there was only one big farm ; and the rest was in the hands of crofters or small tenants.

45104. About how many small holdings would there be?—About twenty, I think.

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45105. And were these twenty small holdings in one group?—All in one group at Altos township.

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45106. One may call it a township?—Yes.

George Grant
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45107. And it had hill grazing attached?—A bit.

45108. How large was the hill grazing?—I could not be sure, perhaps a thousand acres; I cannot be positive, but something like that.

45109. What was the gross rental of the estate?—About £1000.

45110. And the crofters paid of that about £200?—Yes; I state that in my paper.

45111. May I take the liberty of asking for what purpose you and those two gentlemen were associated for the purchase of this property? Was the object in any degree a commercial one—was it a land speculation?—Yes, it was largely. But I took advantage of the land speculation to see what I could do about the crofters, because I had taken a great interest in that question all my life previously. It was my doing entirely all that was done for the crofters; it was at my instance it was done.

45112. What next? How long did you three gentlemen hold the property together?—Some two or three, or perhaps four years. I held it after they went out.

45113. Did they sell out their interest in it to you, so that you became sole proprietor?—They did; and then I sold all my interest to Mr Tennant.

45114. May I take the liberty of asking what you three gentlemen paid for the estate?—£50,000.

45115. Did you buy it in equal shares?—No; I had the largest share.

45116. And you bought up the shares of your partners?—Yes.

45117. What did the estate stand you in altogether yourself?—I could not tell exactly that; I had more than the half of it at first, and at the end I had it all.

45118. But did it cost you the £50,000?—Yes, between us three.

45119. But when you took over their shares, did you pay them more than they gave?—Of course, a great deal more, because it yielded about £100,000 at the end; it was worth double the money we paid for it. The shooting rent explains that. There was a mansion house, which, as I have said, cost £10,000, and it, with the shooting, was let for £200, and since then the shooting alone has been yielding £2000, and it was that which principally made the profit upon the transaction—it was the shooting rent.

45120. When you became proprietor of the whole—you are not in the least bound to answer me unless you like—what did the estate cost you, the whole of it? You bought up the shares of your friends, and you had originally a considerable proportion, what did it cost you?—I don't know that I can exactly answer that. I gave one of my partners £10,000 of profit, and the other £5000.

45121. So that it cost you altogether about £65,000?—Yes, roughly.

45122. And have you sold it?—It was all sold to Mr Tennant; he got the last of it.

45123. What have you received for the property for which you paid £65,000?—Roughly, about £100,000.

45124. There has been a profit of about £35,000?—Yes.

45125. But the great part of that profit is to be accounted for by the increased sporting and pleasure rent?—Mostly.

EDIN-
BURGH.

45126. For the mansion house and buildings?—Yes.

45127. How much do you estimate that at—of the £35,000?—It is

EDINBURGH.

very difficult to say from memory; certainly £20,000 of it.

45128. So that your profit, as it were, on the land separately considered

George Grant
Mackay.

would not be above £15,000?—It was not nearly so much. I sold £12,000 worth of wood, which should have been cut down fifteen years before; a great deal of it was ninety and one hundred years old, and it was rotting on the ground. Some of it certainly should have been cut down thirty years before I got it. I cut £12,000 worth of it when I bought the estate, and you would not miss the wood now; it looks as well as ever it did.

45129. When you got the estate in this condition—I do not refer to the large farms, or mansion house, or the shooting, or anything of that sort—you found the crofters paying £200 a year of rent?—I cannot be sure of that.

45130. Or nearly. How did you deal with this area which was divided between the small tenants?—I got a plan made first, and then I divided the land, giving each man his house and his arable land, and a certain piece of the improvable hill ground in addition to it, for the very purpose that he might have work during his idle time when it would cost him nothing, and that at last he would have a compact parallelogram to himself; whereas formerly they all held their land higgledy-piggledy.

45131. You gave each an arable croft and a piece of unimproved ground conveniently situated and susceptible of improvement?—Yes, always adjoining.

45132. I presume it was imperative upon them to accept these conditions?—Not at all.

45133. I mean, if they remained on the estate?—Just so.

45134. They were to take your conditions or leave your property?—What they would have liked was to be let alone.

45135. I am merely speaking as a matter of fact to realise the thing exactly to my own mind. They were to take these conditions you offered them or leave the estate?—I suppose so.

45136. Then your object was to convert these little crofts with the adjacent improvable hill pasture into feus as much as possible?—Yes.

45137. Did you give the tenants of these little new holdings which you created the option of accepting feus or remaining as tenants under lease?—My statement said expressly that they asked me to leave them on nineteen years' leases instead of giving them feus, and that they would pay me the same rent if I would do so. They were afraid of the feus, because they were a new thing, and they did not understand them; but they understand them now.

45138. But still there were feus created and leaseholds?—No, I did not give any small tenants leases; I gave them all feus.

45139. You did not retain any as leaseholders?—No, except those who had leases before.

45140. Then you gave them the option of taking a feu or leaving the property?—Well, it never was an option in that way. Highland crofters never think of leaving on any consideration. There was no talk of option.

45141. But that would have been the result?—I don't know; I am not very sure. If they had all stood out I don't think I would have been so hard as to turn them away. I am sure I would not. If they did not like it, and did not understand and did not trust me, I certainly would

not have faced the idea of turning out twenty crofters. I have brought in crofters largely, and did not want to turn them away.

45142. I don't want to impute harshness to you ; I wish merely in realise the terms you made ?—I did not do such a thing, and am not capable of doing it.

45143. If these men had said, 'We don't want feus ; we prefer leases,' what then ?—They said they did not want feus and would prefer leases, but I knew better than themselves what was good for them ; it was very much better for them to have feus than to have leases. They are very much better off now with perpetual feus than with leases. There has been a change in the ownership of the estate, and there may be another, but that won't affect them now.

45144. You would not give them leases, but for their good insisted on making them feuars ?—Yes.

45145. I also understand from you that if you had said, 'We don't want the feus ; we would rather remain tenants at will,' you would have left them as tenants at will ?—Certainly, I never would have removed a whole township.

45146. You would never have removed them as a body ?—Certainly not. I never did such a thing, and would not do it ; I would have given in if they had combined in that way, even although doing so would not have been for their own good.

45147. If they had struck, then you would have let them stay as they were ?—Yes, I would ; I have often done it.

45148. You completed, or nearly completed, this work, and you converted the whole area occupied by these twenty small tenants into a large plantation ?—No, none of it was made plantation. I did not plant any of the land.

45149. I think the hill ?—That was another estate ; my own estate in Ross-shire.

45150. Had the Rosehall people no hill pasture ?—About a thousand acres.

45151. That is not planted ?—No.

45152. What became of that ?—It was feu'd out in separate lots as moor ground alone.

45153. Then the whole, including the thousand acres of hill pasture, are feu'd ?—Well, not the whole of it, but a good deal of it was ; most of it was, I believe. It was all thrown open to the public as feus, and they took it up where they liked.

45154. Were the whole of the twenty tenants converted into feuars ; I understood some remained as tenants ?—No, I think they all got feus, every one of them.

45155. After they became feuars and the transaction was completed, what was the aggregate rental of the area which formerly paid £200 ?—I don't know—the hill ground and all ; I did not count that up. Somebody said it was £700 ; perhaps it was. I cannot tell.

45156. You cannot tell by how much the rental of this area was raised by your operation ?—No ; you see it gets mixed, because they got the shooting, and that was the most valuable thing on the whole property. They got the shooting as well as the land, and that was paying a couple of thousand pounds a year. But that has been deteriorated now by these crofts. I cannot single out what the crofts would be alone. The shooting rent is the most valuable part of that moor ground ; it is worth more as shooting than grazing.

45157. But there was no shooting rent included in the original £200 ?—No.

EDIN-
BURGH.

EDINBURGH.
George Grant
Mackay.

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George Grant
Mackay.

45158. You know what the shooting value now is?—Well, it is sold to three or four different parties; but after I had sold two-thirds of the estate I got about £550 of shooting rent, I think, for the remaining third. The proprietors who bought the other parts shoot over them themselves, so that I cannot say what the rent is. I know one shot 700 brace of grouse last year; but, as I said, I calculate that the shooting, which formerly yielded about £200, now yields about £2000—would do so in the market.

45159. You cannot tell me what increase of rent there was upon the agricultural part?—I think they just about paid their old rents, except that the hill was taken from them.

45160. About the same as they paid before, but without the hill?—Just so; which they were much better without, according to my humble opinion. It was doing them no good, and it was a great loss to me. I don't think it is a good thing for small tenants to have big ranges of hill.

45161. They actually pay about the same amount for the arable land as feus which they were formerly paying as tenants at will?—I think so, roughly. I am only speaking roughly from memory. I think it is about that.

45162. Then your operation converted these tenants at will into proprietors without any increase of payment whatever?—Well, there might have been a little. I don't like to say definitely, because somebody might bring up statistics showing it was different.

45163. But very little?—Not much. I feued the land at £1 an acre, and charged 5s. or 6s. for moor; so that the arable land was not raised at all. They were not paying more than they were paying as rent.

45164. Then how do you account for the people being worse off, less industrious, and less happy on land which is their own than they were before when they were on another person's land holding as tenants?—It is very marvellous; I don't believe it. This man, John Sutherland, is a gentleman now, and he was a very poor man when I took him up, and yet he comes and makes a complaint that he was ill-used. I never was so astounded as at that man coming up. I made a man of him.

45165. But you said yourself that giving them perpetuity or fixity of tenure does them no good—you repudiate security or fixity of tenure?—Well, as a rule. You see this man was about the most successful of the whole of them. When I feued the land this man came in first and got the best of it, and now he is well off; and then the next who came in did not get so good a piece, and so on.

45166. But, on the one hand, you say, as a general principle, you repudiate fixity of tenure, and that it does them harm; while, on the other hand, you say that on this particular area or spot the people are better off and that their complaints are false?—I don't say they are all false. I was referring to this man who made a complaint. If they don't improve the crofts it cannot do them any good to have a feu; but a man who will work industriously will make himself comfortable. An industrious man it pays to have fixity of tenure, but not a lazy fellow.

45167. An industrious man will get on better everywhere and a lazy man worse; but does the fact of having fixity or security of occupancy naturally induce a man to be more industrious?—I think it does, and it should, and it did there. A number have done remarkably well.

45168. Then fixity of tenure has been beneficial?—Yes, to a good many of them; but I have been disappointed to find that to some of them it has not. The old tenants who had houses already and arable land to begin with—it suited them admirably; but to men who had to

do everything on the open moor, to begin life and build houses,—it was too heavy for them ; they had not enough money to bring them round. They had to keep their families when all this was going on, and build houses, and they went and borrowed money from improvement companies in Aberdeen and elsewhere, at enormous interest, and that crushed them.

EDIN-
BURGH.
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EDINBURGH.

George Grant
Mackay.

45169. On the moor which they brought in themselves what was the feu-duty or rent per acre ?—The feu-duty was 5s. generally. Some say I charged 6s., and it may have been so. From 5s. to 6s. an acre, never more.

45170. But we have heard of land which has been let on improving leases at a nominal rental, in fact for nothing at all ; and we have heard of land which has been let at 1s. to 2s. 6d. an acre, all of which experiments succeeded, and the people more or less prospered, especially where they paid nothing ; but we have never heard anywhere of wild land being given to the people at 5s. an acre and their prospering on it, because 5s. an acre at the beginning is half a rent ?—But your Lordship never heard before of feus having been given off at 5s. an acre ; it was always leases. Nobody but me ever gave a feu off at 5s. an acre.

45171. But if you gave a man a good long lease at nothing an acre, or 1s. an acre, he may be prompted to greater exertion, and become a more prosperous and successful man than a man who gets a feu at 5s. an acre ? —Yes, but then he does not interfere with the shooting ; the lease does not give him the shooting, which is worth 2s. 6d. an acre, and that makes a great difference.

45172. How do they manage the shooting ; do they put it all under one direction, and let it together and divide the proceeds ?—Some of them —it is one of the greatest damages to the estate of Rosehall—take out their whole feu-duty in trapping game, and that is what damages the whole estate. They put out stacks of corn at this time of the year and set traps—anybody who knows about sport knows that in that way you can gather in all the black game round about the country—and the game which they get they sell, and pay the feu-duty. Nobody can punish them, because it is their own land ; and that is one of the greatest evils connected with that plan of feuing land. They are doing that now, and are spoiling a shooting which was one of the finest in the whole Highlands.

45173. It may have spoiled the shooting and spoiled the people ; but supposing you had acted otherwise, and provided that it should be a club shooting—that the shooting rights should be let together and the proceeds divided, might not that have been a benefit ?—I could not do that ; I cannot reserve anything when I feu ; when I feu I sell.

45174. According to the existing law, you cannot feu and reserve shooting rights ?—No ; if I could I would. I wanted to give them fixity of tenure. I knew the shooting was of no legitimate value to them ; and here is the way they make an illegitimate use of it.

45175. So that your experiment in feuing the land has in a great measure failed ?—I am sorry to say it has : but I could not say it may not be successful yet, if you have industrious people. I would not think of giving a whole township feus again ; but if there was a smart man I would give him a feu where it would not interfere with the shooting. But as a rule, it would not do to give the whole body of them fixity of tenure.

45176. The experiment has in a great measure failed because the selection was not good ?—Yes, pretty much ; and it won't do at all unless they have a start with houses and some arable land to begin with. I don't

EDIN-
BURGH.

believe in squatting a man on the moor and giving him a piece of land, at any price, and telling him to do good with it ; they cannot do it.

EDINBURGH.—
45177. We have the strongest evidence that that has admirably succeeded on the estate of Lord Lovat ?—You mean in feuing land ?

George Grant Mackay. 45178. No, but putting them down upon nineteen years' leases ?—That is what is going on all over the Highlands ; and his leases are not so good as almost any in the Highlands, because he can give them notice to quit at four months by paying them for improvements.

45179. Then you think the system of improving under leases really succeeds because the proprietor has the active control and management of the people, and can direct them ?—Exactly ; that is the main point,—looking after the property and seeing it is not neglected.

45180. These people are not fitted for independence ?—They are not, I am sure of it. They are people who ought to be taken in hand by intelligent men and managed just as you would children.

45181. In giving us your remedies, putting aside the minor remedies suggested, such as fishing facilities, harbours, and so on, you have suggested that proprietors should treat their people liberally, intelligently, and well. But supposing the case where the proprietors were so burdened, or were indifferent, or were absentees, and could not treat their people liberally and well, or would not do it ; have you any suggestion to meet a case of that sort ?—Yes ; I have often thought of it—if there were any means by which an Encumbered Estates Act could be brought in, as it was in Ireland, and give every facility to some of these landlords who can do nothing for the people to get rid of their estates. It is where the landlords are excessively poor and have no money to spend that the misery is ; you never hear of misery where there is a solvent and resident landlord.

45182. So that you look to the transfer of estates ?—I would ; it would be a great boon to the Highlands if there were greater facilities given to people who, like the dog in the manger, cannot get rid of big estates. Some landlords would hail it, though they don't ask for such a measure ; but if the Government would bring it in a great number would take advantage of it, and it would greatly benefit the West Highlands of Scotland. Your Lordship has seen no destitution, I think, except on estates of that kind, unless on an estate that is utterly neglected, and many of them are utterly neglected.

45183. I am not quite prepared to admit the accuracy of your statement in that respect—that we have never seen distress or misery or destitution upon estates which were in the hands of intelligent and rich men—resident landlords ?—Lewis is the only exception, and the cause there is mismanagement and neglect entirely.

45184. I only say I have seen destitution and poverty upon great estates ?—I know most of them in four counties, and I have looked round, and where the proprietor is resident and solvent, I don't see anything the matter with the people.

45185. As you say, there may be errors of judgment or errors of system which may have almost as bad effects as the want of means of doing good ?—It is not so much want of judgment or of means as just simple neglect—ignoring them ; that is the worst thing the crofters have to complain of. It is not oppression, but neglect they have to complain of ; that is the thing—when the landlord does not take any interest in them. Where the landlord takes an interest in them, there they are thriving and prosperous ; where he takes no interest in them, there they are all going wrong.

45186. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—You are aware that from time imme-

mercial there have been periods of scarcity among the population on the west coast?—Yes.

45187. How would you propose to put them into a position that would obviate that state of things?—They are fast getting out of it, if they were only let alone. They are getting on splendidly. There is an enormous difference within the last twenty-five years in the condition of those people. When I began to employ labour I could get any number of men at 8s. a-week, and I cannot get them now for 15s. or 18s. a-week; and tea, sugar, and all the necessities of life are cheaper now than they were then; so that whatever condition the crofter is in now, he is in the best condition he has been in since the creation. I say it advisedly; there is not a doubt about it. If there is poverty in the Highlands now, there was much greater poverty before.

45188. You think they are gradually working their way out of it?—Every Skye man I employ gets 2s. 6d. a-day, and being industrious, frugal good men they live on fourpence a day, and save the 2s. 2d. every penny of it. They never spend a penny in drink or anything else, but go back to their families in Skye, and live in a dormant state till the 2s. 2d. is done; and then they come and work to me again. They don't take any improvement in their condition as a stepping stone to move upwards; as long as they have meal and potatoes they won't work.

45189. How do you account for the fact that they work with industry when they come to you, and that their industry ceases when they get home?—I don't know why it is; it is a very curious thing. I offered to build houses for these men—I suppose you have seen the dens they live in in Skye—and let them bring their families to my property—I thought it was hard for them to have to go back and forward—but not one of them would look at the proposal; they would go back to Skye and vegetate there. That is their enjoyment, and it is a great pity other people should interfere with their enjoyment, if they enjoy themselves that way.

45190. *Mr Cameron.*—What employment do you give these Skye men on your property?—They were building a silo for ensilage.

45191. Do you find they are ready to take any employment?—Any; there are no better people than they are that way. They are tractable and industrious, and never get drunk or give trouble.

45192. You have employed them a good deal in road-making, have you not?—Yes, and planting.

45193. Are they good hands at planting?—Capital at anything; but they are like children; I have always a skilled man over them. I never put a Skye man over them. A Skye man is only a machine, but a useful machine.

45194. Do these Skye men come regularly in spring and ask for work, or do you make known to them that you have work?—They write and ask if I will take them on, and my man writes back that he will.

45195. Do you get the same people?—Yes; and they go when they like. If they get tired of it and want to go home and enjoy themselves, they will go off the next day, and I never hear any more about it; and when they come back I employ them again.

45196. *Professor Mackinnon.*—Have you tried to account at all for the condition of mind of these Skye people—that they will work when away and not at home?—They would work at home if the proprietors would go ahead with all sorts of work the same as I do. If the proprietors would do that, and put their properties right at home, the Skye men would not need to come to me; but when the proprietors cannot do anything, then the men must come out. If they could get meal and potatoes at home they would not.

EDIN-
BURGH.

EDIN-
BURGH.

George Grant
Mackay.

EDINBURGH. 45197. You think if there was work at home they would work at home?—Certainly, just as well as they do away, if they were put under proper direction in a squad. There is any amount of work in Skye if there were men of wealth to do it. The island is in a state of nature; there is no improvement in it. Thousands of pounds might be profitably employed in Skye.

45198. *Mr Cameron.*—Draining perhaps?—I could not point out all the ways. There is not a bit of land in the island which would not yield three times the crop it does if it were properly worked, but it would require people to take an interest in that.

George Grant Mackay. 45199. *Professor Mackinnon.*—You think the people are better off than they were thirty years ago, even in Skye?—I am sure of it; they never were so well off in the world as they are now.

45200. Even supposing they say the very opposite themselves?—I don't believe them. It is always fine to speak about old times; old times are always fine times with everybody—the times of our grandfathers. There never were any times in the world like the present.

45201. This year no doubt was exceptional, but you know that over all these parts of the west it was admitted on all hands there was so much distress that the locality could not provide for the people this year?—It has been frightfully exaggerated. This spring I wanted a lot of work done, and I wished to have Skye men, but they preferred to stick at home this year waiting for the Lord Mayor's money, and I saw afterwards they got doled out to them 6s. 8d., whereas they might have been earning £10 with me in the spring. This is what came of collecting money for them in London. This kind of thing, making the people suppose they are to get money from others to support them, is the worst thing that could possibly happen them; I would rather the Lord Mayor's money had been put into the sea.

45202. You are quite convinced that the people of Skye and Lewis could have lived without outside help this year?—I don't know about that; the proprietors would help them. There never was a Highland proprietor who would allow his people to starve if other people would let them alone. A gentleman once asked me, did you ever see a Skye man who did not look as if he got porridge and milk? I went to hear Professor Blackie lecturing in the Grassmarket on the Sunday night, and if they had seen the congregation he had, they could have seen nothing like it in Skye. I wish the worthy Professor and all the other agitators would only look at the slums of Edinburgh, and let the Highlands alone. You never saw anything like the destitution and misery there is in the low parts of Edinburgh and Glasgow. There is no end of room for patriotic effort there if it were only taken up. The Highlander at home is in paradise compared with the people in the alleys and closes of a great city.

45203. Probably you are quite right, but let us take one thing at a time. A gentleman who has charge of an estate in the island of Lewis was at the head of the movement for getting outside help?—I don't think it was very nice of him then; he ought to have applied to Lady Matheson.

45204. I understand she subscribed very largely?—If the estate were properly managed, there ought to be nothing of that sort wanted. Lady Matheson is a lady, and cannot manage much, but efficient management would avoid it.

45205. Would you suggest what sort of management it should be to put things on such a footing that there would not be the necessity for appealing to the outside world now and again for help?—I don't know;

the worst thing that happens them is when help is given. There is a worse thing than destitution, and that is ill-advised charity.

EDIN-
BURGH.

45206. This year, when charity was resorted to, it looked like charity or starvation?—I don't think it would have been starvation; you never heard of a case of starvation in the Highlands. I never heard of one, and George Grant Mackay. I have lived all my life there. They always get porridge and milk, and they look well upon it. There never was a case of starvation. I challenge anybody to show a case of it. There are cases in London and Edinburgh, and nobody knows about them. But in the Highlands everybody knows where there is necessity, and they help one another, and they let others know about it.

EDINBURGH.

45207. You think the population of Skye and the outer islands are quite as well off as the people in Edinburgh and Glasgow?—I would infinitely rather be in the worst place in those islands than in the closes of Edinburgh, whatever the wage might be.

45208. Don't you think the very poor people in Edinburgh are only a small proportion of the population?—I don't think so. There are 40,000 people in Glasgow living in houses of one room. Conceive the condition of things where that is the case. Mr Bright stated that the other day, and I think that indicates a state of things infinitely worse than anything you could find in the West Highlands.

45209. You think the best thing that could be done with Skye and Lewis would be to let them alone?—I think so. The best thing that I think can come out of this Commission will be that proprietors will have their attention turned to the crofters, and look after them more than they have done.

45210. There was one part of the west coast you alluded to, the island of Raasay. You told us you raised the rent £1 upon each crofter, because the rent had not been raised for eighty years; how many of these years was the estate in your possession?—Two; but I have the books.

45211. I mean before the rent was raised?—I have the books of the old Macleods of Raasay for eighty years.

45212. But the estate was in your own hands only two years?—Yes; I did not buy it to speculate, but I got into bad health, and was advised to leave the island.

45213. Previously for eighty years the rents had not been touched?—No.

45214. During those two years the rent was changed how much?—A trifle; about £1 a-piece; and the average rent about that time was 50s.

45215. That would be how much per cent.?—It was called about 40 per cent; but it does not matter although it was 500 per cent., £3 is nothing for a crofter to pay for three cows' grazing. When they were paying 25s. of rent a lot were complaining they were too high; 25s. would not do much good to a starving man.

45216. So far as I have been able to follow the evidence, there was a complaint now and again in these parts of high rent, but that complaint was very little in comparison with the complaint about the small holdings. One man, for example, stated that he would prefer to have three crofts for three of his present rents rather than the croft he had for nothing; so that really the complaint of high rents was not so great. During these two years when you were making improvements upon the estate of Raasay, you did not think of enlarging the crofts of the people?—Increasing the arable land?

45217. Increasing the holdings?—No; they have thousands of acres of

**EDIN-
BURGH.**

pasture land now. They have far too much ; it is the very thing that is doing them mischief.

EDINBURGH
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George Grant Mackay.
45218. What stock do they keep ?—Not one of them had not three cows and starks, and a few sheep, and that kind of thing ; and if he had nothing else surely 50s. is not a big rent for all that.

45219. Do you think a holding that keeps three cows and a few sheep is sufficiently large to maintain a family ?—I think any man would be a fool who expected on a 50s. croft to maintain a family. I have heard a great deal of talk about that, as if a 50s. croft could keep a family. Nobody intended that ; it is impossible ; it is intended as a home for a man from which he can go and work otherwise, at fishing or labouring, or as a tradesman or anything else. He could not expect to support a family out of a 50s. croft.

45220. During those two years you were improving the estate of Raasay, you did not think of putting the crofts in such a position that the crofter could maintain a family ?—Some of them did support their families.

45221. What would be the size of croft that was supporting a family ?—I don't exactly remember the rents ; they would be 50s. rents on an average.

45222. So that a crofter of 50s. rent could maintain a family ?—In a way they did ; but they generally fished. I don't know what proportion of their time was spent upon the croft and what upon fishing.

45223. Perhaps it would have been better if they had fished more and crofted less ?—That is what I have always said ; make fishermen of them, especially in Raasay, where there are plenty fish. I did everything I could to get them to fish.

45224. Did you ever turn your mind to the other side, and try to get them to croft more and fish less ?—No, because I would be a fool to do that ; it would be thefoolishest thing in the world to make crofters of them instead of fishermen. The thing is to make fishermen of them, and give them houses and potato land from which they can go to fish ; that is the thing to make men of the West Highlanders.

45225. In all the districts of the country that you know pretty well, along the east and west coasts, have you not come across crofters who are pretty well off ?—My own crofters are pretty well off at Kyle, and they keep their sons when they come home, and are pretty comfortable.

45226. Don't you think the crofters in the west could do that ?—No ; the land and the climate are not suitable.

45227. All over ?—All over. I have hundreds of acres of land I could improve at Glengloy, but I would not be such a fool.

45228. At Kilmuir ?—You could grow oatmeal far cheaper on the prairies in America than you could at Kilmuir. It is a splendid country for sheep, and that is what the crofters know nothing about ; but it is not a place for growing meal. Let them take their food out of the sea.

45229. Can't they grow sheep in America ?—No, they have no grazing there like ours.

45230. You have no fear of foreign competition ?—No ; not in mutton.

45231. Nor in beef ?—It may in beef ; but they cannot produce a blackfaced piece of mutton like ours ; it is impossible.

45232. You think Skye should not be cultivated ?—I am certain ; it is the wildest dream possible to speak about cultivating the land there. It is a splendid country, and nature has adapted it for sheep ; and I cannot understand any wise person suggesting that it ought to be cultivated, because nature has not adapted it for cultivation. It is

fighting against nature altogether. You can get meal for 15s. a boll from abroad, and you cannot possibly cultivate corn at such a price; it would cost five times the money sometimes.

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EDINBURGH.

George Grant
Mackay.

45233. And the people who should be maintained in Lewis, if there are to be any there at all, should be taking their living out of the sea entirely?—Yes, they should most certainly. All the people on the West Highland coast should take their living out of the sea, except trifles for milk for their families. Any man who begins to enlarge the crofts I think will only be doing the crofters mischief.

45234. Over what area upon the west coast would you apply that observation?—I don't know—beginning at Mull, opposite Oban, and up to Cape Wrath.

45235. You would diminish their crofts rather than enlarge them?—I would not do that until you make them better fishermen. I think the wise thing is not to develop farmers, but to develop fishermen.

45236. In the diminished holdings you would propose, would you give them any security of tenure?—No; they are not fit for it. I tried it on the east coast, where they are more intelligent, and a better class than on the west. They are like children, and would get into a state of torpidity.

45237. Although it is a good thing, it is not a good thing for them?—That is so; they are not fit for it. You require to have a man of some intelligence before you give him that.

45238. Don't you find there are a large number of intelligent people not fit for it too—lazy men?—Always; that is it; and that is the way I say you must select the man you would give fixity of tenure to. Some men it is a capital thing for, but not for those West Highlanders; you must get them educated first.

45239. So far as you know it has not, at all events, been tried?—To give them fixity of tenure, it has not, and I hope it never will.

45240. So that you have no experience to guide you in that opinion?—I have experience with much better men than they, and if it fails with better men it cannot help failing with them.

45241. Where were these men?—On the east coast, Rosehall and Culrain.

45242. Do you think it is bad for them?—It has failed. It has failed with some, and not with others.

45243. Is that not the way it is with proprietors; don't some of them go to the wall?—Yes, there is a lot of bad proprietors as well as tenants; but an Act of Parliament won't make bad proprietors nor bad tenants good.

45244. It is a good thing in itself, but not for the west coast people?—Quite so.

45245. Nor even for east coast people?—Some of them do very well on the east coast, but not all round. I would not give indiscriminate fixity of tenure on the east coast; but I would not give it at all to the people on the west coast.

45246. Would it not adjust itself in the same way as on larger properties, every person who was not fit for it would just go?—I would not begin by putting a foolish man in power at all; I think it is beginning at the wrong end.

45247. Don't you think these things would adjust themselves in the market—that some would just misuse their property and go?—Yes; but it would take a long time. It would be the very thing for the man who started it; but if you know beforehand it would fail.

45248. If you believe it would fail?—If you are sure it would fail, it would not be wise to try it.

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45249. But you have no experience of the matter in the west?—Not in the west——; yes, I have in Oban.

EDINBURGH.
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45250. How did it do in Oban?—Very well; but they are a different class of people there.

George Grant Mackay. 45251. I am glad to hear there are some on the west coast that are worthy of the privilege?—People about the towns are different; the ordinary west coast Highlander is a slow coach.

45252. I should be sorry to believe it?—I don't know if you know them as well as I do.

45253. Anyhow the experiment has not been tried?—No, and I hope it never will.

45254. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You spoke of the number of people who may be described as occupying the slums of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and you referred to something which took place last night; is it not possible that some at least of the occupants of these places are themselves either dispossessed crofters or the children of dispossessed crofters?—It would be deplorable to think that any west coast Highlander could ever descend so far; it is possible, but I should be slow to believe it. I should hope not.

45255. I think you have written several times and published matters about the state of the Highlands with which you are so intimately acquainted. Am I correct in saying that not long ago you expressed yourself somewhat in this form, that there is at this moment a great part of the Highlands in a state of nature, and thousands upon thousands of acres therein which might be profitably reclaimed?—Yes.

45256. You have expressed that opinion?—Yes, about twenty-five years ago. I have modified that view to this extent, that it would cost more than double the money now to improve land than then.

45257. Did you not say something to that effect within the last two years?—I don't recollect it.

45258. In a letter you addressed to the *Inverness Courier*?—That it might be profitably reclaimed—hundreds of thousands of acres!

45259. Not hundreds of thousands, but thousands upon thousands of acres in a state of nature?—I hold that still; but I don't think there is the same extent that can be profitably reclaimed now. Circumstances have altered, and labour is more than double what is twenty years ago.

45260. If you made such a statement you modify it now?—I do. I cannot remember that I made the statement within two years; I hardly believe I can have said it within that time, because labour has so much increased in cost. Formerly an acre of ground could be reclaimed for £10; now it costs about £25.

45261. You say in your paper that in congested districts considerable emigration would be desirable?—I think so.

45262. Are you not aware from your own experience of what you have seen in America that there is a great deal of hardship to a settler who has little or no capital—that he has a deal to contend with?—No doubt; he will have to work when he goes there; no mistake about that.

45263. Will you go this length, if there be in the Highlands a great deal of land susceptible of profitable reclamation, would it be right to send people away against their will?—No; I would never like to see a man going away if he is profitably employed at home; certainly not.

45264. Just one question about the estate of Raasay; is it not the fact that at the time you were proprietor of it the greater and most valuable part of the land was under lease?—One large farm.

45265. Therefore it was impossible for you to extend the area of your crofters?—No, I had no power; it was all under lease. But if I had had the power I could not have done it. I think it would have been going backwards.

45266. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—What is the reason that you employ so many people from Skye?—Because they are the finest people, I think, on the face of the earth.

EDINBURGH.

45267. Do you choose them, or do they come to you?—It is both ways.

EDINBURGH.

45268. Can you not find people round about you on your estate equally good?—No, I cannot; not equally good for working. They are a first-rate people—a fine people.

George Grant Mackay.

Mr THOMAS SELLAR, Hall Grove, Bagshot, Surrey (63)—examined.

45269. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement to make?—The object which I have in coming before you is to rectify statements which have been made to you respecting the conduct of my father, the late Patrick Sellar, who in the early part of the present century was factor on the Sutherland estate of the Marquis of Stafford. I have been most reluctant to come and occupy your time with what appears to me to be at the present day a purely personal and historical question. But after the statements which have been made to you, I have felt, and I trust you will think I am justified in feeling, that I was required by every consideration of duty and of honour to come and appeal to your indulgence. I have put what I have to say in print, and, with your permission I shall read it, partly because, not having the habit of speaking in public, I shall probably occupy less time by so doing, and still more because, in a matter of so great interest to me, and to the other members of my family, I have desired to be as accurate and precise as possible. There runs through the Sutherland evidence which has been presented to you the impression that to Mr Sellar was due the initiative of the policy of the clearances carried out in that county, and that he alone was responsible for the execution of that policy. No other agent is ever referred to. It is proper, therefore, that I should make you aware of what Mr Sellar did in the matter; and in the first place, as to his share in initiating the policy. He was designated the factor, but there was a resident commissioner on the estate, and there was no separate law agent. In point of fact, the commissioner, who was acquainted with the management of land, performed most of the ordinary duties of a factor; and Mr Sellar, who was a lawyer, and had, up to that time, little or no practical experience in the management of land, performed mainly the duties of law agent. His duties were described by himself on two separate occasions, once in his judicial declaration of 1815, and again in a statement he printed and circulated in 1825. They were, shortly, the collection of the rents, the preparing of the leases, and the carrying legally into effect of such arrangements as should be directed by the commissioner acting under Lord and Lady Stafford's instructions. It will thus be seen that he had really no power of initiative. His duty was confined to carrying legally into effect such arrangements as the commissioner directed. So much as regards his power of initiative. Next, what share had he in carrying out the clearances? To enable you to appreciate his share in carrying out those clearances, it will be necessary for me to give you a narrative of them. I have made diligent search for information respecting them in every quarter where information was to be had, but I have been able to learn little that is not contained in Mr Loch's book, published in 1820, on the improvements on the estates of the Marquis of Stafford. Mr Loch enters largely into the motives of the policy; and after stating those motives, and the objects sought to be

Thomas Sellar.

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Thomas
Sellar.

' attained, he goes into some details, though these are principally confined to the transactions which occurred while he was commissioner. He states, at page 76 of his book, that the removals from the interior to the sea-coast commenced in 1807, and that they were carried out from that period as the different tacks expired. I can find no details of what the clearances were from 1807 till 1810. They are believed to have been chiefly in the southern part of the county. One large sheep farm in the interior was, however, then formed. It extended north and south from the village of Lairg to Loch Naver, including the mountains of Ben Cliebrig and Ben Ormin, and east and west from the river Tyree, falling into Loch Shin, to the head waters of the streams falling into the Brora and Helmsdale, and it was roughly computed, Mr Loch states, to extend over 100,000 acres. Mr Sellar entered upon his duties as "factor" in 1810 at, it is believed, the Martinmas term of that year; at the same time as Mr Young became commissioner. Mr Young resigned in 1816, when Mr Loch, who had been previously commissioner on Lord Stafford's English estates, succeeded him; Mr Sellar continued to occupy his post till Martinmas 1818, when he also resigned, as he had just succeeded to a considerable property on the death of his father, and had to attend to his own affairs. There are no details whatever in Mr Loch's book of the removals between 1810 and the time he became commissioner. The only account of them which I have been able to discover is contained in the paper which Mr Sellar printed and circulated in 1825, and is as follows:—"The first district," he says, "in which I desired to carry the new arrangements into effect was the parish of Assynt. It was at the term of Whitsunday 1812. The mountains were divided among the persons who had formerly been tacksmen or middlemen in that parish. I expedited the necessary warrants; but the gentlemen who were to receive possession had so much influence over the people that little or no interference of mine was necessary. In spring 1813, I was desired to carry into effect similar arrangements in the parish of Kildonan and part of Clyne, the mountains of which were to be put under Cheviot sheep-herds as well as Cheviot sheep. Such was the tumult occasioned by this proposal, that before the notices could be served it was necessary to call in military aid. At the term of Whitsunday 1813, however, the mountains were put in possession of the sheep farmers and their sheep-herds; and the people were transferred to the neighbourhood of Helmsdale, where the Marquis of Stafford then proposed to build a harbour, and to establish a herring fishery. In the year 1814 it was proposed to arrange in like manner the ground near the sources of the river Brora, the parish of Farr: I was desired, in consequence, to prepare myself for removing the population of these districts to the neighbourhood of fishing ground. These districts were intended to be divided into sheep farms; but, much to the relief of my official duty, the farms, excepting one, were not taken by sheep farmers. That one being taken by myself, it was in my power to leave one-half of it, for four years, in possession of the old tenantry, who were of course allowed the whole of those four years to transfer themselves, their families, and property to the new allotments provided for them; so that, in point of fact, there were removed in 1814 only twenty-seven tenants, and one tinker or caird, who had taken possession of a piece of extremely wild ground in a morass among the mountains. I continued," Mr Sellar adds, "in the employment of the Marquis of Stafford until Martinmas 1818, but no further arrangement of the estate followed." The clearances subsequent to the period at which Mr Sellar ceased to be connected with the management of the estate are referred to, as I have already stated, in some detail, by

Mr Loch. After describing, at page 68, the frightful misery of the year 1816, and stating that while such was the distress of those who still remained on the hills, it was hardly felt by those who had been settled on the coast, he goes on to say—"If any doubt had remained of the propriety of the system which had been adopted, the experience of 1816 certainly put that doubt to rest. There could be no hesitation," he continues, "on the part of those who had the management, to advise that that system should not merely be continual but extended." He then states that the tacks of a large portion of the estate expired at the respective terms of Whitsunday 1818, 1819, and 1820, and that it was determined, for reasons which he describes, that the removals from the lands referred to should be postponed till 1819 and 1820, and should be completed at the Whitsunday terms of those years. Accordingly, at Whitsunday 1819, and at the same term of 1820, the removals from the large portion of the estate to which Mr Loch refers were carried out. They were mainly from the upper parts of the Strath of Kildonan and of Strathbrora, and from the west or proper left bank of the Naver. It will thus be seen that, relatively to the whole extent of the clearances, those carried out under Mr Sellar's directions were comparatively small. The Assynt clearances of 1812 he took no active part in. What he did directly carry out were the evictions of 1813 in the lower part of Kildonan, on the right bank of the River Helmsdale, and those of 1814 on the upper part of the east or proper right bank of the Naver. But it is said that at all events he cleared Strathnaver. Here again is a complete misconception. The west bank was cleared in 1819, after he had ceased to be in the employment of the Marquis of Stafford. As to this there is no doubt whatever. This bank, as you have seen as you passed through it, is in certain parts susceptible of tillage, so far, at least, as regards soil. The other bank, in the upper part of the strath, consists of heathy hills, on which there are few signs of former settlements, and on which, whatever may happen on the west bank, it is not likely that the plough will ever turn up the soil. It was the last named portion of the strath, the upper part of the east bank, and it only, of which Mr Sellar conducted the clearance. Hitherto I have dealt with matters which do not necessarily imply culpability on Mr Sellar's part. I now propose to bring under your notice allegations imputing culpability to him, some of them of a grave character. The first place at which these allegations were made before you was at Bettyhill, at the foot of Strathnaver, where an old man named Angus M'Kay, cottar, Strathy Point, who said he was eleven years old at the time of the evictions, thus described his recollections of what occurred in 1814 :—"I and my brothers, who were young, were," he said, "asleep in bed, and there was a woman came in, and said, 'Won't you wake up? Sellar is burning at Rhiloisk.' " The following examination then took place :—"Q. Did you see any burning houses yourself in Strathnaver?—A. No, I did not. Q. Do you know that a number of houses were burned at that time? A. Oh, yes, yes. Q. Many houses?—A. All from the River Owen Malloch, and another river coming into Strathnaver on the east side down to Dunveddan Burn.—Q. The houses were burning?—A. That is said, but I cannot say; I saw nothing. I was in bed. Q. You were told at the time?—A. Yes." The burning of houses cannot be carried on in a corner and out of sight. It must be visible to all. How could it be that such a conflagration was not visible to this man, if such a thing occurred? How, at all events, was it that he did not say that he had seen the blackened remains? This man's evidence curiously illustrates how the belief in

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Thomas
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Thomas
Sellar.

' those burnings took root. Though he was on the spot and must have seen them, had they taken place, but did not see them, he is yet willing to state and maintain that houses were burned all down the strath, simply because, as he stated, it was so said. He refused emphatically to say that he had seen any burning houses himself; and, on being pressed on the subject by the question, "The houses were burning?" (that is the houses all the way down to Dunveddan), he answered, "That is said, but I cannot say; I saw nothing. I was in bed." This man was the only witness, during the whole of your inquiry, who appeared before you stating that he had been in Strathnaver at the time of the evictions of 1814. But others spoke to the burning of houses at that time. Angus Mackay, aged 22, a student of divinity, presented resolutions agreed to at a meeting of crofters and cottars in Farr, in which it was stated that they and their forefathers had been cruelly burned like wasps out of Strathnaver. At Helmsdale, Angus Sutherland, teacher in the Glasgow Academy, read a statement in which it was declared that in the years 1814 to 1819 the people of the parish of Kildonan were ejected from their holdings, and their houses burned to the ground, under circumstances of the greatest cruelty, the houses in many cases being set on fire while the people were still in them. These burnings were carried on, it was stated, under the direction and supervision of Mr Patrick Sellar, &c. It was added that there was abundance of contemporary literature, testifying to the barbarity of the proceedings, and that there were still living witnesses of them. I may observe, with reference to what the witness calls the abundance of contemporary literature, testifying to the barbarity of the proceedings, that I have ransacked the British Museum over and over again, times without number, for contemporary literature of all sorts having any bearing on those times, and I say unhesitatingly that, besides Mr Loch's book, there is no contemporary literature which testifies in any manner to the character of the proceedings at the clearances, except the report by the future Lord Robertson of the trial at Inverness, in 1816, of Patrick Sellar. The witness was pressed to inform the Commission what authority he had for stating that houses were set fire to while people were in them; and then it came to light that his authority was a person of the name of Polson, who had told him that his mother-in-law's family was evicted, and her house set on fire while her infant children were still in the house, one of those infant children being Polson's future wife. Mr Angus Sutherland's proof of the burnings from witnesses still living was at this point of his evidence reduced to a statement derived from a man who could himself know nothing directly of the circumstances of the case; and Mr Sutherland so far modified his original allegation as to say that he had no objection to "clearances" being substituted for "burnings," and that he had put in the word "burning" simply because that was the word used by the people. As to contemporary literature he came down to this statement: "Well, generally, of course, there is some sort of literature on the question." Subsequently, on being urged to produce some better evidence of the burnings which he had alleged, all he could say was that he had heard John Polson relate, though only once, the story of the burnings, that there were several people living who remembered them, and that Mr John Ross recollects them. John Polson and John Ross appear to have been both present; but neither one nor the other, though under the circumstances one would have expected Mr Sutherland to produce them, if they could have helped him, came forward to confirm him. He then went on to say that it was a well-known historical fact that there were burnings—as well established, he said, as the exist-

' ence of Sir William Wallace. I have now enumerated all the statements made to you, which have come under my notice, accusing Mr Sellar of having burned houses, except the statement at Bonar Bridge ' of a burning which, having occurred, according to the witness, in 1819, ' could not have been the work of Mr Sellar. My answer to these statements is, first, that Mr Sellar himself denied absolutely that during his factorship any house was burned by his orders, except the hut, or, as he said, the timber only of the hut of one Chisholm, a tinker and squatter, ' on an outlying part of Strathnaver; and, second, that he was tried at Inverness on an indictment, in which, among other things, those charges ' of house-burning were set forth; and though twelve residents of Strath- naver were examined to prove the charges, not one of them, when ' he appeared in the witness-box, could say, except in Chisholm's case, ' that he had had his house burned, or had seen any other houses burned. How could there have been such a failure of evidence if the charge of ' burning houses had been true? What explanation can be given of these ' witnesses being unable to prove the destruction of their own and their ' neighbours' houses by fire if they were so destroyed? The blackened ' ruins, at all events, must have been there, visible to all. I say it is ' entirely untrue that any house was burned except in Chisholm's case. ' Besides these charges of burning houses, accusations are made of other ' acts of cruelty and oppression committed by Mr Sellar. As to these, I ' have to say that Mr Sellar's conduct was submitted to an investigation ' such as, in this country, does not often occur. He had, as his personal ' enemy, Mr M'Kid, the sheriff-substitute of the county, whose conduct ' and *animus* towards Mr Sellar were of such a nature that when they ' were proved at Mr Sellar's trial, his evidence was passed over in con- formity with the procedure of that time. This man, bearing this ' enmity, undertook to get up the case against Mr Sellar,—to take the ' precognition, as it is called. He describes in a letter to Lord Stafford, ' written in May 1815, immediately after returning from this precogni- ' tion, what he had done. The letter will be found in the report of the ' trial. He says in it—“With this view” [the investigation of the ' charges made against Mr Sellar] “I was induced to go into Strathnaver, ' where, at considerable personal inconvenience and expense, with much ' patient perseverance I examined about forty witnesses.” Will it be ' believed, under such circumstances, that any charge which any one could ' make was not traced out by Mr M'Kid, and was not embodied in the ' indictment? Charges might have been aggravated by such a man; they ' could not have been extenuated. On those charges Mr Sellar was ' brought to trial, and the whole of them vanished at the touch of legal ' investigation. One charge only, that in the case of the man Chisholm, ' had any semblance of evidence tendered in support of it—evidence, such ' as it was, which was rebutted by the evidence for the defence. The ' rest of the charges being unsupported by any evidence whatever, were, ' as a matter of course, withdrawn from the consideration of the jury, ' and on the one case left to their consideration they at once and unhesi- ' tatingly gave an unanimous verdict of acquittal. To revive and restate ' the very charges made in the indictment, as has been recently done by ' certain gentlemen, is surely monstrous. It is equally out of all reason ' for men to come forward at this time of day and make new charges. I ' say, if these new charges were true, it was impossible for Mr M'Kid, ' imbued as he was to such a degree with personal enmity, to have missed ' them, when he examined those forty witnesses on the spot, within a year ' of the time when the events happened which were the subject of his ' inquiry. I cannot pass from Mr M'Kid without stating that in his

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' letter to Lord Stafford, already quoted, though he enumerates and accentuates all the charges which had been made against Mr Sellar, he charges him with no burning of houses, except in Chisholm's case. I must also mention that this same Mr M'Kid, who examined those forty witnesses in Strathnaver, and who knew more of the circumstances than probably any one else, had, at a subsequent date, namely, on the 22nd September 1817, to come forward, and acknowledge, in a letter transmitted through the hands of his law agent, an Edinburgh writer to the Signet, that the statements to Mr Sellar's prejudice, contained in his Strathnaver preconceptions, were to such an extent exaggerations as to amount to absolute falsehood, and he added that he was thoroughly ashamed of having given credence to them. I say, in conclusion, that every particle of authentic evidence in existence is in contradiction of those tales of burnings, and of those monstrous tales of cruelty alleged against my father, which, disproved at the time, were revived five-and-twenty years subsequently by a mendacious partisan, have been propagated by irresponsible agitators, and are given credence to by a credulous people. I propose to put in, and I now tender as evidence, a certified copy of the correspondence with Mr M'Kid, taken from the records of the Sheriff Court of Dornoch, where it was recorded at the time. I refer at the same time to the report of the trial, which will be found in the appendix of a book I recently published, entitled *The Sutherland Evictions of 1814*. Before closing, I wish to say a word with reference to statements made before you at Loch Aline, in Argyllshire, one of them being that summonses of removal were taken out against forty-eight families by the proprietors of Acharn and Ardtornish, before they sold their estates in 1838 and 1844 respectively to Mr Sellar, and another, which the witness seems to have had some hesitation in making, being that Mr Sellar evicted forty-four tenants from the estate of Acharn. These statements are untrue. The Sheriff Court books of Tobermory have been searched between 1837 and 1845, and no summonses of removal have been found at the instance of Mr Gregorson, Mr Sellar, or any one else, against any one on those estates. There were no evictions on them. Any changes which took place were voluntary. The only summons of removal which has been discovered during the period in question at the instance of Mr Sellar, or of the previous proprietors of the estates, is one issued by Mr Sellar in 1843 against one Allan Mac-Donald, described as pretended fishing tenant of Kinloch-Aline. This man's holding was on neither of the estates, but was on a bit of ground at the mouth of the river, acquired from a neighbouring proprietor, for the convenience of the fishermen. The salmon nets were taken off in 1843 for a time, and thus this man's services were no longer required.'

45270. With reference to the alleged clearances of the two estates of Acharn and Ardtornish before they were sold to Mr Sellar, although there were no summonses of eviction taken out, is it denied or admitted that there were a great number of removals of families living on these two estates shortly before the sale?—You will observe that these are events long gone by; and in order to enable me to inform you accurately of what occurred I must go into the story at some length. I have had all my father's papers looked into which were not destroyed. I have also had the books of the successors of his then law agents looked into, and all they could give me was a list of papers handed to the agents for the present proprietor. I have gone to these agents and got all the papers I could get, and the only paper which throws any light upon the matter is one dated 1825, when a valuation of the estate was made, and it is stated in that valuation that two-thirds of the estate were then under sheep in the

hands of the proprietor and one-third in the hands of six tenants. I have not been able to trace by documentary evidence what became of these six tenants, and I was under a strong impression that they were not there when my father got the estate, for this reason, that he settled with the large tenants directly for the whole sheep stock. Until the last few days I was under the impression that that was the case. But I have made inquiry amongst the people of the district, and they say those six tenants were still on the estate when my father bought it, and that they were tenants occupying a kind of club farm together; that my father said, 'I do not wish to put 'you out, but I wish you to be collectively responsible'—this is what the people of the country say—'for the rents of this farm, because you have 'it in company.' They declined and voluntarily went out, and the large tenants, the M'Lauchlans, went out with their servants. I can find no trace of any others going out. The servants went out because my father brought his own servants in. That is the best information I have been able to get—I give it as precisely and accurately as I can—and the whole number of persons who left the estate then were those six tenants—I believe so because the people say so—and the Messrs M'Lauchlan, who delivered over 2100 sheep, and their servants.

45271. Those six tenants, according to your account, left the estate after it was purchased by your father?—I don't know; but what I fancy is this, that it must have been before my father took possession of the estate, because he took over the whole sheep stock of the farm, and they were delivered by the Messrs M'Lauchlan—2100 sheep stock.

45272. Do you find that he took over the sheep stock of this club farm?—There is no record of these tenants whatever, and that is what made me be under the impression that it was all in the hands of M'Lauchlan; but I have heard that these people were there.

45273. As far as I understand the allegation was that a certain number of tenants were removed before the sale, and that that was effected as a condition of the sale?—That is quite absurd; no such thing was done. I may explain that Mr Gregorson was not the owner of the estate, but Mr Fraser, solicitor, London; and Messrs M'Lauchlan were tenants of Mr Fraser, and the six tenants I have referred to were sub-tenants of Messrs M'Lauchlan. I believe that information is accurate.

45274. You have not been able to find any evidence of the departure of a considerable number of small tenants immediately previous to the purchase, or connected with the purchase of that estate?—Absolutely none, and I have inquired amongst people still about the place, whose memories may not be accurate, but who concur in denying that there was anything of the nature of evictions. All they say is that these six tenants and the servants went.

45275. That has reference to the estate of Acharn?—Yes.

45276. Have you any other statement to make respecting Ardornish?—It is said that there were four removed. I suppose they were four of Mr Gregorson's servants; but I know nothing about it.

45277. With reference to the allegation of the removal of persons through the instrumentality of your father from the Sutherland estates, I understand you to state generally that there is no evidence whatever that he was ever in such a position as to be an adviser in promoting the general policy of the estate?—Certainly not.

45278. Is there any evidence that he was opposed to that policy?—No; the evidence is to the contrary. I can read it to you if you like. He mentions in a letter which is published in this book of Mr Loch's that when he went there he was imbued in the highest instance with the opinion that this removal was an unjust thing.

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45279. Which removal?—These removals generally.

45280. I should like to hear an extract from a letter of your father's stating that the policy was in his mind an injurious one, or one to be condemned?—No; on the contrary, after seeing the country, he says it is one to be approved. He says—'You desire an account of my own particular progress, and to that I shall confine myself; but I cannot help mentioning a circumstance which you will scarcely believe of a man who farms a good many thousand sheep now feeding in districts lately occupied with inhabitants, and that is, that I came to this country full of the belief that the growth of wool and sheep in the Highlands of Scotland was one of the most abominable and detestable things possible to be imagined. The reports of the Highland clergymen in Sir John Sinclair's book of statistics, the essays written in the periodical publications, and the general assurance of every Highland gentleman whom one met with in the low country, and of every low country gentleman who had never been in the Highlands, convinced my mind, as it did that of others who possessed similar means of forming their judgment, that the inroads then made on the ancient habits and manners of the children of the Gael were cruel and impolitic in the extreme.'

45280*. What is the date of that letter?—1st May 1820.

45281. And that was his original opinion?—Yes. 'Before I had been one or two years in Sutherland, I explored the interior of the country. I found it to consist of extensive tracts of peat bog, broken into mountains and rocks and wild scenery, and interspersed here and there with patches of land under imperfect tillage near the river banks; each patch, or haugh, or field surrounded by a country of bog, the exhalations raised by the sun from which were condensed during the night on the crops attempted to be grown, and which had during four years out of six mildewed and been destroyed. I found an infinity of fine Alpine pasturage which, by reason of the softness of the bog, or inaccessible nature of the ground, the cattle of the Highlanders never cropped. I found that while the cotton grass was in spring flowering with great luxuriance and fading untouched, the cattle were dying by scores. One gentleman, Captain Matthieson of Shiness, lost 200, I think, in one spring; and Colonel Sutherland of Culmally buried, the first year I came to Sutherland, eighteen milk cows and a bull in a hole or ravine. Moreover, the inhabitants of the Highlands were fed every second or third year with meal imported by the proprietors from other countries, and all this misery was endured in contending, in a country so situated, against nature; countless myriads of herrings, cod, ling, &c., at the same time swarming around the coast and in every creek and bay of it untouched; why?—because the people in the interior remained in misery there, preventing it from being possible to apply its pasturage to any useful purpose; and those on the shores were the sub-tenants of gentlemen whose style of education and pursuits through life made them quite indifferent to the treasures spread out before them.'

45281*. Then he altered his opinion by the year 1820?—Within one or two years after his arrival.

45282. About what year was this change of opinion?—He came to the country in 1809, and he says 'within one or two years.'

45283. His change of opinion in favour of clearances and the transformation of the industrial character of the country?—Yes; it must have taken place about 1811.

45284. And it remained his opinion until when?—Till the end of his life.

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Thomas
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45285. He always remained of the opinion that the policy had been a salutary and useful one?—That the results had been beneficial. I never heard him discuss anything more than that.

45286. At what age did he become himself engaged in farming operations?—He became engaged first in 1809 in the farm of Culmaily, an arable farm.

45287. What farms did he afterwards take?—He acquired in 1814 the farm on which these clearances occurred—the one in Strathnaver, with which he had to do, on the upper portion of the east bank. In 1819, I presume, he acquired the farm of Morvich in Strathfleet, where he lived; and in the same year he acquired the other bank of the Naver.

45288. It was an arable farm he acquired in 1809?—Yes.

45289. And in 1814?—That was purely a pastoral farm.

45290. And in 1819?—The arable farm of Morvich in Strathfleet; and at the term of Whitsunday 1819 he acquired the west bank of the river Naver.

45291.—Did he hold, for a brief period at least, the whole of these farms while he was factor?—He got the farm in 1809 before he was factor; he got the farm in 1814 when he was factor.

45292. And the two farms in 1819?—He had ceased to be factor then. I think, in fact, that in 1817-18, when his father died, he paid very little attention to the duties of factor. He had a clerk who attended a good deal to the business, and I fancy he had very little to do with it. The only farm he took when he was factor was in 1814.

45293. How long did he retain the two farms which he took in 1819?—The lease was for nineteen years, and expired in 1838; and in that year a considerable portion was given to others; and at the next term, 1857, they were diminished still further. My brother had succeeded by that time, and he is now tenant of a portion only of the west bank of the Naver.

45294. Then your father and the members of his family have remained tenants in a portion of these farms up to the present day?—Up to the present day.

45295. And you, in justice to your father's memory and on his part, as it were, and on the part of your family, repudiate altogether that he had any share whatever in advising the adoption of that policy?—I have no knowledge of what he may have said if he was consulted; but what I say is, that he was not in a position to take the initiative.—I take it there were conversations—I don't know—but anyhow he had nothing to do with the initiative.

45296. Who was the adviser?—The Commissioner.

45297. And your father never saw any cause to regret it either as a moral or an economical proceeding?—I never asked him how he viewed it from a moral point of view. That is a question I would not put to my father. As an economical proceeding, I from the first heard only one account from him. I take it, and I say it frankly for myself, that these compulsory clearances are things of ruder times long gone by when the views as to the rights of landlords over land were very different from what they are to-day—moral rights. I speak personally my own view, without meaning to commit any one.

45298. But I should imagine that the ties of affection and duty between proprietor and tenant, or chief and dependent or clansman, were more lively and powerful at that period than they are now?—I think, if you read the books of that period, you will find that it was not so. You will find it was the very reverse; it was a question altogether for landlords.

45299. On the part of the people, I mean, towards the landlord?—I

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Sellar.

can only tell you what the literature of the day shows—that you will find the contemplation was—Lord Selkirk's book, for instance—that it was perfectly useless to keep people there; they were only ruining themselves. Let the people sell their stock, it was said, and go to the colonies; and those that have not stock, let them go to the towns. There was no mention then that it was the bounden duty of the landlord to look after them.

45300. I do remember that Lord Selkirk was a great advocate of emigration; but I think he was an advocate of regulated and beneficent emigration. I don't think he contemplated turning out the people to find their own way. I think his notion was a system of government and encouraged emigration?—I think if you read it you will find nothing in the way of assistance to the people. I am speaking of the whole tenor of the literature of the time; it had little or no reference to care for the people who were to be removed.

45301. I thought Lord Selkirk had himself gone out to America and purchased ground and carried the people there, and given them his own personal supervision?—Yes, he did.

45302. I imagined that the whole tenor of his policy was a benevolent and superintended emigration?—I am speaking now—I forget what Lord Selkirk's book is called—but if you read the literature of that day you will find there are very rare instances of any person thinking it the duty of a landlord to look after his removed tenants; and we know the changes which have taken place in public opinion in recent times as regards the rights of landlords over their land. Opinion changes.

45303. We will admit that a purely economical idea with reference to the management of land and the interests of it have materially altered since the first twenty or thirty years of the present century?—I must say distinctly that, so far as I am concerned, I do not feel called upon to go into a defence of the Sutherland clearances. I think it would be an impertinence in me to do it; but I must say that, so far as I can make out from anything I have been able to read, it was not from notions of purely economical results to the estate that this policy was adopted, but with the idea that the people were in such a condition of distress that they could not live. Every few years they were dependent on the landlord for support, their crops having failed. The population were dependent on purely agricultural resources, and whenever their crops failed they were necessarily destitute; and it was with the view of remedying that state of things that this policy was adopted, as well, no doubt, as for the economical development of the estate.

45304. However, your business at present is to vindicate your father against those charges?—Yes; the other matter I really don't feel concerned about. I had better volunteer a statement. You know there is this extraordinary statement everywhere as to burnings. Now, it is unquestionably the fact that there were burnings, and I will read what Mr Loch says as to the burnings which took place in 1819 after my father ceased to have anything to do with them; it may save time if I tell you at once. He says—‘In 1819 some of the people were impressed with ‘the notion that if they resumed possession of their holdings they would ‘be enabled to retain them for another year, and that something ‘might happen during that period to prevent the arrangements taking ‘effect. In this view they retired upon the approach of the sheriff ‘officers, taking with them all their goods; but as soon as the con- ‘stables left the glen they reappeared, and constructed new or repaired ‘their old turf huts, and re-occupied their former possessions. This was ‘done in no offensive manner towards the factor. It, however, rendered

' a second ejectment necessary, a measure distressing to the people themselves and in which they acquiesced with the same good temper and obedience as they had done in the first instance. It, however, made it necessary for the local management to adopt some measure to prevent the possibility of its repetition, and to prevent it taking place at all in other cases; this was to be accomplished either by removing or by destroying the timber, the remote and inaccessible situation of the huts rendering it impossible for the people to remove the timber at all or at an expense far exceeding its value, was, as has already been stated one of the causes which induced Lord Stafford to become purchaser of it. This reason also necessarily prevented those who had to carry the arrangements into execution from effecting this. The streams were too small to admit of floating it down to the coast; and in many instances it was placed at too great a distance from their course even if this had been practicable, and carts could not be brought within miles of these habitations. In the exercise of their discretion, the local management adopted the only course which could be pursued, that was to collect and burn it. The fact is, moreover, that much of the timber which was destroyed in this manner was done by stock farmers themselves, after they had got possession of the lands and were in the occupation of the farms. This simple and necessary act arising out of the peculiar circumstances of the moment, and equally required for the sake of the people and that of the stock farmer, and executed without the knowledge of Lord and Lady Stafford, has been falsified in every way by the directors of that self-constituted society whose motives and conduct have more than once been already alluded to. The most positive and direct denial is given to every account in which it has been attempted to apply to these proceedings the character of cruelty and oppression arising either from a premeditated plan or from the inadvertence of the moment. Wherever it was possible to carry off the timber with ease it was not purchased, but left to the tenants in the usual way. Such was the case in the parish of Loth. Yet so determined were the propagators of these falsehoods to misrepresent every fact, that they asserted that every house in this parish had been destroyed by fire—a statement equally without foundation and malicious. In order to make this further plain he says— So minutely and carefully were the proceedings conducted, that a memorandum was made of each case by the procurator-fiscal, who is the public prosecutor of the county, at the time of each removal, of the state and condition of each cottage. To these minutes reference may be had as occasion may require, and they serve as a most complete and thorough refutation of all the falsehoods and calumnies which have been propagated regarding these transactions.'

45305. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—No doubt, Mr Sellar, it is a very painful position for you to be in to-day?—Painful! Not at all. Excuse me; not at all.

45306. Very good. I shall confine myself to putting questions to you entirely arising out of what you have yourself stated to-day. I have no wish to go into anything except what you have done yourself?—Go into anything you like; if it is a proper question I will answer it.

45307. You know very well, I suppose, the history of the proceedings at the trial of your father?—Perfectly.

45308. Are you aware that the evidence of one of the witnesses—and the most important witness—was thrown out?—Mr M'Kid, I presume you allude to—yes; and I am also aware that the Advocate-Depute stated that he was not important. He was called purely on a technical point. I will read to you what took place, so that there may be no doubt

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Sellar.

about it. And this very man afterwards said the whole statements were lies. Here is the passage in the report of the trial:—‘The first witness proposed to be adduced was Mr Robert M’Kid, sheriff-substitute of Sutherland, to whom it was objected that the proposed witness has ‘evinced malice, or partial counsel, or both, against the pannel, in so far ‘as he imprisoned him without a complainer,’ and so on. ‘Answered by the Advocate-Depute: That if it had been true that the pannel was imprisoned without a regular complaint it was only an irregularity in the proceedings, and the Court of Justiciary stated in their finding on the petition for liberation irregularity as the ground for allowing bail;’ and ‘. . . . that the only point on which the prosecutors propose to examine Mr M’Kid is as to the practice of Sutherland with respect to the rights of outgoing tenants to retain possession of their barns until the term of removal from the arable ground as to which he conceives him the fittest person to speak as judge ordinary of the bounds,’ so that he was merely a technical witness, and not an important witness.

45309. Now will you please answer my question directly, was the evidence of one of the witnesses thrown out by the Court?—It was not rejected.

45310. Answer me yea or nay?—It was not rejected. Lord Pitmilly said he could not reject it, but he advised the prosecuting counsel to pass it over under the circumstances of the case.

45311. Was it withdrawn by the prosecution?—It was withdrawn.

45312. Well, we have come to it at last?—Yes. I wish to be as straightforward as I can and to give you all the facts. You asked if he was the most important witness, and I said he was not, and I think I have shown you he was not, and was not considered to be so by the Court.

45313. Are you sufficiently acquainted with the present law of Scotland to say that the objections there stated for your father are such as would now be listened to for one moment?—Procedure has changed, and they would not now be allowed. I am not a lawyer, and I can only say that these things are not now done; but it was the procedure of the day. My Lord, I should say that I think six or eight witnesses were objected to on the same ground; there was not one of them rejected, but Lord Pitmilly said, with reference to M’Kid’s, ‘In the circumstances, I advise the Advocate-Depute to pass it by.’

45314. Has the constitution of juries who try such cases been very much altered now, and popularised from what it was at that time?—I don’t know; I am not a lawyer. I will read the names of the jury if you please.

45315. Please answer me directly. If you don’t know it, say so?—I think I am entitled—when asked a question, I shall answer it directly, and I shall give then an explanation of it, if you please.

45316. You don’t know whether the constitution of juries in criminal trials is now different from what it was?—I know absolutely nothing whatever about it. I suppose things have been popularised, but I have no knowledge upon the subject.

45317. You referred to a letter which was written by Mr M’Kid; do you know the circumstances under which that letter was got from Mr M’Kid?—It was given by him.

45318. Do you know the circumstances under which it was got?—Yes, it was got from Mr M’Kid.

45319. What were the circumstances?—I had better read the correspondence. I think it is the best way to explain it, rather than stating things offhand.

45320. *The Chairman.*—I think a distinct question was put to you. Do you know the circumstances under which the letter was procured from Mr M'Kid, or was written or supplied by him?—I know the circumstances so far.

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45321. Can you not state these circumstances *viva voce*?—I may say there was an action raised against Mr M'Kid, in consequence of his conduct, by my father. The agent for Mr M'Kid was Mr Gordon of Carroll, W.S. He appears to have come to my father during the proceedings, and to have offered to pay damages, and to pay the costs, and I suppose my father insisted—but I don't know how it occurred—that he should have a statement from Mr M'Kid as to the circumstances in the matter, and the letter was written in that way. I should like to read it to show you the circumstances.

Thomas
Sellar.

45322. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—I will put it in this way, Was it not in consequence of a threat of proceedings in the Court, either to be begun or actually begun?—Proceedings going on.

45323. Do you know what Mr M'Kid's position was then; are you aware that he was a very poor man?—I believe he was. But what is the inference which I am to understand is to be drawn from this?

45324. Never mind the inference?—Pardon me, it is a matter of character, and I do not wish it to be left in that way. I think I am entitled to know what you exactly mean; and I think I ought to be allowed to read the whole thing.

45325. *The Chairman.*—I think the impression left by the last question and answer might be that the letter was wrongfully extorted from a poor man by Mr Sellar or his representatives. If we were to leave the matter there, that impression might prevail on the minds of those who are here; therefore I think Mr Sellar may read any explanation.

45326. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Surely?—The first letter is:—‘ From Mr M'Kid, late sheriff-substitute of the shire of Sutherland, to Mr Sellar.—Drummuie, September 22, 1817.—Sir, Being impressed with the perfect conviction and belief that the statements to your prejudice contained in the precognition which I took in Strathnaver in May 1815, were to such an extent exaggerations as to amount to absolute falsehoods, I am free to admit that, led away by the clamour excited against you on account of the discharge of the duties of your office, as factor for the Marchioness of Stafford, in introducing a new system of management on the Sutherland estate, I gave a degree of credit to those misstatements of which I am now thoroughly ashamed, and which I most sincerely and deeply regret. From the aspersions thrown on your character, I trust you need not doubt that you are already fully acquitted in the eyes of the world. That you would be entitled to exemplary damages from me, for my participation in the injury done you, I am most sensible; and I shall therefore not only acknowledge it as a most important obligation conferred on me and on my innocent family, if you will have the goodness to drop your lawsuit against me, but I shall also pay the expenses of that suit, and place at your disposal towards the reimbursement of the previous expenses which this most unfortunate business has occasioned to you, any sum you may exact, when made acquainted with the state of my affairs—trusting to your generosity to have consideration to the heavy expenses my defence has cost me, and that my connection with the unfortunate affair has induced me to resign the office of sheriff-substitute of Sutherland. I beg further to add that, in case of your compliance with my wish here expressed, you are to be at liberty to make any use you please of this letter, except publishing it in the newspapers, which I doubt not you

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EDINBURGH.
Thomas
Sellar.

' will see the propriety of my objecting to.—I am, Sir, your most
' obedient servant, ROBERT M'KID.—Addressed to Patrick Sellar, Esq.
' of Westfield, Culmaily.' My father's reply was as follows:—' *Culmaily,*
' 22nd September 1817.—Dear Sir, I have instantly received, through
' your hands, Mr M'Kid's letter to me of this date, and I have heard
' from you an explanation of the state of his affairs, which (as he is no
' longer possessed of the power illegally to deprive a British subject of
' his liberty, and otherwise to oppress him under the form of the law)
' induce me, from compassion to Mr M'Kid's family, to drop my suit
' against him on his paying the whole expences of the said suit, and
' placing at my disposal £200 sterling,—and having just now received
' your obligation as security for Mr M'Kid's performance of this, I cheer-
' fully give this authority for dismissing the process. From the
' moderation with which I have acted towards your client in this affair,
' you will believe, I am sure, that I have no wish to distress Mrs M'Kid
' and her family and connections by any publication on the subject in
' the newspapers. At same time I have explained to you that such
' publication may happen in the course of the trial of the other partici-
' pators in this affair without my being able to prevent it.—I am, Sir,
' your most obedient servant, PATRICK SELLAR.—Addressed to Joseph
' Gordon, Esq. of Carroll, W.S.'

45327. I suppose you have no means of knowing from what source
this £200 came?—I had better go on and read what Mr Gordon says
in reply.

45328. *The Chairman.*—You might answer that question a little
more directly. Have you any means of doing so?—I have the means,
but I should like to read the letter, because the insinuation is that my
father found the money.

45329. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Oh no, nothing of the kind?—It
looked very much like it.

45330. That supposition is quite wrong. I don't see how that possibly
could be?—Well, the source from which the money came is mentioned in
this letter.

45331. Your father said that Mr Gordon gave his obligation for it?—
Yes.

45332. *The Chairman.*—Can you not give it without reading the
letter?—My recollection is not such that I can. I know there is mention
of friends in Caithness and Mr Gordon. The letter is as follows:—
' From Joseph Gordon, Esq. of Carroll, W.S., to Mr Sellar.—*Culmaily,*
' September 22, 1877.—Dear Sir, having just now received from you a
' letter authorising the dismissal of your suit presently depending before
' the Court of Session against Mr Robert M'Kid, sometime sheriff-
' substitute of Sutherland, now residing in Thurso, upon his paying the
' expense incurred by you in said process, and placing at your disposal
' the sum of £200, I oblige myself as surety for him that he shall fulfil
' these terms on or before the 12th day of November next, it being
' understood that in case Mr M'Kid may not have in his power to raise
' funds for the payment of the said sum of £200 sterling, you will take
' the acceptance of a respectable gentleman at three months as cash.—I
' am, dear Sir, your most obedient servant, JOSEPH GORDON.—Addressed
' to Patrick Sellar, Esq., Westfield, Culmaily.' That is all I know
about it.

45333. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—He did not appear to have had it
himself?—I don't think he had.

45334. Do you know what became of Mr M'Kid afterwards?—No; I
endeavoured to find out, but I could not learn anything about him.

45335. Did he disappear altogether?—I wrote down to know what had become of him, but I could learn nothing whatever about him.

45336. Do you know that he afterwards filled some important office? —No, I do not. I asked, and could get no information. I did not wish, if there were any descendants left, to hurt their feelings any more than I could help.

45337. You stated that your father had no initiative—you dwelt upon that word—in the putting out of these people from their possession; and you stated that your father's papers, or most of them, had been destroyed; how do you say that he had no initiative?—Upon the evidence of what his duties were, he was not in a position to have the initiative; the commissioners had it.

45338. You think from the subsidiary position he held on the estate he could not have had the initiative?—Yes, I think I made that very clear.

45339. Will you answer me this? Is it not the case that over and over again most important proceedings, some of them of a very violent nature indeed, to crofters and others, have been initiated by persons in such an inferior position as ground officer?—I really don't know; I know nothing of it. I don't think a ground officer would be entitled to go and clear out a country side.

45340. You state that when your father took the farm on one side of Strathnaver it was convenient for himself to allow several people to remain there four years; why did he allow them to remain there four years?—I presume it was convenient to him.

45341. And convenient for them?—I know nothing about that.

45342. Don't you take a little credit in the statement that he had the kindness and good feeling to allow them to remain to look about them? —I don't know how I should have expressed it, but I read to you what my father had written. What motive he had in allowing them to remain the four years I don't know. It was for his convenience, I presume, but the result was that it gave them four years.

45343. It was not that it had dawned upon him that he ought to do something for these poor people?—How can I tell? How is it possible? How can I say what was in his mind seventy years ago?

45344. While holding this office, whatever it might be, he took himself a farm in Strathnaver?—The farm on the upper part of the right bank.

45345. From which a number of people were put out?—Yes, for which he was tried.

45346. You read an extract from a letter from him to Mr Loch, in which he indicates the opinion that the inhabitants of these glens were in a state of misery?—Yes.

45347. Did he find these glens such a very wretched thing when he took them?—How can I tell what he found? I was not alive in those days.

45348. But the localities which he has described in the letter as totally unsuitable for people to live in, he himself took?—I don't know whether it was these particular tenancies he referred to. He took the Strath from the Mallard to Dunsedan Burn, and he had the rest afterwards. But how can I tell what was in his mind?

45349. You mentioned in one of your statements that with regard to the burnings—and I am sure I have no particular wish to enter into the matter?—I wish you would.

45350. You mentioned two men who were supposed to be present?—Present where?

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EDINBURGH.

Thomas
Sellar.

EDIN- 45351. Who knew something about the burning, but were not pro-
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EDINBURGH. 45352. You mentioned that the name of one of them was John Ross?—Yes.

Thomas Sellar. 45353. You have stated that except the case of Chisholm there were no burnings?—On my father's part—none, I am certain of it, on the evidence. I have looked at the evidence with a most critical eye, and I am certain my father burned no place except this house of Chisholm's. What happened in 1819 was another thing altogether, and my father was not factor then.

45354. May I ask your own opinion on the matter, Mr Sellar?—If you ask me my own opinion about the policy of making the clearances I shall most distinctly decline to give any opinion. It is not fair to me to ask me; I have come here upon the question of whether my father was guilty of cruelties or not. I believe a good case could be made for these clearances, but those who are interested in them have not thought right to come and defend them, and it would be an impertinence on my part to give an opinion; it is their duty and not mine.

45355. *The Chairman.*—You have stated that you decline to give any opinion; why should you go any farther?—I am entirely at your command. I ought to say, however, that my own personal opinion upon the question of compulsory clearances at the present day—

45356. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Have you been at Ardtornish?—Yes, but not recently. I was there twelve months ago. I have been over the whole estate.

45357. Did you see the remains of a great number of houses?—No. And I was there in 1840, and I have no recollection of seeing the signs of crofts recently cleared, and none of my brothers, nor any of the shepherds, have any recollection of them either; that is what made us believe up till recently that there were no tenants except Messrs M'Lauchlan.

45358. Have you the correspondence that took place at the time of that purchase?—I have mentioned that I have every kind of thing turned out for the purpose of trying to get it. My brother tells me the papers were all put in a barn, and some shepherd carelessly, thinking they were of no value, went and burned them, and they are not to be had. I merely have my father's books and nothing else. Then I went to the successors of his law agents here, and the only thing they could give was a receipt for documents handed over to the law agent for the purchaser. I have all these here, but they throw no light upon the matter.

45359. Your evidence is rather of a negative class about Acharn and Ardtornish?—Pardon me, I say positively there is not a summons of removal at all; and with regard to the other things upon all the evidence I have been able to discover upon the place, and from the people, it would seem there were the six people I have referred to, who appear to have been sub-tenants of Messrs M'Lauchlan.

45360. The story that was told us at Loch Aline was that so many families?—Forty-eight.

45361. That forty-eight families that were upon these estates prior to the purchase by your father were not there now, and were either summoned out or were forced out; is that true or is it not?—Pardon me, that is not what they said; they said forty-eight summonses of removal had been taken out by the previous proprietor. I have the notes here. It was not forty-eight families removed, but forty-eight summonses taken out.

45362. Is what you question that there were forty-eight summonses, or removals?—I question both. I not only question it, I deny it.

45363. And you think the persons who gave that evidence were speak-

ing quite at random?—Quite at random; they could not say there were forty-eight summonses of removal when there were none at all.

EDIN-BURGH.

45364. Don't you think a person of the class of most of the delegates we had may have been confounding summonses of removal with notices to quit, or that kind of gentle pressure which is sometimes used?—I deny that the people were there. I don't know anything about the delegates. This man was one of the inferior servants on Mr Smith's estate, and I am told he left his employment last year.

EDINBURGH.

Thomas Sellar.

45365. But is it not likely that he would confound summonses of removal with notices to quit?—The statement was contained in the written paper, and was to the effect that forty-eight summonses of removal were taken out.

45366. But there are no people there now?—Yes, there are.

45367. How many?—I don't know; I am not landlord. All the cottars who were on the place when I was there in 1840 remained until my father died in 1851.

45368. I think we were told that a number of people were employed, but they did not reside upon the property?—I am speaking now of what to my own knowledge occurred, that these cottars who were on these estates when I was there in 1840, and subsequently, never were removed while my father was there.

45369. *Professor Mackinnon.*—At what date did your father purchase the estate?—Acharn in 1838, and Ardtornish in 1844.

45370. The state of the evidence about tenants is something like this, that in 1825 there were six tenants, and now there is only inference that there were any tenants in 1838?—I admit that from the evidence it appears they were there.

45371. In the other case, the documents themselves would show that our witness spoke rather wide?—Clearly.

45372. Whether the six tenants were there or not?—The six, I presume, were there.

45373. So far as the documents show it would appear they were sub-tenants of the large farmer; but there is no proof of the matter?—No positive proof; but I admit it.

45374. And I think you stated already you would prefer not to enter upon questions of policy?—Really it is no affair of mine.

45375. *The Chairman.*—The only point upon which I want information—it is perhaps already known from published correspondence—is with reference to the fine or payment of £200 accepted by Mr Sellar from Mr M'Kid?—Damages.

45376. When you use the word 'damages' that would seem to imply that it was given in consequence of the sentence of a court of law?—In lieu of damages may I say then?

45377. Well, was that payment by Mr M'Kid to your father ever made?—I have no doubt it was paid. You may take it that it was paid. It is not relevant to the matter, but I have applied to my brother in the north for some information as to what my father did as an employer of labour, and I have a letter from him in regard to that which I hope you will permit me to hand in.

45378. You are perfectly at liberty to make any statement, written or verbal, for your brother?—The letter he sent me was as follows:—
 ‘ “Hartfield, Tain, N.B., 13th October 1883.—It is out of my power to extract from my father's books, as you ask me to do, the amounts which he spent in giving employment to work people in Sutherlandshire and in Morven in Argyllshire, from 1810, when he took Culmailly farm, till 1851, when he died; but the following statement will show how exten-

EDIN-
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EDINBURGH
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Thomas
Sellar

sively he employed the people:—At Culmaily and Morvich he had about twelve families, half of them cottars resident on the farm, and they were employed during the whole year. He had about twenty men and twelve women constantly employed during winter; in summer he employed about twenty-four men, twenty-four women, and sixteen boys and girls; in harvest he had about thirty men working on the farm, and seventy to eighty women. The married farm servants had a cow kept on the farm, and the cottars had a croft and a cow's grass rent free. In addition to this regular employment of people, some of whom resided on the farm, and some came from Rogart, he gave a great amount of work from time to time to the people of Rogart, chiefly in improving the farms, between the years 1810 and 1830. He got Culmaily, with 300 or 330 acres of arable land, in poor condition; he improved the land by trenching the hill and by drainage until he got it up to 470 acres, which he fenced with ten miles of excellent stone dykes. He diverted the Culmaily burn by a channel nearly a mile long, made farm roads, and built four cottages and a large steading, with meal and threshing mills. These works, if now executed, would cost probably £7000 to £8000. He got an advance of £1500 from the proprietors, but the rest of the money which he spent he provided. At Morvich he added about 170 acres to the farm by reclaiming land of which part had been under moss, and part had been under tide water before the 'mound' was made. He straightened the channel of the salmon river the Fleet for a considerable distance, and embanked it. The Morvich improvements, which he executed at his own charge, would now cost something like £3000. He limed both farms, and had them always in the highest cultivation. He employed in these reclamations chiefly his neighbours, the people of Rogart. Previously to 1810, the people of Rogart and Golspie had not had the opportunity of being trained to modern agriculture, or even to steady industry; but when I came to take charge of the farms in 1841, I found them to be such steady, honest, and cheerful workers, that it was a pleasure to work with them. On the Strathnaver sheep farm, which was then much more extensive than it is now, he made great improvements entirely at his own expense. He surface-drained the whole of the land, built eight or nine shepherds' cottages, sheep fanks, and enclosed parks; round the parks he built stone dykes, which are still good. These improvements represent labour that would not now be executed for less than £3000. He brought his leading drainers, dykers, and builders from among the people he had trained at Culmaily; and these leading men, who did the work under contract, found their labourers partly in Rogart and partly in Farr. At the commencement of his arable farming in the parish of Golspie, at Culmaily, he brought his leading ploughmen from Morayshire, but in a short time the ploughmen came to be young Sutherland men. In the same way his first shepherds were chiefly selected in Roxburghshire, where they had been trained to the management of the best Cheviot sheep. In a short time young Sutherland men were trained to be the shepherds. In 1838 he bought Acharn, in 1841 Clonlaid, and in 1844 Ardtornish. These estates in Morvern, Argyllshire, were all under sheep when he acquired them. The land had been under blackfaced sheep, but he converted the stock to Cheviots, and he brought his Sutherlandshire shepherds with him. He carried on improvements on his Argyllshire estates in his usual active manner until his death in 1851, and he gave a great deal of work to the people of the country. He brought his leading dykers, drainers, road makers, &c. at first with him from Rogart, when he went to live in Morvern, as well as his shepherds and ploughmen; the

' people of the country worked with them, and the labourers I found on the property in 1842 had become equal to those he had brought with him from Sutherland. He spent in actual improvement of the property, apart from ordinary farm labour, between 1838 and 1851, the sum of £4840, 17s. 10d., of which upwards of four-fifths was for labour. This sum represents a much larger employment of labour than a like sum now expended would do, owing to the great advance in wages which has since taken place.—P. P. SELLAR."

EDINBURGH.

EDINBURGH.

Thomas
SELLAR.

45379. *Professor Mackinnon.*—There were a great many removals in Morvern before your father had any property there, and since ?—I don't know.

45380. So far as you know, you are not aware of his being personally concerned in any of these ?—None; there was no removal by him subsequent to his taking possession; abandonment of their tenancies by the Messrs M'Lachlan, and six sub-tenants, with the servants on the farm.

Rev. JAMES CALDER MACPHAIL, Free Church Minister, Pilrig Church, Edinburgh (61)—examined.

Rev. James
Calder
Macphail.

45381. *The Chairman.*—Have you got a statement to make ?—I was appointed along with Principal Rainy by a committee of the Free Church in the Highlands to appear before the Commissioners and make a statement; but Principal Rainy was involved with engagements in the Lews, which he found it quite impossible for him to get quit of, and he is there now. I do not wish to appear alone without him, and I have to beg as a special favour that your Lordship and the Commissioners will have the kindness to allow me to send in a written statement when Principal Rainy returns to town.

45382. We shall be very happy to receive it.*

Mr GEORGE AULDJO JAMIESON, Accountant in Edinburgh (55)—
examined.

Mr George
Auldjo
Jamieson.

45383. *The Chairman.*—Have you got a statement which you desire to make ?—I have. In my capacity as *curator bonis* for Mr Mackenzie of Kilcoy, my attention has been called to certain evidence before your Lordship and the Commissioners at Dingwall; and I desire to make a statement in reference to that, and also with reference to the management which has been pursued on that estate for the last thirty years in regard to the crofters thereon, during which time I have been directly or indirectly connected with its administration. With your permission I will read the statement :—' Mr K. Davidson appeared as the delegate of crofters on the estate of Kilcoy, and made the following statements as to their condition :—First, that there had been evictions of crofters, of which he remembered a great many himself, in order to add their crofts to the possessions of the larger farmers. Second, that most of these evictions had taken place during the time I have been in the management of the estate of Mr Mackenzie. Third, that in one case a widow paying 20s. an acre for her possession had been deprived of some acres of it, and had been allowed the abatement of only 20s. from the rent. Fourth, that a

* This statement appears in Appendix A, lxxxvii., p. 398.

EDIN-
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EDINBURGH.

Mr George
Auldjo
Jamieson.

' tenant had been deprived of 15 acres of pasture without any compensation at all. Fifth, that the houses of the crofters were so built that their cattle had to be taken out during any storm, lest the houses should fall on them. Sixth, that the crofters have serious grounds of complaint of damage by game, for which they receive no compensation. One of the cases referred to by Mr Davidson I was able to identify, the others I could not; and I therefore directed the local factor, Mr Cameron, to write to ask whether I was right as to the one case I recognised, and to ask for the particulars of the others referred to. Mr Davidson has been good enough to furnish me with this information, and I beg to offer the following comments on his evidence:—First and Second.—There have been no evictions at all during my term of office; no croft, so far as I am aware, has been added by me to any large farm, with two exceptions at Kileoy Heights and one on Tore; the rent of the former is £10, and of the latter about £5. I was appointed in 1867. Some of the cases of eviction referred to by Mr Davidson are stated by himself to have occurred twenty-eight years ago, or eleven years before my appointment; others in 1850, or seventeen years before my appointment, and four years before the estates were under the charge of the Court. Mr Davidson cited ten cases of eviction. All of these so-called evictions took place long before my appointment; three of them in 1850, and of the circumstances relating to these I can give no special explanation; one of these parties has since occupied his house rent free; a fourth was Mr Davidson's own father, who was evicted from his croft about twenty-eight years ago. Donald Davidson's lease came to an end in 1856; he held $6\frac{1}{4}$ acres arable and 2 acres of pasture at a rent of £5, and his croft, along with an adjoining one of about half the size, was added to a neighbouring croft of about 24 acres, altogether making a holding of 38 acres. The rent of the whole in 1856 was £14, 18s., and the factor reported that if let in one division, it ought to continue to fetch that rent; but so far as I can now see from the notes taken at the time, we agreed to accept £12 from the new tenant. It appears from Mr Davidson's statement that his father got another croft on the property, taken for him apparently by a brother-in-law, from which I would gather that he had not the means of taking a croft for himself; that croft is now held by his son. The fifth was a case exactly the same,—of the tenant of a small croft being removed in order that the adjoining croft might be made large enough for a tenant to live on. Roderick Davidson held, in 1854, a croft of about 9 acres, for which he paid £5; that, with another croft of about the same size, it was proposed, in 1855, to add to an adjoining croft extending to about 29 acres. The sixth and seventh cases are those of two men apparently removed in 1856; and on referring to notes made by the factor and a reporter in 1847, I find these two tenants mentioned as having made no improvements on their crofts, and I presume that, in consequence, on the expiry of the leases their leases were not renewed. The eighth case is that of a woman who was removed. On inquiry I find that it was believed she was in the habit of selling whisky illicitly, and was no doubt removed on that account. The ninth case is that of a man who had a lease for thirty years, which did not expire till 1868; but he left in 1862, six years before the expiry of his lease. I cannot at present state why, and he could not of course have been removed during the currency of his lease, except for some reason sufficient to justify the lease being brought to a premature conclusion. The last named, who, he says, was also the last evicted in this district, I find entered in the notes made at the time as a

“worthless tenant, both as regards payments and improvements,” and he therefore did not get his lease renewed when it expired. From this explanation it will be seen that Mr K. Davidson was entirely misinformed in every particular which he stated as to evictions on this estate; the only cases cited by him in which crofts were added to a larger farm took place thirty-three years ago; in none of these cases has there been any forcible ejection of the parties, in all the other cases the removals were made in pursuance of regular estate management, or because the tenants themselves were unsuitable. There have been within the knowledge of myself, or those who have assisted me in the management of the estate, just three cases of ejection or eviction on the estate in the twenty-nine years I have known the property. One of these is the case of a tenant who was in difficulties, much in arrear, and had to be removed; the other two were two small crofters at Istiane, who were considered by the factor and myself to be unsuitable tenants for their possessions, which were added to the adjoining croft so as to make a small farm; one of these tenants has now got a croft on the estate, and the other occupies his house rent free. Third.—With reference to the third statement, I have to state that the widow in question held a house and 10 acres 2 roods 23 poles of land, for which she paid £6. This was 11s. 3d. per acre, not 20s. as stated by Mr Davidson. There was taken off for planting 2 acres 30 poles; an abatement was given of 20s., with which the tenant expressed her satisfaction, and her rent now for 8 acres 1 rood 33 poles, besides the house, is £5, or 11s. 10d. per acre. Fourth.—With reference to the withdrawal of 15 acres of pasture without allowance, having obtained from Mr Davidson the name of the tenant, because I could not identify the case, I have to state that the lease held by the present tenant's father expired in 1874. It contained, along with $23\frac{3}{4}$ acres arable land, $17\frac{1}{2}$ unimproved pasture; in reletting it we reserved 15 acres of the pasture intending to plant it, and we bound the new tenant to improve the remainder. I produce the lease signed by the tenant showing the reservation of land for planting, and I explain that it was considered a benefit to the tenant to plant the ground rather than stipulate for its improvement. From 1874 till it was planted, the tenant probably occupied the ground; but when it was planted, there was no withdrawal of anything the tenant held,—it was reserved for planting when he took his lease. Fifth.—As to the condition of the crofters' houses, I give the most unqualified contradiction to the statement of their wretched condition. Speaking generally, these houses are at least as good as any of the same class in the Black Isle, and no unbiased person who visits the district will corroborate the statement of the delegate in this particular. Sixth.—As to the game, if there be any ground for complaint I must accept the blame, for the game is not let. I know what is killed, and it is against my strict orders if any quantity of game is kept of which any tenant can complain. In point of fact, I have never heard a single word of complaint for many years, and I am satisfied no ground of complaint exists. With reference to general management, I think it may be of some benefit to your Lordship and the Commission if a statement were submitted regarding this estate, which has been under the special management of the Court for thirty years, and in which a regular system has been pursued under the best advice which could be procured, and I have therefore prepared the following notes, which, with your permission, I would also read:—‘Memorandum by George Auldjo Jamieson, *curator bonis* for Mr Mackenzie of Kilcoy, respectfully submitted to the Royal Commission (Highlands and Islands), Scotland, October 1883. In June 1854, my predecessor in business,

EDINBURGH.
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EDINBURGH.
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Mr George
Auldjo
Jamieson.

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EDINBURGH.

Mr George
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' Mr Donald Lindsay, was appointed *curator bonis* for Mr Mackenzie; on
 ' Mr Lindsay's resignation in 1867, I was appointed his successor; I have
 ' thus been intimately acquainted with the position of Kilcoy for a period
 ' of thirty years. I am aware by information derived from Mr Cameron,
 ' who was factor on the estate for many years, that there had been for
 ' long a population of squatters rather than crofters on many parts of the
 ' estate; but in the early part of this century, the number of these was
 ' materially increased on the tenants in the upper parts of the country
 ' being turned out to make way for sheep, and I believe Mr Mackenzie's
 ' father rather encouraged this immigration into his estate. No regular
 ' arrangements seem in many cases to have been made as to the
 ' terms on which either the original or the imported crofters occupied
 ' their lands, and their payment of rent was very irregular, and I rather
 ' think was obtained, when paid at all, by taking labour and produce in
 ' payment. In many cases, however, there were leases under which
 ' meliorations were payable to the tenants for improvements they executed
 ' on their crofts. This system went on in a listless kind of way until
 ' both landlord and tenants were startled by the destitution of 1846.
 ' Then the native poverty of the district was brought into strong relief,
 ' its native resources were quite inadequate to cope with the misery and
 ' starvation which then revealed rather than developed themselves, and
 ' but for the timely and liberal aid of the Destitution Fund, famine must
 ' have prevailed over a large part of the estate. To provide labour for
 ' this population, the proprietor of Kilcoy obtained a loan for drainage of
 ' £10,000, and those then in the management of the estate had already,
 ' perhaps somewhat in advance of the times, taken means to improve the
 ' agriculture of the district, and to introduce a vigorous and enterprising
 ' tenantry. In doing so I have no doubt crofts were added to existing
 ' farms, and there must have been some displacement of population, but
 ' this had been effected prior to my personal acquaintance with the estate;
 ' and although at one time several small crofts have, in pursuance
 ' of the policy I will immediately explain, been added to the existing
 ' farms, there has not since 1854 been any regular system on what has
 ' been designated as evictions to create large farms. The district is mainly
 ' an agricultural not a pastoral district, and, therefore, the clearing out of
 ' whole glens referred to as having taken place in some districts has had
 ' no place here. It would appear that leases had been granted, or were
 ' understood to be granted, in favour of many of the small tenants which
 ' expired in 1856, and immediately on his appointment, therefore,
 ' Mr Lindsay had to deal with the question of what was best to be
 ' done with the numerous tenantry who had only shortly before been
 ' literally starving, and who could not possibly exist on the miserable
 ' holdings they had. So impoverished was the district at this time that
 ' I find in the accounts small payments for meal, no doubt to some of the
 ' smaller tenants, who could not get on the poor roll unless they had given
 ' up their little stocking. The rental of that date showed upwards of
 ' 186 tenants paying rents between £30 and £1, averaging £4, 4s. 6d.,
 ' and some (32) under £1. Mr Lindsay resorted for advice to Mr Peter
 ' Brown of Linkwood, then the great agricultural authority in the north
 ' of Scotland; and it may be interesting to quote what, in his report of
 ' 18th November 1854, Mr Brown says on this subject:—"In the opinion
 ' of the reporter, there ought to be no holdings of a size between that of
 ' a house and good garden and the farm which supplies labour to at least
 ' one pair of horses, for the very obvious reason that there can be no
 ' economical division of labour on a croft or farm of smaller extent than
 ' from forty to fifty acres, and this the factor seems to have held in view

EDIN-
BURGH.

EDINBURGH.

Mr George
Auldjo
Jamieson.

when framing the scheme alluded to. If the projected re-arrangement of the crofts be adopted, some outlay for buildings may thereby be found necessary; but if the factor's suggestion of supplying the small tenants with wood can be acted on, this outlay would be but trifling, as the tenants would in that case take the greater part of the expense on themselves." I recollect at that time spending a long time on the estate with Mr Cameron, the local factor; and I have referred to the report by Mr Cameron which embodied his recommendations. Having in view the information now desiderated, I have prepared the following abstract of the results:

	EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS.					PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS.				
	No. of Tenants.	Average Extent.		Gross Rent.	No. of Tenants.	Average Extent.		Gross Rent.		
		Arable.	Pasture.			Arable.	Pasture.			
1. KNOCKBAIN DISTRICT.										
1st North-East Division . . .	8	5 3 25	6 3 6	£ s. d.	3	15 3 0	18 0 17	37 15 0		
2nd Division . . .	3	11 3 19	4 2 17	27 12 0	1	35 2 18	13 3 12	42 0 0		
3d do. . .	3	7 1 30	10 1 29	23 15 0	1	22 1 10	31 1 7	17 2 0		
4th do. 1st . .	3	5 2 20	7 0 20	13 16 0	1	16 3 20	21 1 20	14 18 0		
2nd . .	2	6 1 31	12 0 6	14 18 0	1	12 3 22	24 0 12	13 0 0		
3d . .	6	0 3 23	8 2 28	13 0 0	1	3 2 13	34 2 33	4 6 0		
5th do. 1st . .	7	4 2 34	2 0 27	31 12 6	1	33 0 2	15 0 9	37 0 0		
2nd . .	7	2 1 9	5 1 2	10 10 0	1	16 0 20	36 3 15	14 0 0		
6th Western Division . .	4	4 1 37	7 0 25	16 0 0	1	17 3 30	28 2 20	17 0 0		
Total of the above details . . .	41	49 2 28	64 1 0	155 9 6	11	174 0 15	223 3 25	197 1 0		
Total Tenants, Acreage, and Rent . .	41	205 2 15	260 0 20	155 9 6	11	205 2 15	260 0 20	197 1 0		
Average Extent and Rent of each Holding in the whole District.	41	5 0 2	6 1 15	3 15 10	11	18 2 30	23 2 23	17 18 3		
2. TORE PARK.										
1st Division . . .	4	9 2 37	.. .	5 16 0	1	38 3 27	.. .	24 0 0		
2nd do. . .	4	7 3 5	.. .	5 10 0	1	31 0 21	.. .	24 0 0		
3d do. . .	3	10 3 25	.. .	6 11 0	1	32 2 35	.. .	34 0 0		
4th do. . .	4	6 2 5	.. .	3 6 4	1	26 0 19	.. .	12 2 0		
Total of the above Details . . .	15	34 3 32	.. .	21 3 4	4	128 3 22	.. .	94 2 0		
Total Tenants, Acreage, and Rent . .	15	128 3 22	.. .	21 3 4	4	128 3 22	.. .	94 2 0		
Average Extent and Rent of each Holding in the whole District.	15	8 2 15	.. .	1 8 3	4	32 0 35	.. .	23 10 6		
3. DURRUSMITTAL.										
1st Division . . .	3	9 1 13	1 1 15	28 14 0	1	28 0 1	4 0 7	28 5 0		
2nd do. . .	5	4 2 13	2 1 31	22 13 0	1	22 3 24	12 0 36	27 18 0		
3d do. . .	6	3 2 29	1 3 37	17 6 0	1	22 0 12	11 3 23	22 0 0		
4th do. . .	4	3 2 5	3 2 29	22 17 0	1	14 0 21	14 2 37	12 17 0		
5th do. . .	6	3 0 26	2 2 16	17 5 0	1	18 3 37	15 2 20	17 5 0		
Total of the above Details . . .	24	24 1 6	12 0 8	98 15 0	5	106 0 15	58 2 3	106 5 0		
Total Tenants, Acreage, and Rent . .	24	106 0 15	68 2 3	98 15 0	5	106 0 15	58 2 3	106 5 0		
Average Extent and Rent of each Holding in the whole District.	24	4 1 27	2 1 30	4 2 3	5	21 0 35	11 2 32	21 5 0		

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Mr George
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Jamieson.

		EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS.				PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS.			
		No. of Tenants,	Average Extent.		Gross Rent.	No. of Tenants,	Average Extent.		Gross Rent.
			Arable.	Pasture.			Arable.	Pasture.	
4. BOGALLAN.									
1st Division . . .		3	A. r. p. 5 1 6	A. r. p. 4 1 21	£ s. d. 9 0 0	1	A. r. p. 15 3 18	A. r. p. 13 0 23	£ s. d. 9 0 0
2nd do. . .		2	6 3 32	8 1 1	11 0 0	1	13 3 24	16 2 3	11 0 0
Total of the above Details . . .		5	12 0 38	12 2 22	20 0 0	2	29 3 2	29 2 26	20 0 0
Total Tenants, Acreage, and Rent . . .		5	29 3 2	29 2 26	20 0 0	2	29 3 2	29 2 26	20 0 0
Average Extent and Rent of each Holding in the whole District.		5	5 3 32	5 3 29	4 0 0	2	14 3 21	14 3 13	10 0 0
5. ISTIANE, . . .									
Total of the above Details . . .		4	4 0 29	2 0 34	10 16 0	1	16 2 35	8 3 16	14 0 0
Total Tenants, Acreage, and Rent . . .		4	4 0 29	2 0 34	10 16 0	1	16 2 35	8 3 16	14 0 0
Average Extent and Rent of each Holding in the whole District.		4	16 2 35	8 3 16	10 16 0	1	16 2 35	8 3 16	14 0 0
6. MUCKERNICK.									
1st Division . . .		3	1 3 29	7 0 11	4 3 6	1	5 3 8	21 0 33	4 8 6
2nd do. . .		2	2 0 14	5 2 15	2 8 6	1	4 0 29	11 0 30	4 0 0
Total of the above Details . . .		5	4 0 3	12 2 26	6 12 0	2	9 3 37	32 1 23	8 3 6
Total Tenants, Acreage, and Rent . . .		5	9 3 37	32 1 23	6 12 0	2	9 3 37	32 1 23	8 3 6
Average Extent and Rent of each Holding in the whole District.		5	1 3 39	6 1 36	1 6 5	2	4 3 38	16 0 32	4 1 9

TOTAL RESULTS.

Totals of the above Details . . .	94	129 1 16	108 3 10	312 15 10	25	465 2 6	353 1 13	439 11 6
Total Tenants, Acreage, and Rent . . .	94	497 0 6	389 2 8	312 15 10	25	497 0 6	389 2 8	439 11 6
Average Extent and Rent of each Holding in the whole Districts . . .	94	5 1 6	4 0 2	3 6 6	25	19 3 21	15 2 13	17 11 8

' It will be observed that in few cases is there any material increase of rent; and from the notes made at the time, I see our chief object was to secure good industrious tenants likely to improve their possessions, because we contemplated that no small part of the value of these crofts had to be taken in labour, and were satisfied that the labour bestowed at their own convenience on their own crofts would be more valuable than any labour stipulated for other purposes. Acting on the lines of

' the policy suggested by Mr Brown, leases were granted to the tenants selected in 1855 and the subsequent years. These leases were for nineteen years, and provision was invariably made for the retention by such of the old tenants as wished it of their houses rent free as long as they would stand. At the present moment there are fifty-seven such houses occupied rent free by former crofters or their widows. In 1873 these leases began to expire, and we had then to consider what course was to be taken. In the meantime the system pursued had operated satisfactorily, and in the main the results we anticipated were, generally speaking, realised. But formidable difficulties presented themselves in carrying out the next stage of Mr Brown's suggestions. At that time Mr Beattie of Aberdeen, a gentleman of large experience, was employed to advise us and to report on the values of the farms, &c., and his report on the subject of these crofts, dated July 1873, was in these terms:—"I now proceed to report on the small farms on the estate, the leases of which expire from Whitsunday 1874 and following years up to Whitsunday 1880. The greater portion of the lands under notice forty or fifty years ago consisted of barren moors. At that period illicit distillation was suppressed, and the inhabitants of the district and glens finding whisky smuggling no longer possible were dispersed. Some emigrated to the colonies, others went into the army, but many families settled on outlying lands, where lots or crofts were allotted to them, and the estate of Kilcoy became a favourite squatting locality, which seemed to have been pursued without much attention to regularity up to 1838. A considerable extent of the moorlands, however, were in a manner cultivated, but the houses erected were of the meanest description. At that date the estates were surveyed, and plans laid down for their more regular occupation. This gave rise to many of the aged and infirm having to give up their lands to their sons or successors, and they retained the original dwellings only, many of which still remain in the occupation of themselves or descendants, many now in very poor circumstances and receiving aid from the parochial poor funds. The readjustment of the crofts in 1838 induced a more substantial improvement of the land and the erection of a few rather better houses, although many at this date are but wretched hovels. The tenants, with but few exceptions, are industrious; some are young, and cultivate the land very well; and the cattle throughout are very good crosses of the Highland with the Teeswater breed. There are about eighty possessions in all, seventeen of which extend from 30 to 65 acres, and the remaining sixty-three from 1 to 30 acres. The total acreage may be stated at—

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	Acres.	Dec.
Arable,	1379	517
Muir and pasture, partly improvable,	359	1
Roads and waste,	27	7
Total acres,	617	1776

' To retain so numerous a tenantry on this extent of land would evidently prevent the substantial and permanent improvement of the estate. It is equally evident that a radical change cannot be effected at once. Several of the tenants complained of the limited extent of their holdings and their miserable houses, indicating that their time was lost in such a position. I shall endeavour, in dealing with the farms of each district,

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' to point out the manner in which I would recommend the land to be arranged into permanent farms and crofts, so that by an adjustment of the periods upon which the holdings shall be let, the proprietor may have it in his power to conjoin possessions from time to time, in order to form farms of extent worthy of suitable and substantial houses. In those localities suitable for small possessions only, improved buildings may at once be gone on with." On considering this report, and having, in the meantime, visited and gone over the estate with Mr Cameron, I did not consider it expedient to give full effect to Mr Beattie's suggestions. I find in a memorandum sent to the factor, I said—"In sanctioning the foregoing leases, particularly in Knockbain and Drumsmittal districts, the curator is aware that this infers an abandonment, to a great extent, of the plan proposed by Mr Beattie of conjoining the crofts into larger sized farms. The curator, however, has come to be satisfied, after hearing the factor's views and giving the matter much consideration, that it is most for his ward's interest to adhere to the system of smaller crofts, at all events, for a time." And, in reply, Mr Cameron said—"Mr Beattie recommended that the crofts, particularly the Knockbain and Drumsmittal districts, should be conjoined and made into larger sized farms. This plan, if carried out, would necessitate the building of new houses, and the trenching, draining, and complete fencing of all the lands, and, to a great extent, the removal of the present tenants. I have no hesitation whatever in saying that if this system were carried out in its entirety, particularly in Knockbain, the percentages would fully absorb the whole rental of the district, and create a scarcity of valuable labour for both landlord and tenant. I think, therefore, that the curator has acted wisely and for the interest of his ward in adhering to the system of smaller crofts." In submitting, therefore, to the Court the proposals he ultimately resolved to adopt, the curator took occasion to explain fully both the policy and the details of the course he deemed best in the circumstances, and this is recorded in his report to the Court of 4th July 1873, as follows :—"When, in 1854, the predecessor of the present curator was appointed by the Court, among other difficulties which presented themselves for his consideration was the question of what ought to be done with the numerous crofters on the estate, who had been brought many years before from the upper glens of the county, to whom small patches of moorland had been allocated, and by whom as frequently such patches had been appropriated. These small tenants had done little good to themselves, and none to the estate ; and, as they began to get old, and unable to procure a subsistence, they gradually became chargeable on the poor-rates, which had in consequence become exorbitant. In these circumstances, Mr Lindsay, availing himself of the best advice and assistance he could obtain, removed a few of the least eligible of these crofters ; added their possessions to those of the adjoining crofters most likely to work them efficiently ; and he granted leases in the form of which a copy is herewith produced, for nineteen years, at such fair but moderate rents as he deemed adequate, and on the condition of the tenants, in the course of these leases, improving their possessions by trenching and draining. The old tenants who were unable or unfit for such crofts were allowed to occupy their houses ; but as they gradually died out these wretched huts were removed, and the sites added to the adjoining possessions ; and, as opportunity offered, the smaller crofts which fell in were added to the larger possessions, or to those of the more active and industrious tenants. In this manner, during the currency of the leases which are now about to expire, not

' only has the redundant population diminished, and the poor rates correspondingly decreased, but the value of the estate has been materially enhanced. The poor rates in 1854, and for many years after, were 1s. 6d. per pound ; they are now 10d. The former curator, and since his appointment the present curator also, have carefully insisted on the fulfilment of those obligations as to the improvement of their possessions imposed on the tenants by their leases. This has been a more difficult task than the collection of their rents, and the Accountant of Court is aware that annually, along with the curatorial accounts, there has been submitted a statement showing the extent of land improved and drained in terms of these obligations during the preceding year. The results thus annually exhibited are summarised in the report by Mr Cameron submitted herewith, from which it will be seen that upwards of 430 acres of arable land have been added from waste, and upwards of 50,000 yards of drains made by the crofters themselves. The careful and judicious superintendence of Mr Cameron himself has largely contributed to this result. The time has now arrived when the future policy in dealing with these possessions has to be determined, and the subject is one to which naturally the attention of the curator has been anxiously directed for some time, as probably the most difficult and delicate part of the management of his ward's estate. When, in 1855, Mr Brown of Linkwood and Mr Cameron looked forward to 1874, they anticipated that the proper management would be to convert these crofts, with their improved land, into larger farms—large enough to give constant employment to a pair of horses—and to do away entirely with the smaller possessions or crofts ; and this policy no doubt commended itself very strongly, in view of the great evils which had arisen from the poverty and inertness of the former crofters. But the result of nineteen years' experience has effected a great change. The pressure of the poor rates has been reduced, the redundancy of the population has been got rid of, the habits of the people themselves have undergone a change, and they are in general active and industrious, as is evinced by the results of their labour on their possessions ; and an element, which was certainly not present to the minds of those who reported in 1855, has recently been introduced into the question by the state of the labour market, and not only the enhanced expense, but the growing scarcity of agricultural labour in all districts. This subject has of late formed the subject of much anxious communication between the curator and Mr Cameron, the local factor, who has put his suggestions into the form of the report herewith submitted ; and the curator has asked from Mr Beattie also such advice and suggestions as he can afford. Guided by this assistance, the course which the curator is respectfully of opinion ought to be pursued is to combine a few of the crofts in suitable localities, but in general to maintain the present system for a time at any rate. To adopt at once the suggestions made in 1855, and to throw all these crofts into small farms, would infer the removal of many deserving and industrious families who have cultivated their possessions well, and who supply valuable labour to the neighbourhood ; while it would necessitate the outlay of a large sum in new buildings and improvements of a character probably in advance of the people, who have not got either the capital or the skill to avail themselves of the accommodation which would be thus afforded. In going carefully over these crofts there are probably one or two instances in which, as at present advised, the curator would propose to create new farms of a size necessitating any considerable outlay. These are (1) adjoining Tore, where a part of the present farm of Ryefield, if not let along with Tore, would be advan-

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tageously combined with three of the larger crofts in that neighbourhood, and form a very nice farm of 150 acres or thereby ; and (2) at the east end of Muckernich, where three crofts may be combined into one small farm of 80 acres or thereby. In other cases the combination of the crofts proposed by the curator will rarely raise them to the rank of farms ; and while he would propose to afford liberally drainage and such radical improvements, he does not contemplate any outlay on buildings, and very little on fencing, which, for a time, at any rate, the tenants will provide more cheaply and advantageously for themselves. In another important respect the curator would propose to alter the course pursued in 1855 ; leases were then given for nineteen years, and were necessary where obligations for improvements were laid on the tenants, the advantage of which could not be derived within a shorter time ; but now these possessions are improved, and there is no reason why leases of such duration should be granted which are not suitable or convenient in the case of such possessions, and are often not salutary in the case of such tenants. The curator proposes, therefore, in most cases, to give leases for seven years or for twenty-one years, terminable by notices on either side at seven and fourteen years. In terms of this report, the small tenants hold their possessions, and the curator is not aware of any dissatisfaction with their tenure. He is aware that of late, owing to inclement seasons, their cultivation has not been so profitable as formerly, and when he recently met some of them he expressed his desire to help them by any assistance he could afford them ; and he intended to spend money in draining without requiring any interest. On consulting with his legal advisers, however, he found this was *ultra vires* unless he could allege and prove absolute necessity, and, as matters have improved, the curator has felt that it would be improper for him to submit a proposal to the Court which he could not justify on the only grounds on which the Court could sanction it. Should circumstances have got worse in place of better, the curator would have made this application, as he believes these tenants are entitled to every consideration that can be afforded them. The improvements executed by the crofters themselves since 1873 have been trifling, only some 40 acres trenched and some 30,000 yards of drains made ; but there is not much land now left to improve. In conclusion, I submit a statement contrasting six of the principal crofter districts on the estate in 1882, with their position in 1854. In 1854 the poor rate was 3s. per pound, in 1882 it was 1s. 6d. Yet between 1854 and 1882 there had been laid out on the crofts by the proprietor, including the value of manufactured timber supplied, £4328, 12s. 8d. In 1854, the population on Kilcoy of the crofter class, after a lengthened period of destitution, had only a few years before just escaped from starvation, and were steeped in poverty : in 1882, I believe the population is generally well-to-do, industrious habits have been created, and their possessions are well cultivated, and the people are active and enterprising, and until I read Mr K. Davidson's evidence I believe contented.

**STATEMENT of the Rent and Acreage of six Crofter Districts in 1854
and 1883.**

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District.	Rental.	Acres Arable.	Acres Pasture.	Rate per ac. of Arable Land excluding Pasture.	No. of Tenants.	Average Rate per acre, allowing 3s. per acre for Pasture.	Average size of holding (including Arable and Pasture).	Average Rent of each Croft.
Knockbain, . .	294	459	116	12 9	21	12 0	27	14 0 0
Kilcoy, &c., . .	214	306	54	13 8	16	13 5	22½	13 7 2
Tore Park, . .	113	133	4	16 4	6	16 3	23	18 16 8
Drumsmittal, . .	156	156	10	20 0	8	19 9	20½	19 0 0
Bogallan, . .	43	47	20	18 3	4	17 0	16½	10 15 0
Coldwells, . .	46	36	3	25 0	2	25 0	18	23 0 0
	866	1142	207	...	57			
Average results of the whole six districts,	15 2	...	14 8	Arable, Pasture. 20 3½ 28½	15 4 0

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45384. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—The late proprietor of Kilcoy, Sir Colin Mackenzie, was, by all accounts, a very good-hearted man, was he not?—Yes, he was; he took a great interest in the estate, and in all public matters.

45385. It appears, then, from the statement you have read, that a great number of people were removed from the upper glens and settled upon Millbuy?—Not on Millbuy, at Knockbain and Drumsnittal; but hardly with his consent—his consent was never asked, though he acquiesced.

45386. There can be no doubt that a number of people were removed in the early part of the century from the upper glens?—I have always understood there was a considerable removal in the early part of the century.

45387. The estate of Kilcoy lies in the parish of Knockbain?—It lies almost entirely, that part we are now speaking of, in Knockbain and Killearnan.

45388. In point of fact, there has been a great reduction in the population of these two parishes within the last forty years?—I should apprehend there was; but I have not looked at the official returns.

45389. I have them here, and I observe the reduction from 1841 to 1881 in Knockbain is 699. What was the other parish?—Killearnan.

45390. The reduction there in the same time was 584. Now must not these two removals within the century have involved a good deal of distress to the people?—Much less distress than their remaining where they were in those cases under my knowledge.

45391. Apparently the system that you followed yourself since you got the management was to retain the small crofters as much as possible; and I think you can state that the reclamation of land by them has been very considerable?—If you combine Mr Lindsay's management with mine, it has been. I have given you the figures; it has been very considerable.

45392. The area of the cultivated land has doubled?—Oh dear, no. The area of cultivated land occupied by crofters may have doubled; in 1854 it was 703 acres, and in 1882, 1142 acres.

45393. A very considerable increase?—Very considerable.

45394. The rent has also very considerably increased?—It has.

45395. These two things have gone together?—They have, with a third element—outlay by the proprietor.

45396. I don't know that you mentioned that very particularly except that there was £10,000 borrowed at the time of the destitution. Have you been in the habit of spending a good deal of the income of the property upon the crofters?—The total sum expended since 1854 on the crofter class of possessions has been about £4250, including the value of manufactured timber supplied from the estate.

45397. You have yourself, and I think correctly, acquitted yourself of any putting out or eviction or removal of the people; but has there not been a very great reduction there in the population upon the estate of Kilcoy in these two parishes?—I trust there has been. I think the only management for such an estate was materially to reduce a starving population.

45398. That might be very judicious for the estate, but was it judicious for the people?—I have less doubt about the people than about the estate almost, because the people who were starving in Kilcoy found employment elsewhere, and are earning wages.

45399. The estate has been under the charge of the Court for a long time?—Yes.

45400. And I presume that the expenditure is very sharply looked

after by the accountant, or whatever he is called, of the Court of Session ?—Certainly; no expenditure of the nature of improvement can be undertaken by me unless it has practically the double sanction of the Enclosure Commissioners as improvements which ought to be made, and of the Accountant of Court as improvements which are judicious.

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45401.—During those thirty years when people were removed or went away, were you able to give them any help ?—No, it would have been *ultra vires*.

Mr George
Auldjo
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45402. Following that out a little further, the estate has now been under curatary for thirty years ?—Since 1854.

45403. And may be a good number of years yet ?—I hope it will, for Mr Mackenzie's sake.

45404. And for your sake ?—I don't doubt.

45405. Do you not think, speaking generally, when an estate is under the charge of the Court, whether from minority or any other cause, the population suffer a good deal from those in charge not being able to spend money in improvements and otherwise, the same as an ordinary possessor of the property would ?—I don't think in this case they have ; but they have suffered very much necessarily from the absence of that kindly, considerate treatment and intercourse which a landlord in full possession of his estate would no doubt have been able to bestow. But in the stricter view, in which you are now looking at the matter of improvements and outlay on the estate, I think as much has been done as any judicious proprietor would have done.

45406. You called in some years ago a gentleman from Aberdeen—from your own county—and he rather wished to consolidate small crofts, and you set your face against that. Have you any reason to regret that you followed your own good instincts instead of carrying out this idea of the consolidation of crofts ?—I have not ; but with this qualification, that I think the time may come, and probably has come, when what Mr Beattie suggested will be the proper management. The keeping up of a very large number of small houses on these lands is a burden upon somebody ; it is a heavy burden upon the tenants when they begin to get old, as they will be in another nineteen years ; and it is an intolerable burden upon the landlord who derives such small rents comparatively from the land. Therefore the problem is not solved, in my opinion ; it is only deferred.

45407. I should like to ask one or two questions which may be of importance to the Commissioners. You have taken a good deal of interest in the question of land tenure in Scotland generally, have you not ?—I have for many years.

45408. And I believe you have published a small pamphlet on the subject ?—I read a paper before the Royal Society this spring, which I was asked to print privately, and of which I took the liberty to send you a copy.

45409. I gather that you indicate that the people of this country have no right, or no real rights in the soil ; is not that your view ?—Certainly, the result of my reading upon the subject has been to convince me that the idea that the predecessors of the present crofters had any real rights in the soil is contradicted by all the evidence of history.

45410. But let us go back a little further ; let us go back before the introduction of the feudal system—before we had regular kings in Scotland. I presume the occupants of the soil then must have had certain rights to possession of the land on which they dwelt ?—Certain of the occupants had certain rights.

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45411. In course of time it came to this, did it not, that the people who were in possession of the soil did give over their entire rights of property to the king nominally?—I should say, from my reading, that was a mistake. I apprehend that the fact is that the land—any rights in the land which grew out of the growth of society—were unquestionably vested in the sept, or clan, or tribe, or whatever may have been its designation, and that these were rather usurped by the king than made over to him.

45412. But whether the property in the soil was in the hands of the sept or tribe, or the people themselves, in course of time it came ultimately to be entirely in the hands of the king?—I think not; I think it was widely different from that; the king's *rights* in his lands were very clearly defined. He had his own right as a member of the tribe, and he had in addition to that his right as king to lands which were the kingly lands, devoted to his maintenance as king, and which the king at the time took; and there was sometimes a sub-king, with lands devoted to him. It was a most elaborate system. But it is a mistake to say that the king held the whole of the property that the rest of the clan held of him. On the contrary, he held in his own right as an individual, and held also for the endurance of his office, what was dedicated by the tribe for the maintenance of their sovereign.

45413. If it be the case that the king had no such right, will you explain to me why it was that about the end of the sixteenth century, about 1596, the king called upon everybody to exhibit their charters?—But you are making a tremendous leap; that is away many hundred years from the time I was speaking of.

45414. Take it then your own way?—I was referring to the period prior to the breaking up of Scotland into the seven original earldoms; I was looking at the time when the tribe first began to emerge from barbarism into civilisation and to cultivate the lands it had formerly merely wandered over as savages. During that time, my reading has led me to form a clear conclusion that the right to the land was vested in the tribe; that the kingly lands were set aside for the king, the priestly lands for the priest, the piper's lands for the piper, and so on through an indefinite gradation; and that thus they were held when the feudal system burst in upon them.

45415. We will not come down so quickly. But take the time when the whole of Scotland became under the domination of one king, the time of Malcolm Canmore and immediately afterwards, when charters began to be granted. At the time when charters began to be granted did the Crown not assume the property of the whole of the soil of Scotland?—Certainly as the foundation of the feudal system the king, on paper, made himself the lord of the manor of the whole of Scotland. You are perfectly right about that point; but that was only for a mathematical point of time, in order that he might give it out again to the great vassals of the Crown, and that they in turn might give it out again to their vassals. But it cannot be said that at any time the king of Scotland had possession of the *dominium utile* of the land, because he only claimed to have the right of superiority.

45416. Let me put it in this form. At this moment, when there is land—I believe there is not much of it—to which no title can be shown, by charter, or otherwise, is that not held to be the property of the Crown?—Certainly; I apprehend that is the creature of statute.

45417. When charters began to be granted—we shall say shortly after the time of Malcolm Canmore—to great potentates, it was a grant from the Crown, was it not?—It was. I do not think the Crown would have

been very wise to have refused them; I think the vassals would have been very ready to help themselves.

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45418. Was any pecuniary payment expressed in the old charters as a consideration for the Crown granting the charters?—From my knowledge of the circumstances I should think not, but I don't know. The granting of the charters, according to my view, was a mere matter of form, in order to lay the foundation of the feudal system.

EDINBURGH.

Mr George Auldjo Jamieson.

45419. But in any charter you have seen you cannot say it was for a pecuniary consideration?—As a matter of my own general knowledge, I should say no; but I have not looked at the matter so carefully as to give such a distinct answer as I should like to be pledged to.

45420. In old times Scotland was in the habit, was it not, of being invaded occasionally by the English?—Yes, occasionally, and by other people too.

45421. Supposing that the charters of the nobles were so absolute as to give no right whatever to the people, and that the nobles could remove the people, as they are now doing and have been for a considerable period, where would the people have been who would defend Scotland from the invasions of England?—I think, sir, that a great fallacy underlies that. The paper and parchment rights of the great nobles of these days to the land were just about worth the paper and parchment they were written on; they held them by their sword and by their strength. They held them by their vassals; and in order to understand their position I think you must go back to the expiry of the previous period in which the original members of the clan or sept were the proprietors in fee simple of the great part of the sept land. Those were the original members of the sept, or the clan, and that is a very different thing indeed from having been the people, because there was nothing more exclusive than the Celtic clan or sept unless it were the Saxon gemote, which was equivalent to it; and nobody had any right in the sept lands except they were born within the strict purple of the sept, or the Saxon equivalent. And those clansmen who came to hold the lands of those days held them under the great vassals of the Crown; and we see them now in the lairds and other people who hold of the great vassals or of the Crown. But the common people who formed the great mass, who defended Scotland, were the dependants of those great houses and of their vassals; and they had no personal right in their land; they were the dependants of those who had.

45422. Were not the terms of the charters of the great nobles, what are called ward holdings or military tenure, held for military service?—Yes.

45423. The king gave out his lands to his nobles upon condition that they would give him so many men when called upon, and if they did not bring the men did they not forfeit their charters?—Of course, if they did not fulfil the obligations imposed upon them, then their corresponding rights would fall.

45424. Supposing then that those great nobles turned away everybody and banished them out of Scotland and off their places in consequence of their having no right to the soil?—They had no *right* to do that to those to whom they had granted the lands, unless they forfeited by irritancy. But there was a vast number of the poorer classes in Scotland who were not of that class; they were dependants of that class, and they were very much in the habit of doing with them as they liked, as all early communities did. Every early community in the world did so, and the more the matter is studied the more clearly that appears.

45425. Do you think the kings of Scotland, when they gave their original charters to the great nobles, ever contemplated for a moment that

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EDINBURGH.
Mr George
Auldjo
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the people upon those lands were not to have a certain hold or right, or were liable to be removed at the will of those parties from the soil?—Unquestionably. A very large proportion of the population of Scotland in those days were persons who were in the position of serfs, of which there were two classes—one allodial serfs attached to the land, and who went with the estate, and the other personal serfs, whom the great lords of the day employed as their personal servants to cultivate their domain lands. That was the class of people who made up the noble peasantry of that day; and, no doubt, the relations thus stated roughly seem to our modern ears very severe, but in those days the relations between man and man were more close than they are now, they were more of a family than a legal connection.

45426. Do you assert that at any period from the time of Malcolm Canmore, the people who lived upon the lands had no title or absolute hold upon the lands?—If by people you mean those below the rank of landholders, I answer unhesitatingly, yes; there were no such rights known to the Scottish people of that day.

45427. And it would have been perfectly within the power of those landowners holding these charters to remove every person when they chose from their estates and banish them abroad?—That is a somewhat deceptive view of the case; it might have been their right, but it would have been their wrong too, because they would have been doing irreparable injury to themselves; their whole strength lay in maintaining the population about them, so that the question could never practically assume the position you are now putting.

45428. Then the moment the people were of no use to them they began to remove them?—That leads up to a very different question. As you put it, it would seem as if it was a matter of policy, of choice, on the part of the landowners; it was the force of circumstances which was more powerful than their will, when society developed. If you will think what a Highland chieftain was in those days, or even a Scotch laird, he depended on his own home and those around him for his maintenance in every way. There was no exchange at all almost of commodities; in those days men lived upon themselves, and were self-sufficing and self-contained. When society advanced and circumstances arose which forced foreign commodities upon them, and the local necessities which had employed a great many of these men, and made them at once the retainers and the necessary allies of their landlords, came to an end, their employment ceased, because their place was taken by others. The chief got his coat from Galashiels instead of from his own glen, and the man who wove it was not dismissed from the glen because he was no longer necessary there, but was dragged, by the irresistible force of modern circumstances, to Galashiels or elsewhere where he could ply his trade.

45429. You have stated that for a time it was the interest of the great landowners and others to keep the people. Will you say this,—May circumstances not arise when it may be the interest and duty of the State to keep the people in the country, if, as you say, they have no hold whatever upon the soil upon which they are?—I hardly follow the question.

45430. The people were useful, you say, and the landholders never thought of removing them from the land; but may the time not come when the State may think it proper to retain those people for certain purposes?—That assumes that the State is to take charge of these people, as the Highland proprietors took charge of their population.

45431. Any way you choose to put it. May not the exigencies of the State render it right that the State should take some means to protect

the people and keep them in their own land, if they have no hold on the soil at present?—I can see no such duty devolving on the State with reference to any part of its population. And if you say that that devolves upon the State, as regards part of the population, it seems to me to lead up to a system of direct communism—you have no halting-place. I cannot, and I don't think you would propose that a distinction should be made by the State in favour of any section of its citizens at the expense of the rest,—that it should subsidize crofters out of the taxes paid by other labourers.

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45432. It would be a pity if there were any mistake upon the question. I am merely following out your own statement that, in former times the large landholders did not think it necessary; in fact, it was their wisdom to keep the people on their estates. Now, I want to carry that farther; may the time not come when it may be necessary for the State, for the purpose of preserving the people in the country, to keep them just as the Highland proprietors did before?—Certainly not; and that would be coercing the laws of nature instead of co-operating with them. Economic laws are just as powerful and irresistible as those of physics, and you may just as well attempt to stem the ocean as to stem the progress of events and social circumstances; they are equally beyond control, and the wise policy is to co-operate with and not to thwart them.

45433. Take the case of Russia, was it not thought advisable within the last few years to give the peasants their freedom and an undoubted hold upon the land, which they had not had before?—I understand it was; that was deemed necessary for the safety of the imperial empire.

45434. I suppose you have read what Mr Cosmo Innes has written about the commons of this country?—I have not read it recently, but I am familiar with his views.

45435. Are you aware that there are thousands upon thousands of acres of common land in England now reserved and inalienable to the people?—I believe there are numberless commons in England, and it is one of the beauties of the country.

45436. Are there any such in Scotland of any extent?—Not of any extent that I know of.

45437. Have not all the commons been divided by a process of division of commony, and divided among the landlords, and amongst them alone?—That is so.

45438. Do you agree, or do you not, with Mr Cosmo Innes, that, in the division of the commonies, the lawyers of previous days stretched the question of parts and pertinents to such a degree as to deprive the people of their right to their commons, or many of their commons?—I won't venture to express any opinion upon the legal question, but upon the moral and political point I have no doubt he was right. I think, in the division of commons, more regard should have been had to that innumerate right which the public had as to their use, and that this has in many cases been lost sight of.

45439. You know there was a great division of the commony Millbuy in the Black Isle about thirty years ago?—Yes.

45440. All that has been divided amongst the proprietors in the neighbourhood?—Yes.

45441. Would it not have been well that there should have been one little piece in the vast county of Ross left to small people to send their cattle to graze upon?—That is a matter of right; I was speaking only of what lawyers call the servitude *ludendi*. The people, I apprehend if the people had any right, no lawyer on earth could defeat it; but the right which the law has not recognised, and which I regret it has not, is that

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innominate right which the people possess by long use of using commons as places of recreation and resort and amusement, which we so much want. It was to that I referred, and not to a pecuniary right, such as the right to use it for the grazing of a cow. If a man had that right he was entitled to have it protected.

45442. *The Chairman.*—You have described to us the administration of an estate which, during the last thirty years, if I have understood you correctly, has been one of very gradual, and I suppose considerate consolidation?—It has; you are referring to the question of small crofters.

45443. But gradual and considerate consolidation, which has resulted in the number of separate holdings being reduced to about one-third of what they were thirty years ago; and we may presume the average size of them is three times as large?—Quite that.

45444. Or perhaps more?—Yes.

45445. That has, of course, been accompanied by the removal or dispossessing of a certain number of people. I presume it has not been the case that these families have been naturally extinguished; they seem to have been in part removed at the end of leases?—At no other time, of course.

45446. They have not died out from time to time, but have been systematically dealt with—in part removed and in part kept on at the end of certain periods?—Yes. The old people remain in their old houses until they die, and the young people provide for themselves elsewhere.

45447. The old people remain as cottars?—As cottars paying no rent.

45448. In the little houses which they had formerly inhabited as farmers?—Yes.

45449. And a certain number of the people went elsewhere?—Yes.

45450. In the case in which these small holders, for the general good of the estate and of their neighbours, were reduced to the position of cottars, did any of these people fall into the condition of paupers?—A good many of them; some of them were paupers before, and a good many of the 57 people who now occupy their old houses I have no doubt now are upon the poor's roll.

45451. So that, although the estate and the remaining number of people have probably been benefited, there has been, by the consolidation of the small holdings, a certain class reduced to pauperism?—No; the result has been that the poor rates have diminished one-half over the whole of these lands, therefore everybody in these two parishes has benefited in that respect by the operation. The paupers who are now on the roll, I have no doubt, would have been on the roll although they had continued in their crofts, and it has not been because of their removal from their crofts that they have been reduced; but as years crept upon them, and they were no longer able to work, they would naturally have fallen into that position.

45452. But in some cases, had they remained in their crofts, their families or the young people who went away to other places might have remained on the farm and cultivated it till the time of their parents' death, and so supported their parents?—They might, and no doubt in some cases they would; but it does not quite follow as a necessary result that they would. I think the tendency would have been for them to have gone where they could have carried their labour to a better market, because these small crofts were quite incapable of recompensing fair labour.

45453. You think they would have deserted their parents?—I have

no doubt they would have followed the natural bent of every man to better himself, and would not have wasted their labour on crofts which would not repay their labour.

45454. You think in that case the small tenants whose holdings were consolidated were agreeable to this process of gradual and considerate consolidation—that they themselves wished it?—I do not say in all cases; I am afraid far from it. Those who got the crofts adjoining their own liked it, and others did not. That is just human nature.

45455. So that this consolidation has been attended with some degree of human suffering and human depression. Now, I would ask you how were these people dealt with on the small crofts with reference to any improvements that existed? First of all, had these crofters originally broken any ground—built houses, cultivated the ground, and executed some simple improvements?—Going back to the original crofter, I have no doubt he came to the ground finding it nothing more than a moor; that he built a very bad house, and gradually broke in land round about about him; and that he paid no rent. After a while, his position there, no doubt, attracted the notice of the ground officer or the laird, and a rent was imposed upon him. At a further stage he would rise to the level at which he would require a lease, and then economic laws would begin to operate. Where that lease was granted, in many cases provision was made according to an elaborate system in the north of Scotland of meliorations; and for several years after Mr Lindsay's appointment we had a considerable number of people to settle with on the ground of meliorations. That was one type. Another type was where the rent was modified in respect of the improvements effected. That was the type which Mr Lindsay and I preferred, and which we have invariably acted upon.

45456. That is to say, instead of letting the farms at the beginning of the first or second lease at the market value, or what you considered the market value, you let them at reduced rents in order that the people might be gradually compensated for their meliorations?—Certainly.

45457. And you yourself have seen on the property considerable sacrifices of rental for the purpose of reimbursing the people?—Certainly; that is the *raison d'être* of the form of lease which we have, which imposes on the tenant the obligation to bring into cultivation certain land, and that is as much a part of the rent as a money consideration.

45458. And in consideration of that he gets the land at a lower rent for a certain number of years?—Yes.

45459. But you say there were other cases in which some compensation was given?—Yes. During the time of the predecessors of Mr Mackenzie such obligations were given, and it devolved upon us as representing Mr Mackenzie to deal with them. But Mr Lindsay and I had no power to give obligations which would have affected the successors of Mr Mackenzie; and therefore, even if we had preferred that system, it was not in our power.

45460. So that in the case of these people losing their crofts, and falling into the position of cottars and partly into the condition of paupers, there was no compensation given to them at the time that they fell into that condition?—There was no compensation due.

45461. Because their rights were consumed by the favourable terms of their previous tenure?—That is so.

45462. Were the people who fell into this condition regarded as objects of particular indulgence and commiseration on the part of the management of the estate? Did they receive any donations or any means of support, or what?—In the position in which I and my predecessors stand

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EDINBURGH. — 45463. Do you think it would be possible by any alteration of the law or statute—could it be safely permitted to curators to transport themselves altogether into the position of a benevolent landed proprietor?—I think it would be extremely dangerous, and I don't think the Legislature could be induced to pass the law.

45464. *Professor Mackinnon.*—I think it was alleged as one proof of the improved state of matters on the estate that the poor rates had decreased from 3s. in the pound to 1s. 6d. ?—Yes.

45465. In the comparative rental you gave us the rent during the period was doubled ?—The rent from the crofters.

45466. Can you say if much the same state of things existed over the whole estate?—Oh, no. The rent, of course, was very much increased in consequence of the bringing in of arable land at the end of the crofters' leases. The rental of the estate has increased, but nothing in that proportion.

45467. Have you any idea of the proportion in which the rent has increased from 1854 to 1883?—There has been a very large increase on the Highland part of the estate in that period; there are two distinct parts of the estate. I think the increase has been from about £4700 to £8000.

45468. So that it has very nearly doubled?—Yes; but that must be qualified by this statement that it represents a very large expenditure of money. There is nothing like that increase in the nett return to the proprietor, because out of that he has to pay a very large sum annually for money borrowed for improvements.

45469. Do you think that, taking the parish in which the estate is situated, the rental has about doubled in these thirty years also?—I think it very likely.

45470. I find in the parish of Killearnan a reduction of population during that period from 1794 to 1000, or fully more than one-third?—Yes.

45471. And in Knockbain a reduction from 3000 to 1800, fully more than a third also. Now, although the poor rate has decreased from 3s. to 1s. 6d., is not the yield of the poor rate much about the same, the rent being doubled?—Yes, but the expenditure upon the poor has materially increased in the interval.

45472. So that really, although there is a third less people, there is as much spent upon the poor as there was thirty years ago?—Yes; but the poor are very much better off.

45473. I have no doubt of that?—Which I am glad to say.

45474. I hope everybody is better off; but although the population has been reduced by a third, we have as much money spent upon the poor as ever?—Yes.

PETER L. M'LAREN, Clerk, Secretary to the Edinburgh Highland Land Law Reform Association (25)—examined.

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M'Laren. — 45475. *The Chairman.*—Do you appear as a delegate from the Land Law Reform Association?—No; I simply appear as secretary to read a short statement prepared by the association.

45476. Therefore it is on behalf of the association?—On behalf of the association.

45477. Would you kindly inform me of the nature, character, and numbers of the association?—The association is for the reform of the land laws; it consists of two secretaries and a committee, which is called the executive of the association. I cannot give you the exact number of members, some hundreds; but the executive numbers about twenty.

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45478. Are they at all directly or closely associated with the question of crofters and cottars—the small tenantry in the Highlands?—They have been in communication with numbers of people throughout the country. The aim of the association is to ameliorate the condition of the crofter people generally.

45479. Specifically the crofter and cottar population?—Yes.

45480. Very well, will you kindly read your statement?—Statement submitted by the Edinburgh Highland Land Law Reform Association to the Royal Commission on the Crofter Question.—The executive of the Highland Land Law Reform Association beg most respectfully to submit to the Royal Commission the views which, in common with kindred bodies throughout the country, their association holds, concerning certain questions with which the Commission has been appointed to deal. They are of opinion that, together with the evidence given before the Commission of evils at present existing, it may be useful to the Commissioners to know the views held by at least a large section of the Scottish nation regarding the remedies that with advantage may be applied. It is unnecessary to emphasise the present critical state of matters in the Highlands; that is sufficiently evidenced by the appointment of the Commission, and the facts which its inquiries have brought to light. It is enough to say that the present state of things is one which cannot possibly endure, even although the interests of justice, good government, and the public peace did not demand its speedy termination. If the evidence led before the Commission shows anything at all, it shows, in the first place, that the landowners in the Highlands virtually claim absolute and unlimited power to do with the soil of the Highlands as they please; and secondly, that the peasantry are as a rule in so miserable a condition that they have no material inducements to remain in their native land, or improve their condition there. With these two points in their order, the executive in their statement propose to deal. The claim which in substance if not in form has been thus put forward by the landowners of the Highlands is one which is in principle unsound, and in practice dangerous in the last degree. Whatever individual rights of property in land may have grown up in the course of ages in this county as in every other, the community is the ultimate owner of the soil. That the interests of agriculture can be best promoted, and the general good most thoroughly advanced by the concession of qualified proprietary rights to individual citizens, there is little room for doubt. But property has its duties as well as its rights, and property in land especially is not to be treated merely as a means of aggrandising or otherwise benefiting the individual proprietor, but also as means of benefiting the community at large. The case of the deer forests is one very much to the point. Deer forests exist simply because they fetch large rentals to the persons to whom they belong. It is not pretended that they are in any appreciable degree an utilisation of the productive powers of the soil. In many instances, the land under deer would afford fine pasturage for sheep, and parts of it might be cultivated with advantage. Landowners, however, claim the right to convert arable and pasture land alike into a vast wilderness, if only to do so be made worth their while. If this claim be well founded in one instance, it is in all, and there is accordingly no reason why the last native inhabitant

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of the Highlands should not be expatriated, and the whole country put under deer, if only a sufficient demand for forests were to arise. Looked at in this way, the unsoundness of the landowner's claim is very apparent, and the fallacy on which it proceeds is brought to light. What the exact rights of a landowner ought to be, is not a matter on which the executive desire to pronounce. They are merely concerned to point out the absurdity of the claim that has been put forward, and to urge the necessity for making it clear that only such rights can exist as may be exercised consistently with the general good. As the land at present stands the rights of proprietors are virtually absolute, and the investigations of the Commission have shown the urgent present need for such changes in the law as will bring it into harmony with common sense and the principles on which society is based. Whether or not the peasantry, until comparatively recent times, considered themselves joint proprietors with the chiefs, and were treated by them as such, is a matter on which much has been said. In the view of the executive, however, it is enough for their purpose that there is at present a Highland peasantry, and that their condition is such that a Royal Commission has been appointed to inquire into it. The Commissioners have had opportunities of seeing the peasantry for themselves, and of hearing from their own lips the grievances of which they complain. It is a fair enough thing to say that if these people are wretched they should go away to America or the colonies, and seek to better their condition, though the exponents of this view are usually supposed to be actuated with a regard to the interests of other parties rather than of those for whose welfare they profess to be concerned. So far as regards the peasantry, it is difficult to believe that were they to go away their lot could fail to be better than it is. But the executive have little hesitation in saying that it would not be for the general advantage that the Highland population should remove themselves beyond the sea, even though their places were supplied by sheep and deer. And accordingly they are concerned rather to show how it is possible to retain fellow-countrymen of whom they are proud, and by improving their condition to put the soil of the Highlands to those uses for which they believe the earth was created and given to man. The grievance first in importance of which the witnesses before the Commission complained seems to be the smallness of holdings, and it is natural that this should be so. It is of little use to a man that he have secure tenure of a patch too small to afford him remunerative employment, or that he pay but a small rent for what is scarcely worth rent at all. For the smallness of their holdings the peasantry are not to blame. Subdivision of crofts has rarely taken place with their consent, but has often been forced upon them by the factor or laird. And the executive would respectfully suggest the necessity of securing that a man who wishes for a larger holding should be entitled to obtain it, so long as there is land in his neighbourhood capable of cultivation. This might be done in a variety of ways, but the view of the executive is, that where there is uncultivated land, and men ready to bring it under cultivation, such men should be entitled so to do. This will be done, of course, only if they have some guarantee that they and not another will reap the benefit of their own exertions; and those who have crofts will improve them only if they are similarly secured both against removal and the raising of their rents. The executive would accordingly venture to suggest that something in the shape of fixity of tenure for a definite

' period—say nineteen years—along with compensation for all improvements he has made, should be conceded to the crofter. Such a change would, of course, only work gradually. It would be by degrees that the crofters could extend and improve their holdings and acquire stock for the hill pasture, over which it is indispensable they should have grazing rights. Capital might, indeed, be advanced to them by individuals or companies, as has been done elsewhere, on the security of that value in their holdings, which would then belong to them; but it is to their own exertions they must look for success. Such changes might not, of course, prove so lucrative to the landowners as if they were able to convert their lands into deer forests, and the deer forest mania to endure. But in the view of the executive an improper and unnatural use of the soil cannot be placed against its proper and natural use. It is possible, too, that this mania may pass away, and it can hardly be argued that the contingent profits to the landowners, which depend on the chance of its endurance, should be allowed to outweigh all other considerations. But it seems very clear that the state of things here sketched will prove fully as lucrative to the landowners as sheep farmers—the only other apparent means of utilising the soil; and it is important to observe that if the crofter be thus secure against removal or the raising of his rent at the laird's or factor's pleasure, he will be independent of them and their underlings, and that factor domination, which has proved such a curse to the Highlands, will be virtually at an end. On the question of fisheries and improved harbour accommodation the executive do not desire to speak, as there can be little doubt as to the expediency of fostering and improving these in every possible way. They desire, however, in conclusion, to allude to a matter which they think it is desirable to notice. Along with this statement a paper is handed to the Commissioners, entitled "Points on which Evidence is desired." This paper the association circulated as widely over the Highlands and Islands as possible. Their sole desire was to assist the simple peasantry by every means in their power to arrange and lay before the Commissioners the facts which they knew and the grievances of which they complain. The footnote at the end of the paper will show the spirit in which the association went to work, and the spirit, too, in which they are glad to believe the testimony of the people, as a rule, was given. The association knew well how readily persons evil disposed to the peasantry would seize hold of any rash or reckless statement that might be made; and the Commissioners will observe the emphasis laid in the footnote on absolute and painstaking accuracy of statement on the part of all desirous of tendering evidence on any point. The executive are satisfied that the Commissioners will view this matter in the spirit of fairness which has characterised their proceedings throughout; but having regard to the unscrupulous statements made in influential quarters, the executive consider it important that the Commissioners should be placed in the best position to judge for themselves.—Signed on behalf of the Edinburgh Highland Land Law Reform Association, DUGALD COWAN, P. L. M'LAREN, Joint Secretaries.

—' Edinburgh, 20th October 1883.'

45481. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—How does your society propose that persons should select land? What right of selection should they have?—I am not authorised by the association to answer any questions, but should any of the Commissioners wish to put any questions, I shall take a note of them, and we shall post the answer either to-night or to-morrow. [The following reply by witness, on behalf of the association, was subsequently received:—'Edinburgh Highland Land Law Reform Association, Edin-

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'burgh, 23rd October 1883.—Sir Kenneth Mackenzie, Bart. of Gairloch.
'Sir, with reference to the question you were good enough to put to me
'yesterday, I am directed by the executive to indicate their views very
'briefly in reply. They consider that where land capable of cultivation in
'neighbourhood of any township is at present uncultivated, the crofters
'in the township should be encouraged to reclaim this and add it to their
'holdings; and where there is no adjoining land capable of being so
'reclaimed, the executive would desire to see set on foot a judicious
'system of migration to fertile land at present under sheep or deer—
'large tracts of which were formerly under cultivation—and the crofts
'of the persons so migrating utilised for the extension of the holdings of
'those who remain.—I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient
'servant, P. L. M'LAREN.]

45482. *Mr Cameron.*—Would you kindly make a note of one question and post me an answer. In the beginning of your statement you recommend that the land should be the property of the whole community rather than of the landlord. In the middle of your statement you would appear to be satisfied with a lease of nineteen years. There is a considerable jump between these two theories; would you kindly explain which of the two really contains the view of the society?—[The following reply by witness, on behalf of this association, was subsequently received:—'Edinburgh Highland Land Law Reform Association, Edinburgh, 23rd October 1883.—Donald Cameron, Esq., M.P., &c., &c. Sir, with reference to the question you were good enough to put yesterday regarding the statement which I had the honour of reading before the Royal Commission, I am instructed by the executive to point out, that the position taken up in the first part of the statement is merely a denial of the absolute power of a landowner to do what he pleases with the soil of the country, and that no opinion was ever expressed regarding any scheme for the "nationalisation" of land. Towards the end of the statement, it was urged that fixity of tenure for a definite period, say nineteen years, was one of the changes most urgently required in the land system of the Highlands. The executive regret that in the hurried reading of their statement, it appeared to you that these two positions were inconsistent, but they believe that if you will have the kindness to refer to the statement now in the hands of the Commission, you will see that the arguments in favour of the second largely depend on the assertion of the first.—I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient servant, P. L. M'LAREN.]

45483. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—I observe you issued a circular at an early period to a number of people, of which you have handed in a copy; but you have not given us the purport of the answers you have received from those to whom you issued it. Did you not receive a number of answers?—We did not ask answers.

45484. You issued it simply to instruct the people?—That was the purpose.

45485. *The Chairman.*—I recognise your association now, because I remember the paper you had the goodness to put in our hand, and which I admit to have contained very judicious and valuable matter. I am sorry you are not prepared to give *viva voce* and immediate answers to questions, because I am afraid, so far as I am concerned, I shall not be able to put questions to you otherwise; and in the circumstances in which we are placed, I can only ask you to retire at present.

JAMES MACDONALD, Retired Revenue Officer, now residing in Edinburgh (81), and JOHN MACKAY, Pavior, Edinburgh (83)—examined.

EDIN-BURGH.

45486. *The Chairman [to John Mackay].*—You are the elder of the two, and we will ask you for your statement first. I understand you desire to relate something respecting your memory of the burnings in Sutherland?—Yes.

45487. Will you be so good as relate it in your own way?—I mind of my father's house being burned, and four houses that were in the place at the same time.

EDINBURGH.

James Macdonald and John Mackay.

45488. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Is it down in your paper?—Yes.—‘ My Lord and Gentlemen,—I am a native of the parish of Farr, Sutherland. I was born at a place called Dalhoriskel, on Strathnaver, so far as I can ascertain, in 1801. I came to this city the year after King George IV. visited it, in 1823 I think it was. The only evictions I witnessed was that which took place in the hamlet in which I was born. That hamlet was composed of five houses. I have heard, however, that the clearances were first begun on the heights of the strath of Kildonan, and that they were afterwards continued on the heights of Strathnaver, where they were carried out by degrees, till the whole of the inhabitants, down to its very foot, were cleared off. I have, however, a distinct recollection of having seen a number of the people that were evicted on the heights of the strath congregated at the cruives on the river, some distance below my father's house, waiting for the couples and some other wood and furniture of their houses, of which they had made rafts, to be floated down by the river while in flood, and which they then dragged ashore. Those, however, were people who were located within a few miles of the confluence of the Naver. Those who were located about Strathy Point, Strathy, and that neighbourhood, had to refloat their wood below the cruives, to be carried down to the sea, at the confluence of the river, where they had a boat to transport it eastwards. The people, having no knowledge of seamanship or the working of a boat, piled their effects principally in its prow, and, by so doing, raised the stern so much out of the water that when they set sail the rudder powerless, and they nearly lost their lives. Finding themselves powerless in the matter, one of them had to go to Strathy Point for a seafaring man to trim their boat for them, and to pilot them to their destination. Some time previous to the Whitsunday term, my father and the rest of the families comprising the hamlet of Dalhoriskel got notice to quit. Where the other families were sent to I do not now remember, but my father was sent to a place called Newland, so called, as up to that time no one had lived in it, being nothing but bare rocks and stones, totally unfit even for goats, far less for human beings, to live in. It was such a place that the people used to say it was the last place that God created, and that He must have been in a hurry while He had done so. I did not go with the rest of my father's family to Newland, but remained at Skelpick with some friends. Immediately the people left the hamlet the houses were set fire to. I witnessed the five houses in flames, which really grieved me more than words can express. I afterwards heard that the manner in which those removals were carried out were harsh in the extreme. But being a matter of history I need not dwell on it. I visited the place only once since I left it, and that is more than thirty years ago, so that my recollections are not so vivid as they once were.—JOHN MACKAY.’

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donald and
John Mackay.

Statement of James Macdonald.—To the Honourable the Royal Commissioners on the Crofter question.—‘ My Lord and Gentlemen, I respectfully beg to state that my appearance before you here is due to the fact that I am a native of the parish of Clyne, in Sutherlandshire, where I was born in the year 1802, and that I resided there during the year when the clearances—which are now matter of history—took place in that county. This being known to a number of my countrymen now located in this city, they have requested me to come before your Honours and give some evidence as to what I observed and witnessed in my native place in those unhappy times to which I have referred. Having acceded to their request, I will endeavour briefly to relate one or two incidents of my early recollections, and afterwards will be glad to answer to the best of my ability any questions which you may be pleased to put to me; but I desire to avoid attaching blame to individuals who were engaged in carrying out the high-handed doings of those days, either as factors or principals. They are now all in their graves; and it would be unkind to their living relatives to be keeping their names before the public in what may be considered an unenviable light. The scenes which I have witnessed in Sutherland in connection with those clearances were of a very distressing nature, and have left a distinct and painful impression on my mind, although I cannot be expected to remember at this distance of time all details of what came under my observation then. I may mention here that my impression of the people who were expelled from their holdings in those days was and is that they would, morally, mentally, and physically, compare favourably side by side with any other peasantry in the world. With regard to the wilful burning of dwelling-houses, that is a point upon which there need be no doubt whatever. I beg to assure your Honours that I have seen the atmosphere in Clyne, and for many miles around, filled with the smoke which arose from the burning cottages from which their inmates had been forcibly ejected, in the straths of Kildonan, Brora, Fleet, &c. Other cottages I have seen in the act of being demolished—levelled with the ground; and I have seen the people who had occupied them for days without shelter, huddled together at dykesides and roadsides, and on the beach, waiting the arrival of ships to carry them across the Atlantic, or wherever they were forced to go. I have a distinct recollection of seeing a notice, that was issued simultaneously with those proceedings, posted upon the door of the parish church, intimating that any person who was known to have given shelter to, or to have harboured any of the evicted people, would in turn, without any warning, be summarily ejected from his or her house, and be compelled to leave the county; and this harsh decree applied irrespective of any ties of relationship whatsoever. At the present day it is hard to believe that such cruelties were actually perpetrated; but I am here a living witness to testify that it is only too true that such things were done. Permit me to add an expression of the belief I have always had fixed in my mind, that were our landed proprietors to take a more personal and practical share in the management of their estates, and come themselves more in contact with the people, the results would generally be of the happiest nature; and many of the difficulties now surrounding the question before your Honours might never have arisen. The peasantry would have been encouraged and stimulated by the presence of their landlords among them in person; and the bonds of sympathy and confidence which once existed would have been in existence still, conducing materially to the best interests of both. Great wealth has been expended from first to last in vast experiments on the Sutherland estates; and I deplore the fact that the latest

' great scheme appears to have ended in disappointment and loss to the generous nobleman whose good intentions had originated it. The reason why the reclamations recently carried out so extensively in Sutherland have proved a failure is now well known. The ground chosen was naturally unsuited for the execution of the design, while plenty of good land, lying waste in the straths, well adapted by nature for such improvement, might have been utilised and brought at a comparatively small expenditure to yield valuable returns. A happy, prosperous peasantry might have been replanted there to the mutual advantage of both landlord and tenant, and also that of the nation. I scarcely expect to see it, but I rejoice in the belief that this will yet be done, and at no distant date.—JAMES M'DONALD.'

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James Macdonald and John Mackay.

45489. *The Chairman [to Mackay].—Was your statement written by yourself?*—It was not written by me, but I stated the whole of it.

45490. *[To Macdonald].—Was your statement written by yourself?*—No, by my son; it was dictated by me.

45491. It is a faithful transcript of your personal recollections?—Yes.

45492. I would like to ask you whether you remember anything of the condition of the people in their holdings before their removal?—Permit me to say that, so far as I am concerned, I am quite a disinterested man. But I recollect of the peasantry of these straths—seeing them in my father's house in my younger days, and comfortable and very respectable men they were. I recollect of that perfectly.

45493. Was your father himself a crofter?—He had a little farm, but it was diminished when the flitting took place—when the removals took place. My father was one of four who had perhaps twenty or so acres—three more along with him; and when the evictions took place—when the allotments took place—my father's farm was reduced to four acres or so amongst those who were removed from the heights of the parish.

45494. We heard a letter read to-day by Mr Sellar, stating that previous to the evictions the people had been in a very miserable condition in these parts of the country—liable to scarcity and starvation. Do you remember anything at all personally about the general condition of the small tenants, or is it too far before your time?—I believe it was in my time it took place. I recollect perfectly for the last seventy years, and a more comfortable peasantry I never saw.

45495. What church did you go to?—The Established Church.

45496. What parish?—Clyne.

45497.—Do you remember the appearance of the congregation?—I do.

45498. Were they well dressed and substantial-looking people?—Remarkably well-dressed and stout. The Sutherland Fencibles were raised from them—as fine a corps as ever entered the British army.

45499. At what age did you come to the south of Scotland?—About thirty years ago.

45500. Where did you live previous to that—between the age of fifteen and fifty?—I was at home until about 1828. Then I entered the revenue service, and was in Ireland for some years. I have been in different parts of Scotland and Ireland.

45501. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You are both old men now, and have lived beyond the period mentioned by the Psalmist? *Both.*—We have.

45502. And the statements made in your papers, whatever may be said to the contrary, are true so far as you are concerned? *Both.*—They are.

45503. *Sheriff Nicolson [to Mackay].—Do you remember exactly the year in which your father was burned out; what was the year?*—As

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45505. It is said to have been a common thing in those times, whenever there was a bad season, for the people to be in a state bordering on starvation:—was it so?—I never mind but of that year, and it was after Strathnayer was cleared.

45506. Did they raise corn enough to feed themselves?—Scarcely; some of them. But they would depend upon cattle altogether. I mind one man came to the neighbourhood where I was, and he had twenty-one head of black cattle, forby six horses and sheep; I cannot tell what number of sheep. These came from Garvealt.

45507. Have you any recollection of their bleeding cattle in summer to make use of the blood for food?—That year I am speaking about.

45508, 1816, was it?—The year they were badly off.

45509. Did they call the year by any name?—Nothing that I heard of; I never heard.

45510. Did they bleed the cattle?—They did.

45511. And how did they use the blood?—They boiled it, and took it with milk; after it cooled, you could cut it like leather.

45512. Was it not the practice to bleed the cattle in spring, under the impression that it was for the benefit of their health?—No, no; I never heard that. I never knew of them bleeding the cattle till that year, and I saw it done myself then.

45513. At no other time?—No other time.

45514. When did you leave your native parish?—The year 1823.

Sir JOHN W. P. CAMPBELL-ORDE, Bart., Proprietor of North Uist (56)—
examined

Sir John Campbell Orde, Bart. 45515. *The Chairman.*—I believe you have a statement which you desire to read?—Yes, my Lord; I thought it would facilitate matters if I embodied what I have to say in writing. ‘I beg to submit the following statement on the subject of the condition of the crofters and cottars on my estate of North Uist. In it I have noticed as they occur in the evidence of delegates and others the grievances complained of. I pass over in silence the Sollas evictions which took place before my late father purchased the estate from Lord M’Donald’s trustees in the year 1855, for that reason and because anything I know on the subject of them is from hearsay. I may say, however, that statements have been made as to the employment of soldiers on that occasion which cannot be substantiated. There is also an answer to the allegation that those who were removed received no value for the fittings and roofs of their houses. I have reason to believe that the people would have been allowed to remove them to Locheport and elsewhere, where some were settled on the estate; and as regards both these and the families that emigrated being in arrear many years for rent, there really would be a considerable balance against them after allowing for value of roofs, &c. according to the old custom of the country. The crofters who complain of charge for interest and repayment of capital which was expended on

' draining their lands, appear to forget that the land was supposed to be
' permanently improved by the drainage. The execution of the work
' was in Lord M'Donald's time, as proprietor, and I conclude that it was
' done under Government inspection. If these drains are not now effi-
' cient, I attribute it in a great measure to the carelessness of the tenants.
' But as a matter of fact, the rents to which drainage money had been
' added had all been revised by me before the Royal Commission was
' even talked of, and adjusted at what I and my factor considered
' the value of the holding, if not much below it. *Alleged fixing*
' *of Rent by possible Earnings making help.*—So far as I am aware,
' it was only on the Boreray estate (held on a lease of four lives and
' three nineteen years), that this was ever done. For this neither I nor
' my father can be held responsible, but I believe, if reference is made to
' the returns of acreage of crofters' lots, and common grazing attached, and
' of the stock kept thereon, it will be found that the Boreray lands (I
' refer to those held under lease above referred to) are not rented above
' their real value agriculturally, although they may be comparatively
' dearer than others on the estate. The rent was fixed at a time when
' £2 was an unusually high price for a stirk or one-year-old beast; and
' other stock was equally lower in value than now when it is very common
' to hear of £7 or even £8 as the price given for a crofter's stirk.
' *Cottars a Burden on the Crofters.*—There can be no doubt this is the
' case, and that both crofters and cottars would be pleased if the latter
' were removed elsewhere. But, admitting the existence of the evil, it is
' but fair to inquire how it has arisen before resorting to any remedy,
' at the expense and risk, as I understand it is proposed by some, of the
' proprietors, who are certainly only to blame (so far as I think has yet
' been proved) for a too lax enforcement of estate rules. The cottars on
' my estate (I speak of those on the crofters' farms) may be said to
' consist of two classes—*First*, such crofters who, being unable to pay
' rent, have from time to time lost their lands, but continued to occupy
' houses (in many cases there are more than one house on a croft), or
' built others on the croft or on the common of the farm, when the new
' tenant took possession of the lands. I may mention here, that the fact
' of the crops being the property of the outgoing tenant, may in some cases
' have been made an excuse for their remaining in the locality. *Second*,
' younger sons and daughters of crofters, who are kept or allowed to
' come into their parents' houses after marriage. This appears generally
' to go on so long as they agree well together, or until the death of the
' crofter, and the succession of perhaps another child who finds the house
' too small for so large a party. When this state of things arises, a
' second house is built, an addition of four or six couples made to the old
' one, or an outhouse ostensibly built for cattle is converted into a dwell-
' ing house. Of late years this has been strictly forbidden, and stopped
' to the utmost of our power. I have a typical case just now in the
' island of Grimsay (on the M'Lean property). A shepherd in the employ-
' ment of the tenant of Kallin, who lost his situation owing to a change
' of tenants; without even taking the trouble to ask my factor or me, he
' erected a new house on the common land of Grimsay. He was inter-
'dicted from doing so, suffered seven days' imprisonment for breach of
' interdict, and on his release returned to, and still inhabits the house in
' question. Two other cottars may be mentioned as examples of such
' practice—*First*, a man, not a native, but a Lewisman, was introduced
' or allowed to settle at Heisker Islands, by the tenants there, without my
' knowledge, many years ago. On hearing of it, I called on them to get
' rid of him, and they did their best to carry out my directions, by pulling

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' down his house ; but he still remains, and with his family, is no doubt, ' to a great extent, a burden on the crofters. *Secondly*, there is also a ' cottar on one of the west side crofter farms, from whom I took the house ' he occupied, as he refused to pay any rent, and was not a desirable ' tenant ; his mother had been a pauper, and had possessed or occupied ' the house as such. This man was dispossessed, but in a fortnight's time ' took possession of the house, and is there at the present time. May I ' ask, in the existence of such a state of things, whether a proprietor can ' be blamed for the congestion of population ? The witness Mal. M'Queen ' complains of Langrish farm having been taken from Tighary, but admits ' that it was many years ago, and doubts whether it was ever attached to ' Tighary since Tighary was crofted ; in fact, he says he believes it was ' taken away previous to that, and I am certain it took place long before ' the sale of the estate. The School Board have placed no restrictions ' on teaching Gaelic in any of their schools. Individually, I am of opinion ' that it is not desirable, as the teacher's time is sufficiently occupied with ' more important subjects. The teacher is a native, and perfectly competent ' therefore to teach Gaelic. It is curious that since the visit of the Commis- ' sioners to North Uist, H. M. School Inspector has reported on this very ' school 'that Gaelic is too much used.' The schools fees ranging from one ' shilling for a quarter, about the ordinary rate per month in schools on the ' mainland, cannot be considered exorbitant or beyond the means of the ' parents. I can hardly understand this being necessarily the case among ' crofters, who, as is shown, keep four cows, besides other stock. It is ' quite possible that here, as I have known it elsewhere, the great object ' of the tenant is to rear as many calves as possible ; and perhaps the ' children suffer in consequence. There will naturally be a season in ' winter when the majority of the cows are dry. As to the statement ' that the rents in this township are excessive, I find that there are in it ' sixteen tenants, at rents varying from £4, 15s. to £6, 9s. for single ' crofts ; the double crofts, of which there are four, pay £8, 5s., £10, 1s., ' £10, 6s., and £12, 2s. The aggregate rental of the farm is £108, 19s., ' and judging from the stock kept, I am of opinion that it is in these ' days very moderately rented. The first and most important complaint ' made by the witness, James M'Corquodale, is as to the rent being too ' high, and I take his own holding as an example, which was reduced ' once to £8, 3s., and is not £8, 10s., as stated by him ; and I believe it ' was still further reduced. He was in arrears at Whitsunday term over £8. ' On this croft, according to his own statement, he keeps five cows and a ' two-year-old beast, two horses, and eight sheep. I think the Commis- ' sioners will agree with me, that whenever he chooses to vacate the ' holding, it will not be necessary to advertise it to get a fresh tenant at ' that, or even a larger rent. There is no doubt that the Carinish people ' were better off when they earned money by kelp-making, and possibly ' the rents are higher in comparison on this than on some of my crofter ' farms, but I believe I may say that any alteration in rents on it since ' the property was bought has been by reduction. The rents vary from ' £2 up to £10, 3s. It is stated that the ground does not give as heavy ' crops as formerly, and I fully believe it to be the case, and it would, to ' the minds of most with any knowledge of farming, be a very curious ' thing if it were otherwise, when the continuous cropping that it is ' subjected to is known. With regard to cottars being placed on the ' farm from other places, this has certainly not been done during the last ' thirty years, so far as I am aware. About fifteen years since, two people ' from Locheport had vacant crofts given them in Carinish. It is said ' that the price paid for making kelp is less than formerly. The witness

' who makes this statement is in error; the present price of drift-weed kelp ' is 42s. Cut-weed kelp is not now made. I have written evidence, that ' in 1798 and 1804, when kelp was sold at £20 a ton, 35s. was paid for ' making it when the weed was of three years' growth, and 42s. when of ' two years' growth. I think this a most frivolous complaint. The ' allegation, that there has been a deterioration in the character of cattle ' is entirely erroneous; from my personal observation, corroborated by ' others more competent, I am prepared to say that they have much ' improved within the last twenty-eight years. Potatoes are still largely ' exported when prices are good for them; at other times it pays the ' people better to feed their cattle with them. This occurred a year or ' two ago, and it was the cause of a marked improvement in the condition ' of the crofters' stock next July market. The practice of not asking the ' price for meal and other things when not paying for it at the time is ' not peculiar to North Uist; but I am in hopes that latterly the dealing ' on credit with local merchants has much decreased, and that the ' requisite sum for a bag of meal is remitted to Glasgow merchants, and ' it is sent carriage paid. I am aware that about £200 was advanced ' last winter and this spring by my factor, for this purpose, in the island. ' I believe the freight on a bag of meal from Glasgow is 2s. I remember ' not many years ago it was 3s. 6d. *Loch Epport—Evidence of John Morrison.*—It is unnecessary to notice this witness's statement as to the houses of those removed from Sollas now, as I have done so previously. ' The total rent of Locheport tenants is £46, 15s. among thirty-two tenants, ' of these two have made no payment of rent at all, and the arrears on the ' very small sums now charged are always large in proportion to those else- ' where on the estate. I am sorry to have to record it as my deliberate opin- ' ion that the complaints as to rents in this district, and the failure to pay ' them, small as they are, are only the natural result of these people having ' being made the subject of public sympathy, and having lived on public ' charity for so many years. Their rents vary from £2, 15s. to £1. There ' is only one at £2, 15s. I do not know without reference what is their ' average amount of stock, but in most places the higher sum would not be ' considered a high rent for even one cow's keep, more particularly as the ' people sat for years absolutely free, and have means of subsistence by fish- ' ing much nearer them than in most places on the estate. *Middle Quarter* ' —*Angus Macaulay's Evidence.*—The transaction mentioned by this wit- ' ness, of his father paying £4 arrears of rent due by a former tenant, when ' he got a holding at Middle Quarter, has been misrepresented. The £4 was ' certainly not paid to the factor by his father, and no such practice exists ' on the estate; but I have some reason to believe that holdings, and more ' particularly cottars houses, have been sold and bought, although I recog- ' nise no such transaction. No doubt the erection of fences would be of ' great benefit to both crofters and tacksmen marching with them, but the ' crofters are in my experience invariably unwilling to pay interest on ' them. They sometimes can be induced to erect a dyke, but wherever ' sheep are kept this is not an effectual fence without wire. *Middle* ' *Quarter—Evidence of Donald M'Queen.*—The rent of £3, 5s. for this man's ' holding cannot be said to be high, keeping, as it is stated to do, two ' cows, one horse, and six sheep. It will be seen by his evidence that a ' full croft here, which pays £7, keeps two horses, five cows with followers ' (till a year old), and twelve sheep. Is this high? *Boreray Island.*— ' There appear to be twenty-three crofters here at present, as against (as ' stated) twenty formerly. I am not aware of any additional tenants ' having gone there since my father's purchase of M'Lean's lease, but the ' reverse. The drainage of the loch referred to was done at M'Lean's

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EDINBURGH. ' expense many years ago. The outlet has been allowed to get choked up by shingle. Till this year I was never asked to have anything done to it. It has been the want of attention from time to time as required that has rendered it useless. It would now cost a considerable sum to make it efficient. An alteration of the outlet in its lower end, so that it would discharge into the sea at a place more sheltered from the heavy breakers, would be necessary; but I am of opinion that if made at the proprietor's expense, the tenants who would derive benefit from it, if not paying interest on the cost of the work, should at least be bound to keep it in order without payment. The same remarks apply equally to the repair of the sand banks, which is enjoined on all tenants on the property. There is plenty of land in Boreray capable of improvement. The erection of fences would make it better available, and there are plenty of loose stones to be had. I particularly noticed recently many places where a day's work of a dozen men in surface drains would have doubled the value of the grazings. As to the distance that peats have to be brought in boats, and privilege of cutting paid for in labour, at first sight this might appear to be a grievance, but so far from it really being so, these people are much better off than those of many farms in this respect. Originally there were peats on the adjacent island of Lingay, but they were many years ago exhausted, and peats had to be taken from a tacksman's farm on the shores of the Sound of Harris. The payment of day's labour to the tacksman is not a serious burden for the fuel for a family for the whole year. My factor, who is at present tacksman of the farm, has continued the charge made by his predecessors. As to the distance they have to bring their peats, it may possibly be five or six miles by water; but as they all possess boats, and the tide will carry them the whole way and back almost without their putting an oar in the water, and the work has to be done in summer, I have no hesitation in calling this a most frivolous complaint. Boreray is the best locality in North Uist for lobster-fishing, and it ought to be a great help to the tenants. It is also very advantageously situated in respect of kelp, that made there fetching a higher price, owing to its freedom from admixture of sand. There are only three cottar families and two other single. I cannot admit that there is or ought to be any exceptional poverty. The School Board originally made an application for a grant in aid of building a school at Boreray, but on consideration withdrew it, and one or two others in localities where the number of children was small, being of opinion that education could be provided for in such places by the societies in connection with the Established and Free Churches. The experiment has not been satisfactory, and the application for these grants is to be at once renewed. But I may mention that, when I visited the school in Boreray on a beautiful day in July last, the children present were not twenty in number out of some thirty, although none reside over half a mile from the school; and as no fees are charged by the society's teachers, it could not be alleged as a cause for bad attendance, as is so frequently done in the case of the board schools. This does not speak much for the desire for education which is supposed to exist in Boreray. *Rev. John M'Rae's Evidence.*—I have been able to ascertain that the case of conviction for sheep-stealing referred to took place twelve or fourteen years since. There are every year large losses of sheep unaccounted for by deaths on the large farms—on my own farm and those occupied by tacksmen. We have not any proof that there is any wholesale stealing, but it is not satisfactory; and I know of at least one case recently where a boat was seen on shore, a shot was heard, and the entrails of a sheep were shortly afterwards found on the

spot. *Grimsay—Angus Macaulay's Evidence.*—I observe in this witness's evidence a statement as to something my father said about an embankment the sea broke down, and I think it right to say that my father was an eminently practical man, and that I am quite certain that the witness must have misunderstood him. I am convinced that my father made use of what, with him was a favourite maxim, viz., that water is a good servant, but a bad master. The embankment in question was put up during the currency of M'Lean of Boreray's lease, Grimsay being part of his holding, and I know nothing of the conditions under which it was done. But I may say with reference to works of this nature I have formed a very strong opinion, that having regard to the recent frequency of extraordinary high tides, it is not desirable to renew those broken down, or to erect others of the same sort. *Reduction of Rents in respect of Cottars.*—As elsewhere pointed out, I think it is clear that the majority of cottars consist of broken-down crofters or dependants of crofters who have simply squatted from time to time. So far as I am aware, there has never been a case since we got the property of North Uist of any complaint made by crofters on this subject. If such had been made to me, I should have been disposed to enforce the estate regulations on this subject so far as could be done by a reasonable expenditure in law charges, but, I should not have been disposed to carve out of the tackmen's farms, or the common grazing, fresh crofts for people with no capital and who consequently could not be depended on to pay any rent.

Desired Removal of Cottars.—I do not see that in practice any difference exists between cottars and cases where more than one family are on a croft, and only one recognised by me as tenant; both are an incumbrance or burden. I may mention a typical case in this same island. On the death of a crofter some years ago, but since our purchase of M'Lean's lease, I found on his holding, which was a double croft, four separate families of his sons, and a fifth had squatted on the common of the farm. On another croft in this island there are three separate houses, and three families on a croft rented at £2, 10s. The crofter is said to be the author of the statement given in by Angus Macaulay. *Baleshare and Illeray—Evidence of John McDonald.*—The statement as to the damage done on this farm by the high tide in 1882 is correct in the main, though I am inclined to think it somewhat high coloured; but the witness also omitted to state that the increase of green pasture on this island during the last twenty years has been very considerable. In my opinion, it more than compensates for what was taken away by the high tide and gale last year. The statements made as to rents are exaggerated; they vary from £1 to £6, 19s., at which figure there is only one; sixteen are below £4. The area of Baleshare Island, which includes part of Illeray, is by Ordnance Survey, exclusive of foreshore or fresh water, 2249 acres. None of this is hill ground or peat moss. Counting half crofts together as one and double crofts as two, there are thirty crofts held by thirty tenants; the total rent of these, £127, 10s. for Baleshare and £60, 13s. for Illeray, a total of £178, 3s., or, as I make it, just about 1s. 7d. an acre, besides which hill pasture on main island is attached to each croft for fifteen sheep. It is worth while to compare this with the island of Kirkibost, let to one tenant who pays £75 for it, and a croft of say £4 or £5; call it £70, and this gives, I think, a rent of more than 2s. 6d. an acre, the extent being 548 acres of ground of much the same character as at Baleshare. *Houghary Tenants—Deprivation of Grazing attached.*—So far as I can ascertain, it is at least seventy years since Aird was attached to the farm of Houghary. It would be a serious injury to the farm of

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' Balranald to take it away from it. *Overcrowding of Lands.*—As elsewhere stated, this, I think, can be proved to be due to the people themselves principally. I visited this farm since the visit of the Commissioners to Locheport. I found in one house the tenant, a widow, her married son and his young family, her daughter and her husband, the son-in-law, also with a family, and another daughter recently returned from Glasgow with an illegitimate child. May I ask how such a state of things is to be prevented, or how it is wonderful that so many mouths cannot be filled by the produce of a single croft? *Knockintorran—John Laing's Evidence.* The question of interest on drainage I have already dealt with elsewhere, and I will pass on to a straightening of marches mentioned by this witness, in which he complains that the land of the crofters was diminished. This appears to have been done some fifty years ago, and I can say nothing about it. The crofters complain of a fence, towards the expense of which they contributed, having become useless. This I believe is partly correct, but the fence in question was erected in my father's time and under the advice and direction of the late Mr M'Kinnon of Corry, who was factor at the time. I think the tenants are to blame for some of the damage done to it by their stock; it was not sufficiently strong originally. A stronger fence would have cost probably a third more, and as the tenants grumbled at being obliged to pay for this, they would have objected still more to a more expensive one. I am, however, quite ready to repair it if they will pay interest on half of the cost of so doing. *Balmore—Subdivision of Crofts without Reduction of Rent.*—My factor distinctly denies this, and his statement is fully borne out by the fact that some of the old crofts remain undivided to the present day, at rents of £8 odd; the divided or half crofts vary, but are all below £4, 12s. The complaint as to a hill grazing called Maival can be easily answered. The marches between the hill grazing of the west side farm with the north side of Vallay, a tenant's farm, were readjusted some fifty years since by Mr Neil M'Lean, land-surveyor, and in doing this Vallay lost land of an estimated value of £16. This was taken off its rent and added to the west side farms, viz., Balmore, Knockline, Knockintorran, Houghary, Tighary, Hosta, and Balmartin; a sum not exceeding in any case £s. 8d. was added to the rent of each croft on these farms. What was known as Maival grazing is now available to the whole of these farms, and I am at a loss to perceive any cause of complaint. Complaint has been made of Irish people being introduced. There is one cottar, a tinsmith, who may be a native of Ireland; his wife has two sons by a former husband; both have families, and one is a pauper. They occupy an outhouse built by their stepfather, who pays rent of £1. This is the only case of strangers resident with my permission or sufferance on the property that I can recall; but I may here state that I see no reason for my doing otherwise than as I think proper in letting my land or houses. The statement that the difficulties of the crofters on Balmore commenced when their holdings were subdivided is contrary to facts, which can be shown. They have never been heavily in arrear. Their land is notoriously the best arable crofter farm on the estate, and their rent under £9 is for a souming of five or six cows. *Complaint of a Cottar being allowed to enclose a Garden.*—This complaint is positively the most frivolous of many of that description that have been put forward; the origin of it I take to be that the man is not a native. The crofters have themselves to blame for his presence on the farm. He was a joiner by trade, who worked at the building of Paible Free Church. The crofters petitioned for his being allowed to build a house. The land enclosed is less than an acre in extent, and its

EDIN-
BURGH.

EDINBURGH.

Sir John
Campbell
Orde, Bart.

' value, as taken from the hundreds of acres of ground, is absolutely infinitesimal. Such complaints are the best proof that the crofters have little or no well-founded grievance to put forward. It is stated that Locheport formerly belonged to this farm as a grazing. It certainly did not do so within the last sixty years, or when crofters were placed on this farm; and as regards the rent being too high, it appears that there has during that time been no increase, notwithstanding the enhanced value of produce and consequent increased rents elsewhere beyond what were then current. It is requisite to state that Claddach Carinish was part of the lands held by the M'Leans of Boreray on a long lease. There is no doubt that all of these lands until we got possession of them were managed without judgment or the enforcement of proper rules. Everywhere on them the crofters appear to have subdivided their holdings among their children at their pleasure,—to have built, or suffered to be built, additional houses both on the crofts and on the commons of the farm, without even asking leave of the proprietor. There is no insuperable difficulty in children attending the Grimsay School if their parents were at all anxious about it, although at high tide they would have to put them across in a boat over the ford.

General Remarks.—We are asked to believe that the circumstances of the people of my estate are worse than they were forty years since, but so far from the evidence bearing out this, I hold the contrary has been proved. One argument is that the importation of meal and flour from the south has largely increased. The explanation to my knowledge is that it is found that it pays better to give their unthrashed barley, bere, and oats to their cattle and to buy meal, their cattle now fetching fully four times the price they did even thirty years ago. It is no doubt the case that the land does not return as heavy crops as formerly, but I believe the extent of this to be exaggerated; and is it to be wondered at, when one learns that grain crops have been taken off the same land alternately with potatoes for 80 or 100 years, and the principal manure used is so exhaustive a one as sea-weed. I need not say that the maintenance of two or three families on a croft that is well capable of supporting one cannot reasonably be expected. But it is necessary to draw attention to the fact, that the acreage available for cultivation is not limited to the croft, and therefore must not be judged of the extent as returned. There is on all the farms held by crofters, except Locheport farm, a certain extent of "machir" or "gearidh" land contiguous to the regular croft, and sufficient to allow each crofter as much additional land for cropping as will bring his extent of such up to fifteen acres in all. It must not be understood that this ground is all broken up at once, but that the quantity usually broken up by a crofter comes to fifteen acres including the croft. The extent of land of this description would give more to each crofter where it is "machair," but it is not possible for an average crofter to cultivate more, nor is it desirable on that description of land.'

45516. *Mr Cameron.*—What is the nature of that ground?—It is divided into two classes,—'macher' land, which is sandy land, and which if care is used can be broken up without risk, but which if broken up in exposed places leads to positive loss. It is improved by breaking up, and if they would fence it and sow grass seed, it would be a great benefit to themselves and to the estate.

45517. What is the nature of the land which is arable and not cultivated?—It is common land both 'machir' and 'gearidh,' and they break it up in shares.

45518. Do they break it up?—Yes, every year, some, but not the same pieces of common, they hardly ever allow any part of their crofts to lie fallow.

EDIN-
BURGH.

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EDINBURGH.

Sir John
Campbell
Orde, Bart.

45519. They actually break it up?—Yes, they sow crops, not only on the whole of their crofts, but on that land besides.

45520. Is it fenced?—No, that is the evil; if they fenced it, it would be a permanent improvement; but the difficulty of dealing with so many people is almost insuperable. The land between the hill and the crofts they cultivate more for potatoes.

45521. *Professor Mackinnon.*—But this fifteen acres of ‘machir’ land is yearly broken up?—Fifteen acres of ‘machir,’ ‘gearidh,’ or croft is available to break up. The delegate for Knocktine is a striking example of division of lands. His father had the smallest croft on the township, and always had difficulty in making ends meet; on his death his two sons divided the croft without asking or obtaining leave, and are still there. Probably people will be found who would call it a hardship if I selected one of the brothers as my tenant, and compulsorily removed the other, but I have no hesitation in saying that this would be the proper course in such a case. It is a curious fact that the marriages on my estate during the present year, of which only nine months have elapsed, already number 20, as against in the whole of 1880, 21; in 1881, 12; and in 1882, 25, and this in a year when it was alleged that the small tenants were in such reduced circumstances that many were on the verge of starvation, and appeals to the general public for charity were necessary. Is this not the natural result of the hopes of free trade in land, or rather confiscation of property, that cannot but take hold on the minds of a comparatively uneducated class? I am not to be understood as maintaining that poverty does not exist in these parts. It does, and always will among such, but I am confident that it has been much exaggerated. Did the Commissioners see or hear of any cases of starvation, or even abject poverty unrelieved in the course of their circuit? Do the records of the applications to Parochial Boards for the past year show any sensible increase? Can there be any great amount of destitution when out of a population of over 4000 I have not had one single application for assistance to emigrate? In relation to the value of holdings, I may say that the grass of a cow is usually put by the tenants on crofter farms at from 8s. to 12s. This I am justified to say is entirely out of proportion to profits which can be derived at present prices, and should never be less than 20s. On the tacksmen’s farms the keep of a cow is charged in the few instances at £4 to £5. This includes fodder. The least that should be charged for summer grazing of a cow is £1, and at that they could make it pay well.

45522. *Mr Cameron.*—You include in that £1 sufficient wintering to keep the cow in winter?—No.

45523. You mean the £1 represents the grazing?—Yes. You must remember that it is the grazing not only on the hill ground in summer when they are herded off the crofts, but the grazing in common through all the crofts, on all the gheairy land and the macher land.

45524. *Professor Mackinnon.*—The £4 or £5 includes the wintering?—Yes, but that is only given to farm servants as part of their wages. ‘We will take the class who appear from all accounts not only to be the greatest burden on their neighbours, but who one might suppose, would have most difficulty in earning bread—viz., the cottars—I find that in 1883, 1240 families (only 206 souls, including single women) were owners of an aggregate of stock amounting 290 sheep, 86 cows, and 58 horses. ‘These are the people who are supposed to be utterly unable to pay rent.’

45525. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Are these cottars?—These are cottars. One of the applicants who came to the Sheriff at Lochmaddy for relief, rode up to the door on his own horse.

45526. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—May there not be beggars on horse-back?—Many of them: I have often seen them. ‘Of course, it is patent to all, that estate regulations as to subdivision or sub-letting of land are regarded as a dead letter, when there is this number of stock belonging to persons who rent no lands, and there are 140 families who plant potatoes and grow corn more or less, and these are the people who are supposed to be in poverty, of such an aggravated description as to call for the interference of Government on their behalf. I fully admit that such interference is desirable at this crisis, when agitators have gone through the land holding out to the people that the remedy for their complaint is robbery of their landlords under the guise of legislation, and instead of giving credit to proprietors for having at heart the welfare of the people, holding them up to execration as tyrants. Practically, it is urged that it is necessary that the rents of land should bear no relation to their value (best estimated in my opinion by the quantity of stock it will carry), but be regulated by the size of the family who may be on it at the time. Even were there no other means of making a livelihood, I cannot admit this principle, and we do not find it admitted or acted upon in the relations of employer and workmen. But on my property, I can show that for several years past, there have been considerable extraneous sources of income to the tenants. Although, owing to my limited income, I am not able to spend as much in the employment of labour as I could wish, the estate books show that, during the last four years, the money credited to crofters and cottars for labour on roads, kelp making, and tangle collecting, amounted to £1088 in 1879, £989 in 1880, £695 in 1881, and £777 in 1882,—the rental of the class among whom this money was distributed being about £1900 a year. Besides this, the whole of the cut weed, estimated in a good year at 26,000 tons, has been to be had since the manufacture of this sort of kelp ceased, without charge, whereas formerly only a limited quantity was given to each crofter. *Compulsory Labour.*—Except in the case of cottars on tacksmen’s farm,—I believe I may say no such thing exists on my property. But as I have not seen it explained elsewhere, I think it well to suggest a possible explanation, that this mode of payment is infinitely easier to the labourer than a money payment. Lobster-fishing is an industry which I understand to be fairly remunerative, and needs little capital; it has now reached considerable dimensions. Many of the young men are in the Militia and Naval Reserve. *Encouragement to improved Agriculture.*—Since my father’s death in 1879, I have had this under my consideration, although it involved considerable outlay on my part, but I see the greatest difficulty in getting so many of the crofters on a farm to agree to anything. I am met with prejudice in favour of old customs, and against any change in what has been there were sure to be objections, as also to pay interest on any improvement, however desirable. There is apparently a general idea that without actually refusing to obey it, it is possible to evade any new regulation that is unpalatable. These difficulties I need hardly say have been increased enormously by the recent agitation, and the result is that all such measures must at present be held in abeyance. The people have been told by those above themselves in the social scale, as well as others, that the measure of their rent is what they can afford to pay, and not the value of what the land will produce in stock and crop; that the measure of the land they should have is what they require, and that so long as they can pay rent, thus estimated, they should be entitled to remain, not only during their own lifetime, but from generation to generation. I may confidently point to the facts and figures I have given, and the evidence before the Commis-

EDIN-BURGH.
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EDINBURGH.

Sir John
Campbell
Orde, Bart.

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EDINBURGH.
Sir John
Campbell
Orde, Bart.

sioners as corroborating the views I have taken the liberty to express. I have submitted them both, not so much in answer to the complaints made, as feeling it a duty to speak plainly in the interests of a people whose natural instincts are good, and as such, cannot but be capable of much improvement in their condition, although necessarily this must be a work of time, and only practicable under the ordinary conditions of free contract between man and man, and the maintenance of the rights of property.'

45527. *Mr Cameron.*—The complaints which we had in Benbecula and North Uist?—Benbecula, I have nothing to do with.

45528. I mean North Uist. The complaints we had as to removals related to a period long antecedent to the purchase of the property by your father; therefore I need not trouble you with questions upon that subject?—I merely stated there was some exaggeration.

45529. That place of Tighary which was given to the people was before your time?—It was not given to the people in place of Langash; they say Langash used to be attached to it as grazing.

45530. Was that before your time?—Yes, and it was sixty or seventy years before Tighary was under crofters at all.

45531. Your factor stated that in your time there had been no removals, except for non-payment of rent; can you corroborate that?—The only evictions were, I think, of persons who were not tenants of mine at all, and these I have nothing to do with; they were cottars not paying rent.

45532. With regard to the rents, before the Commission went there, and before the agitation commenced, did you ever receive any communication from the crofters as to their rents being too high?—No, except with regard to the district of Carinish. I heard the rents were considered to be high there; but I believe that was only in respect that the people used to make a great deal of money by kelp, and the crofts were possibly worse in comparison with others in the island. But the statement of stock, I submit, fully corroborates the fact that the rents can only be said to be high as compared to others on the estate.

45533. You went into the question?—Yes.

45534. And came to the conclusion that they were not too highly rented?—Yes.

45535. And therefore you made no change?—I made a change in some.

45536. In lowering?—All in the direction of lowering, except in cases where a man's rent was, say £2, 3s. 7½d, I sometimes made it 5s. and that sort of thing; and that would generally be when there was a change of tenancy.

45537. Is there any kelp manufacture?—Yes, the kelp manufacture goes on still, but it seems that the chemical trade has been rather indifferent lately, and the company who have the shores—the same company as has the shores in Tiree—have not taken a lease, but hold from year to year.

45538. But still it gives some employment?—The drift kelp making goes on; but this year, there was literally none, owing to the absence of weed from the shores. It is a very bad thing for the people, because it is so fluctuating; but there are always some tangles.

45539. There is no drying of tangle on the grass land such as at Tiree?—Yes, and on the tacksmen's land too; they dry it wherever they can get it. It is the crofters themselves who make it.

45540. Did you ever hear any complaint of that?—Never; it rather improves the land. The crofters used to go on the tacksmen's land, and take thirty or forty horses, for which no payment was made at all, and graze them there when making kelp.

45541. It seems there is a charge made on the people for cutting peats; is that an old practice?—Only on the cottars, not the crofters—only on people not paying rent; it has been paid in perhaps a dozen instances out of 200.

EDIN-BURGH.
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EDINBURGH.

45542. Do these cottars pay rent?—Some of them do.

45543. And are those who pay rent charged for cutting peats the same as the others?—I am wrong in saying there is a charge for cutting peats; the 10s. includes cutting peats and liberty to live there.

Sir John
Campbell
Orde, Bart.

45544. You alluded to some persons who cut peats upon the farm?—These are the Boreray Island people, who complain that they had so far to go for their peats; and they are better off than half the crofter farmers in the country.

45545. Why is there an exception made about these Boreray people?—I was not aware of this until the other day when they made this complaint, and I find that they went on the tacksman's farm, and that the former tacksman had charged them, which I certainly think was quite fair, for destroying the grazing in taking away the peats.

45546. Does that go on still?—Yes, the practice is carried on; but it did not come to my knowledge until the other day. But I don't see any objection to it.

45547. Why is there an exception made in the case of the Boreray people?—Because in the majority of the other cases the people cut the peat on their own farms.

45548. When they cut peat elsewhere than on their own farms, they make a payment to the farm they go on to?—That is the only case known of.

45549. Do any crofters cut peats on land occupied by adjacent crofters and not by large farmers?—Not that I am aware of; I should say not. I think it would be very much for the benefit of the country generally, if a small charge were made for cutting peats, because the deterioration of the surface is very great indeed, and it requires a great deal of supervision; they don't run the water off the peat hags, and it destroys the grazing.

45550. But could not they be made to do that by having proper regulations?—You would require to have somebody to enforce the regulations.

45551. But could not somebody do it?—He would have to be paid; the constables on the farms could do it, but they would have to be paid.

45552. Who would pay them?—I do.

45553. Could they not include that amongst the other services they do for you?—They might. However, as a matter of fact, this is the only part where anybody who cuts peat off their own ground, pays for the privilege of doing so, and it would have been very simple to have added that to their rent.*

45554. Is there any work to be obtained on the island?—I have just shown you, that between work on the roads and kelp making there was an average of between £700 and £1000 spent in the last four years.

45555. Entirely by yourself?—By road labour.

45556. But your own expenditure?—No, part of it public expenditure on the roads. I may expend £200 or £300 some years, but owing to getting little but unskilled labour, there is not so much money spent. If I want masons, or slaters, or tradesmen, I am almost obliged to send out of the place, and I cannot get lads to come to Argyllshire to learn a trade. I have repeatedly asked them, and have only got a few.

* I did not remember when answering this question that the crofters on Heisker Islands cut their peats on moorland attached to Knockline crofter farms. They make no payment but assist to repair the peat road. I also was not aware that the Balmartin crofters cut peats on Griminish Farm, and give some days labour to the tacksman in return for the privilege. Some of the tacksmen and cottars on their farms cut peats on other tacksmen's farms, but without any charge, as also do the two Established Church ministers.—*Subsequent note by Sir John Orde.*

EDIN-
BURGH.
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EDINBURGH.

Sir John
Campbell
Orde, Bart.

45557. One of your principal grievances is, that you cannot get rid of cottars?—Well, I say it is a grievance. I shall be happy to let them live there so long as they are orderly and can maintain their families; but it is a grievance when I see that every year they are increasing in number, because they think nothing of taking in the families of their sons and daughters the same as the crofters. They have a great disposition to take in their daughters and their daughters' husbands when they are married, and so the evil is increasing. If I could see any end to it—if it could be kept at its present level I should be satisfied.

45558. Do you find that any people come and actually settle on your property and you cannot prevent it?—We had one Islay man, I think, some years ago, and we evicted him at once.

45559. So that your difficulty really exists in the multiplication of families in houses which already exist?—Yes, such as that shepherd who was out of a situation who just simply went back to the farm where he was born, and built a house for himself and family.

45560. Do you think anything could be done, if the law does not already provide for it, by way of altering the law to this extent, that it should be thrown as a responsibility upon the sanitary or local authority to see that not more than a certain number of people inhabit one house?—I don't think you would get the local authority to do that; we are badly off for anybody to carry out anything. There are a few of us who would do it; but I am certain if we had an elected body like the School Board, they would not carry out any such regulation.

45561. In fact, you seem to have a difficulty in carrying out any regulations?—I have been without a ground officer for several years; I cannot get a suitable man. I want a stranger. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to have sanitary regulations enforced; it is a thing I had in my mind for years, to make regulations about overcrowding houses. I do not allow any new house to be built now with the cattle under the same roof as the people, and that is becoming quite the exception. The people are very much inclined to build new houses, but if they are not sharply looked after they don't pull down the old one.

45562. But cannot you prevent any new comer from settling in them?—I don't think it would be easy to do it; they like to have a separate house for cattle, and it is generally converted into such, and I quite approve of it, but if occasion arose and supervision were relaxed it would be in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred converted into a dwelling-house.

45563. I think you mentioned that some of the evils, which no doubt exist are owing to the laxity of the landlords?—Generally throughout the Highlands that is the case, and the laxity of the landlord is owing to the want of power to carry out the regulations when made. A law made and then broken is worse than no law at all.

45564. In the case of one squatter you were successful in evicting him once and he went back again. There was nothing to prevent you doing so again—evicting him a second time?—It only occurred the other day and I have not had time to consider the matter; and it cost me £12 or £15 to evict him; nothing would keep him out of the house short of taking off the roof, and if I were to burn the turf there would be a great outcry in the papers.

45565. Do you think one example of that kind would not have a beneficial effect upon the people?—Yes; I wished to make an example of this man, and that was the result.

45566. It was you who gave way?—Not a bit of it.

45567. You left him there?—The man is there, but he is not living in any house of mine.

45568. Whose land is he on?—On the common of the farm of Grimsay, in a house he built.

EDINBURGH.
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EDINBURGH.

45569. You told me he was not living in a house of yours?—No; he built the house.

45570. But practically it is your house?—They are my stones, my turf, and my heather.

45571. Then I want to repeat the question, why did you not insist on his removing?—Because I have hardly had time to think of it. I want to see what the Commission is going to do.

45572. You quoted the case?—I think it is, most decidedly, a case that should be made public, that such a thing can be done at the present day. I have a paper with me, showing the expense I have gone to, about that man already, just with the view of making him an example, because he did no harm to me—he lives on the people; but if you allow one of these cases you must allow a hundred.

Sir John
Campbell
Orde, Bart.

Rev. WILLIAM HALL TELFORD, Free Church Minister, Reston,
Berwickshire (35)—examined.

(See Appendix A, LXX.)

45573. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement to read?—No statement; I have some notes I intend to lay before the Commission, in connection with the evidence which has been given in regard to the Tongue district, especially in connection with the state of the crofters there, and the evictions that took place in 1819.

William
Hall Telford.

45574. You have also something to say respecting harbours, have you not?—Harbour accommodation.

45575. Considering the lateness of the hour, and the amount of evidence we have had regarding the Sutherland evictions, I would ask you to speak preferentially upon the harbour question. I don't debar the question of the Sutherland evictions entirely, but I would ask you, considering the lateness of the hour, not to be very long upon that subject?—My statement upon harbourage is based upon the present condition of the crofters in Tongue factorage. When the evictions took place it was held out to them as a reason why they should be evicted, that the only industry within their reach was the wealth that belonged to the ocean. But after they were sent there, no steps were taken to further their interest in that respect; no proper harbourage was provided; they were left to take their places in little creeks or distant bays, on exposed parts of the coast; and ever since 1819, downwards to the present day, although the Duke of Sutherland has 140 miles of sea-shore on his estate, there is not one single harbour for the benefit of the fishermen. There are several places where a fishing population is now located, and where, if a harbour were built, a special industry would grow up in the county, which would have a beneficial effect in changing the present system which prevails in the county, and might be the means of breaking down the exclusiveness which borders round about the crofters in their little districts. Take the district of Port Skerra, where there has been a fishing population since the evictions took place. The rent first was only £2, 0s. 10d.; and Melvich £2, 10s., and they themselves have increased their holdings in value to £122. Altogether the capitalised value of what the crofters have done for the benefit of his Grace is £9870, being the capitalised value of the crofts which they have made by their own labour. That has cost his Grace nothing, and yet there is nothing done for the people in the way of providing for the only industry which is within their reach.

EDIN-
BURGH.

EDINBURGH.

William
Hall Telford.

I also find that, because this industry is lacking to them, they have to get 8s. 6d. of every pound they spend in the county outside the county. Their rental is £2127. Each croft is supposed to bear three rents. Taking two of them for their support, and adding to that the amount of money his Grace is said to have expended among them yearly for the last twenty years, makes £8724. Adding to that £3000 as the value of their regular fishings, brings out about £12,000. Then adding to that any other sum they are able to get out of the neighbourhood—local labour from those who are able to employ them—I find that comes to about £16,000. In this fishing locality there are 800 families, and those 800 families cost each year £28,000, so that four-sevenths of what is required for their support is got within the county, and three-sevenths must be got outside. That argues that the locality does not support the population, and something must be done in order that their support will be by the earth again. I know nothing that will bring that about so readily as harbourage; and I think some means might be taken to secure harbours for the three principal places on the Tongue coast, Port Skerra, Armadale, and Skerry ; or leaving out Armadale, which is a small place, take Palmin, where an excellent deep sea harbour might readily be built. These remarks I venture to lay before the Commission, in connection with the special matter of harbourage, because they show that if his Grace were prevailed upon to halve the population—to make a distinct fishing population, and a distinct farming population—that would be the best possible means of opening up the resources of the county, and bringing back the state of matters to what it used to be when, in the days of the tacksmen, there was a graded population from the chief downwards. The men who were known as tacksmen in those days were men of culture and men of some refinement, which linked society together in such a way that confidence was preserved amongst them. But now the population of Sutherlandshire find themselves all together along the sea-coast. There is nothing permanent for their industry or work ; they are dependent upon outside labour and resources for their support, while they ostensibly pay rent for their little crofts to his Grace. There were some other matters which I thought it might be desirable to bring before the Commission in connection with evictions ; but as the hour is late I will beg leave to hand in a statement on that point.

45576. With reference to the question which we have frequently heard agitated at these meetings, that is the division between the industry of fishing and the industry of agriculture, what is your opinion generally ? Do you think that fishing ought to be practised as a separate industry on the north and west coast ; or do you think it ought to be allied with some possession of land ?—Quite distinct, if there were harbours. Already his Grace has tried that in a small way at Port Skerra. He built four or five cottages there some fifteen or twenty years ago, and they have never lacked tenants though they have no land.

45577. When you say no land, do you mean not even land for one cow ?—Not even for a garden, in this case I specially refer to.

45578. Would you therefore restrict a purely fishing population to a cottage, and not even give them a bit of potato ground or a cow's grass ?—Personally, I should like them to have half an acre or an acre for garden ground attached to their little cottages.

45579. But not for pasture at all ?—Not for pasture or special agricultural purposes.

45580. They should have no stock ?—Personally, I think it would be a hindrance and encumbrance to them in prosecuting their calling.

45581. Should they be encouraged to acquire their dwellings themselves

as feus—to buy up and become actual proprietors of their houses, or should they remain as tenants at will of the proprietor?—Having a right to look upon their holdings as their own. I can adduce a case in Berwickshire, at Burumouth, where the people have secured a harbour for themselves. The fishing population there, numbering 371*, spent £9000 on a harbour, and last year the white fishing amounted to £5000; and the greater part of the fishermen hold their houses as feuars.

45582. What area of ground is attached to the cottage?—At this place no area; the houses are as near as possible to high-water mark, beneath the brae or cliff.

45583. They have not even a cottage garden?—They have not.

45584. In that way they avoid the danger of subdivision, and the building of additional dwellings on their small feus?—They are prevented from that.

45585. But in the case of the feus you are speaking of, with the stances of the houses and a quarter of an acre or half an acre of land, do you think they might not be in danger of subdividing and building additional houses?—That could be restricted. I don't see there would be any danger if the houses were built on ground properly feu'd and arranged.

45586. In constituting a feu for a house and a small area round it in the form of a garden, can you restrict the purchaser of the feu from building an additional dwelling?—Not if the feuar has the right; but feus could be granted without that right.

45587. You are in favour of establishing or creating a separate fishing community, but subject to that condition, that it is to be in the neighbourhood of a competent harbour, and, I presume, that the fishermen shall acquire a class of boats which will enable them to prosecute the fishing at a distance, and all the year round?—Only in such circumstances.

45588. How do you propose that your fishing communities are to be provided with this good class of boats?—If a harbour were provided for them, I have no hesitation in saying their own industry and thrift would speedily provide that for them.

45589. But still the initiatory step must be taken. Do you think, in that case fish-curers would come and provide the people with boats subject to gradual acquisition or purchase by the crew?—In the past, that has been the case to some extent. This little village I spoke of had twenty years ago twenty herring boats, as they are called, manned by five men and a boy each; but the fishing has declined since then, and there are only ten there now.

45590. Have you ever considered any project by which Government could either advance directly to the fishermen for the purchase of such boats, or advance to the fish-curer on condition that he should supply the boats?—Never. In the north, we have been accustomed to look upon the fish-curers as interested in such advances, and as being willing to make them, if the fishing were promising and favourable.

45591. And not to require any extraneous assistance whatever?—None whatever.

45592. Except the credit they might get from local banks?—Just so.

45593. You mentioned the disadvantage of having a population ranged all round the coast; you seem to point to the settlement of some of the people in the interior?—Yes.

45594. Do you mean by that the constitution of larger crofts?—Larger crofts not renting less than £20, however much above.

45595. How do you propose to arrive at the constitution of such crofts?—If liberty were given to have land on lease, and that that might grow as the natural outcome of the progress of the country in consequence

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* The adjoining village of Ross is included in this enumeration.

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of the increase of the fishing industry, I have no doubt, even in Sutherland, in the course of nineteen years, that would very materially show itself.

45596. The goodwill of the proprietor is the first thing!—That is the main thing; and the natural prosperity of the people would lead up to it.

45597. Have you ever considered the proposals, of which you have perhaps heard or seen something in our proceedings, for Government advancing money to crofters upon security of their stock?—No, I desiderate that much.

45598. You desire it?—Personally I am not in favour of such,—I desiderate it. I think the crofters have made a great mistake in speaking so much about Government aid.

45599. Do you think it would be a misfortune to settle a new body of crofters, who would not be able to stock their crofts from their own resources?—I think it would be a mistake. I look upon the fishing industry upon the north and west coast of Sutherland as the great hope of the country; fishermen might acquire such a competency as would enable them to take to farming; or the natural outcome of the country that would result from such townships.

45600. The fishing people having realised gains by the sea would expend these gains upon the land?—Possibly; there are cases round about the Scotch coast where there is that seen.

45601. Men who began by fishing, and when the fishing period was past, took to land?—Not the fishing period, but their own lifetime of fishing.

45602. At what age do you think a man ceases to be an active fisherman?—Fifty-five.

45603. And do you think a man, at that age, would still be fit to engage in farming—in rural pursuits?—That depends on the money he has on hand.

45604. If he has the money he would!—He might.

45605. Do you think a man can work much longer on land than on the sea?—I believe he can.

45606. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Are you a native of Sutherland?—I am.

45607. Did you live a long time amongst the people there?—I lived there from 1850 till I finished my college course, and came to settle in the south.

45608. Of late years you have lived in Berwickshire?—Yes.

45609. And is there a fishing village close to you?—Yes, Burnmouth.

45610. Is the population of the village a purely fishing population?—Yes.

45611. Do the people intermarry with the agricultural population?—I am not in a position to answer that question.

45612. But are the fishing population of the east coast of Scotland not generally a distinct race?—They are distinct from the west coast fishermen.

45613. From the Highlanders?—From the Highlanders. The Sutherland Highlanders who are now fishermen are the descendants of those who originally inhabited the straths of the country.

45614. And do you think these Sutherlandshire Highlanders will ever devote themselves to fishing in the same way as a native fishing race?—They would if they had secure harbours.

45615. Do you know of any instance of that sort?—I know several at our own little village at home; there are several families in it who are fishermen, and have no land; they have no other means of livelihood, within their reach, except fishing.

45616. And do they devote themselves for twelve months in the year

to fishing?—So far as the weather permits. They go to the east coast during the herring fishing, and when they come back they go to the white fishing, and in spring they take to the lobster fishing.

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45617. They fill up the whole year?—So far as the weather permits.

45618. And are they able to make a decent livelihood?—I hope they do. But they are very much impeded in their labours by the lack of harbour accommodation, which necessitates their dragging up their boats, and by the risk from the surf in launching them again. All that might be prevented if they had deep sea basins.

45619. On the west coast generally the Highlanders have natural basins?—These are arms of the sea—lochs.

45620. And yet they don't become permanent fishers do they?—But on the west coast of Scotland the fishing is different from that in the north; there is little white fishing inside the Minch. There is one other matter I should like to advert to; I am anxious to refute a statement, made some time ago by a witness who appeared before your Commission, with regard to the late Rev. Mr Mackenzie of Farr. I hold in my hand a copy of a letter by the Rev. David Mackenzie. In regard to his opinions ere he died, I had the pleasure of knowing him personally, and I know that up to the hour of his death he never ceased to regret and deplore the fact of the clearances. The statement he made, in his original letter, which I hold in my hand, to the late Mr Loch, the Duke's commissioner in 1819, fully expresses the position he maintained at the close of his life with regard to these clearances; and with your permission I should like to read that letter, and Mr Loch's reply to it. Mr Loch wrote to Mr Mackenzie on 17th February 1818, in these terms:—‘*106 Great Russell Street, 17th February 1818.—Rev. Sir, Mr Suther has forwarded to me a plan of a new manse for the parish of Farr, which I have laid before Lord and Lady Stafford, and it has met with their approbation. Mr. Suther will contract for it immediately, and Captain Mackay will take care it is begun to as soon as the season will permit. You are probably aware that a considerable change is to be made in the settlement of the people of your parish, which is to be completed by Whitsunday 1819, by removing the inhabitants of the upper parts of the Strath to the sea coast, extending from the mouth of the Naver to Strathy and Armadale. None of the changes may, without the consent of the people, be accomplished sooner, as arranged by Mr Suther and Captain Mackay. Of the propriety of the measure there can be no doubt. It is as much for the advantage of the people as the benefit of the landlord. Nay, much more so. The experience of the last season shows the miseries to which the inhabitants of the hills are exposed. I have the satisfaction of knowing that this is now the opinion of some of the best informed gentlemen of Sutherland, and who formerly had some doubts on the subject. Indeed, I am satisfied that you and every other reflecting man must perceive that such high situations are ill calculated for the habitation of man, and that nothing but adventitious circumstances, which have ceased to exist, could have forced them into them. You must be fully aware that, in contemplating these changes, the welfare of the people has never been once lost sight of, as you well know that no proprietors more anxiously desire the happiness of those placed under them than Lord and Lady Stafford do. And I must beg to direct your attention to this matter with some earnestness, as I do not think that the amount of Lord Stafford's kindness to the people of Sutherland is felt as it deserves. It is satisfactory to know that in England his Lordship's long-extended bounties to the people settled on his Staffordshire and Shropshire estates have been fully felt*

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' by the people themselves, while it has called forth the approbation of
' the bench of magistrates at Shrewsbury. But his Scotch tenants have
' no less reason to be grateful when it is considered that besides the sums
' expended by his Lordship in the purchase of cattle, and besides the very
' great arrears now existing on the estate of Sutherland, the amount of
' his Lordship's relief to that property exceeds £11,000. The recurrence
' of such an expense, and of so great an advance, I am bound if possible
' to prevent, by putting the people in a situation where they will be out
' of the reach of such a calamity. And it is the duty of every man to re-
'flect that many circumstances might have occurred to have prevented
' the possibility of such a supply. Deeply indeed is the man responsible,
' in my mind, who adds, without reflection for interested motives, to such
' a population, without a thought of how they are to be maintained in
' years of scarcity. You must see from what I have stated that the
' changes which are in progress are dictated by the kindest feelings for
' the people. And you will pardon me when I say that I think it fair
' to them, and only justice to Lord and Lady Stafford, that you assure
' them of this fact, by calling to their attention what has been so lately
' done for them, and to point out to them the very favourable terms upon
' which their removal is accomplished for them, and which removal is
' intended to prevent the occurrence of those miseries from which they
' have so lately emerged. You will also at the same time assure them,
' that the measure has been too well considered not to be fully acted upon,
' and too well arranged not to be carried into effect. Indeed, the lands
' they hold are already let to others from Whitsunday 1819. I trust
' therefore they will make good use of the time which has been given
' them, and be ready to occupy their new habitations by that time. If
' they do not, they have themselves alone to blame. I not only give you
' leave to show this letter, but beg of you to make it as public as possible.
—I am your faithful servant, JAMES LOCH.'

45621. Has that letter ever been published?—Not that I am aware of: I have the original in my possession now. This is an exact copy. Mr Mackenzie's reply is dated March 1818, and is as follows:—‘*Manse of Farr, March 1818.—Dear Sir, I received your communication of the 17th ult., by which I was glad to find Lord and Lady Stafford have been pleased to order a new manse for this parish. I have no doubt but Mr Suther and Captain Mackay will take the necessary steps for forwarding the work in due time. It is proper to mention to you that all my offices, including barn, byre, stable, and kiln, require a complete repair, and that my garden wall is an entire ruin. Captain Mackay should be authorised to cause proper tradesmen to inspect all these, and to give in a report of what repairs they require, that the work may be done at the same time with the manse. I beg leave to suggest to you the propriety of either slating the offices, or else thatching them well with heather. The practice hitherto in this place was to thatch them with divot, which will not last for more than three years, so as to keep out the rain. The consequences are, as I clearly see in regard to the offices here, that a good roof will decay in a few years, that the walls will be destroyed by rain and damp, and that a frequent supply of divot is required, by which a considerable surface of pasture is destroyed, and considerable expense increased; so that I consider it for the advantage of the heritors to supersede divot entirely by a more durable thatch. I perused with the necessary attention that part of your letter which refers to the important changes which are to take place among the tenants of this parish. I have complied with your wishes in giving publicity to your letter, by showing it to some, by reading it to others, and by satisfying the inquiries of many who only*

' understand the Gaelic language. I am quite sensible of the propriety of
' directing the attention of the people to the amount of Lord and Lady
' Stafford's kindness to them during the unprecedented distress of last year.
' The seasonable supplies which they had been pleased to send to the
' parish were instrumental, under Providence, for preserving the lives of
' many. But although no public acknowledgment had been made for these
' bounties, let me assure you that during the anxious moments of distress,
' when I informed many of the people that a supply was coming, and in
' the enjoyment of these supplies, they seemed grateful to their noble
' benefactors; and I have the satisfaction to state that they were and
' still are sensible of the obligation. The indulgences given to the tenants
' in their rents and price of victual are striking instances of kindness which
' I know have excited the gratitude of the community generally. And I
' believe the people will duly estimate and feel grateful for any favourable
' circumstances in which their removal will be accomplished for them;
' but as you did not specify particularly these circumstances, I cannot say
' to the people what they may be. In my humble opinion, the mere
' process of removing them from the upper parts of the Strath to the sea-
' coast, then to leave them to depend for subsistence on the natural pro-
' ductiveness of their new stances, will not ameliorate their circumstances,
' so as to put them beyond the reach of the calamities which they lately
' suffered, and which may yet recur. I presume you know that the lands
' on the sea-coast, with the exception of Strathy and Strathy Point, are
' already thinly inhabited; and let me assure you, as a positive fact,
' that the calamities of last year were as general and as severely felt among
' the inhabitants of the coast as among those of the upper parts, and that
' at this very period the necessaries of life are as scarce on the coast as in
' the upper parts. From what I know of the circumstances of the majority
' of those around me, since so many were sent down from the heights to
' clear Mr Sellar's farm, I do not perceive how the great addition which
' is intended to be made to their number can live comfortably, as you
' anticipate. The lands on this coast are not extensive, neither are they
' in many places good; the surface of the ground is extremely rugged, and
' incapable of improvement to a great extent. There is no lime, no marl,
' and but a scanty and precarious supply of sea-weed for manure. The
' coast, as you know, is remarkably bold and rocky; the landing places are
' few, and some of them far from being safe. There is no kind of traffic,
' no industry, nor any opportunities of earning money by day labour. So
' that the local advantages of this coast are by no means equal to the
' southern shores of Sutherland. The great population of the heights
' removed to such a coast will have to contend with all the inconveniences
' arising from their new situation. From what I have heard of the
' quantity of land which can be given them according to the new arrange-
' ments, it will not produce of corn what will support some families for half
' the year; and being totally unacquainted with seafaring, their supplies
' from the ocean must be very precarious, particularly during the storms
' of winter and spring. The difficulties which they must encounter before
' they build houses, furnish themselves with boats and fishing implements,
' will be very great, and although boys and young men may in the course
' of time learn the art of fishing, yet those advanced in years and the very
' aged will not, and of these there is a great portion among those people to
' be removed. With my knowledge of these circumstances, and because
' I am yet ignorant of anything to be done for the people, further than
' that upwards of about 1000 inhabitants are to be added to the population
' already on the coast, I beg leave to be excused from giving any
' assurances to them of the change being for their advantage. I decline

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' this task, not from any reluctance to execute your orders as connected
' with the interests of Lord and Lady Stafford, but merely because I am
' not convinced in my own mind that the measure will be for the advan-
' tage of the people. I have endeavoured to contemplate the change in
' all its bearings upon the interest of the people, as far as I could penetrate,
' and I must confess that I am fully persuaded in my own mind that
' the sea-coast of the parish of Farr, with its present local advantages,
' will not secure a permanent subsistence to the great population to be
' removed to it. These are my real sentiments, and I submit them to
' you with all due deference. Should the experience of the people after
' the changes take place prove my opinion to be false, I shall readily
' acknowledge to you my error. But pardon me when I suggest to you the
' propriety of furnishing yourself with the most accurate information from
' authentic sources regarding the different circumstances connected with
' this important change. You will readily allow it is a serious matter to
' remove at one term in one parish upwards of 200 families who are
' still struggling with the unavoidable difficulties in which they have been
' placed,—low price of cattle, the reduction of the profits of day labour,
' and above all the failure of last year's crop, together with the unexpected
' deficiency of this present crop. It is to be naturally expected that a
' change so extensive in immediate prospect would excite anxiety in
' the minds of those who must experience it. The people are indeed
' anxious, but I hope they will be excused; they are submissive, and are
' inclined to be so. I have to ask your pardon for trespassing so long
' on you patience. I am willing you lay this letter before Lord
' and Lady Stafford.—I have the honour to be, D. M.' Mr Loch
answered Mr Mackenzie, on 30th March 1818, in the following
letter:—*106 Great Russell Street, 30th March 1818.*—Dear Sir, I have
this morning received your letter of the 19th, and have read it with all
the attention the importance of the subject to which it relates deserves,
and which every communication from you will ever, I trust, meet with
from me. I have also laid it before Lord and Lady Stafford. I am
much pleased to find, from your assurances, that the people of your parish
have not been insensible of what Lord Stafford did for them. I am
also gratified to learn that the terms upon which their removal is to
be accomplished is seen in the light I wished it to be, and which I think
it deserves; and though I have to regret that I cannot carry you along
with me entirely to the extent I could wish, yet I am well assured that
you will explain fully to the people, and it was this I urged particularly
in my last letter to you, that although they might not view the change
in the same point of view, yet that the same was not undertaken in the
mere wantonness of power, but that, in the opinion of those under
whose direction it was carried into effect, it would prove beneficial to
them, and that in its execution it was the particular orders of Lord and
Lady Stafford that every attention compatible with the completion of
the measure should be shown to them. This explanation calls for no
expression of opinion from you, nor involves any compromise of deeply-
rooted feelings. From what I have said, you will perceive that I
continue firm in the opinion of the propriety of the measures I have
recommended; and in doing so, I beg to assure you it is from no feeling
that it would be unmanly or wrong to retract an opinion erroneously or
too hastily formed. On the contrary, no one is more ready than I am
to do so, when convinced of the propriety of what is urged in opposition
to my own views, and no one is more desirous of hearing all that can
be urged. But upon the present occasion, the subject has received too
much consideration, and has occupied too much of my most anxious

' thoughts, not to have been viewed by me in all its bearings, and I am equally convinced of the necessity of what I have advised, from general reasoning as from arguments derived from local circumstances. And I should wish it to be understood, that I wish the responsibility of this measure to rest entirely upon myself, so that its unpopularity may neither be cast on one hand to the door of the landlord, nor on the other hand to that of the local factors, nor when I do so do I wish to undervalue the extent of such responsibility. In reply to your letter, I would only observe, that it appears to me to signify little (if I were to grant to you that the landlord must continue to support the people) whether he had to do so upon the coast or among the hills, but that to him it would make a material difference, whether he was enabled to do so, by receiving a considerable rent from the hills or no income whatever. That the people when they get to the coast are to support themselves easily, or entirely on corn, never occurred to me. I knew it to be impossible, and I have ever thought the former lots too large, as it enabled them to obtain a wretched livelihood from their land, without obliging them to have recourse to that great source of food and wealth, the ocean. I am also aware that nothing but the strongest pressure of necessity would induce so great a change of habits as I allude to. The old cannot be expected to embark in such occupations, but the means afforded to the young will furnish something to all; and the lots will contribute much to their support if planted with potatoes. You have assumed as a fact that which I by no means meant to convey, that there was any desire to oppose the wish of those who had a desire to settle in the colonies. I am authorised by Lord Bathurst to say, that it is by no means the policy of His Majesty's Government to oppose any obstacle to such settlements, and I enclose a communication to this effect from the Colonial department. The indulgence given to the tenants, subject to removal, of not being called upon for any rent for their possessions, either old or new, for the year ending Whitsunday 1819, will equally enable those who wish to settle on their lots to purchase shares in boats, or allow these who wish to go abroad to comply with the terms offered them by Government. But the latter must comply with such conditions as Captain Mackay may think proper, so that they may not afterwards throw themselves upon him for lots. I make no apology for the length of this letter, which the matter must justify, and will only further trespass upon your patience by adding, that I hope you will assure the people not to deceive themselves by thinking that the plan can or will be changed, and that therefore they must make the best of the ensuing summer.—I am yours very faithfully, JAMES LOCH.'

45622. *The Chairman.*—The correspondence is certainly very interesting, and Mr Mackenzie's letter proves his sincerity, and I believe his wisdom. But Mr Loch's letters also seem to be written in good faith, and as if he was convinced of the wisdom of the step that was being taken?—That seems so from the letter; but there are one or two very interesting facts in it—first, that the holdings were large, and second, that it was only the exceptional year of scarcity (1816) that caused the change; Mr Mackenzie says 'the unprecedented disaster of the former year.'

45623. I don't think Mr Loch's letter quite implies that that was the only year of scarcity, or that this had been impressed upon him by the fact of a single year of scarcity; and we also know that these clearances were merely a continuation of a policy which had been initiated years before?—Quite, in Sutherland.

45624. The letter is very interesting, but I wish to know, although it proves the sincerity and wisdom of Mr Mackenzie at that time, does it

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prove that his opinions may not, after a long course of years, have been in some measure modified?—I am assured he never changed them. I enjoyed the privilege of his acquaintance until his death, and have conversed with him on the subject of the clearances.

45625. And did you often hear him refer with regret to that period?—Often with regret. He often lived in my father's house, and I have spent long nights with him talking over old days.

45626. Yet we have, as far as I remember, a distinct declaration from another person who had access to him and his conversation, and who heard him distinctly state that his opinion was in some degree modified?—Then, in answer to that, I can assert the knowledge of Mr Mackenzie's own family—the members of his own family—and they express what I have personal knowledge of, that he never changed his mind from the statements and sentiments written to Mr Loch in 1818.

45627. People sometimes, under the impulse of the moment, express inconsistent opinions?—These were rather too sad and sorrowful times, and the remembrance of them was too bitter for him to regret the opinion he formed in 1818.

45628. *Mr Cameron.*—What year did he die?—About 1857 or 1858.

45629. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Did he preserve all his faculties?—Perfectly, and discharged his parish duties to the very last without assistance.

45630. I presume he was a nominee—that he was presented by the Sutherland family to the charge—was he not?—He was; but he was engaged before his settlement in Farr in doing work in the heights of the Strath.

45631. *The Chairman.*—Do you remember ever hearing him speak as to the normal or usual condition of the tenantry in the higher part of the valley, irrespective of that great year of scarcity?—Often.

45632. What did he say about their condition?—That they were a happy, contented peasantry; and he always spoke of the tacksmen as educated gentlemen, who were able to write out their own deeds, as the charter chest in Dunrobin Castle proves. A century ago the tacksmen were able to sign their own names and exhibit their own signatures.

45633. He did not think the small tenants were then oppressed by the exactions of the tacksmen?—No, he never gave expression to such an opinion.

45634. *Professor Mackinnon.*—We always used to hear about the great numbers that lived in this Strath. Now Mr Mackenzie states, and Mr Loch does not contradict it, that there were 200 families to be removed at once?—Yes; that is the second clearance.

45635. He does not say how many were removed from the other parts, but he implies that there was a considerable number—‘Now from what I know of the circumstances of the majority of those around me, since so many were sent down from the heights,’ so that in addition to the 200 in 1818, there seems to have been a considerable number before, though the number is not stated?—No; Mr Mackenzie expressly says that all the sea-coast except Strathy Point and parts of Armadale were thoroughly peopled.

45636. When you talk about the large numbers who occupied that glen, can you tell me if this is about the best evidence there is of the numbers who occupied it?—It is the best written evidence I have seen; and in addition, from my conversation with the people who were evicted out of the glen, I know that the population must have been large.

45637. This letter says it was considerably over 200 families?—That is only a section; that is from Achnabourin up to the Skail farm, on the right hand side going up the Strath.

45638. You were yourself in the parish at the time of Mr Mackenzie's death?—Yes.

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45639. And you were old enough to remember his conversation?—All his conversation.

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45640. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—From whom did you receive those letters?—From his daughter, Mrs Macdonald, who resides in Edinburgh.

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45641. *Professor Mackinnon.*—He remained all his life minister in the parish, and as a matter of fact he was of the country, and always held in high respect by the people?—Yes; he was the Free Church minister all along; he went out. When I spoke of being in the parish, I meant that I lived in Strathy, and he had charge of the district, and was our minister virtually.

45642. So that you knew him thoroughly?—Yes.

45643. *The Chairman.*—Which of the two sides of the river would have the larger population, the west, or the east which looks towards the setting sun?—The west side, the Skail farm.

45644. When we went up we rather thought the east side looked more valuable for cultivation?—Only from Skelpick; from Rhifail, further up on the east side, there is very little green.

45645. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Did the family of Mr Mackenzie feel rather annoyed about the statement which was made?—They did, and all who knew about it.

45646. And they wished you to come forward and contradict it?—They did.

45647. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—Do you know whether Mr Purves, in the statement he made to us, may have been confounding Mr Mackenzie the minister with Mr Mackenzie the catechist of the same period?—Possibly. I did not know Mr Mackenzie the catechist, and I don't know if Mr Purves knew him.

45648. Where were the tacksmen you referred to in Strathnaver?—One in Langdale, one in Achool, another in Klibreck, and another in Mudal.

45649. And were they removed at the same time?—From the upper end first—Klibreck and Mudal—and the people went to Orkney; and they were the progenitors of the Mackays of Orkney. The Mackays in Orkney are all Sutherland men, who were evicted during the time of the clearances.

45650. These clearances were made to make large sheep farms?—Yes; and to-day the Strath is held by three sheep farmers, and the Tongue factorage by eleven—5000 people, and only eleven families holding the land.

[ADJOURNED.]

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EDINBURGH, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1883.

EDINBURGH.

*Present :—***Lord NAPIER and ETTRICK, K.T., Chairman.**

Sir KENNETH S. MACKENZIE, Bart.

C. FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Esq., M.P.

Sheriff NICOLSON, LLD.

Professor MACKINNON, M.A.

**William
Gunn.**

The following statement by Mr William Gunn, factor for the Duchess of Sutherland on the Cromartie estates, was read* :—‘ My Lord Napier and Gentlemen, Crofter Commissioners meeting at Dingwall. When I had the unexpected honour of addressing you at the above meeting I was anxious that not a day nor an hour should elapse before entering my protest against the astounding statements and assertions of the two crofters from the “Heights of Strathpeffer.” I there and then, I believe to the satisfaction of all unprejudiced minds, disposed of the great majority of their charges, notwithstanding that they mainly dealt with a period long before I came to Ross-shire. There was, however, one statement in particular, which, although it astonished me, I was not at the moment prepared to refute. I mean the statement that they, the delegates, were there by the authority of, and to represent all the crofters on the Heights of Strathpeffer except three. I need scarcely point out that this important statement was unsupported by a single particle of evidence. I greatly doubted the assertion at the time, and now I am in a position to give it an emphatic contradiction. There are in all eighty-three crofters on the Strathpeffer property, of whom fifty-nine are on the “Heights,” and of this number I have the very best reason for believing there are not a dozen tenants who authorised the two “self-called delegates” to appear in their name, far less to make accusations so entirely out of sympathy with their feelings and wishes. I promised your Lordship to make inquiry into the case of poverty to which such pointed reference was made by John Rose; and it was with no small difficulty that I got a clue to the family referred to. The head of this family is a man I should say under sixty years of age, who a good many years ago had the misfortune to be deprived of his wife, who still lives an inmate of an institution in the vicinity of the town of Inverness. A daughter, who at present resides in the family, is fatuous, and has, I am informed, a propensity for destroying articles of bed-clothing. Whether this may account for the use of canvas as a substitute for the usual covering I am unable to say, but certain it is that to the outside world—even to the nearest neighbours—the circumstance was unknown until brought to light with such questionable taste by John Rose at Wednesday’s meeting. This man has four of a family, who, with the one exception referred to, are doing for themselves. He has a fair average croft of over seven acres arable, at a rent of £5, 7s. 8d., which is not in arrear. He is an industrious man, and of late years he has been much employed on estate labour, sometimes earning considerably over £20 in a season. In the early spring of this year he was so employed, and received for his labour the sum of £8, 1s. The case of the old woman’s cottage, with the hole in the gable, so graphically described by the same person, can be explained as follows :—The damage occurred during the night in a severe gale of wind. I was apprised of

* See Dingwall evidence, p. 2642.

' it next day, when two men were at once sent to repair and make the house comfortable. The inmates of the cottage and the men who repaired it can still testify to this. This house, which stands in a very exposed situation, has frequently undergone repair at the Duchess' expense; and at the time John Rose was making the insinuation of neglect, the estate men were engaged putting this and some other neighbouring cottages into repair for the winter. This fact must have been well known to him, as one of the houses recently so repaired is occupied by his nearest neighbours, who for the last twenty years have occupied a four-acre croft rent free. As to Rose's statement that "the Duchess of Sutherland had only spent £300 in that part of the estate occupied by the crofters whom he represented," this may be true in one sense, as my firm conviction is that Rose simply "represents" himself, and at most one or two others;—but if he claims to represent the crofters on the "Heights," I am prepared to show that during my own management no less a sum than £700, exclusive of the aforesaid sum of £300 for roads, has been expended on the erection and repair of crofter and pauper houses, and this although there is no stipulated obligation for such outlay. This same season the repair of roads used solely by the crofters of this district has cost the estate nearly £30, while the labour bill for the Strathpeffer estate alone amounts to a very large sum annually. I may here mention that, taking the three districts or properties comprising the Cromartie estate, as many as eighteen slated houses have been erected on the crofter holdings within the last three years, at the joint expense of proprietor and tenant. This, I think, affords the best evidence, not only of the ability of the tenants, but also of the desire of the proprietrix to help those who help themselves. Mr Fraser-Mackintosh was induced, from information which seemed to be supplied to him from some private source (for the men from the Heights certainly said nothing about it), to put some questions to me regarding cases of poaching on the estate. I had no recollection of the cases he referred to, but on leaving the place of meeting the procurator-fiscal reminded me of their nature. The Edinburgh *Daily Review* of Saturday last contains a letter (of which I enclose a copy), purporting to give the true version of these poaching cases, the writer of which I believe has no right to call himself a "crofter." I have to apologise for bringing this anonymous letter under your notice at all, but my reason for doing so is that it appears to contain the information upon which Mr Fraser-Mackintosh put his questions to me on the subject of poaching. The two young men who had been detected by the gamekeepers were reported to the procurator-fiscal of the county, that he might take steps to prosecute them. On the fiscal informing me, however, that the offence, being 'night poaching,' would be punished with imprisonment, in case of conviction,—and the men themselves having written me begging to have the prosecution departed from,—I wrote Lord Tarbat, recommending that, in the circumstances, no steps should be taken against them. His Lordship agreed to withdraw the information, and the case was departed from, the men gladly paying the expenses which had been incurred to the procurator-fiscal. With regard to the other case, which was that of a lad in his seventeenth year, who was caught in the act of poaching an hour after midnight, on the same occasion, his case was also reported to the procurator-fiscal, and the circumstances being similar, the prosecution against him was also stopped. It is absolutely untrue that the lad was made to labour for a month in a plantation on the estate by way of fine. I did, much to the satisfaction of his grandfather, with whom he resided, find him employment on the

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estate at a liberal rate (for a "schoolboy") of 14s. per week—as the wages sheets signed by himself show. In all he was employed for thirty-four days, for which he was paid £3, 19s. 4d. From a letter from the fiscal in my possession, I find that that the costs incurred to him were £4, 1s. 4d., which made the proportion payable by each of the offenders £1, 7s. 1d. All the three were highly gratified at the time for the leniency shown them. By way of showing the whole circumstances of the cases, I enclose a copy of my letter to Lord Tarbat recommending the withdrawal of the prosecutions, and his Lordship's letter to me agreeing to this course being taken. I have only one regret in connection with this matter, and it is this, that the two misguided delegates who took some pains to assure you that they were not prompted by certain "well-known agitators," should have been deluded into casting unfounded reflections upon the actions of proprietors and their representatives long since gone from amongst us, and making rash statements which they cannot substantiate by an atom of proof. As to the aspersion attempted to be cast upon my office assistant, Mr Fraser, let me simply say that the threats alleged to have been made by him were never made and that Mr Fraser, whose character is above reproach, enjoys the entire confidence and respect of his noble employers, and I can assure his would-be traducers that nothing they can say will shake this confidence. Allow me to add, in conclusion, that I have ascertained that at the remote period referred to, about eighty years ago, the custom which so generally prevailed all over the Highlands in those days, existed to a very limited extent in this valley, and that some crofters, whose holdings lay within or contiguous to the farms of Fodderty, Keppoch, and Inchvannie, were merely the sub-tenants of the then holders of these respective farms. This was the case in comparatively few instances; and I may say that within the last few days, when visiting the Heights, I came across a number of crofters who told me that they occupy now the same holdings which their fore-fathers held for four generations; all these people expressed in strong terms their disapproval of the statements put forth in their name by the would-be delegates, and, at the same time, gave expression to their gratitude for many acts of kindness at the hands of the present proprietrix—the Duchess of Sutherland, and of her father the late Cromartie. I may here remark that Donald Macdonald only became tenant in 1877, on the death of his mother. John Rose became tenant on the death of his father, who was an excellent man in every way, and who, had he lived, would have been one of the last to have counselled the recent conduct of his son. I have to apologise for the length of this statement, but in justice to my noble constituent, and to the past and present management of the Cromartie estates, I have felt called upon to refute the unfounded charges that have been so publicly and recklessly made.—I have the honour to remain, my Lord and Gentlemen, your obedient servant, Wm. GUNN, factor for the Duchess of Sutherland, Countess of Cromartie.—P.S. I have to request that you will do me the favour of having this statement read at the next meeting of the Commission.—W. G. *Cromartie Estates Office, Strathpeffer, 17th Oct. 1883.* The following is the letter in the Edinburgh *Daily Review* referred to in the foregoing statement:—*The Strathpeffer Poaching Cases.*—Sir, When Mr Gunn, factor, Strathpeffer, was asked, at Dingwall, by Mr Fraser-Mackintosh whether it was a fact that he, in his factorial capacity, on one occasion fined two men, who were brought before him for poaching, £2, 2s., and whether he fined, in the same manner, a schoolboy, who was found with a useless pistol in his possession, £1, 1s., he replied that he did not recollect doing anything of the kind. I observe, however,

'to-day in the *Inverness Courier*, that Mr Gunn says the circumstances are as follows:—"Some years ago two young men were found at night, in the possession of guns, after deer, and trespassing on land not in their own occupation. They were taken up by the then lessee of the shooting, but they were allowed, without being brought before a court, and on payment of some small expenses incurred, to go free. There was no trial, no prosecution, and no fine imposed." The real facts of the case are these: The two men were found in a barn, taken by the gamekeepers before Mr Gunn, and fined each £1, 7s. 1d. (not £2, 2s., as in Mr Fraser-Mackintosh's question). The other case is that of a schoolboy, who was found on the footpath between a neighbour's house and his own home, with a hand pistol in his possession. He was taken by the gamekeepers as a night poacher, brought before the factor, and ordered to pay a fine of £1, 7s. 1d. (not £1, 1s. as in Mr Fraser-Mackintosh's question). The boy could not pay the fine, whereupon the factor made him work a month at a plantation then going on on the estate. A month of hard labour out on the bare hills during a cold winter is surely rather severe punishment for a schoolboy. Are things of this nature so common with Mr Gunn, that these particular cases are forgotten in the crowd? The crofters are also anxious to know from whom Mr Gunn got his special authority to act as a judge in his own private office in matters of this kind? Mr Gunn admits that these men were brought before him, and though, according to him, no fine was imposed, still he admits that they paid certain expenses. If there was "no trial, no prosecution," will Mr Gunn state how these expenses were incurred, and who became their custodier? One of the Strathpeffer delegates was prepared to give a history of these cases, also to deal generally with the question of game, before the Commissioners, but, owing to the want of time, was not heard.—I am, &c., A CROFTER.—*Heights of Strathpeffer, Oct. 11, 1883.* The following are the letters between Mr Gunn and Lord Tarbat on this matter:—
Strathpeffer, N.B., Jan. 22, 1879. My Lord, I have not yet received any authority from your Lordship for the prosecution of the young fellows who were caught out with guns at night, on the Heights of Fodderty. I enclose a petition from them earnestly pleading that your Lordship may be pleased to forgive them. I have made further inquiry into the matter, and I am able to say that their statement is true to the effect that the deer are coming down in great numbers, and devouring their turnips. This being so, there is a very strong feeling of sympathy springing up in their behalf, which is all the more general as the young men are respectable in their way, and not hitherto known to have been guilty of anything approaching to regular poaching. Besides, it is well known that these deer do not breed on or come from your Lordship's ground, so that there was less scruple in having a shot at them. Had they been guilty of taking game on your ground, I would certainly have them prosecuted; but, considering all the circumstances of the case, I believe it would be a mistake to have them prosecuted, more especially as the punishment following upon conviction must be imprisonment. Should you decide upon forgiving them this time, we might make it a condition that they pay all expenses, and that they forfeit their guns to Macleay. An early reply will oblige, as the fiscal will require to know.—I remain, your Lordship's obedient servant, WILLM. GUNN.
Note.—In abandoning the prosecutions, the condition that the guns should be forfeited was not insisted on.—W. G. 'Trentham, Stoke-upon-Trent, Monday, Jan. 27.-79.—Dear Gunn, I have decided to take no more notice of the poaching affair this time, and not to prosecute, but to let the men off,

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'on the conditions you mention in your letter of the 22nd. They must give up their guns, and pay expenses. I suppose the man who signs himself John Mathieson is from the Tulloch estate. And could you let me know the name of the third one you mention in your letter of the 11th, who was not acting in concert with the others, he is not mentioned in your last letter, yours truly, TARBAT.'

The Chairman.—I think it right to say I have allowed, as an exceptional case, this statement on the part of Mr Gunn to be read aloud on this occasion, in consequence of his inability to appear here to-day. At the same time, I must express my regret that, in consequence of his absence, I, and other members of the Commission, and especially Mr Fraser-Mackintosh, who is personally alluded to in the statement, have been deprived of an opportunity of cross-examination in the case, an opportunity which in other cases has usually been afforded.

ALEXANDER BEGG, Agent for the Canadian Pacific Railway Company
(45)—examined.

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45651. *The Chairman.*—You have had the goodness to send us a pamphlet in the Gaelic language, having reference to settlements in the North-West, but we have not received a copy in the English language, and therefore several members of the Commission are debarred from the advantage of perusing it?—I shall be very happy to furnish you with an English copy of the pamphlet.

45652. You have a written statement which you wish to read?—I have. 'It is not my intention to refer to the state of the people living in the congested districts of the islands on the west coast of Scotland, nor shall I speak of the causes that led to the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the subject. On these matters I am not sufficiently informed to offer any evidence, but taking it for granted that there is overcrowding in some parts of the islands, I may perhaps be allowed to suggest such a remedy for the evils attendant on this state of things as may be found applicable to the case of the crofters and cottars. There are, it seems, two favourite means put forward for the relief of the congested portions of Great Britain, namely, migration and emigration. Migration can, in my opinion, be only a temporary remedy in the case of the crofters, inasmuch as the population of the islands of Scotland, I am informed, is increasing so rapidly that were all the available land suitable to cultivation (some of which is at present set apart for purposes of sheep farming, hunting, &c.) divided amongst the people for farming operations, it would not be more than a few years before the same old evil of overcrowding would have to be met. It does not come within my province to discuss the relations existing between landlord and tenant, or to suggest any remedy for evils complained of in that respect. Whether lands now used for other purposes are devoted to the use of the crofters or not, the question still remains, Is there sufficient land to maintain the rapidly-increasing population of the islands? If my conclusions are correct, a system of migration can only be at best a temporary means of relief to the crofter population; and it is, therefore, to the alternative, emigration, that I look for a way out of the present difficulty. Emigration does not, I must say, evoke at first the most pleasing sensation in the minds of the people. It is a serious matter, and I readily confess that it requires a good deal of courage to sever old associations, and break up long-established homes, to go to a strange

land among strangers. I have myself known what this separation means, and speak therefore from experience. I am fully aware of the great attachment Scotchmen feel for their native land, and how loath they are to part from it, and more especially do I understand the ties that bind the crofter to his native soil. His love for the place where his forefathers lie buried, his allegiance to the religious principles in which he was trained from childhood to his minister or priest and to the old-established customs of his race,—these make it difficult for him to tear himself away. To the crofter there is no place like his native hills, and so long as he imagines he can procure sufficient land to sustain himself and family, even though it be in the poorest way, he is not apt to think of exchanging his old home for a new one abroad. Nor would it be right to endeavour to induce him to leave his native land, if there were any certain prospects of a prosperous future among his own people. But if it can be shown that at the best he can only expect a slight improvement in his condition for the present, and that in the immediate future, even that improvement is likely to cease, owing to the fresh demands of a rapidly-increasing population, he may then be led to consider whether he cannot better his position by seeking a home in a new land, while at the same time aiding to improve the condition of those of his country-men remaining in the islands. It then becomes a question whether the crofter prefers to toil on for a mere sustenance, making no provision for his family, but living as it were from hand to mouth, though always looking forward to the addition of a few acres to his croft, and the consequent small improvement in his position,—or whether he will branch out, and by his inborn hardihood, industry, and perseverance provide a comfortable and independent home for himself and his children. The first step then to be taken is, I should say, to educate the crofter concerning the advantages and disadvantages of other countries as compared to his own native land. To him in this case, as in all others, knowledge is power. He must know what is before him, and must weigh well the prospects in the new land, before he can even consider the advisability of breaking up his old home. Lady Cathcart has already made a generous move in this direction, by sending out a few of her tenants to North-Western Canada, and settling them there on farms. This experiment has been conducted throughout on a most liberal basis in every way worthy of its beloved and respected originator. It cannot be expected that all crofters will receive the same liberal treatment should they desire to emigrate. Lady Cathcart's experiment has, however, proved beyond a doubt that crofters can emigrate, and become prosperous and happy in a new land. The testimony of those already sent out to North-Western Canada by Lady Cathcart may be easily obtained from her Ladyship herself, and will show how comfortably they are settled in the country. A portion of this testimony appeared in the *Scotsman* of last Saturday, 20th instant. In order to educate the people of the mainland and islands of Scotland as to the adaptability of North-Western Canada to settlement, I am now circulating amongst the crofters a Gaelic pamphlet descriptive of the country. No attempt has, however, been made to induce them to emigrate, as I quite understood this to be a matter upon which they must decide entirely for themselves, but in order that they may do so intelligently I thought it proper to give them in pamphlet form the necessary information. I may say here, that I have just received two letters from the gentleman at present engaged in the work of distributing my Gaelic pamphlet, in which he says that he has been most cordially received by the people on the islands. The impoverished state of the people on the

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' islands is the greatest difficulty to be overcome in their emigration, and some means will have to be found to assist them. The mere payment of the passage money to their destination in the new country is not, and cannot be sufficient assistance. They require to be aided in obtaining their land, in the erection of suitable buildings, in the purchase of stock, and other necessaries. I have known many settlers arrive in the north-west with only a few pounds in their pockets, and by dint of industry—working for wages with farmers, doing a little now and again on their homestead (the free grant of land made by the Canadian Government), hiring an ox and plough at times, and thus by the strictest economy and good management—acquiring in a year or two a comfortable home and a good farm. But, in a strange country, unaccustomed to the ways of the people, and many of them speaking only the Gaelic tongue, the crofter could not do this. In the first place, he would require to be settled with his own countrymen as neighbours, speaking his language, knowing his ways, and ready to assist him at any time. This colonising plan could be carried out without isolating the crofters altogether from the other classes of settlers in the country. To explain what I mean, the Canadian North-West is laid out in townships six miles square, containing thirty-six sections of 640 acres each, and these are subdivided into quarter sections of 160 acres. Following is a diagram showing a township with the sections numbered. In the rail-

N					
31	32	33	34	35	36
30	29	28	27	26	25
19	20	21	22	23	24
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18	17	16	15	14	13
7	8	9	10	11	12
6	5	4	3	2	1
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' way belt of thirty-six sections, as shown above, the Dominion Government holds those numbered 2, 4, 6, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 28, 30, 32, 34, and 36,—all the even numbers in fact except 8 to 26,—for free grants and pre-emptions. The Canadian Pacific Railway, Canada North West Land, and Hudson Bay Companies hold the remaining sections, with the exception of numbers 11 and 29, which are reserved by the Government solely for school purposes. Now, we will suppose a township set apart for crofter settlement, and that the Government land is reserved for them. Every alternate section, except 8 and 26, would then be occupied by crofters, the intervening sections being settled upon by people of other classes. This system would enable the crofters to be

near each other, and yet not isolated. Or if an arrangement could be effected between the Canadian Government, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, Canada North-West Land Company, and the Hudson's Bay Company, whole townships might be set apart for crofters, the adjoining townships being occupied by other people. Under the home-stead law of Canada, the free grant of land is 160 acres to each settler, and it is a question with some whether this quantity of land is not too large in the case of the crofters, who have been accustomed to their small crofts. It seems to me, however, that as the islanders have given some attention to the raising of cattle, a portion of the land might be used for grazing, and I would suggest the following plan for placing crofters on a section of 640 acres of land:—

80 Acres of  a Farm.	Common Pasture ground for all	80 Acres of  a Farm.
80 Acres of  a Farm.	four Settlers 320 Acres.	80 Acres of  a Farm.

This would give each crofter a farm of eighty acres, with a fourth interest in a common pasture ground, which fourth interest adjoining his farm it would be in his power to dispose of whenever he desired to do so. There is, as far as I can see, nothing to prevent the formation of a Gaelic colony in the north-west of Canada, and if established on the foregoing plan (No. 1), it could be extended as far as people were found to occupy the sections. It is, I think, desirable that with the emigration of crofters some of their priests and ministers should go to the settlement to form churches in the familiar way practised at home. This would serve to make the people contented from the very outset, and this contentment, at a time when pioneers suffer most, would do much to secure the future success of the colonists. With regard to the suitability of the Canadian North-West to crofter settlement, the success of the tenants of Lady Cathcart, who are now settled in the country, is proof positive. These settlers went out this spring, and at the present time are comfortably housed, have reaped a crop from their land, and each one is in a fair way to make an independence for himself and family. The following is an extract, from a letter received by Lady Cathcart from one of the settlers:—"Dear Lady Cathcart,—Yours of the 10th July came to hand in due time, which I am most happy to have received, and to have the honour of writing to tell you about our

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' prospects in this good new country. We are all enjoying the best of health since we arrived here, both old and young, and we all feel sure that the country is very healthy. Our land is beautiful also, and surrounded favourably in every way, and the soil is rich. This we know by our crops—as potatoes, turnips, barley, oats, and beans are very good. I have some new potatoes which weigh half a pound already, and they have been only nine weeks in the ground, and other crops are as good as that, better than any we used to see at poor old Benbecula ; and in every respect we are glad of the change, and would strongly recommend our friends and neighbours to come here as soon as possible. All who are good, strong, able working men, who would be ready to turn their hands to everything that might come in their way, should come ; idlers are not wanted. I feel more than happy to see my party doing so well, and they will be a credit to the Highlands.
' We are glad to hear of Mr Macdonald being on his way to Manitoba, and that he is coming to see us. I am sure he will be greatly delighted with the country we have here, and also to see us doing so well in our new homes. I have my house nearly finished—made of logs 23 feet long, 16 feet broad, and 8 feet in walls—and my byre is ready ; also my hay for two cows and two oxen—my stock at present." It is needless for me to say anything further on behalf of the Canadian North-West except this, that the general testimony of settlers in the country is invariably in its favour. The land is easily tilled, and wonderfully fertile, crops being speedily acquired with a yield nearly double that of any other portion of the American continent. The wild grasses of the prairie are, moreover, specially adapted to stock raising. All these conditions are favourable to settlement, the only point on which there seems to be any doubt in the minds of the people here being as to the climate. I have myself had many years' experience as a resident in the north-west territories, and I can say confidently, that though sometimes the weather is cold, yet the winter months are remarkably healthy and enjoyable ; the air being dry, the cold is not so much felt as one would imagine. I have indeed suffered more from the damp raw cold in the city of London that I ever did in the north-west, and I have in my possession the testimony of a large number of farmers now settled in the country all confirming what I say in this respect. The farming seasons are there very much the same as in Scotland. Ploughing and seeding commence in April ; hay time is June and July ; harvest in August and September ; root crops are pulled in October and November ; and winter sets in about the middle of November, and lasts until March. To return now to the main point in connection with emigration—the means by which the crofters can be comfortably settled in their new homes in the Canadian North-West should they decide to emigrate there. Lady Cathcart's liberality towards her colonists is exceptional, and can hardly be taken as a guide in dealing with a large number of people. I have no doubt that many of the landed proprietors would assist in settling their people comfortably in their new homes, and that some scheme based on a business principle, might be formed by which landed proprietors and the Government would join hands in the work. This is, I believe, only to be done successfully as an investment on the part of the landed proprietors, and not in the way of charity, the Government becoming in some way security for the repayment either of the principal and interest, or of the interest alone. While I have no doubt of the feasibility of the scheme to which I have referred, its successful carrying out would entail a great deal of work and much loss of time in organising it. It seems to me that the more practical and business-like scheme

' is that proposed last winter by Mr George Stephen, the president of
' the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, to the British Government
' for the transport and settlement of 10,000 families the Canadian North-
' West. The following is the definite proposal made to the Government :—
' "For the sum of £1,000,000 sterling, 10,000 small farmers with their
' families, averaging five persons to each family, say 50,000 people in
' all, can be comfortably brought from their homes to the new Canadian
' North-West, and each family provided with 160 acres of the finest
' wheat-growing land, a comfortable wooden house, a cow, and the
' implements necessary to enable them to begin the cultivation of their
' land, including the cost of ploughing and seeding a few acres for their
' first year's crop. The money required to be provided by the Govern-
' ment and advanced, by way of loan, to the North-West Land Company
' of Canada, and to such other corporations interested in the settlement of
' the Canadian North-West as might wish to join in the enterprise, and
' be able to furnish the Government with such security for the repayment
' of the loan as might be required. The loan to be for ten years without
' interest. In consideration of this loan the Land Company to undertake
' the work of transplanting and settling in the North-West, under the
' supervision of the Government, these 10,000 families, assuming all the risks
' incident to the business, and the responsibility of the repayment of the
' money advanced by the Government. The Land Company would take
' a lien on the 160 acres of land given to each family to the amount of
' £100, on which the emigrant would be charged interest at the rate of
' 6 per cent. per annum after the first two years of his settlement; the
' emigrant to have the right to pay off the principal at any time. The
' chief inducement to the Land Company to undertake this work lies in
' the increased value that would be given to its own lands adjoining those
' upon which the emigrants settled. This scheme is based on the
' assumption that the emigrants sent out are fit for agricultural work, and
' have energy and ability to take care of themselves, after getting the fair
' start thus provided for them. It will thus be seen that the redundant
' population of the islands of Scotland may be materially reduced without
' any further cost to the Government than the interest of £400 for ten
' years for each family—say £2, 10s. per annum, or £25 for the whole
' ten years. The advantage of this scheme is its thoroughness. The
' settlers are transported to their destination, cared for, and comfortably
' settled in their new houses under the supervision of the Government, and
' no money is paid until the Government is satisfied that the settlers have
' been well and properly cared for. There is no chance of complication in the
' work, no chance of the Government being brought to task for sending out
' people to a life of misery, and the only cost to the British people is the loss
' of interest on the loan. The security for that loan could, I have no
' doubt, be satisfactorily arranged; and it seems to me that the proposition
' put forward last winter by Mr Stephen could be well made applicable
' to the case of the crofters. One feature is certainly to be admitted in
' the scheme, and that is that settlers would not go out as the recipients
' of charity, but would be expected to repay any advances made on their
' account, and the British Government would therefore, in point of fact, be
' lending the settlers the money, the land companies which undertake the
' work of settlement being only the medium. In judicious emigration is,
' I feel confident, to be found a speedy, permanent, and effectual cure for
' the evils arising from over-population in the islands on the west coast
' of Scotland; and it is because I believe that that part of the British
' empire, to which I have particularly referred, is exceptionally suited to
' crofter settlement, that I have drawn especial attention to the Canadian

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BURGH. ' North-West. I may, in conclusion, say that Mr Stephen, the president
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Begg. ' I have just referred, is expected in London about the middle of
' November, and I am quite sure he will be pleased to co-operate in
' elaborating a plan to meet the requirements of the crofters in the matter
' of emigration. The following is a statement, showing how a crofter
settled in the Canadian North-West could repay the monies advanced
to him, and his probable condition at the end of ten years. In the
following calculations I have made use of the minimum acreage broken
by a settler, and the minimum yield of wheat per acre. I have taken
wheat as my basis, as other grains are about equally profitable:—

' 1st Year of Settlement—crofter would have his house and byres erected, and himself and family comfortably settled. In addition to this, if he went out in early spring, he would have 5 acres (say) broken, and a partial crop to pay a portion of his first expenses. This partial crop I count for nothing.	
' 2nd year—15 acres, 20 bushels wheat to acre, at 3s. per bushel of 60 lbs. \$225 =	£45
' 3rd year—25 acres,	75
' 4th year—35 ,	105
' 5th year—45 ,	135
' 6th year—55 ,	165
' 7th year—65 ,	195
' 8th year—75 ,	225
' 9th year—80 ,	240
	£1185
' Less interest at 6 per cent. on £100, 9 years,	£54
' Principal of loan,	100
' Towards keep of family, at £40 per year for 9 years,	360
	514
' Balance to credit of crofter,	£671
' The usual number of acres which a settler can and does break each year in the Canadian North-West ranges from twenty to forty acres. I have only allowed ten acres per annum in the foregoing calculations. The usual yield of wheat per acre in the Canadian North-West is from twenty-five to thirty. I have only allowed twenty bushels in my calculations, and the price of wheat ranges from 80 cents, or 3s. 2½d. upwards. I have only allowed 75 cents, or 3s. My calculations are based on the supposition that there will be no failure of crops. There has been no failure of crops in the Canadian North-West during the past ten years. Now, let us look at the condition of the crofter in the North-West at the end of ten years, supposing that he practises ordinary care, economy, prudence, and industry:—	
' Farm of 160 acres, including house, byres, and other improvements, at a low valuation of £2 per acre,	£320
' Stock, implements, &c., say low,	150
' Balance on hand, from wheat or grain raising, after paying everything,	671
	£1141

' It will be observed in the foregoing I have not considered any
proceeds arising from keeping of stock and other sources, as I calculate

' that they would be used in stocking the farm and other expenses. The following is a statement showing nature and extent of the security for money advanced to settle crofters in the Canadian North-West. Under the homestead law of Canada, £100 is the largest amount allowed as a lien on a homestead for advances made to assist the settler. We will suppose then that £500,000 is advanced to settle 5000 families on 160 acres each in the Canadian North-West. What will the security consist of? 800,000 acres of land, which, with the buildings and other improvements of the settler, would be a very low valuation at 16s. per acre, or £640,000. I have already shown how the settler can repay principal and pay interest. Then at the end of ten years, suppose none of the principal should be repaid (which however is out of the question), what would the security have risen to? At a low valuation, it would be 800,000 acres at £2, or £1,600,000 as security for £500,000. It must be remembered that the settler's work and improvements on his farm create an annual increase in its value. An acre of virgin prairie valued at say 16s. is, when broken and under cultivation, worth at least £2. The labour of breaking and cultivating the land is so much increased value placed upon it. The Government then need not doubt the security—the crofter will have no difficulty in repaying principal and interest, and I don't see a safer investment for private enterprise than the placing of good settlers on the lands in North-Western Canada, and taking security on their homestead—(not one settler, I believe, will be unable to repay the principal and interest long before the former is due). At the end of three years the security becomes better as a patent is then issued for the land and it becomes free from all Government restrictions. Valuators of land in the Canadian North-West seem to forget one point, namely, that the Government free grants are getting less and less each year, and accordingly as this goes on other lands are in demand, especially near the lines of communication, and the general value of all lands, especially those along the railways and rivers, must necessarily increase. I am basing my values on land from practical experience. Land which less than three years ago, I myself sold as far west as Brandon in North-Western Canada for 10s. per acre, I cannot to-day repurchase for £3 per acre. The reason is this—when I sold the land it was far beyond the line of settlement, to-day it is in the midst of it. If it were possible for a decision to be arrived at in the case of the crofters, and a commencement made in the way of emigration the coming spring—it would (if emigration is to be a means of relief for them) be greatly in their favour for some of them to be sent out during 1884. Land is being taken up so rapidly by settlers along the line of railway that choice locations will become more and more scarce. And I beg to say that I will be happy to afford the President and members of the Commission any further information or assistance within my power.'

45653. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Did the settlers from Lady Gordon-Cathcart's property locate themselves on the lands of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company?—I believe they were located on lands belonging to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. I am not sure but they are in neighbourhood of the railway belt in the Qu'Appelle Valley.

45654. But they bought their lands from the Canadian Pacific Railway Company did they not?—I cannot give you the particulars of that transaction; I believe they did.

45655. At all events, they were not emigrated under the auspices of the company?—We had nothing to do with it. It was entirely under Lady Gordon-Cathcart. All we did was to assist Lady Gordon-Cathcart in forming an allocation. We showed her colonists every attention we could

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when they arrived there. They arrived in the North-West by themselves in charge of a man sent out there, and our agent in Winnipeg did everything he could to show them the lands, and allow them to make their own selection.

45656. You remark on the liberal character of Lady Gordon-Cathcart's arrangements with these settlers; do you know what sum she advanced? —I understood she advanced £100 to each family on their arrival in the country. This is a very different thing from £100 to go out and settle there.

45657. £100 besides their passage out? —That is what I understand.

45658. Now, in Mr George Stephen's scheme, he proposes to do the whole thing for £100 a family? —Yes. The settler would have an advantage in that respect, because in sending out a large number of people the supplies, houses, and other things could be purchased at very much lower figures than in purchasing for a small number. The settlers would get the advantage of that.

45659. At what do you count the passage money from here to the lands in question? —You can get an assisted passage for between £6 and £7 or £7, 10s.

45660. Out to the North-West? —Yes.

45661. For each member of a family? —Yes.

45662. And do you count an average of five members to a family? —Yes.

45663. That is £35 or £40? —Yes. I consider Lady Gordon-Cathcart's assistance to her settlers should amount to £150.

45664. I am referring now to Mr Stephen's scheme. It would take £35 or £40 out of £100 to convey the settlers to the North-West, and then there would remain £60 or £65 to settle them there; how would that £60 or £65 be invested? —It would be invested in the way mentioned—in building a house, obtaining a cow and implements, and starting them; but remember we can do that under this scheme at a very much less figure than an individual can do it.

45665. Has it ever been done at so low a figure as that in any case? —I don't know that such a scheme has ever been entered into. The land companies certainly, though they undertook it, would not make any money out of it.

45666. The Mennonites are, I think, an instance of persons who started with a remarkably small capital. Their original capital was I have been told £80 on arrival there? —I happened to be there when they arrived, and I don't think any one could tell what they started with. I saw some of the Mennonites with bags of gold in their hands. They are very secretive people, and no one could tell what they had. They are also very saving people, and put by everything they make. There can be no calculation as to what they had when they arrived in that country.

45667. And do you think £60 or £65 would be sufficient to erect a house, to turn up a little bit of land, and provide them with the necessary implements and stock to enable them to start fairly in the North-West? —I can only say this, that if such a scheme were entered into the companies interested would be bound to do that, and to the satisfaction of the Government, and whether they lost or not in the matter it would be done. I don't believe they would make any money out of it.

45668. You think the companies would be bound to start the settlers satisfactorily? —To the satisfaction of the British Government. The British Government would require to be satisfied.

45669. When do you propose that this advance of £100 should be repaid; is it at the conclusion of ten years? —Yes, I understand so.

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45670. Then they would sit rent free for ten years?—A settler could pay off the amount whenever he liked according to that arrangement.

45671. But at the end of ten years would he be obliged to pay it up?—Certainly. A lien is taken over his land. The companies must have some security.

45672. Would the company take any profit from him beyond the £100?—No.

45673. They would ask for no interest?—Yes; 6 per cent.

45674. But supposing a settler fails to pay the 6 per cent. interest, what would happen?—If a settler through any misfortune was not able to pay, I can positively say that nothing would be done to him to turn him out of his land, or force him to pay it. He would get time, and would be expected to pay the interest in the long run.

45675. He would not be turned out?—I am quite positive of that.

45676. It was mentioned to us the other day in evidence in Glasgow, by a witness who had been in America, that he had seen in Ontario a fabulous number of places for sale, the settlers being entirely overburdened with debt—that they had had to borrow money to start with, and had never been able to free themselves; has that been your experience with settlers?—I think I can give you some information on that point. Settlers and farmers are human beings, and sometimes they will borrow money for other purposes than improvements, and I believe that some farmers in Ontario at one time went beyond their means and borrowed money, but I don't know that it was to the extent that this gentleman said. However, I am not sufficiently well acquainted in Ontario.

45677. But in the North-West you have not found that to be the case?—No, I have not. Besides, at this point the only sum that a settler borrows is £100.

45678. But if they found it insufficient might they not go to a private lender for more?—They cannot do it until the end of three years. Of course, you cannot control an individual after he is a free agent.

45679. The question is whether it will be an absolute necessity for him to borrow money?—No, I don't think so.

45680. Is there sufficient timber for house building in these settlements by the side of the railway?—The Canadian North-West is, I think, very well placed in that respect. In some parts, of course, there are no trees; there is a level prairie. In others there are clumps of trees. The rivers are always lined with forests, and there are numerous lakes which have forests around them, and the prairie wood is quite sufficient for building houses. I think Lady Gordon-Cathcart's people built their houses of blocks got in that form.

45681. Is that wood sufficient for fuel too?—Yes.

45682. There is no difficulty about fuel?—I do not consider so. I think that problem is solved; and besides that, I may say the coal mines recently discovered have been found to produce the very best coal, and in very large quantities. In fact, our railway now is burning the coal taken from the mines along the line on the western division.

45683. You mentioned, towards the close of your paper, that to advance money to emigrants was a good investment for private enterprise?—That is my personal opinion.

45684. Is it your opinion that a settler should at once begin to pay interest?—Mr Stephen's proposal is that the interest should be deferred for two years. Do you think a settler can at once begin to pay interest?—No, I think it would be better not to charge them interest for the first year; and in Mr Stephen's scheme they are not expected to pay interest for two years.

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45685. Then how would you say it was a good investment for private enterprise, if they cannot pay interest for two years?—I think in this way, that if they could not pay interest the first or second year, they could probably pay a sufficient rate afterwards to make the investment good. I mean by that that the security to the investor is, I consider, first rate. He puts a man on the land, and that man's improvements are continually increasing the value of his security. That is where I consider such an investment would be good.

45686. If a private investor in this country was to advance money in this way, what means would he have of realising his investment if that were necessary to secure payment of the interest? Is there any agency out there through which he could work?—I would not recommend any investment of that kind, unless you were prepared to give the settler ten years to repay principal and interest. I would not be in favour of any scheme that would not give ten years.

45687. But allowing that, is there any agency out there through which an investor could recover his principal and interest in ten years' time?—Certainly.

45688. Would the company act as agent?—The company would not.

45689. He would have to appeal to private agency?—The laws of the country are sufficient for that. There is a Registry Act, and the laws are perfectly good for such a case as that.

45690. Would it not be to the advantage of the company to assist private enterprise on a smaller scale than say 10,000 families? Suppose 100 families were sent out, would it not be to the advantage of the company to see them settled, and assist the private investor to recover his money?—Perhaps I have led you into a wrong impression. The Canadian Pacific Company have not made that proposal. It emanated from Mr Stephen. I don't think the Railway Company could go into any such transaction.

45691. Mr Stephen then did not speak as president of the company?—No, he spoke as a private individual. That is as I understand it.

45692. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Are you a Scotsman?—I am descended from a Scotch father and a Scotch mother.

45693. And you represent here a private company called the Canadian Pacific Company?—Yes.

45694. What are the principal objects of that company?—To build a railway from the Atlantic across the continent to the Pacific Ocean, and to run it, and, in addition to that, we have a grant of land from the Dominion Government.

45695. This is really a mercantile company established for the purpose of making a profit?—Certainly.

45696. It is very important, is it not, to the financial success of your company, hat the lands you have got in connection with the railway should be occupied and settled?—I don't know that it has anything to do with the financial success of the company, except that the railway requires settlers along its line of railway to produce business for it.

45697. Are they not bound to settle within a certain number of years?—Not that I am aware of.

45698. Have you been in the Highlands yourself?—I have not been in the islands. I have been in the Highlands as far north as Inverness.

45699. And I think you stated that your pamphlet has been received by your agents with favour?—I received a letter yesterday to that effect.

45700. Was the pamphlet a gift?—A gift.

45701. And the simple people accepted the gift with pleasure, did they?—With pleasure.

45702. They did not know the old story about the danger of accepting gifts sometimes?—I don't think you will find there is any danger in accepting that gift.

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45703. You mentioned, with regard to setting the crofters upon a lot of 640 acres, that the outside might be occupied and the inside used for grazing purposes?—Yes.

45704. And is your company able to give lots of 640 acres?—Yes.

45705. Is there not a provision whereby you only get alternate sections?—Alternate sections within the railway belt except those reserved for school purposes.

45706. But what I mean is this, can you at this moment give within the railway belt lots of 640 acres?—Yes, we can.

45707. With regard to the statement you made, that if a settler who went out was not able to pay his interest, he would be dealt with leniently, and would be left alone for some little time; is there any obligation to that effect in the document or mortgage which the company takes over his land?—That would be a matter of arrangement entirely. This is only at the present time a proposition, and all the conditions would have to be made perfectly satisfactory to the Government.

45708. Are there any such documents in existence at this moment with such a clause as you have referred to, that if a person who borrows the money is not able to pay up he will not be disturbed for a year or two?—I think there are no such conditions in a document of that kind, but it could be made so. I may tell you this, that I have been connected with the railway company in the land department in the North-West from the commencement of that department until now, and I have never known a single instance where a settler has been disturbed or put to any hardship from not being able to make his payments regularly. He has invariably had time, and been assisted in that respect. That I can state most positively.

45709. I am afraid there has been hardly time to put that in operation, because the Canadian Pacific Company has only been in operation two or three years?—We have 2000 miles in running operation.

45710. When was the company formed?—In 1881.

45711. Then there cannot have been much time to eject people yet?—Well, their payments came due every half-year, and the first year we sold a very large quantity of land.

45712. You state that your company are willing to lend the necessary amount at 6 per cent.?—No, I did not state that. The proposition is made on behalf of the land companies interested in the settlement.

45713. Will you tell me there is any land company in Canada lending money at 6 per cent. at this moment?—I cannot positively say.

45714. Is it not far more likely that the rate at this moment is at least 8 per cent.?—Very likely it is.

45715. Then why did you use the expression 6 per cent.—that the settlers might be able to make terms at 6 per cent.?—Because that was the proposal made by Mr Stephen to the Government.

45716. But that is not in operation?—It is merely a proposal laid before the British Government. I don't know whether they will accept it or not. I merely state that proposal as a basis.

45717. It is a very important one, and I want to know a little more about it. Who was to be at the back of Mr Stephen to guarantee they could raise sufficient money themselves to enable them to lend at 6 per cent. to these parties; where was the money to come from to lend at 6 per cent.?—Well, I think the companies who would be interested in the matter would be perfectly able to do that.

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45718. Have they done so in time past?—I don't think such a scheme has ever been entered into.

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Alexander
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45719. May I put this general question to you, Is it not the fact that almost in the whole of Canada, from one end to the other—the North-West has not had time to be developed—in all the older portions, almost all the settler's lands are deeply mortgaged, and though they pay no rent, they are paying in reality a high rent in the form of interest?—I don't think so. I think I have explained cases where parties have overburdened themselves, but speaking generally, I don't think so.

45720. Can you give me any idea in millions of the amount of money invested by public loan companies in loans to people resident in Canada?—No, I cannot give you any figures, but they can easily be obtained.

45721. Can you give us any idea how many companies there are in Canada, and London and Edinburgh, carrying on that system?—I don't think there are very many.

45722. Are there one hundred?—I don't think so, but I cannot give you positive information in that respect. I think there are very few.

45723. Then of course the amounts they have got invested must be trifling?—There is a difference between land companies and investment companies.

45724. I mean money borrowed?—You mean investment on a mortgage.

45725. Yes?—Well, I don't think there is a great deal.

45726. I am reading just now a paper published in Toronto, called *A New Chapter added to Political Economy*, printed in 1882, and on page 10 I observe—'There are now nearly 100 loan societies, and new charters are applied for every month of the year. They mostly borrow 'at 4 to 5½ per cent., and lend at an average of 8 to 10 per cent. on 'the very best security.' Is that a true representation of the state of matters in Canada?—I would like to say, that I do not speak with regard to Ontario and other portions of Canada, because I am not sufficiently acquainted with their situation, but I can say positively that that state of things does not prevail in the North-West.

45727. Is the reason it does not prevail in the North-West that the North-West has only been open within the last two or three years, and there has not been time yet for these operations to come on?—I think that as a rule the farmers in the North-West have only borrowed such money as they might require to improve their farms, and I do not think you will find that the payment of any such money borrowed has not been met promptly, or has given any trouble.

45728. Well, I shall confine myself to the North-West. Is it not the case that within the last four or five years many companies have been started for the very purpose of lending money in the North-West, that are doing very well?—There have been some.

45729. I said many?—I don't know of many.

45730. Could you give a list of those that there are?—I could obtain it for the Commission.

45731. Don't you think it very likely that that kind of business will very rapidly increase?—That I cannot tell, but I don't think these questions are applicable to the case of a crofter under the scheme that I proposed, because the amount is limited to £100. I cannot speak as to what a crofter will do after he has been settled there two or three years, nor do I think it would be fair to expect me to give any opinion. A crofter becomes an independent agent at the end of a few years' residence there, and he can do as he likes.

45732. You speak of £100 out there; are you prepared to say that

to give a crofter £100 in his own country will not make him pretty independent?—No, I don't so. I don't think he would have the land to cultivate, or use the £100 to advantage.

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EDINBURGH.

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Begg.

45733. How can you say that when you have not been through the Highlands to make inquiries on the spot?—I can only imagine from what I have heard. I happened to be in the court here on Monday, and I heard the examination of Sir John Orde, in which he mentioned that some three or four families resided in one house, and each family had a number of members, and they were living on a small croft. If that is the general case, I do not see how they can employ money to advantage, as they have not the land to cultivate. I may be mistaken; I only speak from what I have heard.

45734. I put it this way. Supposing there was land in this country, in the Highlands, and in the introduction of your paper you give all due credit to the attachment a Highlander has to the place where his forefathers' bones remain, and all that—supposing there was land capable of sustaining him, and that he got £100 to start with, would it not be better to leave him at home to work on that £100, than send him out to the North-West?—I don't think he can derive the same benefit cultivating the land in the Highlands, from the description I have received of it, as he could by employing the money in cultivating the lands in the North-West.

45735. *Professor Mackinnon.*—You stated right through your paper that migration, as it is called in this country, was only a temporary expedient at the best, and therefore it would be better not to discuss it? —I merely gave that as an opinion.

45736. But you don't know the circumstances of the country yourself sufficiently well to be able to give an opinion for our guidance upon that matter?—Only from what I have from hearsay. From personal observation I cannot give any evidence.

45737. On the particular estate you mentioned just now, are you aware that there is a very large amount of excellent arable land?—Well, there would require to be to place the four families who are living in one house comfortably upon a good-sized croft.

45738. And a very large amount of arable land upon which there is no family or croft at all?—I am aware that there are districts used for other purposes that have no settlers on them, but I have understood that the extent of that land would not be sufficient to give good farms to the whole of the population.

45739. You don't know North Uist sufficiently well to be able to say, that if the proprietor were willing at the present moment, there would not be room for a considerable number of crofters to settle down there comfortably if they got £100 apiece?—That is a matter on which I could not give any evidence, but I conclude the Commission will be able to decide that matter.

45740. It is upon that ground I wish to ask you what would be your opinion upon the question of migration?—Well, I can only state the opinion, from what I have heard, that I do not consider that if all the land was divided amongst the crofters at the present time, each one would be able to get a sufficiently large farm to sustain himself and family comfortably.

45741. You do not then condemn a scheme of migration; you only say that it would be only partial at the best?—Yes, that is all I say.

45742. So, even supposing migration was carried on as far as reasonable, there would still be room for emigration?—I think so; and besides that, I think if migration was simply adopted the question would come up again at some future date, very soon.

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45743. To what extent would you yourself propose, supposing this scheme was carried through in its entirety, that emigration should go on from these parts?—Only to the extent of relieving the congested districts.

45744. Don't you think that that question of emigration would also turn up in the next generation quite as well as the question of migration, unless you emigrate the people altogether?—Well, I think emigration, as far as Great Britain is concerned, must always be a safety valve.

45745. So your present scheme of emigration is only temporary, as well as the migration scheme. Both would require to be operative in the future!—The scheme I mentioned would be an immediate one, but emigration as a whole, I consider, would probably go on to a certain extent as the population increased. I do not disconnect the islands from any other part of Great Britain.

45746. So that really emigration would be only a temporary remedy too. It would always have to go on, because if you left the people in the country at all they would be increasing, and there would be always an overflow!—Well, I think emigration is an additional remedy.

45747. But migration might be a very great part of the present remedy if only it was carried out?—I cannot offer any evidence upon that, but at the same time I do not see any reason for objecting to a certain degree of migration.

45748. You think, so far as you know, both might be carried through with advantage, only you know the emigration scheme, and you have studied the emigration scheme best?—Yes, I think both might be found applicable.

45749. Do you think that the statement made to us in Glasgow, about the liabilities of the old settlers in Canada, was very much exaggerated?—I did not read that.

45750. There was a statement made to us, that not only was there a very large number of the old settlers being sold out, because of the amount of money they had borrowed upon their small places, but that there was a very large number still there, who, though not sold out, were very heavily burdened, and that really the interest of these mortgages was a perpetual heavy rent upon them, and kept them down very much?—I fancy that must be exaggerated when it is made so general, but I may say in that connection, that the migration from Ontario to the North-West has been very great. The Ontario farmers have gone west, and that seems to be a natural inclination with a pioneer. In fact, I have seen it in the North-West. I have seen a man take a homestead, which he got from the Government, live on it two or three years, improve it, and then sell it for five or six dollars an acre, and move himself and his family further west, and commence life over again.

45751. Can you tell me the ordinary rate of interest charged in Upper Canada upon a first security?—I fancy it will be from 6 to 8 per cent. I am not quite positive.

45752. And you would say the mortgage must be very heavy indeed if it is as high as 10 per cent.?—I think so. Companies have been known there, as in all other countries, to charge exorbitant rates sometimes.

45753. But when the rate is so very exorbitant with landed security there, as compared with this country, is that not proof that the amount of money lent upon land must be very great?—Well, I cannot give you any information on that point, so far as Ontario is concerned. I think the rate of interest will amount sometimes to as high as 8 per cent. in the North-West.

* 45754. The statement made to us the other day was no doubt made with the intention of discouraging the idea of bright prospects for

Minutes of Evidence.

emigrants. Now, I should like very much if your information as to matters abroad would enable that idea more or less to be dispelled? —Well, I consider a settler borrowing money for improvements for his farm can afford to pay 8 per cent., and if he borrows moderately and borrows simply to go on improving, I do not see any hardship, but I do not think the rule is to borrow in the North-West. The settlers who have gone to the North-West are generally provided with means so far.

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45755. I was coming to that, because the question remains, may not the North-West become in course of time what Upper Canada is just now? If it is the case that in Upper Canada money advanced upon landed security gives 8 or 10 per cent. of interest, does not that clearly show that the amount of money so advanced must be very great in proportion to the value of the property?—I think there is a very great difference between the two parts of Canada.

45756. And you would like to restrict yourself to the North-West?—Well, I can say that the clearing of a farm and the working of a farm in Ontario is much more expensive, and I do not think so profitable as in the North-West, where they cultivate the prairie, and there is no clearance of timber or anything of that kind.

45757. But you are not able to say that the statement made with respect to the old settlers in Canada is very much exaggerated?—I can only give an opinion. My opinion is that it was very much exaggerated.

45758. The word "mortgage" certainly is quite freely used among them?—Oh, yes; that is a word used in every case where money is lent upon land.

45759. Well, the ground of your belief that emigration to the North-West would turn out satisfactory is partly because of the admirable soil; I suppose that is undoubtedly?—In my experience it is so.

45760. That we have no soil in this country, even in the very best patches, to compete with it at all?—I can speak positively as to their having taken wheat off a field in the settlement of Kildonan which had been cultivated for fifty years—I had the authority of an old man—with-out a bit of manure having been used on the land. Then there is further security in this, that the settler can only borrow £100 upon a 160 acre lot, by the law of Homestead.

45761. That is, of course, with the land as security?—The lien is on the land.

45762. He can only borrow £100 upon 160 acres?—The law prevents taking any greater lien on the land.

45763. And I suppose under no conceivable circumstances can the land become so reduced in value as that it would not sell for that amount and much more?—The lowest valuation of land now is 16s.

45764. To come to Mr Stephen's scheme. It practically comes to this, that this country is to lend one million of money; that is the proposal?—Yes.

45765. Well, that means the tax-payers. So really in that case you must ask the whole community to agree that that is a wise scheme?—As I understand it, the community have to pay a very large sum for the sustenance of poor people, and if you get a less dense population I think the general public will be benefited.

45766. You think the sooner they agree that it is a wise scheme the better?—I think so.

45767. Well, you say the company becomes security to the British Government that the settler will be settled down upon conditions favourable to him and satisfactory to the Government that advanced the money?—Yes.

45768. And I think you also stated, that even supposing a settler

EDIN-
BURGH.
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EDINBURGH.

Alexander
Begg.

could not pay the interest on his money, the company would not deal very hard with him?—I stated that as an opinion, and I feel very strongly on it.

45769. That would be a matter no doubt to arrange?—Yes.

45770. But as to the company itself, what is its source of income and profit?—Well, the Canadian North-West Company possess 5,000,000 acres of land within the railway belt, and every acre of that land is good agricultural land.

45771. Of course, the company is very wealthy and powerful, but at the same time it is a commercial company, and liable to commercial risks and disasters?—Yes, but their assets are not liable.

45772. Supposing the company itself came to be wound up and liquidated, what would be the value of its security to the British Government that a settler would be leniently dealt with?—I stated that it would be worth over a million and a half.

45773. But their security to the British Government for the settler—the man who has gone away, and gone away at the charge of British funds—is it not just commercial security, and nothing else?—Well, you can only give a commercial security, and, as I understand, this is the very best class of commercial security.

45774. Security is given to the Government, but no security to the settler?—In what way?

45775. In the way that he may not be handed over to another company, who may deal with him differently?—I think there would be perfect security as to that. In the first place, the settler is placed on the land, under the supervision of the Government; he is settled on that land comfortably under the supervision of the Government. Well, then he is supposed to be able to take care of himself.

45776. I am referring to a case where he is not able to take care of himself; who is going to take care of him?—Well, I cannot go into the future in that respect, except this, that I can say Mr Stephen has never been known to do or countenance a dishonourable action, and so long as the Canadian Pacific Railway is in existence, and this scheme brought out under the auspices of its president, I do not think there would be any danger of emigrants being hardly dealt with.

45777. I am contemplating the time when the Canadian Pacific may not be in existence—that is within ten years?—The thing is impossible, unless the world comes to an end.

45778. And after ten years?—I think the settler can pay up in ten years without any hardship.

45779. But supposing he does not?—I can only say I don't think any hardship would be imposed upon him.

45780. If it was a company that was lending money in this country, and if the settler would choose to risk his interests along with the company, it would be a different matter; but when the Government of the country advances public money, don't you think a better security than that of a private company would be required for the comfort and welfare of the persons sent away with public money?—Taking everything into consideration, I don't think better security could be offered for the next ten years.

45781. You think it would be quite sufficient?—I do.

45782. The report of Lady Gordon-Catcart's emigrants is very encouraging; do you think they were sent abroad upon conditions more favourable than can be expected from private persons abroad, or from this Government scheme?—I think she was most liberal in her provision for her people.

45783. And considering they have been only four or five months away,

don't you think it is rather a short period, and that their circumstances are too exceptional, to base any experience upon for the future as to their comfort and prosperity?—I don't think so.

EDIN-BURGH.

EDINBURGH.

Alexander
Begg.

45784. In the first place, they were sent away under circumstances more favourable than you can expect anybody else to be; and, in the second place, they are only five or six months away. Don't you think it is rather short and exceptional experience to quote as to what may be fairly expected under the large scheme you propose?—Well, from my experience of settlers for the last ten years, I do not think so. The general rule with settlers there is that their condition improves.

45785. But from your knowledge of the resources of that country, its climate, and everything else, you think it would be very much to the advantage of a large number of the people in the Western Isles to go there?—I do.

45786. Even on any reasonable terms?—I do think so.

45787. *The Chairman.*—With regard to the indebtedness of the older class of settlers in the settled parts of Canada, and the mortgages upon their lands, may not these mortgages really be incidental to the longer period during which the country has been settled? May they not be the result of family arrangements—that when the first settler dies, and leaves perhaps several children behind him, money is obliged to be borrowed by the eldest son, or some member of the family, to pay off the others? I mean, these mortgates may not have been incurred in connection with any difficulty of cultivation, but in connection with the multiplication of the family?—I feel quite confident, from a short residence in Ontario, and from seeing very largely into that sort of thing, that the borrowing has not arisen from any necessities of cultivation, except to a certain extent. I think that the excess of borrowing is in a great measure the result of parties going ahead of their position, and perhaps being extravagant.

45788. But when the head of a family dies, in the case of those small properties, is the land actually divided among his sons, or does one member of a family take it over and pay off the other brothers who go away?—I think it generally happens that the brothers go to other parts. Now they go west.

45789. You think the original holding remains in the possession of one, and that the rest go off?—I think that is generally the arrangement. I don't think they cut up their farms.

45790. Well, when a certain number of them go west, is it not probable that their portion is paid to them in money?—It is very often the case, especially lately, that the father purchases lands for the son in the west.

45791. Then he may have to borrow money in order to do that?—I daresay there are cases where that occurs.

45792. But if that is the case, the same motives to borrow would in course of time grow up in the new part of the country?—Not so much there, because I think for some years there will be land to be obtained.

45793. I do not speak of years, I speak of generations. In the course of two or three generations, the land in the North-West will fall under the same condition that it has fallen under in the older parts of Canada?—It may be, but it is very difficult for me to foresee that.

45794. You stated that this company was a private company, but I understand it is a company which has been favoured and established under the auspices of Government?—Yes.

45795. And the Government has given it very extensive and valuable privileges?—They have given it a subsidy for the building of the road of \$25,000,000, and 25,000,000 acres of land.

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BURGH.

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EDINBURGH.

Alexander
Begg.

45796. They have, as it were, given it a subsidy in money, and an endowment in land?—Yes.

45797. And I presume Government had a political object as well as an economical one—to unite the whole territories of the Dominion by a bond of railway?—That was the first intention when British Columbia entered into the confederation—that it should be connected with the eastern provinces.

45798. So the railway may be regarded in some measure, not only as a private institution, but as a public institution, with great duties?—It is so regarded. It is regarded as the national highway of Canada.

45799. Then its endowment is in the form of alternate square mile blocks the whole way across to the Pacific?—To the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains.

45800. What arrangement takes place on the other side of the Rocky Mountains?—The 25,000,000 acres of land are to be all taken from what we call the fertile belt—the prairie section—that is between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains.

45801. No provision is made on the other side?—Not for giving land, except that they have the right of way.

45802. Now, as to the railway belt, as you term it, within which the alternate blocks have been granted to the company, how deep is that railway belt?—Twenty-four miles on each side of the line—that is, four townships. Each township is six miles square.

45803. How many blocks deep is it of 640 acres each?—Twenty-four on each side.

45804. It is then a broad belt, 24 miles wide on each side of the railway, as far as the base of the Rocky Mountains?—Yes.

45805. To what extent have the nearest blocks been as yet taken up to the railway; has the railway disposed of those almost the whole way along?—I have brought four sectional maps, from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains, which show the land taken.

45806. But can you give me a practical idea; how far has the nearest block to the railway been disposed of—the block abutting upon the railway?—Well, they are taken here and there, and not continuously.

45807. Here and there they have been taken up quite on to the base of the Rocky Mountains?—No, about half-way.

45808. But they have not been regularly taken; they have been taken here and there?—The sections were reserved for a time. I may explain that they were reserved for a time by the railway company, in case they might require them for sidings or stations, but recently they have been placed in the market.

45809. Then does the railway reserve blocks here and there, not only for railway and public purposes, but for the benefit appertaining to the increment in the value of the land?—No, that is not the policy of the railway company.

45810. Are they restricted from doing so in any degree?—No, they can do as they like with their land.

45811. But they find it their best policy to dispose of the best blocks nearest to the railway as fast as possible?—They reserve no land. They reserved some merely while the road was constructing, to make sure of sidings, and so on.

45812. They do not act as land speculators?—No, that is entirely against their policy; and besides that, their policy is to give the actual settler land at a less price than the mere investor.

45813. For the sake of creating traffic?—And encouraging the cultivation of the soil.

45814. Do you in many cases dispose of a 640 acre block to one person

or is it generally disposed of in smaller sections of 320 or 160 acres?—It depends on the purchaser's means. If a man has means to go on with farming extensively, he will purchase a section of 640 acres; if his means are limited, he will purchase 160, and so on. That has generally been the rule.

45815. Are the second row of lots back from the railway quite as advantageous as those immediately abutting upon the line?—I think so. Along each section there is a provision by the Government for roads, so that they are quite sure of a road.

45816. Well, speaking of this project for the settlement of crofters, we have the alternative of either settling the crofters upon the railway lands, or of settling them upon the Government homestead lands, the Government homestead lands being available; can you state any reason why we should prefer the railway lands to the Government lands, or do you offer any advantages to this class of settlers that the Government of the Dominion does not offer?—I think you will deal probably better with the Government lands. We are not so anxious for the sale of our lands as we are to see successful settlement. We like to sell our lands, but we are more desirous to see the country successfully settled.

45817. In fact, you think, on the whole, although you personally are connected with the railway, that we, as the friends of the crofter, would do better to deal with the Government sections?—I may say that we will derive benefit by your doing so.

45818. You mentioned it might be the interest of the Government, and the public in England, to make some small temporary pecuniary sacrifice in assisting emigrants to go away, because the operation might be followed by a reduction of the poor rate, or at least the increase of the poor rate might be prevented?—That, I think, would be a natural result.

45819. Well, but still we are told at the same time that emigration to the North-West implies rather a selection of emigrants—emigrants possessing some means, whether for their passage or for their settlement on arriving there. Supposing that even the passage of a family cost £40 or £50, the Government would hardly be expected to advance money for that; how would the emigration of families possessing some means, even to the amount of from £40 to £100, tend to relieve the poor rates?—You mean if you took a certain number of persons who possessed some means.

45820. Yes?—The only way in that case would be that it would give room for those who had no means to expand at home, and so relieve the congestion.

45821. Might it not also tend to leave, in the first instance, some persons behind without assistance, and without the support or countenance their friends might lend them?—In my opinion, the taking away of a certain number of people would give a better opportunity for those left behind to make a livelihood for themselves. They would have more room and more opportunity.

45822. Eventually I quite admit it, but still I remain under the impression that at first perhaps, if you take away the best of the small people, you might leave the rest in a worse condition behind?—We do not propose to take the best of the people in that respect. The only condition in that proposal of Mr Stephen is that the people should be able to do agricultural work—that they should have some slight knowledge of agricultural work—which I believe the crofters all have. We propose to deal rather with those people who have no means, so long as they are healthy.

45823. But still people who hold land in this country?—Not necessarily so, as long as they have some slight knowledge of agricultural work.

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EDIN-
BURGH. JOHN STUART BLACKIE, Emeritus-Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh (74)—examined.

EDINBURGH.
John Stuart
Blackie.

45824. *The Chairman.*—I believe you desire to begin by reading a statement?—Yes, I thought that was the shortest way, and the way also to prevent looseness of language. But before doing so I wish to make an explanation first, how it was that I, who am neither a crofter nor the son of a crofter, nor a landlord nor the son of a landlord, happen to take an interest in this matter. About thirty-five years ago I stayed in Braemar, and wandering about the many glens there, I saw an immense number of ruined cottages—a perfect desolation. Being a person of some human sympathy, I dropt a few tears over that desolation, and wrote a few sonnets and poems, which I called *Braemar Ballads*. A gentleman whom I met at the time said to me—‘Blackie, poetry is of no use; but ‘I have a connection with the *Times* newspaper, and if you write a letter ‘to the *Times* I will get an article to back it up.’ ‘Oh, oh,’ said I, and I wrote a letter, and an article in the *Times* came down to back it. Then there was a row, and for six weeks afterwards my whole breakfast table was deluged with papers about the desolation in the Highlands.

45825. Will you forgive me if I ask you to have the kindness to make your statement rather in the form of a communication to the Commission than as a speech?—Yes, I am merely making an explanation how I took up the matter at all.

45826. Yes, but do so in a less demonstrative manner, if you can?—But I cannot adopt an artificial manner. I was merely going to say that I thought, on account of this deluge of letters upon my poor head, there must be something rotten in the state of the Highlands. I shall first state the facts of the case, as I have learned them by pedestrianising over the Highlands for thirty years and more, and also the political, social, and economical aspects of the case as they appear to me; and, secondly, I shall state the remedies which appear to me to be appropriate and necessary. 1. Facts of the case.—(1) It is a fact that many districts of the Highlands once thickly populated, are now either lying in a state of complete desolation, strewn over with ruins of human dwellings, or swallowed up in some huge holding by the creation of which the native population seem to have been extruded. (2) It is a fact that in other districts of the Highlands a number of extremely poor people have been huddled together into unkindly corners, which now labour under the evil of excessive population—an evil, however, which, on the face of the land, is manifestly owing, in many districts, more to a want of proper distribution of the population than to any absolute excess over the number which it could naturally support. (3) It is a fact that the natural population of the glens in which the desolation is visible, has either been disposed of in the way just alluded to—by huddling them into unkindly corners, in favour of strangers, or by shipping them off to America, or by sending them to languish and rot in small Highland townships adjacent to the depopulated districts, or to drag out an unhealthy and deteriorating life in the back slums of Glasgow and other great manufacturing cities. (4) It is a fact that while in some cases emigration to America or to the colonies was and is highly beneficial, both to those who remain at home and to those who go abroad, the process of thinning the native population of the hills was often resorted to without cause, and generally overdone. There was room as well for a moderate emigration as for a further distribution of the remaining inhabitants in districts where the whole population has been mercilessly swept away. It is no less true, as has been suggested from various quarters, that part of the Hebridean population might be wisely disposed of as fishermen, if the proper training, encouragement, and facilities were supplied from influential quarters; but there would

' still remain room for an agricultural population, occupied mainly with grazing, and with the natural adjunct of a certain amount of tillage in oats and green crops where the soil and situation were more favourable. (5) It is a fact that the crofter system, which grew up naturally in the Highlands, as contrasted with the large farm system natural to the Lothians, and other such districts of the lowlands, has been curtailed of its fair proportions by the undiscriminating *doctrinaire* rage for large farms, which led landlords and factors to seize upon the hill pastureage, which was a necessary adjunct of the crofter system. It has often been said that large farms were absolutely necessary for sheep farming; but this is a mistake; under proper direction, small farmers by the club farm system could pasture sheep on the braes, just as scientifically as a burly farmer from Dumfries or Hawick. The big farms created by the cruel evictions which at different periods have left their baleful marks on the record of Highland economy during the last hundred years, were necessary only to enable a few Lowland adventurers to grow suddenly rich on the ruin of the native inhabitants of the glens, and to save factors and commissioners and their underlings from the trouble of dealing in a kindly, considerate, discriminating, and Christian way with the poor man, from whose toil they drew their rents. On the other hand, I have not the least wish to deny that in some parts of the Highlands, from neglect and inconsiderate indulgence, and generally from a want of wise and firm administration, crofts were allowed to grow up too small for affording the means of subsistence to a family, even when assisted by extraneous employment, as fishing or otherwise. For these a process of moderate consolidation into larger crofts of various sizes is recommended; but this consolidation must not take place violently in favour of one big stranger, but in a gradual, well-calculated, and humane fashion in favour of the native inheritors of the soil; while it must, at the same time, always be borne in mind that big men cannot do without little men in this world, and that care should always be taken, in every well-managed estate, to have a considerable number of small crofts to act as subsidiary means of subsistence to ploughmen and other labourers. (6) It is a fact that, while under the kindly clan system which prevailed in the Highlands previous to the unfortunate rising of the '45, the crofters were allowed to bring down a deer or hook a salmon on occasions, or gather sticks from the wood, and enjoy other natural freedoms; the game laws have now been made so strict that the crofter is absolutely deprived of all these kindly perquisites, and is made in many ways painfully to feel that while the game is cultivated and cherished on the soil, the human being is scarcely tolerated, and no compensation has ever been made to the poor man for these encroachments of the rich. (7) It is a fact that while the position of the crofter has in these various ways been made less favourable from year to year, his rent has in not a few cases not been diminished in proportion; but, on the contrary, it has sometimes been raised so as to keep him on the verge of starvation, and without hope in this world; while, at the same time, the improvements made by the sweat of his brow have, by the operation of unjust laws, been appropriated by the land-owner. (8) It is a fact that while, according to every principle of justice, laws should be made to protect the weak against the strong, the British laws of landed property have been made by the strong to make the strong stronger, and are radically and throughout one-sided and unjust. (9) It is a fact that, in the face of the political axiom, that absolute power placed in the hands of any class of human beings is sure to be abused, the Highland crofters have been placed practically under a legally authorised power, which has no qualification but the accidental goodness of the person who exercises it. By the British land laws, as acted on in the Highlands, full swing is given to

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'any kind of severity, harshness, and insolence in the lords of the soil,
'their agents and underlings, without any possibility of redress. (10) It
'is a fact that while the principles of the clan system, of which the
'influence is still felt in some districts of the Highlands, favoured the
'local population, and cherished in an eminent degree those feelings of
'mutual love and esteem which are the only firm cement of the social
'structure, the principles of the so-called commercial system and of the
'feudal law are essentially selfish and unkindly, and tend to dissociate
'the upper from the lower strata of society in a manner most prejudicial
'to the health of the body social. Under the operation of these essentially
'selfish principles, our landholders have been degraded into land-dealers and
'dealers in game and rent-gatherers, and the feeling of loyalty in their
'dependants, as a natural sequence, has utterly perished. (11) The com-
mercial system of holding forth money as the chief good has taught the
'landlord to disown all territorial duties to the population whom
'he was appointed to guide and encourage, and accustomed him to the
'idea that residence has nothing to do with the possession of land, and that
'the practice of being a habitual absentee attaches no moral stigma to the
'landholder. Absenteeism in the Highlands has grown up pretty much
'in the same way as in Ireland, and has produced its natural effects,—first
'in depriving the district of the best part of its natural life blood, and then
'in establishing the system of government by factors or agents, and their
'underlings, which by the very nature of the thing is systematically
'severe and accidentally generous. (12) Under the operation of these
'various forces, the character of the Highlander and his value as a social
'integer is being gradually deteriorated. Having no independence of
'position guaranteed by law, he can have little independence of character;
'instead of a stout and self-sustained manliness, a cringing servility and
'fear of consequences is apt to become a ruling trait in his character; if
'he is cunning, it is because he dare not be bold; if he is lazy, it is
'because he is working for another, not for himself, and because he has no
'careful continuity of training from his natural guides, and where he has
'not been oppressed, has been systematically neglected and discouraged,
'and has no security that he will be allowed to reap the fruit of his toil.
'Thus our false system not only banishes the best part of our Highland
'population, but corrupts those who remain; our army is deprived of its
'best material, our domestic establishments of their best servants, and the
'Queen's Majesty of her most loyal subjects. The natural result, indeed,
'of the whole treatment to which the Highlanders, under the operation of
'unjust land laws, economical doctrinaireism, and commercial greed, have
'been subjected, has been to extinguish loyalty where it was naturally
'warm, and to sow the seeds of discontent where loyalty was traditionally
'at home. (13) Next to the doctrinaire mania for large farms, which
'depopulated so many beautiful Highland glens, the aristocratic rage for
'deer forests has in these latter days come into the foreground to extinguish
'the last spark of hope in the breast of a Highlander that he may be
'allowed to set a free foot on his native heath. From being the natural
'adjunct of a resident proprietorship, deer forests have become an article
'of mountain merchandise, carried on in a style not seldom, disgraceful to
'our Christian civilisation, and degrading to our British aristocracy;
'and under the influence of this aristocratic rage, our landholders, finding
'that Highland wool does not bring so much in the market as it did at the
'beginning of the century, and that the large farm system is in this way
'beginning to show its natural hollowness, have not scrupled to hand over
'whole counties to be used as a playground for English and American
'Nimrods, who have no interest in the country except to keep as many
'deer as possible on the hills, and as few men as possible in the glens, and

' to allow no cows in the neighbourhood of their deer range, that might yield some honest milk to enrich the blood of a stunted and a starved population. And all this has been done, as already stated, in perfect accordance with English land laws, which give all power to the strong, and no protection to the weaker members of society. (14) But it is not only the honest crofters that must thus retreat from the land marks, on which the omnipotent Nimrod so triumphantly disports. Our purple bens and our green winding glens, that were once as free to the foot of the pedestrian as the breeze that blows over them, are now fenced round with iron railings, or guarded by jealous gamekeepers; and not a botanist can pick up a fern, nor a geologist split a rock, nor an artist sketch a cascade, nor a rhymer spin a verse, nor a traveller in search of health whiff the mountain breezes, for the sacred fear of "disturbing the deer," and curtailing the sport of a few idle young gentlemen. And this in an age when the tide of democracy is advancing all round at a rapid pace, and requires no additional momentum from artificial rights which plant the self-indulgent pleasures of the few in direct antagonism to the best interests of the great mass of the population. (15) It should be mentioned under a separate head, though it is not a fact into which the Commissioners may have had particular occasion to inquire, that the treatment which the Gaelic language has received from the Central Board in London is only one proof amongst many of the utterly unsympathetic style in which the poor Highlanders have been treated by their social superiors. A certain, not uninfluential class of ignorant persons have been foolish enough to say that the Gaelic language is the curse of the country, and that it ought to be rooted out violently. This silly idea suiting, as it did admirably, the mechanical notions of education fashionable with a central board, measuring everything by red-tape, seems to have been influential in excluding the reading of the Gaelic Bible, and the rich lyrical poetry of the Gaelic tongue, from the favoured columns of the inspectorial reports; whereas the real truth is, that not the Gaelic language is to be blamed for anything that is unfortunate in the social intercourse of the Highlands, but the Highland landlords, commissioners, and factors, who will not take the trouble to learn even a smattering of the language of the people on whose ground they dwell, and by the sweat of whose brow they are supported. The appointment of persons as commissioners and factors over extensive Highland estates, who are utterly ignorant of the language, feelings, and habits of the people, is one of the greatest blunders habitually perpetrated in the management of Highland properties. People who really wished to gain the love and confidence of their people would never neglect the study of the language which is the natural highway to their affections. (16) I hope that no person who hears this statement, and these views, will be so uncharitable as to suppose that I am one of those unreasonable persons who deal in sweeping denunciations of whole classes of men. I know there are not a few good landlords, with kindly and considerate factors, in the Highlands, especially among those in whose hearts the milk of human kindness, inherited from the palmy days of the Highlands, has not been curdled into the sour by the worship of a glittering materialism, and the sophis- tries of an ambitious political economy usurping the throne of ethical and political science. These landlords know, and by their kindly conduct practically acknowledge, that their business is not to make money, or to make poaching impossible by stamping out the local population, but simply to make their people comfortable and contented. As good members of society they know that there is no such thing as an absolute right of property in the social system; that no good citizen can do what he likes with his own, but only what is good and profitable for

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 ' the community of which he is a limb ; and that property in land specially
 ' exists, not for the selfish pleasure of the man who owns it, but for the
 ' good of the people who live upon it, in whose well-being the community
 ' has a vital interest. But what the views just stated imply is simply this,
 ' that there cannot exist a widely spread disaffection among a loyal, hard-
 ' working, religious, and law-abiding people—a race of mountaineers second
 ' to none to be found in the whole breadth of Europe—without some good
 ' cause or causes ; and what these causes have been I have endeavoured to
 ' interweave in the statements of the facts that have come under my own
 ' observation. I am perfectly aware that other causes, over which neither
 ' landlords nor land laws had any control, have contributed towards the
 ' extrusion of our stout race of Highlanders from their native seats ; but
 ' this never could have taken place to the extent which now fills every
 ' patriotic heart with sorrow, had not the blood of our landholders been
 ' poisoned, and the social conscience debauched by the long-continued
 ' action of unequal, unfair, and oppressive land laws. The harsh and
 ' violent things that were done in our bonnie green glens, at various times,
 ' the so-called land improvers who are now giving an account of their
 ' stewardship, I have no doubt were done sometimes with the best inten-
 ' tions. But hell is paved with good intentions ; and these, though they
 ' may palliate the personal guilt, cannot diminish the public wrong, nor
 ' prevent a just Providence from running its appointed curse of chastise-
 ' ment. Great sinners are seldom aware that they are great sinners till the
 ' day of retribution comes ; but, when it does come, as recently in Ireland,
 ' they are made to feel it sharply ; and in these cases, the saints, I freely
 ' confess, are sometimes unavoidably punished with the sinners, which of
 course, it is not quite easy for the saints to understand. I wish now to
 ' state my remedies. I assume that the mountain peasantry of the High-
 ' lands are a race that ought not to be lightly sacrificed, either that a few
 ' Lowland speculators may make enormous fortunes by sheep farming, or
 ' that a few aristocratic young gentlemen may have an unhindered range
 ' of the glens for the sake of chasing deer. I believe on the best grounds
 ' that the peasantry of a country, and especially the mountain peasantry,
 ' are, to borrow a phrase from cattle breeders, the very best human stock
 ' that the nation possesses. If the game are worth preserving, the people
 ' are much more. I assume also that the principle of *laissez faire* in this
 ' case cannot be allowed to rule ; things have drifted long enough the
 ' wrong way ; also that the doctrine of free contract as between an
 ' omnipotent Highland landlord and a poor crofter is at once a sophism in
 ' economical science, and in practice a delusion and a mockery. If the
 ' people are to be preserved on their native land they must be preserved on
 ' some principle of which economical science, as taught by a certain narrow-
 ' minded and heartless school in this country, knows nothing ; they must
 ' be preserved, as the Irish people have been preserved in Mr Gladstone's
 ' Bill of 1881, by regulations suited to the peculiar circumstances of their
 ' case. The policy of the future, therefore, if we are to have the Highlands
 ' at all for any purpose but a recreation ground for English Nimrods, must
 ' be a policy directly the reverse of what has led to such lamentable
 ' consequences in the past. Instead of a race of serfs and menial dependants
 ' and stunted starvelings, we must foster and cherish a race of stout-hearted
 ' and stout-thewed independent mountaineers, who will be the glory and
 ' stay of this country, as the Tyrolese are of the Austrian empire ; and
 ' this desirable result can be achieved only by marching boldly forward on
 ' the lines marked out by the far-sighted legislation of the present Premier
 ' in his Irish Land Act of 1881. No two cases can be imagined more
 ' parallel than the economic state of the western half of Ireland and that
 ' of our Highlands and Islands ; and, if there be a Strathnaver in

' Sutherland, the memory of which, at the distance of more than half
' a century, curdles the blood of every true-hearted Highlander, there is a
' Dunveagh in Donegal that responds to it with a fearful similarity of grim
' portraiture. I consider, therefore, that for the regeneration of the
' Highlands, and the recovery and restoration of that noble race of moun-
tainers, whom the narrow and selfish policy of past generations has in
great measure lost to us, we must—(1) Take for our guiding star the
famous three F's; fair rent, fixity of tenure, and free sale, which have
set the stamp of legislative wisdom on the Land Act which is now the
law in the sister island. Of these three F's the two first are absolutely
necessary to give the mountain farmer that independence, security, and
encouragement which are necessary to distinguish him from a serf, the
slave of arbitrary command, and a servant dismissible at will ; and the
third, the right of assignation of a lease, or tenant-right as they call it in
Ulster, seems the necessary sequence of the commercial relation which so
many modern landlords have acted upon in their dealings with their
tenants. In extending to the Scottish Highlanders the generosity and
justice which characterise the Gladstonian Act of 1881, we shall not only
have the benefit of the Irish experience of the operation of that Act, but
we shall have to apply it to a system of legal machinery, which will be at
once less costly and more satisfactory than that which could be looked for
in Ireland, and to a people as distinguished for reasonableness, orderly
conduct, and peaceableness, as their Celtic brethren on the other side of
the Channel, suffering under three centuries of a social cachexy, have
unfortunately been for the contrary. (2) A Royal Commission should
be appointed to make a survey of all the lands in the Highlands and
Islands which, since the evictions and forced emigrations of the last
hundred years, have been denuded of their natural population ; and to
consider and report under what financial conditions and economical regula-
tions these tracts of land could be distributed in small farms of various
sizes, according to circumstances, in such a fashion that the loyal subjects
of Her Majesty in that quarter may have cause to be thankful to the
Government that shall have allowed them to live with peaceful industry
on the roods which were reclaimed by the spade and purchased by the blood
of their forefathers. (3) This Commission will be specially required to
report in how far deer forests, which have always existed in the High-
lands as the natural adjuncts of hill property, have in these recent days
been allowed to encroach on land which could be profitably employed
for pasturage or tillage, to the benefit of the native Highland population,
and the advantage of the public ; and further to report whether the
enormous sheep farms in the Highland glens, now leased to south
country farmers, could not be at once more patriotically, and more in
accordance with good economic principles, distributed amongst native
Highlanders from overcrowded districts, acting on the club farm system,
of which the details are well known to practical economists. (4) The
game laws, which are no doubt absolutely necessary, unless game is
altogether to vanish from the hills, as trout fishing has almost vanished
from the Tweed, must be so qualified that the small farmer shall feel
that his well-being is not systematically sacrificed to the recreations of
the landowner and his friends. This implies that the braes adjoining to
Highland crofts shall, as in olden times, be free for pasture to the crofter ;
and that if deer or other wild animals from the mountain shall be found
encroaching upon his turnip field or otherwise, he shall be entitled to
bring them down. (5) Furthermore, as deer forests, even under restrictive
regulations, such as do not at present exist, are naturally at war with the
development of social life and economic culture of the Highlands, and
are besides, properly labelled under the head of luxuries of the rich, they

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John Stuart
Blackie.

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EDINBURGH.

John Stuart
Blackie.

' ought to be taxed with a heavy percentage, the produce of the tax to be employed in raising the salaries of the schoolmasters, and improving the furnishing of the schools in the county to which the deer forest belongs.
(6) That all the uncultivated ground of the Bens and glens, whether occupied by deer or by sheep, shall be open freely to the foot of the pedestrian, whether travelling for health or recreation, or for the sake of physical science and observation of nature. (7) That in order to diminish as much as possible the evils of absenteeism and of vicarious administration of gigantic estates by factors and land agents, the land laws of this country, and especially the laws of succession in land, shall be changed in the direction of a larger distribution and a more free transmission of property in land all over the country. Our present land laws, by which a monstrous accumulation of landed property in the hands of a few is artificially encouraged, are, historically considered, merely a badge of conquest from the Conqueror downward, maintained and cherished by every device that the love of power, the pride of pedigree, family vanity, and the ingenuity of lawyers could invent. Economical value they have none, except of course, accidentally, as in the well-known case of my noble friend, his Grace of Sutherland, who expended many hundred thousand pounds of income, derived from his Staffordshire estates, on the improvement of his Highland property. But in themselves, and without the accident of exceptionally good men, they tend rather to the waste and mismanagement, neglect and depopulation of large tracts of country that might otherwise enjoy the benefits of resident proprietorship. In order to attain this desirable distribution of landed property, now perniciously locked up in the hands of a few, it is by no means necessary to plunge into the opposite extreme of compulsory division so familiar to Englishmen in the example of France. The revival of the old Norman law of limited primogeniture, as it exists still in the Channel Islands, will serve all practical purposes, presenting as it does the golden economical mean between the French *morcellement* and the monstrous accumulation artificially fostered by the English and Scottish law. Whether, in addition to such a change in the law of succession to landed property, an absentee tax should not be laid on all proprietors who do not reside on their properties for at least six months in the year, may be a doubtful question. Important exceptions to the range of such a tax obviously would require to be made. Nevertheless, personally I am in favour of such a tax. Its imposition would emphatically express the sensibility of the State conscience to aristocratic and plutocratic offences, and act as a salutary reminder of their territorial duties to a class of persons who are only too apt to forget them.'

45827. Having heard your statement, particularly with reference to strictly economical principles as applied to the management of land and the evils attached, according to your belief, to the large areas of land in the Highlands devoted to either sheep farms or to deer, I was desirous of asking you what your own practical suggestions might be for the remedy of the evils attached to large farms and large forests; but, I understand, you have relegated the contrivance of remedies for those evils to another Royal Commission of which I may not be member. Well, although you contemplate the nomination of another Royal Commission to deal with these questions, you have perhaps your own opinions about them?—Yes.

45828. In that case I should like you to state those opinions. We have, for instance, heard a great deal of the evils attached to the area of large farms in the north, to the number of farms in the possession or occupancy of the same individual, and to the non-residency not only of the proprietor but even of the farmer. Now, I would like to know from you what limitations, if any, you would recommend on public liberty, so

to speak, in reference to a single person taking farms and not residing on them?—Well, I think I have indicated that. I name another Commission, because I do not think that under the present law anything can be done. We have what I call the right of the rich to over-ride the poor, and the strong to over-ride the weak, but if that Commission were to report they would say—"Here is a district in the possession of a south country farmer from which the population has been excluded. We ordain, by the power of Parliament, that the proprietor shall distribute that among a certain number of native farmers."

EDIN-
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EDINBURGH.John Stuart
Blackie.

45829. But, speaking of your own personal opinion, your opinion is in favour of limiting the area by law which may be held by any individual tenant?—According to circumstances. I believe, in the terms of a letter written to me by the Duke of Argyll many years ago, that a proper mixture of large, small, and medium farms, according to circumstances, is a wise custom.

45830. I have no doubt the Duke of Argyll would repeat the expression of the same view, but I don't know whether he would be in favour of allowing the law to prescribe that?—I know he would not. He is a landlord, and I am not.

45831. Well, you are in favour of a law prescribing the limits of land to be occupied by individuals?—I consider there is too much freedom to all sorts of persons in this country, and too little Government, and that we would be the better of Bismarck to tell our landlords what to do. I mean I would say—"Here is a piece of land that might be advantageously subdivided for the accommodation of the inhabitants, and it would be for your pecuniary advantage that it should be subdivided."

45832. Would you also be in favour of a legal obligation on the part of the tenant to occupy his holding and live there?—Most distinctly.

45833. A legal obligation?—Most distinctly. No man is entitled to desert the post where God has put him. If he makes money out of it, let him live there.

45834. But reverting to the question of deer forests, would you be in favour, if asked by this future Commission—I speak of your own personal opinion—of prohibiting the exclusive appropriation of land to deer at all, under all circumstances?—No. There are parts of the Highlands which naturally and always were deer forests. The greatest Highland poet, Duncan Ban, was a gamekeeper and an excellent deer stalker. But I would have a survey made to see how much land had been encroached upon that was not naturally deer forest.

45835. Have you any distinct idea of the principles upon which the limitation of deer forests could be founded? For instance, could it be founded with reference to elevation?—That is one element, of course.

45836. But this is merely suggestive on my part. I want to know if you have any distinct idea on what principle the limitation of the exclusive appropriation of the land to deer would be founded?—The principle would be based on exact knowledge and observation and survey of the spot, and seeing from the nature of the ground and the nature of the soil what the country was worth and must be worth for ever; and also historically, what part of that land now occupied as deer forests contains good grass and good soil which had been occupied and could be occupied by crofters for pasture and for tillage. It could be done by survey by scientific men—agricultural men.

45837. And you would be in favour of withdrawing such portions by law from the exclusive occupation of deer?—Most distinctly. Let them know they are the enemies of the native population, and pay for it.

45838. Now, speaking of the abusive formation of the deer forests, and the recent abusive extension of forests, which I understand you to affirm,

EDIN-
BURGH.

EDINBURGH.

John Stuart
Blackie.

can you give me any examples within the last thirty years of any place in which small tenants have been removed for the direct purpose of forming deer forests?—Why, it is a general *fama* in the Highlands! I did not personally take notice of instances, but I am sure Highlanders would be able to tell you. It is a *fama*. For instance, I remember when I was passing through Ross-shire not long ago, I saw what was originally a large sheep farm, but the sheep farm did not pay, and now it has become a deer forest. Of course the people were not kicked off, but the system made them go away.

45839. But surely it is very desirable we should not report upon a *fama*. It is very desirable we should get accurate statements of individual cases in order to measure the practical hardship inflicted on men by the system. Now, I have been constantly asking this question, and there are one or two cases which I am at the present moment reserving in my own mind, but I have not been able, except in those cases, to find one single example in which men—except sheep farmers—in which small tenants have been removed almost within the memory of men living—I mean within thirty years—to form a deer forest?—Because the deer forest comes to supply the big farmer's place very often. In many cases the farmers have told me that the deer came into their ground and ate their oats and turnips, and they had no remedy. One old woman told me when I asked her why she did not complain—‘They gave me a good hint that if I complained they would turn me off to-morrow.’

45840. That is a separate question, but I want to come to the question whether, in recent years, Highlanders have been turned out of their holdings to make room for deer?—That there have been formal evictions I do not know. You will know much better than I do, because you have been taking the evidence. I have not read it, though I mean to do so when it is published. I don't know that there have been recent evictions, but that the deer forests have been encroaching upon land that originally, and not long ago, belonged to the people, I know. As I say, it is a *fama*. A *fama* does not arise out of nothing. I did not take notice of the special cases. What I took notice of was that once a sheep farm occupied a whole glen, and now it is all let as deer forest. I do not say there was formal legal eviction.

45841. I do not mean legal eviction, but I refer to removal. I cannot ascertain that in the Highlands, in your lifetime or mine almost, there has been any removal of small tenants, Highlanders, for the purpose of making a deer forest, but there are many examples of persons being removed for the purpose of making a sheep farm?—Well, that would be simply for this reason, as I said before, that the men were removed to make way for the sheep, and the sheep were removed to make way for the deer.

45842. The sheep are removed to make way for the deer; and when that is the case, when Highlanders are not removed, but when Lowlanders and Lowland sheep are removed to make a deer forest, is your objection to a deer forest as strong?—Yes, if Lowlanders hold the glens with their sheep I would tell the Lowlanders to be off,—after a certain number of years the lease shall terminate, and it shall be divided amongst native Highlanders if they choose to take it. If they do not, let the Lothian farmer come back. I want to give the land, back to the people who held it, if it can be done, and I do not see why it should not. If the big farmers were not to have their leases renewed, and the Government were to say ‘this land shall be divided among crofters,’ I don't see any harm in that.

45843. You have spoken of the evils attaching to the eviction of small tenants—Highland tenants—for the purpose of forming large sheep farms in the hands of Lowlanders and others; and that is, perhaps, the chief

subject of complaint that you have mentioned. Now you have said, in another part of your paper, that the application of the principles of the Irish Land Act is one of your principal remedies. Is there any provision whatever in the Irish Land Act by which either an existing small holding can be enlarged or by which an over-crowded township, for instance, can be relieved by the constitution of new small holdings elsewhere?—I believe not.

EDIN-BURGH.
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EDINBURGH.

John Stuart
Blackie.

45844. Therefore, in so far the Irish Land Act would be totally inapplicable?—It would be deficient as applied to the Highlands. I think the Irish Land Act would apply to Scotland with modifications and qualifications of very great consequence. I speak of the great lines of it.

45845. It would not apply in those respects as a remedy of the evil?—No, no.

45846. Now I want to know from you whether you think or do not think that the application of the Irish Land Act in the Highlands might, perhaps, create another evil which you would deprecate—I mean fixity of tenure and free sale as applied to small holdings in the Highlands. I will assume that these two principles are applied—fixity of tenure and free sale. We have seen whole regions of the country in which there are a multitude of crofts below £2 and £3 of annual rental, inhabited by people in some respects in a great state of depression and distress. Now, do you think it would be a wise thing to give those people a right to fixity of tenure and the right of disposing of their holdings to other persons in the same class as themselves, and thus perpetuating the class which we want to get rid of?—I looked thoroughly into that subject when recently in Ireland, and I think it is very likely that the Irish Land Act, while applying beneficially to what I call farmers of substance, and farms of a certain size, would not apply at all, or not act well, or might perpetuate the evil, when applied to such a very degraded and almost lost population as you find in some of the worst parts of the Highlands.

45847. I don't say degraded?—Well, they are socially not much worth. In the same way I say that if the three principles of the Irish Land Act,—fair rent (which means a rent not to be fixed by landlords), fixity of tenure, and free sale—were to be applied to Scotland, they might not apply to all parts equally, or to all the Highlands equally. They might depend a good deal upon some previous regulations made with regard to size and subdivision of farms. I certainly hold that subdivision of a farm ought not to be allowed. Before these principles were applied to the Highlands there ought to be a distinct report about the variety of tenures in different parts of the Highlands, and they might be applied with extensive reservation.

45848. So there would be a considerable reservation?—Certainly; always where there is common sense there are reservations and modifications.

45849. I think your advice would not go to the indiscriminate and immediate application of the principles of the Irish Land Act, but rather to the contrivance of some system embodying what is good in the Land Act, but modified in its application to the Highlands?—You talk the most perfect good sense, and it is my own opinion.

45850. You spoke with reprobation, as I understood, of the principles of free contract, because those principles are scarcely applicable, according to your view, between the strong and the weak; but now would you carry that so far as to prohibit the power of free contract between the proprietor and the poor man for the reclamation of waste land? We have seen, for instance, on Lord Lovat's property and elsewhere, a considerable, I may say an immense, development of cultivated land executed under absolutely free contract between the proprietor and the small tenant, founded upon a nominal rent, or no rent, during a considerable period of

EDIN-
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EDINBURGH.
John Stuart
Blackie.

years—a contract freely entered into between a good proprietor and a good tenant, by which the tenant is reimbursed for his industry by sitting, it may be for nineteen or for thirty years, without paying rent, and at the end of that period a new valuation is made. Would you prohibit such a free contract as that?—I am perfectly aware of that. But laws are not made for good proprietors, but for bad proprietors. If all landlords were as reasonable as that nothing would require to be done, but I don't think it is right and proper to allow freedom of contract in every case—to allow those who are strong in position and money to have the poor people at their mercy—through the accident of a man being a good man. I would make all these things liable to certain land regulations, with certain rates to be fixed by commissioners. That might be called Prussian and Bismarckian. Well, I wish we had a little of Prussia and Bismarck here. I would not allow the common people to be at the mercy even of good landlords, because the majority of them may be bad.

45851. Have you considered this—if the people wish to enter into such contracts, and if the landlord wishes to grant them, and in that way to increase the comfort of the people and extend cultivation, if the State stepped in and prescribed certain limitations and provisions, might not the landlord be much less disposed to give the people opportunities of improvement?—That is quite possible; I admit that.

45852. Might not the interference of the State in that way tend to prevent the improvement of the people and the development of cultivation?—In certain cases, but not in all. In the main I am in favour of the rent not being fixed by the landlord. It should be fixed by an impartial party.

45853. Might not the landlord in that case be prevented from doing good in the form he thinks right? Might he not be disposed to use his land for purposes of pleasure and for purposes of sport, which you deprecate?—Well, but don't you see the people would be able to use it for good purposes, because they would get their land at a less rent, and they would do for the land what they could not have done otherwise. But that is quite possible. I have heard people saying in Ireland that because they had not absolute power any more, and could not get as much rent as they had been getting, they would go away and invest their money in England or America. Well, if the landlords choose to desert their post for the loss of £100 or £200, let them do so; but I still say it is not a safe thing to intrust the landlords with the fixing of the rent in the general case.

45854. You have spoken, as it were, in favour of the liberation of land by allowing the land to be more freely broken up and more freely disposed of. I presume you mean the removal of such limitations as settlement and entail, and so on, and putting the land as much as possible into the market and promoting its division. Supposing that to be done, are you sure, having regard to the immense wealth of many persons in this country, and the power of capital, that the result might not be the concentration of the land in the hands of the capitalist, instead of its diffusion among the poorer classes?—I am perfectly sure that some people's rage for land, with plenty of money, would make them buy up whole counties. Still I provide for that by laws of succession. I create distribution by succession.

45855. But still for the whole lifetime of a rich man one of those counties might be bought up and used for purposes of sport and otherwise, and you trust to the next generation to remedy the evil?—It could not be worse than it now is.

45856. Don't the laws of settlement and entail in some degree preserve small properties in ancient families, and promote in that way the distribution of land?—Every evil has an incidental good, it is quite true.

45857. Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.—You have often heard, have you not, the question of migration started as a relief, to some extent, of the state of matters in the Highlands?—That is what I call distribution.

EDIN-BURGH.
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EDINBURGH.
John Stuart
Blackie.

45858. Has there not been a deal of migration going on from the Highlands for a great number of years to our large cities?—That kind of migration! Yes, of course there has been, but I mean migration to uninhabited parts.

45859. Has that migration which has taken place, in many cases involuntary upon the part of the people—has it, in very many cases tended to the deterioration of the race?—It must do so. No human being could be brought up in such good circumstances as the Highlander, on the bens, and the bracken, and the braes. It is impossible for Glasgow, with its whole sanitary appliances, to make such a man as is made on the Highland hills. It cannot be.

45860. Then the migration you recommend is not a forced migration to large cities, but a migration to the country parts, where they can cultivate their lands and live in comfort and happiness?—Which were originally occupied by them, and are now occupied by the big farmers.

45861. So, when it is sometimes objected that migration is something very novel, there has been, in point of fact, a kind of migration going on for the last century into the large cities?—Yes, and quite right so far, but it should not have been encouraged so much. It was overdone, because they got no encouragement at home.

45862. I should like to ask you one or two questions of a historical character. You have spoken more than once about the severity of the land laws, and how they have acted oppressively towards the people; are you aware that some time after 1746 and 1747—the abolition of the Heritable Jurisdictions Act—to have people upon a man's land was considered of less importance than it was before?—Certainly it was. The laird was of less importance himself.

45863. Are you aware that a considerable part or a good deal of some of the Highland estates was forfeited to the Crown and placed under the charge of what were called the Forfeited Commissioners?—Yes, I am aware of that.

45864. Are you also aware that on these forfeited estates there were planted factors—a race you don't seem to be friendly to in all cases—are you aware there were factors appointed?—I think it must have been so, but I don't know it as a fact.

45865. Can you tell me this as a matter of history, whether or not, with regard to the factors and others that were placed by the commissioners upon the forfeited estates, part of their duty was to endeavour to improve the state of agriculture upon the estates upon which they were placed?—I am not aware of that historically. My knowledge relates more to the existing factors. I did not study that point historically.

45866. Then you are not able to answer me yea or nay on this point?—I don't think I can answer you many questions of curious minute history on these matters.

45867. Can you answer this question in the affirmative or in the negative, whether carrying out their instructions, these factors or commissioners were the first evictors of the Highland people?—I cannot tell you. I understood always the first eviction, or, as I would say, emigration, was voluntary. In the first emigration the Glengarry people deserted their homes because they would not live in such a country—because they had lost all their dignity and honour—but I don't know when the first eviction was. I think the first was Glen Dessary, but it is very difficult to get information about these old evictions.

45868. Then you are not able, of your own knowledge, to say whether

**EDIN-
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EDINBURGH.**

**John Stuart
Blackie.**

or not the factors upon the forfeited estates were the first evictors of the Highland people?—No, I cannot say that of my own knowledge.

45869. You are aware that about the end of the last century the system of large sheep farming came very much into vogue?—Yes.

45870. Are you aware, or have you heard, that it was a very common thing for people to be tried at Inverness and Edinburgh for sheep stealing?—Well, I am a bit of a lawyer, and I think I have heard of that.

45871. Have you heard of this—and it is an important point as illustrating what the effect of the laws in favour of sheep was upon the people—is it not a historical fact that people over and over again have been executed at Inverness for killing a sheep and eating it?—I have always understood that the whole Scotch law was most severe and monstrous and inhuman, just as in the case you mention. I never inquired particularly, but it is a well known fact to students of law that people were hanged for sheep stealing.

45872. So that the penalty for killing a sheep was as severe as for killing a man?—Of course; it was not the man they cared for, but the sheep.

45873. May I go the length of asking you this question, whether judges in those days were not in the habit of breaking out into the most violent language as to the atrociousness of a poor man who was starving killing a sheep?—I have no doubt many of the legal gentlemen with wigs now before you will be able to explain all about that better than I can. It is quite notorious they used all kinds of language on the bench in those days; they were sometimes more than half drunk.

45874. Without any alteration upon the law or laws of Scotland, a more humane feeling has long prevailed, and without any abolishing of the old law whereby a man could be hanged for sheep stealing, could it be possibly imagined that any judge now would do such a thing? Has it been long in desuetude?—Quite impossible. It could not be.

45875. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—You referred to Glen Dessary as the first instance of eviction. Was it not the case that the population voluntarily migrated to the lower part of Lochaber at the time the Caledonian Canal was made, for the purpose of procuring work?—What I know of Glen Dessary is from Principal Shairp of St Andrews, who wrote a poem on Glen Dessary, and he always represented it to me as a violent eviction, but I could get no documents, and he had no documents to give me, though he wrote the poem. Poets can do without documents sometimes. He was extremely fervid against the cruelty of that eviction, and he referred me to the son of an old shepherd that he had spoken to, but I could not get hold of him, so I know nothing about Glen Dessary. If I could have got real knowledge about Glen Dessary or any others, I would not have brought forward so prominently as I did the Strathnaver business, because I don't wish to injure the feelings of a respected colleague, and I could not get any other about which there was written evidence to bring forward.

45876. *Professor Mackinnon.*—I suppose, whatever the history was or whatever the motives were, there is no question that now there is a very great amount of land that was once in the possession of the people which is so no longer?—I have walked over whole tracts of desolate country. I remember in Mull walking over such a tract with a landed proprietor who was one of the best—and the best are always those that speak Gaelic. We were passing through an old ruin of perfect desolation, and he said, ‘I thank Heaven that I have not to think of that desolation on my deathbed.’

45877. The amount of land in the possession of the people is, in your opinion, very much too small?—I think it was most unwise to send away the people in that way for the sake of making money by sheep farming, with no consideration for their consuetudinary rights as holders of the soil.

45878. And their holdings now are very small?—Yes, undoubtedly.

45879. Do you think the thing could adjust itself without any change in the law?—It is possible men are becoming more reasonable. I remember a factor in Sutherland told me they had overdone the large farms, and that they would have to subdivide them; and I was told by a gentleman in Ireland whose father or some other relation had made immensely large farms, that he thought it had been overdone. I presume, therefore, they are beginning to come to reason, and besides the voice of humanity is a little more strong in the present generation.

45880. You said that laws were made for bad landlords but not for good. I presume that when those stringent laws would be made the good landlord would not think it too hard to have to do under a statute what he did formerly voluntarily?—The good landlord would think it too hard. No man likes to lose power. I know some of the best landlords in Ireland who are violently against Gladstone's law, and, therefore, I say the good landlord would object. No man likes to lose power. It is a pleasing thing.

45881. But you think that the disease is so desperate that it would require such a remedy as a change in the law?—I said before that a landlord ought not to be intrusted with fixing the rent or making a bargain with poor tenants.

45882. And your idea of the future is that the holdings of the small tenants should be larger, and made up to a reasonably sized farm, all over the country?—I think so.

45883. The great want just now is, that there are no middle class people between the very poor small crofter and the very big farmer!—There is a want of a middle class over the whole Highlands, through the mismanagement of a hundred years. There is a want of a middle class. There is no society.

45884. From your knowledge of these parts, especially in the Western Islands, don't you think that even with all reasonable re-arrangement of the surface of the land among the people in that way, there are still too many people in some places?—Certainly; and there ought to be a wise system of emigration established under Government supervision; and there should be a fund, of which part should be paid by the Government and part by proprietors in the neighbourhood who are relieved by it.

45885. But such a system should go on hand in hand with settling matters at home?—Yes, certainly. Whenever emigration takes place you should take care and make proper laws against subdivision—against large farms, and to prevent too small subdivision occurring again. There ought to be laws to prevent these extremes, and the Government should insist upon landholders dividing their land in a rational way. I am sure that often the landlords did not know what was done at all. It was done by factors probably to please themselves and their friends, and to save themselves trouble. I know quite well it was to save themselves trouble.

45886. *Sheriff Nicolson*.—How do you think the rent ought to be fixed?—Quite simply. The sheriff in Scotland is a man that can be trusted with anything—but not alone—the sheriff with two valuators, one appointed by the landlord, and the other by the tenant; and that would practically be the same as the present land courts now sitting in Ireland, only much cheaper and much better. In an Irish land court I visited in Kenmare the president was a lawyer, not a sheriff, and the other two were valuators. I think the thing could be done perfectly simply; only the principle of rent altogether, even as applying to large farms, might require revision if we had a new and philosophical kind of legislation. But I see, practically speaking, no difficulty. It would be quite cheap. £100 or £200, in addition to the sheriff's income, would not be objectionable.

45887. You have been accused, Professor Blackie, of uttering senti-

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ments that were more or less mischievous in the Highlands!—Who accused me?

EDINBURGH. 45888. Have you, in your own conscience, been guilty of any such thing?—There is a certain class of people in this world who if you give them a thing with the right hand are sure to take it with the left. They will misunderstand and misapply and distort what I say. It is the habitual practice of the newspapers to do so. If you don't happen to belong to their party, they make a business of distorting and abusing everything you say. It is their business. They are just drunk with the wine of faction. My own conscience is perfectly free. I never told anybody not to pay rent. I never told anybody to shoot landlords from behind a hedge; what I have stated is that it was a strange thing that the Irish, who were guilty of such things, should get lollipops, while the quiet Highlanders got stripes and nothing else.

JOHN MACKAY, Hereford—re-examined.

John Mackay. 45889. *The Chairman.*—You wish to read a statement?—I do. ‘*The Statement of John Mackay*, Associate of the Institution of Civil Engineers, Railway Contractor, born, reared, and educated in the parish of Rogart, Sutherlandshire, till twenty years of age, son of a crofter, one of nine in a family brought up on a croft of about seven acres. It is an admitted fact that the physical configuration and character of a country greatly influences the physical and moral character of its inhabitants, and in a great measure determines their pursuits, as well as their history. The divisions of the Highlands of Scotland into so many valleys, straths, glens, and islands separated from one another by mountain ranges, or by arms of the sea, naturally led to the divisions of the inhabitants into various little societies, termed clans. Those amongst them possessed of superior property, superior talents and courage, naturally became leaders, eventually chiefs, around whom the rest of the community would rally, under whose protection they would settle, and, when necessity required it, under whose leadership they would fight in defence of honour and home. The secluded situation in which these clans were placed rendered intercourse very difficult, and made each small society independent of the other. Each had its own requirements within its own borders, and hence became, as it were, an independent state, regulated by its own or general customs, and to all intents and purposes self-supporting. They were very abstemious,—really nature's wants are few. Their means of subsistence were various. The valley, the mountain, the lake, the river, were free alike to all, for agriculture, pasture, hunting, and fishing, and this continued to be the practice till the beginning of this century. The government of each community was necessarily, under such circumstances, patriarchal. The head was the chief. Members of his family with the wisest and bravest of the community became the chieftains and tacksmen under his sway, essential to him in regulating the affairs of the clan, in promoting and preserving internal harmony, in defending the integrity of the territory and the honour of the community. While thus situated, and thus regulated, harmony and tranquillity prevailed. Cheerfulness and contentment abounded. The harp shed its soul of music in the hall, and hearts in humble abodes beat high for praise, and felt its pulses. Under these influences, when feeble governments gave way and political intrigues ceased, setting clan against clan, and creating discord and feuds amongst high-spirited people, progress was made; and though education, as we know it now-a-days, was only the possession of a few, yet there was a vast fund of traditional lore, epic and lyrical poetry, scarcely less

' effective, preserved and disseminated by seanachies and bards, and by
' wandering minstrels, recited and sung round every fireside in the long
' wintry nights, and on festive occasions, that animated the minds of old
' and young to an extent that may not now be believed, inducing the
' people to regard courage and bravery as the highest virtues, and mean-
ness and cowardice as the rankest vices. The fair fame of the clan, the
' good name of the community, were ever a serious consideration; and
' woe betide the clansman that betrayed this sacred trust, or brought
' disgrace upon the community to which he belonged. The chief usually
' dwelt in the midst of his retainers, who regarded him as their protector
' and adviser. At his castle every clansman was made welcome, and
' treated according to his station with a degree of courtesy and regard to
' his feelings unknown in any other country. It was the same in the
' houses of the chieftains and tacksmen. This condescension, while it
' raised the clansman in his own estimation and drew closer the ties
' between him and his superiors, seldom or ever tempted him to use undue
' familiarity. He was thus taught to respect himself in the respect which
' he showed to his superiors. He felt convinced that he was supporting
' his own honour in evincing his gratitude and duty to the generous heads
' of his clan. Thus it was that Highlanders, before and at the commence-
' ment of this century, carried in their outward appearance, and in the
' outward expression of their manners, the politeness of well bred-gentle-
' men without their vices, and in their hearts the high point of honour
' without its follies, and it was thus that the extraordinary attachment
' evinced by Highlanders for their chiefs and superiors was produced, pre-
' served, and maintained, and such a kind and cordial intimacy, and a
' disposition of mutual support existed between them in a way totally
' unknown in modern times in communities elsewhere, vaunting of higher
' civilisation. The results of these relations will be touched upon further
' on. It would be well for modern society if it more closely studied the
' relations that existed between high and low, gentle and simple, in the
' not remote past, and in some measure assimilate their manners accord-
' ingly. If that were so, many of the grievances now complained of, and
' justly complained of, would be redressed without a Commission of inquiry,
' without irritation or agitation, without invoking the force of the Gaelic
' proverb—"Is treasa tuath na tighearn" (tenants are stronger than lairds),
' and running the risk of a social convulsion. The influence of Highland
' chiefs remained politically and socially paramount till 1748. Neverthe-
' less, shorn as it was, at that time, of its political and juridical power,
' their social influence between themselves and their retainers remained
' intact till after the commencement of this century. It was after
' Culloden's fatal day, so glorious to the vanquished, so humiliating to the
' victors, that the attachment of clansmen to chiefs, chieftains, and tacksmen,
' shone forth most conspicuously, proving at once beyond any doubt the
' affectionate relations that existed between them, and the mildness of the
' sway exercised and felt. This surely should convince sheep men that
' chieftains, tacksmen, or middlemen as some of these gentlemen are
' pleased to term them, were not the oppressors, tyrants, or money grabbers
' they would for purposes of their own make them out to have been.
' Innuendoes, insinuations like these, are simply intended to palliate
' cruelties perpetrated upon an unoffending people, more like the ravages
' of war than the legalised abuses of the rights of property. My Lord, I
' entertain too much respect for Her Majesty's Commissioners, I have
' too much respect for myself as the representative of many of my country-
' men, at home and abroad, to enter into a controversy here with these
' gentlemen upon these and other questions. There is another arena at
' our command, but to the credit of Highlanders, now so much maligned

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EDINBURGH. ' by these interested persons, and now seeking the protection of Her
— Majesty's Government from extirpation, be it said, that when their
EDINBURGH. ' superiors were in their power after Culloden, none of them were so base
— as to take advantage of it, none forgot his duty to accept the price of
John Mackay. ' blood, or take the proffered bribe from any quarter to betray prince,
' chief, or tacksman ; all of them were equally safe ; and while rents from
' forfeited estates were paid to the Crown with the one hand, outlawed
' and exiled men were frequently supported, by their ancient tenantry,
' with the other ; and this fidelity to ancient heads of clans and families
' was exhibited in another manner when the Crown and the nation were
' in dire need of men to defend the flag of Britain, and restore the lost
' prestige of its arms. The Government of that day became sensible of
' the influence dispossessed chiefs enjoyed with their clansmen and
' retainers, and of what value to the nation that influence could be
' exercised. This influence, and the proved fidelity of clansmen to their
' hereditary chiefs, procured to several of them the restoration of their
' estates and titles, forfeited for rebellion. Clansmen enlisted in their
' thousands at the call of these chiefs and tacksmen, and upon the shoulders
' of their devoted adherents many of them were raised to positions of
' eminence and renown. At this period 13,000 Highlanders were
' regimented in two years, officered by chiefs, chieftains, and tacksmen.
' These were the heroic days of the Highlands, as honourable to the people
' as they were to their venerated superiors. The ancient bonds that
' bound and united them together in one grand whole had not then become
' unlooseened. It is a singular fact in the history of the Highlands, that
' within the last sixty years, since the grand social ties that united society
' together in ancient and modern times have become unloosened and broken,
' more estates have been lost to Highland chiefs than in the previous six
' centuries of turbulence, bloodshed, and rapine. It is recorded that the
' eighteen Highland chiefs who fought with Bruce for the civil and
' political independence of Scotland, had till within recent years preserved
' their estates and influence, a fact creditable alike to all concerned.
' Individuals might change, but the bonds that united chiefs and retainers
' together were strengthened in each succeeding generation, resembling
' the leaves and branches of a tree, fading in autumn, but acquiring fresh
' strength and vigour in spring. When improvements became necessary,
' when the ancient order of things required a change, those chiefs, who
' had and felt a regard for the feelings of their ancient tenantry who had
' done yeoman services, brought those changes about gradually, softened
' them to their people, and thereby preserved for themselves the ancient
' affection, respect, and veneration of their dependants, and the esteem of
' all wise patriotic men. The names of all those proprietors are well
' known ; here it would be invidious to mention names. In all great
' social changes, such as the Highland clearances have been, surely the
' feelings and idiosyncrasies of the people ought to have been considered,
' otherwise such changes, conducted as they were, may justly be termed
' revolution and confiscation, for which, as it always happens in a reaction,
' due retribution will be demanded and exacted. The Highland clearances
' were revolutionary from every point of view. To illustrate further what
' has been already said, permit me again to refer to the ancient regime.
' The influence of chiefs, and the devotion, attachment, and fidelity of
' retainers—never at any period were these more conspicuously displayed
' nor more usefully put forth, than in the service of the country in the era
' between Culloden and Waterloo, the most momentous in the history of
' this country. This was the result of it. In that period were raised the
' following corps or regiments for permanent service in the Highlands.
' nine regiments of the line—the 42nd, 71st, 72d, 74th, 78th, 79th, 91st

' 92nd, 93rd. War office returns show that in the period above mentioned
' 14,000 men, four-fifths of them Highlanders, entered the 42nd alone in EDIN-
' drafts and reinforcements. Sixteen regiments for limited service— BURGH.
' Loudon's Highlanders in 1745-48; Fraser's Highlanders in 1757;
' Montgomery's Highlanders in 1757; Keith's Highlanders in 1759; The John Mackay.
' Gordons in 1759; Johnstone's Highlanders in 1760; Fraser's High-
' landers in 1775; Lord Macleod's in 1777; The Aberdeen Highlanders
' in 1777; Royal Emigrant Highlanders in 1777; The Argyll High-
' landers in 1778; The Macdonalds in 1778; The Athole Highlanders in
' 1778; The 2nd Battalion 42nd in 1780; The 2nd Battalion 78th in
' 1793; The 2nd Battalion 93rd in 1803. Some of these regiments were
' over 1000 strong. They served their country in Germany during the Seven
' Years' War, others in America and India, breaking the power of
' Hyder Ali when the Carnatic was overrun, and restoring the prestige of
' the British soldier in that country. It would be superfluous here to
' record the achievements of the line regiments, or to say aught of how
' gallantly they upheld the honour of Scotland. The prestige acquired by
' these incomparable soldiers still remains. The influence of the principle
' of nationality in our regiments has by them been proved to be of unmixed
' benefit. It led to emulation; it had no disintegrating effect. In the
' hour of trial, the appeal to remember their country and the reputation
' of the corps had an all-powerful response; but is it not the fact, that
' only the shadow of former days now remains in the shape of kilts and
' tartans? The substance is gone! Unless the policy so destructive of the
' substance be reversed very soon, a few short years will suffice to do away
' with the shadow itself, and then it will be seen what a blunder has been
' committed. No country can afford to despise the risks of war and invasion.
' While there are crofters in the Highlands there will always be the best
' raw material for soldiers, either by voluntary enlistment or by a mild
' conscription. What a burlesque did we see enacted a few years ago, noble-
' men and gentlemen connected with the Highlands meeting to frame a
' petition to the Queen not to permit the War Office to discard the kilt and
' the tartan. Might not Her Gracious Majesty indignantly have retorted,
' " Nobles and gentles, what have you done with the substance, when you
' are so anxious to preserve the shadow? Kilts and tartans will not defend
' the interests of our common country; the same men must adorn them in
' the future as in the past. The prayer of your petition is granted, in the
' hope that one and all of you will be able to produce the men when
' required; you have enjoyed the privileges of your high position, but you
' have neglected its duties, and abused rights given you for your own
' benefit, and the welfare of the commonwealth." Nor was this all that
' patriotic Highlanders had done for their country in danger. In addition
' to the above twenty-five regiments raised in the Highlands for permanent
' and limited service at home and abroad, within the same period, that
' is from 1760 to 1794, twenty-six regiments of Fencibles were raised in the
' Highlands, composed entirely of Highlanders, for service in Great Britain and
' Ireland. Caithness supplied two, Sutherland four, Ross-shire three,
' Inverness and the Isles six, Argyll and Dumbarton six, Perthshire three,
' the territory of the Gordons two. These regiments, averaging 1000
' strong, served from four to eight years in various parts of Britain and
' Ireland, evincing, wherever they were, the soldierly qualities inherent in
' the Highland race, creditable alike to the men themselves and their com-
manders, and to the country of their birth. It has been computed that the
' Highlands of Scotland in the fifty years 1760 to 1810 supplied 80,000
' men to the British army, men of stature, men of vigour and endurance;
' and yet sheepmen in the past and present tell us the Highlands were steeped
' in poverty, ever on the verge of famine; not so much oatmeal in Strath-

EDIN- ' naver in 1812 as would make a breakfast for one sheepman's dogs. Insult
BURGH. ' added to injury—the weapons of an advocate in a failing cause. We
EDINBURGH. ' admit that the Highlands, like other districts of the country, were visited
John Mackay. ' by seasons of scarcity such as 1814, still called the Black Year; 1838,
' called the year of the Big Snow; 1846, the year of the potato famine,
' but the inhabitants were no worse off than those of other districts. I
' found these words in a statistical account of Morayshire—"Famines or
' years of comparative scarcity, in spite of the natural fertility of the soil,
' were far from infrequent." Even as late as 1782 the province severely
' writhed under the scourge of scarcity. The plea of famines was merely
' the pretext to cloak foregone conclusions with regard to evictions. When
' we natives of the Highlands look upon the past and the present, need it
' surprise any one that we should adopt all and every constitutional means
' of reversing a policy so nefarious, and so destructive of the manhood of
' our country, carried out in so heartless and cruel a manner, and so injuri-
' ous, not only to those more intimately concerned, but to the high interests
' of the State. Where are now the stalwart men who not so long ago
' were the pride of Caledonia, and the boast of all true-hearted patriots?
' Is it not a sad and mournful reflection that, while those brave and gallant
' men were fighting the battles of their country in every quarter of the
' world, the happy homes in which they were born, the homesteads of
' their fathers for many centuries, were being burnt to the ground, and
' their parents and relatives mercilessly expelled from them—homesteads,
' however humble, that were associated in their minds with all that was
' dear to them in the traditions of many generations? Having referred to
' and described the system that produced such devoted and gallant men,
' permit me in a few words to give you a description of the social training
' they received in their humble abodes in the north. I cannot do better
' than quote to you the very words of a Sutherland lady written in 1828,
' a few years after the completion of the evictions in Sutherland, equally
' true of other districts in the Highlands. She states—"I have frequently
' of late heard strangers express their surprise at the marked intelligence
' of the people in this quarter, devoid of every degree of early cultiva-
' tion. To this it may be answered that the state of society was very
' different in the latter part of the last century from what it is now, pro-
' gressively retrograding as it has been for some years in this country.
' Before the commencement of this century, lords, lairds, and gentlemen of
' the county, not only interested themselves in the welfare and happiness
' of their clan and dependants, but they were always solicitous that their
' manners and intelligence should keep pace with their personal appearance.
' The fact was, the chief knew his affinity to the different branches of his
' clan, and it was deemed no inconsiderable part of duty in the higher
' classes of the community to elevate the minds as well as to assist in
' increasing the means of their humbler relatives and clansmen. I am
' aware that many unacquainted with the dear ties of such a system argue
' largely that the distinctions of rank appointed by God could not be
' maintained by such indiscriminate intercourse. Still the habits of that
' day never produced a contrary effect. The chiefs here, for many genera-
' tions, had been 'men fearing God and hating covetousness.' Iniquity
' was ashamed, and obliged to hide its face. A dishonourable action
' excluded the guilty person from the invaluable privilege enjoyed by his
' equals in the kind notice and approbation of their superiors. Grievances
' of any kind were minutely inquired into and redressed, and the humble
' orders of the community had a degree of external polish and a manly
' mildness of deportment in domestic life, that few of the present genera-
' tion have attained to, much as has been said of modern improvements."
' I can endorse every word of this from personal recollections, and could

' add many incidents of the intelligence of the old people without the
 ' adventitious aid of school education. I well recollect seeing some of
 ' the grand old men evicted from Strathnaver. They were very intelligent
 ' and highly religious men. I recollect them conducting prayer meetings.
 ' Those men, before the Gaelic version of the Bible came into use, trans- John Mackay.
 ' lated the English into Gaelic for the people from the English Bible, and
 ' other English books. Being the intelligent, law-abiding, God-fearing
 ' people they are proved to have been, is it not surprising that so terribly
 ' a revolutionary wave should have been made to fall upon them so
 ' suddenly? May we not ask, if it would not have been a wiser, a juster
 ' policy, from every point of view, to gradually educate them out of anti-
 ' quated habits that generally obtained at that period, and lead them into
 ' the new ways of progress that were making themselves felt in more
 ' favoured districts of the south? There were neither fords nor bridges
 ' nor any means of communication then in the north. The inhabitants of
 ' the Highlands were simply what their chiefs had made them. Had a
 ' generous and enlightened policy been adopted, there can be no doubt
 ' that, with their native intelligence, the wealth of stock they possessed,
 ' the example which might be given by practical agriculturists, and the
 ' willingness and obedience of the people to obey authority, a vast progres-
 ' would have been made—a change effected in a very few years that would
 ' have redounded to the credit of proprietors themselves, and incalculable
 ' benefit to the people and to the country; but so sudden was the revolu-
 ' tion, so terror-struck and disheartened were the people, that many years
 ' had passed before much attempt was made to fall into the new order of
 ' things even in favoured localities. No greater refinement of cruelty can
 ' be conceived than to thrust out of their inland homes to sea-shores men
 ' who had no previous training for fishing operations, without boats or the
 ' means of obtaining them, and when obtained there were no harbours
 ' provided for them, the consequence being the loss of many lives. The
 ' sufferings of these communities were very great. Yet, notwithstanding
 ' all this, such was the abstemiousness of the people, such the affection,
 ' parental and filial, that each helped the other, and endured in silence
 ' privations of no ordinary kind. It was after the evictions that the
 ' potato was brought into cultivation, which for thirty years enabled them
 ' to eke out an existence such as it was. Nevertheless, so strong and
 ' sturdy was the race evicted, that for many years they supported them-
 ' selves under every privation, their high-toned feelings induced them to
 ' assist one another, and for any of their friends or relations to accept parish
 ' relief was considered so great a disgrace that pauperism had not increased
 ' to any great extent. Twenty pounds a year on the average sufficed to
 ' maintain the poor of any parish in Sutherland; but on the introduction of
 ' the poor laws in 1846, pauperism has been on the increase, till £400 a
 ' year has been exceeded in several parishes in the county of Sutherland,
 ' showing a great deterioration, and a want of resources, calling loudly
 ' for a change of policy, and showing that the people are justified in asking
 ' and clamouring for it. The ancient tenantry are reduced to a dead
 ' level, with no encouragement to aspire. All tacksmen are strangers, who
 ' come into the county to make fortunes in sheep farming, and then retire,
 ' who have no sympathy with the people, who do all they possibly can to
 ' vilify them, in order to maintain an erroneous system for their own
 ' benefit. Born and reared amongst this people, fully conversant with
 ' their condition before and since the clearances, knowing their wants and
 ' requirements, appreciating the value of a brave and hardy peasantry to
 ' the country and the State, and that it is the duty of the State to protect
 ' the peasant as well as the peer—each in his own condition equally valu-
 ' able in his own sphere to the nation—that it is also the bounden duty of

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BURGH. ' the State to protect the weak against the strong, that laws made by
 interested law-makers cannot naturally be equal, hence, being found to
 be unequal, and proved to be much abused to the deterioration of the
 people, and the detriment of the country, we have the right to call upon
 EDINBURGH.
 John Mackay. ' the Government, through Her Majesty's Commissioners, to adopt measures
 ' to put an end to an egregious evil, in order that rancour and agitation
 ' shall cease upon justice being done to a portion of Her Majesty's subjects
 ' who have well deserved of their country, by their devotion to its prestige,
 ' their love of order, and their hitherto submissiveness to authority. I
 ' may be permitted to say that Highlanders up to a certain point are the
 ' most docile of men; but that point once passed, irrepressible anger may
 ' take the place of gentleness and docility. I entertain the belief that
 ' Highlanders would prefer that proprietors of their own accord might
 ' initiate the reforms required; but having been so scurvily treated in the
 ' past, they see no certainty of any substantial reform of their condition
 ' without the interference of Parliament. The demands are modest enough
 ' —general extension of their holdings, arable and pasture; fair rents;
 ' and compensation for improvements effected by themselves upon land and
 ' buildings. There is land enough in the Highlands and to spare, capable
 ' of cultivation, to support a larger population than there is now, if pro-
 ' perly dealt with and properly administered. Surely it is a disgrace and
 ' a stigma upon the administration of property in the Highlands to be said
 ' that the ryots of India are in a better position and condition than the
 ' majority of Highland crofters, descendants of men by whose fidelity
 ' many Highland estates have been preserved, and by whose devotion
 ' many wars have been brought to a successful issue for the country.
 ' And what has been their reward? Has any consideration been shown
 ' them? Has any gratitude been evinced? It need not be a matter of sur-
 'prise that Highlanders clamour for more land, seeing how they had been
 ' congested and huddled together to make way for sheep runs and large
 ' arable farms, and seeing that year after year wild animals and wild birds
 ' are preferred to themselves, that these receive and command the attention
 ' and protection of Parliament, while they themselves are left to the tender
 ' mercies of landlords, who seem to desire their extermination in the pre-
 ' ference they show for quadrupeds and bipeds for sport, than in brave
 ' men, whom, by the feudal law, proprietors were bound to preserve and
 ' protect in the interests of the State. If it is the duty of the Government
 ' of this country to frame regulations for the proper treatment of wild
 ' animals and birds upon land, and fish in the river and sea, surely it is
 ' its high duty, upon irrefragable proof of bad treatment of men, to take
 ' steps to cause maladministration of land, primarily belonging to the
 ' nation, to cease; and enact that occupiers of that land shall be treated
 ' in a way conducive to the interests of the nation, and that a sufficient
 ' portion of it shall be allotted as may be found necessary for the due
 ' subsistence of the occupiers, willing to pay fair rents for it, upon equit-
 ' able conditions, and able to make the best use of it, and not to be
 ' compelled involuntarily to emigrate from the country they love so well
 ' and defended so bravely, simply because modern proprietors, imitating
 ' the nefarious practices of the old Roman patricians, see themselves obliged,
 ' to maintain inflated incomes, to make desolation more desolate, after the
 ' Roman peasantry had been cut off in war, or sent to the colonies to
 ' inhabit them and defend them to the empire. The social history of
 ' Rome, republican and imperial, seems to be repeating itself in this country.
 ' The vast dimensions of the British empire, the vast extent of its com-
 ' merce, demand the most serious consideration from the statesmen of this
 ' country, be their politics what they may, be their social standing plebeian
 ' or patrician. In the first serious reverse of fortune in war to this country,

' the patrician influence, if not the first to suffer, will assuredly be the next. With a discontented tenantry all around them, their position will be a very unenviable one. With a sturdy agricultural population, balancing in proper proportions the urban and industrial population, a more healthy state of matters can be preserved, and the raw material of the best kind for the defence of the country can be more easily obtained. The Government of the country has interfered in various ways, and at various times with the regulation of factories, mines, and other industries, possibly the creation of their owners. Is land, not the creation of its possessors, a matter too sacred, not to be interfered with, when its administration is proved not to have been beneficial to the subject in all the interests concerned in it? And I here, in conclusion, avow my firm belief that great injustice, great oppression, have been practised in the Highlands, which loudly calls for reform and amendment, and that the sooner attention is given to the condition of those for whom this Commission of inquiry had been granted, the better it will be for the peace and the tranquillity of the country. I have here also the names of all the places cleared on Strathnaver, and the number of families who were evicted. It is not quite complete, because some could not be ascertained, and the people would not put down fictitious figures. Townships on eastern side.—Taobh Mor Mudale, two families; Altnaharra, three; Clibric, six; Rhilbalhaig and Rhichopraig, twelve; Coirre-Chiuran, four; Achool and Altanaba, nine; Altaoghard, Coirre-na-fearn, Ach-an-Eas, and Halmadary, nine; Baile-Mhuillin, one—families cleared for Marshall. Trudarsaig, sixteen; Dalmalard, two; Dal-Harrold, four; Rossal, eighteen; Achnanradh, two; Achaphris and Dalvina, three; Rhiloisg, five; Ioshlanaidh, four; Rhiphail, five; Rhilhigil, Upper and Lower, nine; Dunviden, six; Ach-an-Eilean, three; Skelpick, twelve; Rionnabhaidh, three; Ach-an-lochie, four; Ach-cil-nam-borgan, five—families cleared by and for Sellar. Total families, one hundred and forty-seven. Townships on western side—Bad-an-t-Sheabhaig and Taobhbeag Mudale, three; Cnocan dubh, three; Grumb-Mhor, six; Grumb-bheag, five; Dulhurich, three; Cean-na-coille, seven; Rhidhorach, Kedsary, and Rhichoire two; Syre, fifteen; Langdale, sixteen; Scale, nine; Newlands, five; Carnachaidh, ten; Ach-cheargraidh, four; Dalbhioigais, 4; Dalthorisgil and Apagil, five; Achnabourin, four—families cleared by and for Sellar. Total families one hundred and one.'

45890. Does that refer to the evictions on both sides of the river and in a succession of years?—Yes, and on the map I have put down the years in which the evictions were done. With your permission, I have also been requested to read a little statement here contradicting something that Sir Arnold Kemball said at Golspie, when he said the crofters did not pay any rent for hill pasture. At a meeting of crofters held at Farr on the 15th just, a statement was read in which Sir Arnold Kemball, in giving evidence before the Royal Commission at Golspie last week, denied that the crofters pay any rent for their hill pasture. The meeting heard this statement with astonishment, and in contradiction beg to state that over twenty-five years ago the Farr crofters petitioned Mr Loch, the Duke's then commissioner, for an addition to their hill pasture. The petition was favourably received, and Mr Douglas, sheep farmer, Clyth, was appointed valuator by the Duke. In accordance with his valuation, £66 was added to the crofters' rent and distributed over them at so much in the pound. The chairman and clerk were authorised to sign this statement on behalf of the meeting, and forward it, through Mr Mackay, Hereford, to the Commissioners.—*Farr, Bettyhill, 15th October 1883.*

45891. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You have been already examined?—I have.

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EDINBURGH. 45892. Therefore, it will not be necessary for the Commission to put many questions to you. You have taken a great interest in the state of the Highlands and the Highland people for a long time?—For many years.

John Mackay. 45893. And I suppose you may be considered to some extent as a representative man both for your countrymen at home and abroad?—Yes; I have a large correspondence with my fellow-countrymen in the colonies.

45894. Do you think the statements which you made at Golspie and have made here to-day represent the feelings of your countrymen at home and abroad?—Most certainly.

45895. You don't think you have stated anything that the great number of them, if brought together, would not homologate?—No, they coincide with every word I said. The sentiments I expressed are from letters I received from the colonies.

45896. I think it was stated somewhere that the Duke of Sutherland paid in rates and taxes more than the whole rent he got from the crofters?—Yes, Mr Purves made that statement.

45897. Let me put this case before you. Is it not a fact that the Duke of Sutherland has reduced the rent of almost the whole of the sheep farmers of Sutherland by 50 per cent?—Yes; I have heard that.

45898. And that extended over some five years?—I did not hear about five years.

45899. Supposing an arithmetical question were put, would it not be found that this reduction to those big farmers on the part of the Duke would come to a great deal more than the rates and taxes paid by the farmers?—Certainly.

45900. So that the taunt thrown out against the crofters by the person referred to has no real foundation in fact, as contrasted with the other tenants on the estate?—No; and he included the education rate, so as to make it appear worse.

45901. I suppose the big farmers don't require any education?—Well, that is the worst of it. They send their children away, and the money that ought to be spent in the country is spent elsewhere.

45902. You don't get the benefit of the grant for the children of such men?—No.

45903. With regard to your own name, is it a fact that in the county of Sutherland a very large proportion of the surnames is Mackay?—Yes. In Scotland there are four and twenty thousand Mackays and only nine thousand Sutherlands.

45904. Territorially the Mackays have lost their chiefs for a considerable period?—Yes, ever since I remember.

45905. But it is a fact that never was the clan so far united as it is at present?—Yes. I had a good occasion to test that in 1874, when, in conjunction with others, I was called upon to get the clansmen to subscribe for a testimonial to Charles Mackay, the poet, and I succeeded astonishingly. I think I handed over about £200.

45906. Are you firmly of the belief, you and others, that there is a better day coming for the Clan Mackay than there has been for many years?—I should like to see it.

45907. Do you believe you will see it?—I believe I will, but I regard the Duke of Sutherland as being as much my chief as Lord Reay. If my father was a Mackay, a Sutherland was my mother; and I daresay if the truth were known, I had a greater love for my mother than I had for my father.

45908. One of the ancient titles of the Sutherland family is the title of Lord Strathnaver?—Yes, that was acquired in 1630 when they inveigled Strathnaver from the first Lord Reay.

45909. There are not many men in Strathnaver now?—Plenty sheep.

45910. You heard it stated, I believe, on the part of the Duke of Sutherland's engineer,—Mr Greig, the superintendent of the reclamations—that there were some important projects in view by his Grace with regard to the amelioration of the people?—Yes, I heard so; and I heard other evidence in the statement submitted to you by Mr Purves that, with regard to the small crofts which the Duke of Sutherland had at Shiness, the crofters all left them. That is really a deliberate falsehood.

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John Mackay.

45911. *The Chairman.*—Excuse me. I cannot allow that language to be used here. I hope you will substitute other words?—I will.

45912. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You do not mean to impute deliberate falsehood to Mr Purves. You mean that he made a statement that is not the case?—That is what I mean.

45913. What you and others feel with regard to the crofters in Sutherland is that they would hail with approbation and acquiescence any steps taken by his Grace in the way of improving the condition of the crofters by adding to their arable lands or giving them increased hill grazings?—I would, and I have been trying for the last three or four years, in my own humble way, to impress upon his Grace the necessity for it.

45914. Can any one who has ever spoken to the Duke of Sutherland on the subject have any doubt as to his Grace's desire that the people on his estate should be happy and comfortable?—I believe that is what he wishes, but for some years hitherto he has not given that attention to the condition of the crofters that the proprietor of so large an estate is bound to do. He has left too much to the factors. I believe myself that the Duke of Sutherland is most benevolently inclined, but, being benevolently inclined, why does he not take any action? It was said, and it was hoped most sincerely, in 1872 and 1873, when he began those reclamations about Shiness, that he was going to take some of the congested population away and plant them at Shiness, but when they saw that those 2000 acres there were divided into 500 acre lots their hopes fell at once.

45915. It has been stated that in the early period, going back to 1810 and 1820, the condition of the people there was very poor and very miserable. That was contradicted by two old gentlemen, one of whom I see here before me, who recollect the circumstances. Did the people who supplanted these poor people thrive and live well afterwards?—Astonishingly. It has been said that Sellar alone, in two leases of thirty-eight years, left the county with £150,000, and he must have done so.

45916. *The Chairman.*—I think it would be wiser to enter into details of that sort as little as possible. Sums of money are things that can only be matter of report?—Well, after he left Sutherland he bought great estates.

45917. He may have borrowed money to buy them. None of us can know the pecuniary circumstances of our neighbours at present, much less of those who lived forty or fifty years ago?—That is true.

45918. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Is the feeling of hostility against the evictors, on the part of the descendants of those that were evicted, as active at this moment as it was at the time, so far as you are aware?—Yes, and more intense now than when I was a boy.

45919. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Do I understand you to deny the scarcity of 1812?—I never heard of 1812 particularly, but if there was such it was not peculiar to Sutherland. It touched the whole country, and Sutherland was not any worse off than the people in other counties.

45920. Were not the circumstances of other parts of the country very much the circumstances of Strathnaver? Was not the mode of farming very much the mode of farming in Strathnaver?—Very much. I have read the statistical accounts in the *Scottish Gazetteer* to ascertain what was the state of the population in other counties, and I find that in Morayshire the state of society was almost intolerable—much worse than in Sutherland.

EDINBURGH. I read again about Banffshire, Aberdeenshire, and Forfarshire, and really in Morayshire in 1782 they were in a more rude state than the population of Sutherland.

John Mackay. 45921. We will admit that. In 1782 famine prevailed over the whole northern counties?—Yes.

45922. And at that period the mode of agriculture in the high country of Morayshire and Easter Ross was very much the same as that which prevailed in Strathnaver?—As well as I can make out from the accounts I read in gazetteers, it was the same.

45923. But in the present day the system of farming in Morayshire and Ross-shire has been entirely changed; do you think there is any probability of famine occurring there again?—I don't think so.

45924. Do you not think, if the old system of Strathnaver were re-established, there would be a risk of famine?—I don't think so.

45925. Why not?—Because the people who suffered worst farmed too near down the river side, and mildews would be frequent and spoilt the crops. But in Strathnaver now you would find that the crofters with their present knowledge would cultivate the flanks, and leave the river side for grazing. They would be higher up, and protected from mildew, which only rises a certain distance above the water.

45926. The improved system of cultivation in Morayshire and Easter Ross has resulted in the removal of the old race of inhabitants entirely?—No doubt of it. They were driven to the hills.

45927. In fact, it has not been possible hitherto to create these improvements without almost changing the population?—Well, that was almost a matter of necessity. There was more labour given to the people, and the old race were sent half-way up the hill side.

45928. You mentioned the demands we have met with for fixity of tenure and fair rents; but you did not refer to the very general demand we met with on the west coast for Government advances to stock enlarged holdings. Are you prepared to recommend that crofters should receive such advances?—I don't think the Highlanders have come to such a pass as to ask the Government to help them.

45929. We met with that demand?—I know that. I am talking of Sutherland and part of Ross. I know that on the sea-coast the inhabitants are in a worse state than in the inland places. Take the parish of Rogart, which naturally was so sterile that it did not attract the eye of the sheep farmers, hundreds of the people were huddled upon it, but by their own industry there is as good agriculture to be seen in the parish of Rogart as you will see in Ross-shire on the large farms.

45930. Do I understand you to say that the demand for Government advances for stocking larger farms should not be acceded to?—I should not like to go that length, because it is possible if a change of policy were to take place—if the landlords were unwilling to help—the Government might give a certain amount of help, but not much.

45931. You think that the rent of the land should be fixed by valuation?—Well, that is the idea that has got hold of the people.

45932. But in your own mind?—I think something of the sort might be done.

45933. Would you place a limit on the amount of rent that should be fixed by valuation, and taken out of the region of free contract?—That would depend on the nature of the soil and the locality. If there was a croft near a town, it would be more valuable than a croft at a distance.

45934. But would you fix by valuation rents of £500 a year just as much as of £5 a year, or would you place a limit on the amount of rent that should be fixed by valuation?—I think if rents were to be fixed

by law, the large farms ought to be valued just the same as the small farms. I think that ought to be done.

EDIN-BURGH.

45935. Then on what ground would you fix them by valuation? —The present discontent.

EDINBURGH.

45936. But do you think the large farmer is not able to take care of himself? —He is very much better able to take care of himself than the small crofter is; and now when the Agricultural Holdings' Act has been obtained for Scotland I don't think the large farmer requires any further protection, because he makes his rent for himself by offering so much for a farm, and it is his own fault if he gives too much.

45937. Do you think a labourer does not require as much protection as a crofter? Do you think the wages of a labourer don't require to be settled as much by arbitration as the rent of the crofter? —I think not. The labourer is engaged or hired for the year. If he is dissatisfied he can take himself off at the end of that year.

45938. But has he not the same difficulty to move that the crofter has? —No; the crofter has his stock.

45939. That is a saleable article? —True, but the farm labourer has no interest at all in the soil. All the interest he has in doing his duty is to get the wages agreed upon, but the crofter may have improved his croft, and would be unwilling to leave it.

45940. In fact, if you give him anything like fixity of tenure, the rent must be fixed by valuation? —My own personal opinion is, give them compensation for improvements and they will secure fixity of tenure. I don't think it is possible that evictions—wilful evictions—will or can take place in the Highlands in the future. Public opinion is too strong.

45941. *Sheriff Nicolson.* —You have seen and are well acquainted with the land reclamations carried out by the Duke of Sutherland? —Yes, I have been to see them four or five times, and I did not give a very favourable impression of them to his Grace. I asked how much these were costing per acre. He told me. I asked him how much rent he expected to get for it. He told me. I said, 'My lord Duke, that will not be $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. upon the outlay.' What was his reply? The reply was this—'Oh, we in this country are not like you Englishmen, looking out for dividends.'

45942. Was not the scheme intended for the benefit of the inhabitants as well as of the estate? —I am not acquainted with the intentions.

45943. Was it not intended to let out the land in small farms? —I don't think so. If that was the primary intention, it was very soon abandoned; but I think the real intention was to provide winterings. The sheep men were complaining that they had not sufficient wintering for their sheep. The had previously to that raised his sheep rents very much, and when the Duke sheep farmers began to complain of the very high rents he took this means of giving them wintering at hand. Some were sending their sheep to Ross-shire to winter at very great expense; then it was thought he would get wintering for the sheep farmers at home, which would be very much better.

45944. But practically it has not turned out a success, I believe? —Practically and financially, it is a disaster.

45945. Was the system adopted a practical one? I mean, was it better to attempt to reclaim the land in the expensive way in which it was done than if it had been given to the inhabitants to reclaim in the way they would have done with their own exertions? —I believe if it had been trenched in the way I have seen Highland land reclaimed—trenching from 16 to 18 inches deep by the pick and the spade—it would have been done at a cheaper rate, a very much cheaper rate.

45946. And I suppose there is a good deal of land in your native

EDIN-
BURGH. district that is capable of being reclaimed in that way—in a less expensive way than has been done in these places?—There is not so much land now in the occupation of the crofters in the parish of Rogart that can be reclaimed. I believe they have reclaimed almost all that they can within their own reclamation bounds. Reclamation by crofters themselves, without any aid from Dunrobin, goes on, and has gone on in the parish of Rogart for the last twenty years, I may say, at the rate of between £200 and £300 a year, and that the crofters added to the value of the estate.

45947. And the results have been satisfactory?—The results have been satisfactory certainly, because I recollect some of that land as worthless, not producing 6d. per acre. They have drained it, and fenced it, and now it is producing excellent crops, especially turnips. There are as good turnips produced by the crofters of Rogart as by the large farmers in Ross-shire, and better.

45948. Is the climate of that country very different from that of the Isle of Skye?—I never was in the Isle of Skye, and can hardly say. I should say the Isle of Skye was moister and milder.

45949. But you are not able to give a practical opinion as to the value of Skye for agricultural purposes?—No. I never was there, but it is an island I should like to visit. It is an island for which I have the highest regard. Skyemen as soldiers are A1.

45950. *The Chairman.*—You have described the processes by which land has been recently gradually reclaimed by the labour of the small tenants, and rendered valuable, upon the Sutherland estates; is that under a lease?—No.

45951. It is a life tenure?—All tenants at will.

45952. But it is under an estate regulation that during the lifetime of the persons so improving the rent will probably not be raised?—I have no knowledge of rent being raised during a lifetime, but on the son succeeding the father there have been great rises—as much as from £4, 15s. 8d. to £10 all at once.

45953. If the life of the improver is prolonged, and if he is sitting at a nominal rent, he may be reimbursed for his outlay of labour and capital, but if his lifetime is short his successor suffers?—Yes, and loses the value of the industry of his father. I have known men in Rogart work with such assiduity, and taking little care of themselves—working in wet and so on—that they shortened their days very much. My own father was an instance of that. He began those improvements in Rogart, I believe, and I have now his lot, and I am going on the same as my father did, reclaiming an acre every year.

45954. Would you consider it a great improvement on the existing system there that a lease should be substituted for a life?—I don't think so. I made this proposition to the Duke of Sutherland—'If you will give me my father's place I will spend £1500 upon it, if you will give me a long lease.' He said, 'What do you mean by a long lease?' 'Thirty-eight years,' I said. 'I cannot give you that,' he said. I said, 'Very well, I will not spend the £1500.'

45955. But what I want is your opinion as to what ought to be substituted for the present system. You say that when a life is short the improvement and outlay are lost, or partially lost, to the family; have you got any distinct proposal for the calculation of the value of improvements under such a system?—I don't think that leases would benefit the people of Sutherland a whit. Although their rents may be raised, according to what was stated, by a death-rate, I don't think there was really any great oppression about it. Under the Duke of Sutherland the crofters are not,

except perhaps in some circumstances, too highly rented. The average rent of the two hundred crofters of Rogart is £5, 8s. 6d. That is the average. Some pay £14. On the average they have about seven and a half acres, with hill ground, and every croft in Rogart has 60 acres of arable and hill pasture. The two hundred crofters occupy 12,000 acres, which gives 60 acres to each crofter. The most of that is hill ground, which is not very valuable.

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John Mackay

45956. Then under the sway of the Sutherland family you don't think the substitution of regular leases and estimates of the value of improvements would be a good change from the present system?—I don't think so. In saying so, I simply express my own opinion and the opinion of the people. Better let them be as they are without leases than with.

45957. And without legal claims to revaluation and compensation for improvements?—No, no; I would have compensation for improvements. That, I think, is the greatest grievance.

45958. Then what definite project have you for ascertaining the value of unexhausted improvements on such a property?—I would say that, supposing they are as they are without leases, if at the end of a father's life the son succeeded, regular returns of improvements every year should be kept, and then it would be seen whether the tenant had received a return for the improvements he had made during his occupancy. That is to say, supposing there were twenty-one years, divided into three parts of seven years each, I should say the improvements made during the first seven years might be considered as not entitled to any compensation. On the improvements made in the second period of seven years, I think the occupant, if he left at the end of twenty-one years, ought to have one-third of the cost, and then for the improvements made in the third period he ought to get two-thirds of the value of the improvements.

45959. Would you include in the value of the improvements the value of his labour expended in making the improvements, or the value of the improvements in so far as they increased the letting value of the land?—Quite so.

45960. That is your view of it?—Yes.

45961. And not a *cumulo* calculation, of all that the man had expended?—No.

45962. But an estimate of the increased letting value of the land?—Quite so.

45963. *Professor Mackinnon*.—I presume the statements in your paper, and what you have said since, we may quite regard as the opinion of the people of Sutherland at home and away from home?—Entirely.

45964. That is, the great mass of the people, the native population?—Yes.

45965. You gave us a description of the old life in Sutherland, I have no doubt perfectly accurate for that region?—Perfectly accurate, and I have a perfect recollection of it myself. A more quiet, more submissive, more law-abiding people there were not from Land's End to John o' Groat's. There were no policemen in the county in my boyhood, and they were not required. There was not a lock upon a house, and it was not required. Clothes put out to bleach were as sure as possible to be found in the morning.

45966. A great many things have happened since that time, and I am afraid for good or for evil we cannot restore that condition of life?—The people morally are the same now as then, and what they were fashioned into in the days of old they can be fashioned into in the time to come.

45967. What is the present population of the county?—Twenty-three thousand.

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45968. Have you any idea how many of that population are of the class called small crofters?—I should say 20,000.

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45969. And upon the west and north shores, and also on the east side, these holdings, with very few exceptions, are probably under £4 or £5? John Mackay.—The average rental in the parish of Farr is £2, 6s.; Tongue, £3, 10s.; Durness, £2, 2s. 6d.; and before I went to see them I thought they must be well off paying so small a rent, but when I beheld the miserable plots of land on which they were perched, I said it would be much better for the Duke of Sutherland to get the "Great Eastern," and take those people off and send them to America.

45970. Can you give me a rough idea, all over the county, of the number of large farms?—I could hardly do that just now.

45971. They will be very few?—Very few. There are only three large farms in the parish of Rogart, and they are very extensive.

45972. And between the small croft of £2, £3, and £4 and the great big farm of £600 and upwards, there is really nobody in the county, if you deduct the people in the villages and the class of medical men and clergymen?—No.

45973. And I suppose you feel that to be the great evil socially of the whole county of Sutherland?—Certainly; and not only socially, but I look at it from a higher point of view—I look at it nationally.

45974. Now, do you see anything in the nature of things why that state of matters should not be remedied, as yourself and the people of Sutherland at home and abroad would wish to see it done?—I see nothing to prevent it. The only difficulty I see is that leases cannot be broken without compensation; but if a desire were manifested that such a thing should be done and if a real attempt were made to reverse the policy of the past, we would all hail it with the greatest delight; and not only so, but we would contribute to help the people on. I, for one, would, and all my brothers would.

45975. The policy of the future would be to give them the land in larger holdings, graduated up?—Just so. The people of Sutherland are in a most deplorable condition—all on the same level. The wonder is that they are so submissive and orderly. They govern themselves. They have no governors. They have the advice of their ministers certainly.

45976. Do you think, in past times, say seventy years ago, when there were tacksmen, middlemen, and crofters, there was this wide gap between the small tenant and the big farm?—Oh, dear no. There was an excellent order of society before this sheep farming mania began. There was the chief, and he was always at home. He was surrounded by members of his family, chieftains and tacksmen, and these were men of knowledge and intelligence. Many of them had been in the army, and many of them even had been in the Dutch army, and had returned with a great deal of knowledge of the world.

45977. Suppose a year of very great scarcity were to come, with the state of affairs that we have now—such a year of scarcity as 1816, for example—which state of society, the present or the past, would be able to stand it best in Sutherland?—If such a year were to happen now the effect would be simply deplorable.

45978. It would strike a far greater portion of the people?—Certainly, only there is this difference now, that there is better communication, and assistance from without would come; but supposing there was no communication now in Sutherland, or that the communication was the same as at the beginning of the century, I believe half the population would be starved out. They had great resources in the past. They had immense flocks of cattle, horses, sheep, and goats. They kept as many sheep as provided them with food and clothing.

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45979. Supposing a traveller, like Pennant in the end of last century, found a considerable number of people more or less in a starving condition, may it not be also true that there is a greater percentage of the population in the county at the present moment in a state of actual poverty than there was then?—The poor rates show that; and not only so, but John Mackay, the people now are not so kindly disposed towards each other as they were in the past.

45980. But there was at that time a greater number of people relatively to the total population that had means than there is now?—Yes.

45981. And you would like that state of matters restored as far as possible?—Yes, in a graduated state. Why, it is the misfortune of the Duke of Sutherland that he has not a gentleman of his own blood surrounding him in Sutherland. All are strangers,—a serious matter to the county.

45982. There was a matter mentioned by a witness, that in Strathnaver the amount of cultivated land within that strath at no time exceeded 600 acres; can you tell me about the actual population? What evidence is there about the population of the glen?—The population of Strathnaver was always reckoned at about 2000; and for the oldest of those Fencible regiments I mentioned, it could turn out 270 men at any time—the finest men in Sutherland, and noted to be so.

45983. I notice, in a letter by the minister of Farr at the time to Mr Loch, that there were over 200 families to be removed from the west side of the glen. That statement was unchallenged by Mr Loch, and I suppose we may regard it as quite true?—I should say so. The returns I gave would show 240, but you will find the names of places there where the people were so honest that they would not put any fictitious numbers down. So if you take the names of places without any number of families attached, and add a number for each township, you will find there were in Strathnaver, from one end of it to the other, 300 families.

45984. From all the evidence that is available now, I suppose that statement may be regarded as pretty much about the truth?—As near the truth as can be ascertained now.

45985. Do you see anything in the nature of things why, without a very great amount of expenditure, or at all events with an expenditure that might be recouped, there should not be at least more than one-half that number there again?—I see no reason why that should not be, and I see a reason that it should be so, and that some expenditure should not be grudged so as to retrieve the past. If the natives of Sutherland who supported the dignity of the house of Sutherland were so cavalierly treated in the past, surely the Duke of Sutherland ought now to make amends for it.

45986. Do you think that such an undertaking would entail upon the noble Duke a loss as great as the reclamations that have been carried out?—Oh, dear no!—not half the money.

45987. And Sutherland people all over the world would hail it with great joy?—Not only hail it with great joy, but would assist.

45988. You mentioned a peculiar feature of the old life,—that the people were very intelligent, though in our modern sense they were not educated. There was a rather remarkable instance of that in the case of your own county bard, who could not read?—He could not read.

45989. I suppose you know his works well?—Yes.

45990. Of course the man was a man of very great talent, but his poems struck me as containing a very great amount of information with regard to the current politics of the day.—That is so.

45991. That could not be the case now with a man who could not read?

EDIN-BURGH. —No, but such was then the feeling with the chiefs and tacksmen—their intercourse was so familiar that they educated one another.

EDINBURGH. 45992. I must say the favourite bard of my own country, M'Intyre, was fully as well informed, and he could not read either?—The only secular bard of the time of whom we have any knowledge as educated was John Mackay. Alexander Macdonald.

JOHN MUNRO MACKENZIE, Proprietor, Calgarry, Tobermory, and Chamberlain of Lewis from May 1848 till May 1854 (64)—examined.

John Munro Mackenzie. 45993. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement to read to us?—Yes.

‘Several references having been made to my name by crofters and debt-gates in the Lewis when giving evidence before you, tending to mislead and put me in a false position, may I be allowed to lay before you the following observations:—1. John Maciver, Breascalete, aged 56, said—“That they had four chamberlains since Sir James Matheson came to the estate, and the second, John Mackenzie, was taking from them their cattle for rent, and giving them £1 and £2 for what was worth now £7 and £8.” Maciver, at the time I was in Lewis, was a young man, and not in possession of land, so that he must have been talking from hearsay, not from his own experience. During the years 1848–49–50 and 51, the price of Lewis cattle was very low. Very few cattle dealers or drovers came to the island to purchase cattle, therefore the people, being unable either to turn their cattle stock into money, or in many cases to support them during the following winter, the proprietor had to take them at a valuation in payment of rent and arrears. If, however, they succeeded in getting a better offer, the cattle were returned upon the payment of the money for rent. The cattle were taken for the proprietor. I never had any transactions in cattle on my own account, and I employed another person to value them. The cattle were generally sent to southern markets, and after paying expenses they seldom realised the amount credited to the tenants for them. Prices now are more than double what they were in 1849–50. I had no wish to take their cattle, as it entailed much greater trouble than cash payments, but when so few dealers came to the island it became a necessity. 2. Malcolm M'Lean, Swanabost, said—“When Sir James Matheson got the estate—a kind-hearted gentleman he was—he sent a number of men to reclaim a great part of land in these parts. It was in the time of Mr Munro Mackenzie's factorship, one of the farms made was taken off the inland portion of their township, their rent was raised, and crofters were settled all round them, so that now they were enclosed in a fank.” I have to explain that the farm of Swanabost was at one time let to a tacksman, and that there was a good two-storied slated house on it, which I occupied when I went to Ness. When dividing the farms into allotments, I reserved 40 acres to be let with this house, which was never in the possession of crofters except two years when not let. They grazed their cattle on it without paying rent. I let the remaining portion to forty-one tenants in crofts, averaging over five acres, at an average rent of 12s. per annum, with pasture on the macher along the sea-shore, and on the moorland beyond the ring fence. The land is of the best quality, could be ploughed from end to end, and all cultivated, so that I think this man had no great cause of grievance. 3. Murdoch Mackay, 57, weaver, Lionel, said—“That thirty-five years ago there were twenty families in the township, now there were sixty-six. They had been deprived of hill pasture by Chamberlains Mackenzie and Munro, which was given to other townships,

' and now Lionel had only a piece about 300 yards in breadth." I find, on referring to my diary, that on 22d Feb. 1851, I let the old arable land of Lionel, containing 124 acres, to thirty-six tenants at £70 in 3½ acre lots, at less than an average of £2 each. I also at same time let 47 acres of waste land, which was being trenched and enclosed by the proprietor, to eleven tenants, making forty-seven in all. Subdivision must have gone on since to increase the number to sixty-six. I am not aware of having taken any hill pasture from this township. The tenants of the old land had the pasture of the macher, along with the moor, for £2 of rent, which is not excessive, though I must admit that Lionel is the highest rented place in Ness, except Skeggersta, but they are both good fishing ports, and the land of Lionel is good, every yard of it can be cultivated. The allotments in the other townships of Ness, as let by me in 1851, are the largest and cheapest in the Lewis, being an average of 7 acres, at 10s. per acre rent, viz. :—

		Average.	Average.
		7½ Acres	Rent £3 10
12	allotments in North Dale,		
24	" Cross	4 "	2 5
41	" Swanabost,	5 "	3 12
30	" Habost,	4¾ "	2 19
36	" Lionel,	3½ "	2 0
10	" Callieoe,	5¼ "	2 15
15	" Fivepenny Ness,	8 "	3 5
15	" Knockard,	8 "	3 13
24	" Eropie,	7½ "	3 15
12	" Skeggersta,	2½ "	3 5

' Skeggersta has the advantage of a good fishing port and a large extent of moor pasture. 4. Murdoch Mackenzie, Skeggersta, said—" Though they were 7 miles from the march of Galson, they had to pay for its up keep. That was done in Mackenzie's time." The Galson march dyke, also referred to by other delegates, was not built till after I left, so there must be a mis-take of date. Skeggersta must have 7 miles extent of moor if it marches with Galson. 5. Donald Maciver, 50, crofter and blacksmith, Cross of Ness, said—" The people were still suffering from the oppression and high-handedness of the two factors Mackenzie and Munro. It would have been well for the island of Lewis if the present factor, Mr Mackay, had been appointed when Munro and Mackenzie were elected. He had seen Mr Mackay do what neither of his predecessors did, and that was to wipe off arrears which poor people could not pay." During my factorship it was a most trying time for the poor people of Lewis from 1846 to 1852. Potato disease, bad harvests, low price of cattle, and poor fishing, proved a bad combination. When I took charge in May 1848, I found the people had been supplied with meal by the proprietor, for which they did some work; but there being no regular settlement, most of the people were found to be largely in debt to the estate. I at once altered the system, giving them piece-work, which was measured and paid for each month, less the meal they had got during the month. This change was a most unpopular one. An old man said to me one day—" I have seen six factors on the estate, and you are the first countryman. May I ask you a favour, which is to abolish this piece-work, and put us back again to the day's wages, as we are wasting our constitutions with the pick to make a living." On account of the destitution prevailing, the collection of rents had been neglected; but seeing that work at ordinary rates was supplied, I was very strict in the collection of rents, and, after six years, left not much more than a half a year's rent in arrear, the only exception I made

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EDINBURGH.

John Munro
Mackenzie.

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EDINBURGH.

John Munro
Mackenzie.

' was in the case of widows, but they in general paid as well as men. I rarely wiped off arrears of rent, and would not feel justified in doing so without consulting the proprietor. The township of Knockard in Ness, being very much in arrear, I asked an old man the cause. He told me "that when the estate was bought by Sir James, many of the crofters had been much in arrear, those who had paid in full finding themselves on starting anew on the same footing with those who had not paid, resolved that in the future they would reserve their money, as they looked on their former payments as so much lost." Another man who stood by, said—"I wish your predecessor had been as hard in pressing for payment of rent as you are. If he had I would not have been in arrear. I came here with the rent in my pocket, but when I saw others getting past so easily I took it home again, and soon after my house was burnt, and my money perished with it." The Lewis estate is so moderately rented that there is seldom any excuse for arrears, and when the rent is collected regularly the payments come more easily to the people, who have to exert themselves to earn or save as much as pays the rent. A regular collection of rent, I hold, cannot be looked upon as "oppressive or high-handed." Personally, I was at all times on the most friendly footing with the tenantry, except perhaps with some of the young people, who wished to divide their parents' crofts and build houses for themselves. During the year 1849-50 and 51 all the crofters' land was surveyed, enclosed, and re-allotted. I personally went over every croft in the island, accompanied by a man of skill, heard what the people had to say as to the way the land had been divided, rental, &c. In many cases the mode of division was altered to meet their views; in some cases the rental was reduced, and others left the same; but generally there was an increase of rent of 10 to 12 per cent., which I did not think too much, considering the altered circumstances of the estate brought about by the making of roads, regular steam communication, fencing, and other improvements. I granted verbal leases to each township, so far as the enclosed land was concerned, for a period of fifteen years, and a written lease was to be granted to each tenant on his fulfilling the terms required by the estate regulations, viz., to pay up all arrears of rent, to build a suitable house, with division between himself and cattle, &c. These leases were not much asked for by the tenants, as they were slow in doing their part. As an instance, one man who was a "merchant," and then pretty well off, was building a house, and draining his land with rather shallow drains. I told him if he would build the walls of his house with lime, put slates for roofing in place of thatch, and make the drains $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep, I would give him a letter promising him two-thirds of the value at the end of the lease, if he was removed from his holding. I met him twenty years after on board a steamer, when he told me how often he had regretted not accepting my offer, as he had got nothing for his improvements at the end of his lease. Some of the people built better houses, with windows, chimneys, and divisions between them and their cattle, as provided by the estate regulations, on which they were to be granted leases; they got assistance in the shape of lime and other material, and an allowance of meal, while they were employed building, from the Destitution Committee, but almost in every case these houses were soon changed to the old style —divisions pulled down, windows blocked up, and chimneys put out of use. One man, in particular, over whom I had obtained some influence, I got to build a house according to a plan I had given him, with a 'but-
au-ben,' and mid room windows and chimneys, with byre behind. I was so pleased with this house that I asked Sir James Matheson one day to come with me to see it, as a pattern of crofters' house for the Lewis.

' We drove to the house, a distance of 12 miles. Sir James was surprised and delighted with the house to see it so well built by a crofter. He wished the occupants much happiness in their new abode, and he hoped many of the neighbours would follow his example. We thought we had made a beginning at last. Three months after, on my next visit to this township, what was my disappointment on going to this house to find the front door and windows blocked up, no smoke coming from the chimneys, but issuing through the thatch. I asked the occupant what was the meaning of all these changes. He replied that he was in fear about his cattle at night, that they might get loose and hurt one another, that they were cold without seeing the fire, and that he had made a communication between the byre and the room where they lived. I asked him why he had the fire in the middle of the house, and did not use the chimneys. He said he wanted to make soot straw for his potatoes, &c. I told him I did not believe in all these excuses, that there must be something else which he must explain. At last he acknowledged it was the ill-will and ill talk of his neighbours; he could not stand it—even his own father was among the worst of these people. Fearing they would have to build such houses as he did, they got him prevailed upon to go back and live in his byre. I may relate another incident among thousands of the bad influence of idle neighbours used against the industriously disposed. Going along near the Port of Ness one winter day, I saw the unusual sight of a man at work in his croft with his pick and spade. He could not go to sea on account of the weather, so he occupied his time trenching his lot. I had a talk with him, and remarked to the usual crowd which followed me, how much more profitably this man was engaged than going idle, as they all were when they could not get to sea. I told the ground officer to give this man a boll of meal from the proprietor's store, in token of approval of his conduct. At my next quarterly visit to that part I went to this man's croft, and was surprised to see that nothing had been done since my former visit. I asked the ground officer the cause of the man stopping his work. He replied—' It was that boll of meal; he has not done a day's work since he got it.' His neighbours gathered round him, and taunted him for working for the proprietor, and asked would the factor have given the meal had he not some selfish reason for it? I state these facts that came under my notice, as I could many more, to show the influence of bad example and the jealousy of those who, idle themselves, dislike to see the industrious more prosperous. Much of the backwardness of the Lewis people is caused by there being so little difference of class or position. Out of the town of Stornoway the people are all on the same dead level, and no improvement can be gained by the example of superiors. Till the beginning of this century, the greater part of the Lewis was in the hands of tacksmen or middlemen, who got in some cases from their sub-tenants in money, produce, and labour what nearly paid their rents. There were the Macivers of the parish of Stornoway, the Morisons and Murrays of Barvas, the M'Aulays of Uig, and the M'Leods of Lochs. When Mr Steuart Mackenzie married the Hon. Lady Hood, daughter of Lord Seaforth, and took the management of the estate into his own hands, he did away with the middlemen, and let the land direct to the crofters. This, no doubt, was a step in the right direction, but it had its disadvantages, as the example of a good middleman, who looked after his people, and who was industrious in farming and attentive in stock breeding, was beneficial to the people, though in some cases they may have been petty tyrants. The destitution continuing in 1850-51, and many of the people becoming so much reduced in circumstances (no fewer than 12,829 souls receiving supplies of meal from

EDINBURGH.

EDINBURGH.

John Munro
Mackenzie.

EDIN-BURGH. ' the Destitution Committee in May 1850), and the proprietor, seeing that
 his large expenditure was in no way remunerative, emigration was looked
 to as the only means for providing for able-bodied people who had no
 means of support, having exhausted all their stock, and who were unable
 to live should they get the land rent free. The proprietor, after full con-
 sideration of all the circumstances, offered to pay the passage of all
 destitute people, not only to Quebec, but to whatever township in Upper
 or Lower Canada they might wish to settle in, to forego the arrears of
 rent, meal, &c. If they could not otherwise dispose of their stock, he
 agreed to pay them the fair value thereof, and in addition to give cloth-
 ing to such as required it. During 1851-52 and 55, on the above terms,
 1772 emigrated, the greater number to Upper Canada, some to the
 eastern townships of Lower Canada, where some people from Lewis had
 gone many years before. The people who went to Upper Canada suc-
 ceeded remarkably well, and wrote to their friends telling how well they
 were getting on, and wishing them to follow. Those who settled in
 Sherbrook, in Lower Canada, did not get on quite so well. The Govern-
 ment emigration agent at Quebec advised against their going there. He
 said that Highlanders, who, on their arrival, congregated together,
 remained in the same state, while those who were dispersed among other
 people succeeded best. The only man I may say I forced to go to
 America was a sheep stealer, who never did any work for his own or his
 family's support. Two years after he went I was much relieved by his
 father coming to me with a letter from him in which he said—"Tell the
 factor how much obliged I am to him for sending me to America, as I
 can now make 5s. a day, support my family in comfort, and am able to
 look every man in the face." I have often heard of these people from
 friends and others who have visited Canada, and their reports are most
 favourable. During my factorships two farms were cleared of sheep and
 converted into deer forest. No crofters were then disturbed to make way
 for the deer. From several townships which were not considered suitable
 for crofters, who were greatly in arrear of rent, and did not accept the
 offer to emigrate, the people were removed to vacant crofts in other
 townships which had been occupied by the people who went to America,
 and on reclaimed land. They were in no case crowded on any township
 where there was no room for them. There was no demand for more land
 (except in the parish of Lochs) but could be supplied; no applications
 were made that the vacant crofts should be added to the others. In some
 cases where 10 acre crofts had been given to well-to-do people in the
 course of a year or two the occupants gave up the half of them; and
 when I wished them to retain them for a few years longer to make a
 fair trial, they replied that they had not the means of stocking and work-
 ing them, or of paying the rent. I may also state that all tenants on
 the estate paying from £20 to £40 rent came to ruin in these years, as
 they did not work with their own hands, and had not the means of paying
 or feeding servants. In my opinion, there are few parts of the Highlands
 or Islands where a crofter, even with 10 acres, can pay his way from the
 produce of his croft. Club farms may do with a sparse population, but
 an ordinary crofter, without some other occupation, such as a trade,
 labour for which he receives day's wages, or fishing, cannot make both
 ends meet. When I refer to a crofter being a fisherman, I do not
 advocate such a combination except to a limited extent. In the parish
 of Lochs, where the crofts are the smallest, the people are the best fisher-
 men and the most regular payers of rent. They own many large boats,
 with which they go to fish at Wick and the east coast fishing. I believe
 our east coast fishermen were never so successful as they have been since

' they gave up the holding of land and took entirely to the fishing. They
 ' have full occupation all the year round, as will be seen from a state-
 ' ment, which I beg to hand to the Commissioners, got from Mr John
 ' Duthie, Rosehearty, who comes to fish at the island of Coll every winter
 ' and carries away a cargo of dried fish. If a fisherman has land it should
 ' be a small extent, as it otherwise must be ill cultivated, and left to the
 ' women to do, as is the case at Ness in Lewis. This land, which is the
 ' best in the island, or any of the islands, is not cultivated over 3 inches
 ' deep, though it is capable of cultivation to the depth of 12 inches.
 ' Another great disadvantage under which the Lewis cod and ling fishing
 ' labours is the truck system. If the fish was taken from the fishermen
 ' as it is caught, and paid for in cash monthly, in place of six and nine
 ' months after, they could pay in cash for their supplies, which would
 ' make the people more provident and stimulate them to greater exertion,
 ' and the fish would better be cured. More safe harbours would be of the
 ' greatest advantage; two at least should be constructed between Ness and
 ' Loch Roag. It has been said that the land improved in the Lewis has
 ' been ill-selected. The late Mr Smith of Deanston, under whose direc-
 ' tion the improvements were commenced, said he had fixed on the worst
 ' places, to show that if these could be improved, there might be no doubt
 ' as to the improvement of other parts. I regret to say that his expecta-
 ' tions have not been realised. The land afterwards improved was in
 ' connection with the crofts and farms already let, and where land could
 ' be got suitable for the occupation of the people during the destitution.
 ' Sir James Matheson supported and contributed to seventeen schools in
 ' the island, many of which he built with teachers' houses prior to 1854.
 ' Monthly returns of attendance were sent to my office, and parents who
 ' did not keep their children at school were dealt with, but in many cases
 ' to no avail, as they often told me they did not want to give their
 ' children wings to leave them. When I left Lewis in 1854 the people
 ' were comparatively prosperous, and for many years afterwards there were
 ' better crops, better price for cattle, and the herring fishing had been
 ' fully established at Stornoway and other stations along the east coast of
 ' the island. All the people who had a right to land were settled on
 ' crofts well-defined, which they were improving, and it is my *decided*
 ' opinion, which I cannot too strongly express, that if subletting and
 ' divisions of crofts had been strictly prohibited and enforced, the popula-
 ' tion would not have increased as it has done for the last thirty years, and
 ' which large increase of over 7000 is very much the cause of the present
 ' difficulties. The population of the island in 1854, after deducting
 ' emigrants, I calculate to have been (including natural increase from 1851
 ' to 1854)—

Census 1851 (and three years' increase, 771),	18,693
Census 1881,	25,487

Increase since 1854,	6,794
Less emigrated in 1862,	459

6,335

Add absent militia men when census was taken in 1881,	400
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6,735

Average increase from 1881 to 1883,	480
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7,215

Estimated increase from 1854 to 1883,	7,215
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Or 38 per cent. in 29 years.

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John Munro
Mackenzie.

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John Munro
Mackenzie.

'The style of living has quite altered in the Highlands during this century, as in other parts of the country. A Highland crofter will on an average spend £10 to £30 per annum on the purchase of articles imported into the country, on which his father and grandfather would not have spent £5. Tea, sugar, and wheaten bread were in their time unknown. Clothes and shoes were home-made—thus was little or nothing spent on any luxury, such as tobacco and spirits, the latter being a home production. Within my own recollection there was but one small steamer, which plied once a fortnight between Glasgow and Portree, and none to Lewis or the other islands. Now there are three large steamers loaded with goods weekly to Portree and Stornoway, and three more to the other Hebrides, ministering to the comforts of the people who now live so much more expensively than their forefathers. In most cases, however, these steamers return to the south almost empty, except during the herring fishing season, which lasts but for a few months, and then nine-tenths of the herrings are fished by strangers. It is generally a bad state of matters when the imports of any country so excessively exceed its exports, as is at present the case in the Highlands; and the question may be asked how these imports are to be paid for as they are not replaced or repaid by the natural produce of the country? To a small extent they are met by an export of fish, eggs, cattle, sheep, and wool, and largely by the people going at certain seasons of the year to the south country and east coast fishings, returning to their homes with the wages they have earned. A large amount is being yearly spent in the Highlands by landed proprietors in the improvement of their estates, in many cases exceeding their rental. I may say in my own individual case I have spent on my property, in road-making, fencing, draining, planting, and building, &c., an amount greater than my rental; and I know many of my neighbours who have done the same, but such expenditure must be reduced, and in some cases come to an end, as it is found not to give a fair return for the money spent. The price of Highland wool is now very low, and is almost unsaleable, which makes a great difference to the sheep farmer, who formerly looked to the wool for paying his rent. This, with the very high price paid for stock by valuation on the entry of a new tenant to a farm, makes sheep farms very difficult to let, and in many cases causes the land to be turned into deer forests. In the evidence given before you in Skye as in other places, wrong dates and wrong names of people were often given. For instance Hugh M'Askill, Talisker, was said to have made the clearances at Talisker and Rhudunan forty years ago. A number of the people of Rhudunan were removed in the beginning of the present century by Kenneth M'Askill, tacksman of Rhudunan, who accompanied the people to North Carolina, and remained there with them for three or four years till he saw them comfortably settled. A number of the people were removed from Talisker by a Mr M'Lean. Hugh M'Askill, Talisker, ruined himself very much by giving meal on credit to the people during the years of destitution 1846 to 1849, and for a large portion of which he was never repaid. This he told me himself, and yet these people say without any regret that "he went to the dogs;" but I do not believe they made use of these words, as there is no such expression in the Gaelic language, in which the evidence was given. In the evidence you have had brought before you, it has often been said, and I believe in many cases most unjustly, that the factors had much to do with the impoverishment of the people, and this for their own selfish ends; while in truth, as a general rule, they have done everything in their power to relieve them, and to act justly between proprietor and tenant. During

' the terrible time of destitution through which the Lewis passed, the greatest anxiety and labour devolved on the factor, and even now, after all the years that have elapsed, the memory of such a time is very sad. Nothing too much can be said for the kindness of Sir James Matheson to his people, and his constant interest in and anxiety for their good; and this the majority of the crofters admit to-day. While I was in Lewis, Sir James received from me weekly a diary of all my transactions as his representative, and when he was absent he had in addition a weekly letter telling all that it was proposed to do and all that was done, and to these he regularly replied, showing a full knowledge of all details and the supremest interest in them, so that everything that was done during my term of office was done with his full knowledge and entire approval.'

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EDINBURGH.
John Munro
Mackenzie.

45994. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—I think you remarked that, in your time in the Lewis, crofters who held ten acres of land found they were incapable of keeping that quantity of land occupied?—Yes, and after having it for two years they gave up the half of it.

45995. What do you think a suitably sized croft in the Lewis?—Well, a man without having a horse, and to work with spade labour, could not possibly work more than ten acres, and it would be very hard work.

45996. But even with ten acres he would require horse work?—He would require assistance. Two crofters in some parts joining keep a horse each, and between them they would work a ten acre lot each.

45997. What was the reason this crofter gave up his ten acre croft; was it because he had not a horse?—He had a horse. He had two reasons. He said first he could not work the ten acres and stock the ten acres, and he could not pay for the ten acres.

45998. Was he better off when he had five acres?—I believe he was, because he was not industrious.

45999. What would you recommend for the Lewis now-a-days—what size of croft?—Near the fishing stations such as Ness,—and I strongly recommend that some fishing ports should be made,—one at Shabost and perhaps, one at Galston, so that they could get to sea, because very often they cannot get to sea,—I would recommend that near these stations they should only have potato land, and that a large proportion of the people there should follow the fishing altogether.

46000. Have you more belief in fishing than in agriculture for the Lewis?—Yes, much more.

46001. You mentioned that the tenants paying £20 to £40 of rent in your time were all ruined?—All ruined.

46002. But you say that those tenants paying £30 to £40 did not work on their own farm?—They did not work with their own hands; they had servants.

46003. Is a farm of that size in the Lewis too large for a man to work by himself?—It should not be, but when I left there were none of that size.

46004. And do you think it would not do to re-establish farms of that size?—I think it would be a great advantage. I think in every country it is a great object to have progression, so that a man may rise from one step to another. I think it would be wise to have first the crofter, and then the intermediate man, and then the larger farmer. I think it is a great pity that they are all the same.

46005. Are you a native of the Lewis?—Yes; I was born there.

46006. Do you know anything about the manner in which the 78th Highlanders was raised in the Lewis?—There were two battalions, and I had uncles in both battalions. I have heard a great deal about it in the Lewis.

EDIN-BURGH.

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EDINBURGH.

John Munro Mackenzie.

The first battalion was principally raised on the mainland ; but I know that in the parish of Uig, when Seaforth came to the parish to get recruits, the people all took to the hills. There was a ferry of twelve miles across Loch Roag, and they sent a boat across for Seaforth, manned by six women. This set up Seaforth's rage, and he came very wroth to the manse of Uig, where my grandfather was minister, and was very wroth at them. The minister told him to be quiet—that the people would find the tops of the bills rather cold, and just to let them alone. Next day the minister went up and had a talk with them, and told them their conduct was very unbecoming and very unpatriotic, and that they should come down and meet Seaforth. They said they should be very ready to do so, but they were afraid he would clear off the whole generation of young men. The minister said ‘No, I will be responsible for that—wherever a man has one ‘son that son shall not be taken, but where there is a large family perhaps ‘two will be taken ; but I will see there is no hardship, and I will send ‘my only son with you.’

46007. You had this story from your own grandfather ?—Yes.

46008. Do you know whether any promises were made to the people that they should have an enduring tenure of their land ?—I think the only terms made were that they were to be engaged only for home service ; but afterwards, when they came to Edinburgh, there was some row, and it was changed, and they went abroad.

46009. But were the parents promised some lengthened tenure of their land in consequence of their sons' enlistment ?—I never heard of any.

46010. *The Chairman.*—Then the people were, on the whole, averse to entering the army, according to your impression ?—At that time they were.

46011. And they were promised that Seaforth would not take more than one or two out of a family ?—Just so, and only two where there was a family of three or four sons.

46012. But did the people understand that he could not have taken any ?—I suppose in those days Seaforth was omnipotent. They had no idea beyond him. They knew nobody else.

46013. Did his authority operate, as it were, upon their affections, or did they really believe that he would turn them out of their homes if they did not enlist ?—No, the people volunteered. There was no compulsion of any sort. That very night Seaforth got his full number. I have been told even that men came in to Seaforth saying ‘Here is my son,’ or ‘Here ‘are two sons of mine that will go with you.’ There was no compulsion at that time. They all volunteered.

46014. Notwithstanding their first terror, they came in and volunteered ?—Yes ; it was a terror lest they should all be swept off.

46015. Were there any of the tacksmen or middle class who went with them ?—My uncle was the only one who went with them.

46016. He obtained a commission ?—He did, and was killed at the taking of Java.

46017. Did many of those people get back to the Lewis ?—Yes, a great number of them, and most interesting men they were. In Egypt they mostly all lost their sight by ophthalmia, and they came back to the Lewis with hardly a single exception. They were in Egypt in 1801 with Sir Ralph Abercromby. When they came home the Government was very, very liberal to them. They gave them a large pension, and not only a pension to themselves, but a pension for a guide for each man. I think, between themselves and their guides, they had a pension of £39 a year each. When I went to the Lewis I found upwards of twenty of these men still living.

I asked them 'Have you got medals?' 'No, we never heard of medals.' I got their names and regimental numbers, and I wrote to the War Office, and got medals for them. They were at Maida and Alexandria. I got medals for them, and they were highly delighted and pleased. That was more than fifty years after they came home.

EDIN-
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EDINBURGH.
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John Munro
Mackenzie.

46018. Did they spend a happy time?—Most happy, and they all lived to a very great age. I think fifteen of these men lived till they were nearly eighty. They were not very long in the army. They would not be ten years in the army altogether—those who got blind.

46019. Did they marry?—They did.

46020. And settled in the island?—Yes. They were almost all, without exception, very good men. They did not read—they were not educated men—but they got those guides to read to them, who were very intelligent men. They used to tell us their adventures abroad.

46021. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—The story you have told us is very interesting, but it appears to me that it was your grandfather that really got the men to enlist, and not Seaforth?—Well, they knew my grandfather, and did not know Seaforth.

46022. You have told us what the Government did in the way of giving them a good pension and giving them guides; what did Lord Seaforth do for them when they came back blind?—So far as I know, they all got very good crofts.

46023. Cheap rented?—Well, they were.

46024. Can you explain this to me. Up to this day we are told that the people of the Lewis, look back with attachment to the times when the old way of the Seaforths existed; can you explain the circumstances under which that attachment is continued?—It is just clannishness. I am quite sure Sir James Matheson did a hundred times more for the Lewis than all the Seaforths together, and still they will hold up for the Mackenzies. There was one man who came to me one day. He wanted land, and he said, 'If you look at Mackenzie's books you will find my name there for the last forty years.' I said, 'They don't happen to be Mackenzie's books now; they are Matheson's.' 'Oh,' he said, 'you may call them what you like, but they will be Mackenzie's.'

46025. Do you know the circumstances under which the Mackenzies obtained the island?—I do.

46026. You know the circumstances were not very creditable, but rather the opposite?—Well, at the time it was the common way of warfare.

46027. Is there no feeling at all in favour of the ancient Macleods who were the original lords?—No, there is very little recollection of them at all.

46028. Then can you point out, apart from the clannishness you have referred to, anything that the Seaforths did for their tenants during their possession, which lasted for, I suppose, 200 years, except that they left them very much as they were, and that they were cheaply rented?—That is all they did for them.

46029. Did they make any harbours or piers for them?—Nothing. Mr Stewart Mackenzie, who was of a Galloway family, was the first man who did anything. In former times there was not a single yard of road in the Lewis, and no improvement whatever, and this Stewart Mackenzie did a great deal in the way of making roads. He tried to improve the people all he could, but he lost heart, and went away as governor in the Ionian Islands, and afterwards of Ceylon.

46030. By what authority, or under what rights of property, did Lord Seaforth come down upon this occasion to raise those men?—Well, a

EDIN-
BURGH.
hundred years ago the laird was the king. There was no power known beyond him. He could do what he liked.

EDINBURGH. 46031. He thought he had that power?—Well, he had it.

46032. Whether he had it or not, he exercised it?—Yes.

John Munro
Mackenzie. 46033. Well, I want to know what duties devolved upon the person who exercised those very extraordinary and exceptional powers?—I suppose in those days they never reckoned duties. Might was right.

46034. These were the good old times in Lewis?—Yes.

46035. Which the people look back to still with affection?—Yes.

46036. *Sheriff Nicolson.*— You have kept up your acquaintance with the island of Lewis?—Yes, I have.

46037. Do you think the condition of the people has improved since you left it or otherwise?—Well, I cannot say very much. I have not visited it much. I have just gone yachting and called at Stornoway, but I cannot say anything practical, for I have not gone over the island. From what I hear, and from the trade of the country and the large increase in the herring fishing, I think there must be an improvement.

46038. From what you heard of the distress that was in the island last year, do you think it was in any way comparable to what it was at the time of the potato famine in 1846?—It was nothing to that, because the failure of 1846 lasted from 1846 to 1851. Many people I know who were comfortable, and who had a large stock of sheep and cattle, were perhaps reduced to their very last. Though Sir James Matheson gave plenty of employment at draining, trenching, and so on, many of the people, as long as they had a cow to sell, preferred to do so rather than to work, so they became very much reduced. The last year, I believe, was bad enough, but it was only one year.

46039. Is there a large part of the population of the Lewis, do you think, that could be profitably employed in fishing if they had proper harbours for their boats?—There is.*

46040. And apart from the land?—Apart from the land. The fishing banks in the neighbourhood of the west side of Lewis are, perhaps, the most productive of any part round the coast. Another thing that convinces me that a man who works the land should not be a fisherman is that the very heaviest cod and ling fishing is in the months of spring, when they should be laying down the crop. The consequence is that the men are at the fishing, and the poor women are toiling the land. I can say that the women of the Lewis are the most virtuous and the most industrious people I know on the face of the earth. I think if the men were half as industrious as the women they would be far better off.

46041. Have the people of the island of Lewis any aversion to a seafaring life?—The people of Lewis are divided very much into a Celtic and a Scandinavian race. The Celtic people occupy the south end and the Norsemen are in the north end. I tried to mix them as much as possible. I sent a lot of the Celts among the Norsemen. The Norsemen are splendid fishers, and have no fear of sea or weather. The others are rather like the cat. They don't like to go to sea if they can help it.

46042. Is the parish of Lochs in the south?—Yes, but it is more Scandinavian than Celtic.

46043. And where do you think the Celtic population chiefly are?—In Uig and away on to Barvas, Shabost, Bragar, and so on.

46044. Have you made it a matter of special observation to notice the physical characteristics of the races?—I have.

46045. What are the physical characteristics which distinguish them?—The Norseman is more industrious, particularly as a fisherman. He

* See Appendix A, xl., lxxxix., and xc.

seems to have no fear of the sea. He will go to sea almost in any weather. The other people will wait for good weather.

EDIN-
BURGH.

46046. But what are the physical characteristics?—The Norsemen are generally fair-haired, tall, strong men. The Celt is a little dark man, and very active and very fiery. You cannot put a Norseman into a passion. You might try to chaff a man in the Ness, or do anything you like with him, and he will never lose his temper; but as to the Celt you can set fire to him in two minutes.

EDIN-
BURGH.
John Munro
Mackenzie.

46047. What is the historical reason for that difference of race in the parishes of the island?—I don't know, except that the Norsemen settled more in the north part of the island.

46048. Is there any difference in the mode of thought or customs of the inhabitants of the one part of the island from the other?—Well, I think that in the Celtic part they are more given to grazing. They have more sheep and cattle, and prefer working with sheep and cattle. The Norsemen are more tillers of land and fishermen.

46049. Do you think the population of Lewis has increased too largely?—Much too largely. There are only two ways of relief that I see—that a number of them, if they had harbours, should be employed more at fishing, and get a very small extent of land—that and emigration.

46050. Do you think it would be possible to accommodate the present population of Lewis on the island if the land were distributed among them?—Well, I think they would be much better, some of them, to emigrate. There are too many.

46051. But do you think it would be possible to find land for them all on the island?—If they go on for a few years at the rate they are going, they will make it impossible. Lewis is an island, and there is a limit to it, and I think the limit is reached.

46052. But is there land enough for the present population?—No, I think not, unless you have more piers and more fishing. There is a stretch of twenty-five miles between the Butt of Lewis and Loch Roag, and no place where boats can land. There are two or three places where harbours could be made at a not very large outlay, and I think these would accommodate the people very much. It is not the being at sea that they are afraid of; it is the getting away from land, and the getting in to land. Just now they have to use a very small boat, which they can pull out of the water, and they have perhaps to pull up a bank thirty or forty feet high, and it is pitiable to see the poor people striving to take these boats up after being out at sea. I know that many of them have been ruptured by that work. It is that which prevents them fishing; whereas if they could go freely out and in they would fish ten days for every one day they fish just now.

46053. Do you think, for the proper development of the fishery there, it is absolutely necessary, in addition to harbours, that there should be regular and rapid communication by steamers for carrying away the fresh fish that cannot be salted?—Yes. I think, if there were a harbour at the Butt, where a steamer could go into, it would be untold the wealth they could get. I have seen boats landing 300 and 400 and 500 of the most splendid ling there, from which, if sent to market, they would have made as much in a week as they now make in three months.

46054. They also catch a great deal of turbot?—They do, which they make into bait because they cannot get it to market. If they had swift steamers, and people offering even 5s. for a turbot, they would be very glad to take it.

46055. *The Chairman.*—You seem to have a very high sense of the importance of harbours and boat shelters. When you were there you were

EDIN-
BURGH. associated with a very rich and benevolent proprietor. Was his attention not called to that question?—Constantly, but that was one of the few points which he and I differed upon. I constantly wished that some of the money expended on other things should be expended upon harbours, and he always said—‘Well, the fish-curer should do it. The people who are getting the benefit of this fish trade should do it.’ I said, ‘You will get it in another way. You will get it in rents.’ But I could never get him to see the advantage to him. He always said that the fishermen and curers, and the people engaged in the trade, should do it for themselves.

Sir WILLIAM COLLINS, Publisher, Glasgow (66)—examined.

Sir William Collins. 46056. *The Chairman.*—Will you have the kindness to make your statement?—I have read with great interest and attention all the evidence laid before the Commission relating to the condition of the cottars and crofters in the Western Highlands. As I think there are one or two points of importance which have not been brought under your notice by any of the witnesses who have appeared before you, I venture to come here to-day. I have been in the habit of spending a portion of my holidays during the last eighteen years in yachting in the Western Highlands, and have repeatedly visited the districts from Barra to Stornoway and from the Ross of Mull to Lochinver. During my visits the question has been forced upon me as to whether anything can be done to raise the social conditions under which many of the crofters and cottars live with reference to their dwellings and the limited extent of their holdings, which seem to me, from the nature of the ground, to make it impossible for them to raise sufficient food for their own support, or give them a chance of rising in the social scale. While I admit that even in our large towns there is always a large impoverished class, in the one case this is very often the result of imprudent and improvident habits; while, in the case of the crofters and cottars, it is more the result of circumstances over which they have almost no control, and may therefore be described as honest poverty. As your Honours are probably aware, a storm of unusual severity, accompanied with an extraordinarily high tide, swept over these districts on the 22nd of November 1881, damaging or destroying boats to the number of about 1200. Appeals were made from various quarters and relief committees were formed in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and other places for assistance to relieve those who had suffered from this disaster. Money to the extent of £5355 was raised, which was expended in the purchase of second-hand boats, obtaining material for the building of new ones, and the repairing of those which had been partially damaged; while in other cases cash was given to a proportion of the loss and according to the circumstances of each case. In several cases the landlords met the whole loss, in others they supplied material. As sub-convenor of the Glasgow Committee, and possessing a certain amount of local knowledge, I undertook a fair share of the work of distributing the fund. In the following season I personally visited every district to which we had sent relief in any shape, having resolved to devote my entire summer's holiday to that object. In carrying out this purpose, I came into contact with a large number of parties of different classes, including members of school boards, clergymen, factors, and ground officers, as well as those who had had their boats repaired through the aid of the relief fund. With the question already referred to con-

'stantly before my mind, I took this opportunity of obtaining additional
'and I believe reliable information as to the condition and prospects of
'the cottar and crofter population. From all these sources I gathered
'there was a general agreement of opinion as to the ultimate effects of the
'Education Acts in extending the knowledge of the rising generation as
'to the condition and resources of other countries, which might render
'them less indisposed to leave their present homes, and possibly even to
'create a feeling of discontent with their present uncomfortable condition,
'and thus stimulate them to increased efforts to raise themselves in the
'social scale. Another important element towards their social improve-
ment is to be found in the fact of the wide-spread influence of temperance
principles among all classes of the population, and as showing in a very
pleasing manner the habits of thrift thus acquired. I may instance a
call I had from a clergyman, who was collecting subscriptions for the
re-building of his church in one of the parishes in Lewis, who stated that
some time previously he had been led almost to abandon the scheme
owing to the poverty of the people. He was, however, pleasantly sur-
prised lately by a call from a number of the young men of his congrega-
tion, who stated that from the savings consequent on their becoming
abstainers, they now saw their way to aid him in carrying out his
laudable purpose. Later in the season it was apparent that the potato
crop would be a partial failure, and in the beginning of October heavy
rains and violent gales destroyed a large portion of the grain, which was
then still exposed in the fields. And thereafter deputations came to
Glasgow and Edinburgh, and submitted statements to public meetings as
to the destitution which was again beginning to be felt, and the prospect
of its increase before the new crop could be secured. Owing to the
absence of sunshine and the prevalence of wet weather, the potato crops
in many places never came to maturity, so that provision required to be
made for immediate wants as well as for securing seed corn and potatoes
for the ensuing spring. The appeals which were then made were liberally
responded to, both in the east and west of Scotland, and a sum amount-
ing to £5541 was subscribed and expended in the various districts,
principally among the cottars and smaller crofters. In addition to this,
I believe about an equal amount was raised by the Lord Mayor of
London. The returns sent to Glasgow showed that 3326 families of the
crofter class and 1914 families of the cottar class received relief—some
partly in money and in kind, and some wholly in kind—estimated
number of persons in all 24,055, a large proportion of those belonging to
the Lewis. The Relief Committee, acting under competent advice,
recommended a change in that description of potato seed from that which
had been previously in use in many of these districts, which I believe
will be an advantage to the crofters for years to come, as better fitted
to resist the climatic influences than those formerly in use. The land-
lords in those districts in many cases supplied seed to the crofter class, I
believe, in many cases, to be paid afterwards with the rent. As formerly,
I devoted part of my holidays this season to visiting as many of the places
where assistance had been sent as I could, and was happy to learn that
the crops promised exceedingly well, and in every place I was informed
that, but for the timely relief afforded by the Glasgow, Edinburgh, and
Lord Mayor's funds, the destitution would have been felt most severely
—in many cases such as had not been experienced since the great destitutu-
tion in 1846-47. In some places very interesting scenes were witnessed,
in one populous district the whole of the inhabitants coming down to the
beach to welcome the arrival of the vessel with the potato cargo. As
already indicated, during my visits, I had special opportunities of dis-

EDIN-
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EDINBURGH.

Sir William
Collins.

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EDINBURGH.
Sir William
Collins.

' cussing various remedies for improving the present condition of things.
' Several of these have already been urged upon your Honours, such as the
' increase of the extent of holdings and compensation for improvements
' made by the crofters. This latter seemed to be more desired than leases
' by those with whom I came into contact, and seems to me to point to
' what is considered by many as the greatest grievance. It has often been
' alleged that the cottars and crofters in the west coast are more indolent
' in their habits than those in other districts. In answer to this, I would
' respectfully submit, that being in most cases simply tenants at will, and
' at the same time resting in the belief that advantage had often been
' taken of the improvements they made to increase their rents or to evict
' them, it would be looking for too much from human nature to expect
' them to labour where they had no security that they would reap any
' reward for their exertions. This, therefore, I consider a reasonable
' explanation as to any want of energy they may display. In corroborata
' of this view, I would only refer to the fact that large numbers of
' cottars and those holding small crofts, so industriously prosecute the
' herring fishing both in their own and in the north-east coast of Scotland.
' It is also worthy of remark that when they come to our large towns and
' cities they are able to hold their own with those from other parts of the
' country. In the course of my inquiries as to the means they had to
' enable them to tide over this destitution, I ascertained that in many
' cases they were receiving substantial assistance from members of their
' families resident and working in Glasgow, and but for this the destitution
' would have been much more difficult to meet. It has been suggested
' that many of the large sheep farms might be subdivided into small farms
' or crofts, but there is no doubt there are some difficulties in the way of
' carrying out this proposal. The chief among these may be mentioned—
' existing leases, and the erecting of the necessary houses and offices for
' the additional number of crofters who would then be settled on what was
' formerly one large farm, especially in cases where the property is under
' trust, or where the proprietor is unable to meet such an increased
' expenditure. At the same time, such a subdivision would not meet the
' requirements of those small crofters whose present holdings are totally
' incapable of affording the necessary support for themselves and families.
' While it appears that in many cases the rents in these districts have
' been considerably raised within the last twenty or thirty years, yet I am
' of opinion that a proportionate reduction would not meet the neces-
' sities of the case, or remove their present grievances, or elevate them to
' that social condition which is so urgently desiderated, the saving of 10
' or even 20 per cent. on small rentals bearing a small proportion to the
' whole amount of a year's expenditure of a family. I am not an agricul-
' turist, and therefore cannot form an opinion as to what extent waste land
' may be beneficially reclaimed, but I may perhaps be allowed to refer to
' an experiment made by the Corporation of Glasgow in 1879, while we
' were suffering from a great depression in trade, and had a very heavy
' unemployed to whom we wished to employ a labour test. There was a
' peat moss on the line of the Greenock Railway that had been in a
' state of nature ever since I can remember. We obtained a lease of 100
' acres for thirty years at a nominal rent, and within two years we had
' splendid crops of potatoes—so that while the experiment will be a gain
' to the corporation during the lease, and it will be a great gain to the pro-
' prietor at the end of the lease. As to the vexed question of deer forests,
' I observe an expression of opinion has been given, that these are not
' likely to be extended owing to the want of demand, but I confess to have
' had a feeling of regret in driving last season through a considerable

' extent of country in which everything that is beautiful in nature was to be found, but where I was informed that at that very time the tenants were under notice to remove in order to make room for another extension of a deer forest. I take it that the primary use of land is to provide food, not only for the population living on it, but for the country generally. I understand it is the case that proprietors derive a larger revenue from converting land into deer forests than they could obtain by utilising it for the sheep. But while this may be true, and while there may be certain portions of land unsuitable for any other purpose, I maintain that higher considerations ought to guide in the disposal of such a commodity as land, as the carrying out of this principle of a cold political economy, in allowing a landowner to dispose of his land to produce the greatest amount of personal gain,—irrespective of the higher interests of the country,—might if fully carried out lead to disastrous results by making the country wholly dependent on foreign countries for our food supply. I have incidentally referred to estates under trust, and this is a question to which I wish to direct your serious consideration; and in dealing with the late destitution, I found, notably in two cases, that, while other proprietors were aiding their tenantry, the tenants of a proprietor resident in Australia, and those of an estate under trust, were thrown wholly on our relief fund, as those in charge of these estates were unable to give that relief which was afforded by resident proprietors. I would therefore venture to suggest that in such cases the courts should be empowered to authorise the same relief being given by trustees as resident proprietors under the same circumstances are expected to give, and without the dread of beneficiaries before them. As an illustration of the grievance to which I have just referred, I find that Mr Auldjo Jamieson, in his capacity as *curator bonis* of an estate under his charge, admits that "during thirty years the curators had not been able to give the crofters anything as it would have been *ultra vires*." It has been suggested that some of the difficulties arising out of the present condition of things might be met by the complete separation of the two industries of fishing and husbandry. In certain circumstances this may be possible, but there are several practical difficulties in the way of carrying out such an arrangement—much, for instance, would depend upon the situation of the parties, whether full employment could be obtained at either occupation. Were fishing made the only occupation of any large class, it would necessitate, as in other districts, the acquirement and maintenance of different kinds of boats adapted to the fishings of the different seasons of the year. While again, without such aid as fishing can afford, the condition of many of the crofters would be much worse than has been described in the evidence submitted to this Commission. Still as a general rule there is much to be said in favour of a person concentrating his thought and energy on one particular industry. The last remedy to which I would refer is that of emigration. I am fully aware of the unpopularity of this remedy, as it has generally been associated with clearances and evictions. I wish, therefore, distinctly to state that the only system of emigration I would advocate would be of a purely voluntary and, where necessary, an assisted character. While I think that such emigration would be highly beneficial in many districts to a moderate extent, both to those who leave and those who remain, and whose holdings it would naturally increase, yet it appears to me in the case of the Lewis, unless the proprietrix is prepared to throw some of the farms held by sheep farmers into crofts of a moderate size, I don't see how that large population can be maintained on that land, considering its character and the large natural increase of the population during the last thirty or forty years. I observe that it was stated by

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EDINBURGH.

Sir William
Collins.

' one of the witnesses examined in Glasgow, that the rule should be strictly enforced that there should be no subdivision allowed. I cannot see how such a rule can be enforced, unless by assuming that the younger members of the family are to emigrate. I have observed expressions of regret in several quarters that emigration should be resorted to, lest the country should feel the want of its stalwart sons in time of need, but I confess I do not share such fears so long as our fisheries can supply such splendid defenders as comprise and recruit our naval reserve, which from our insular position must always be our first line of defence. It has always appeared to me that a certain amount of emigration—that is, voluntary emigration—instead of being disadvantageous to this country, is the reverse. This country will always continue to be dependent to a large extent on its manufacturing prosperity, and I hesitate not to say that a given number of people emigrating from these shores to one of our colonies, whether to Canada, Australia, or New Zealand, will within a short period of their settlement become customers for our various manufactures to the extent of not less than five times what they would ever be if they remained at home; nay further, they would become cultivators of that raw material and produce for which we are at present dependent so largely on other countries.'

46057. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—You have a very large Highland population in Glasgow?—We have a large Highland population. Incidentally I was talking over the matter with one of our clergymen, and I think he spoke of about 25,000 being connected with our churches more or less. They are largely employed in our boat yards and other out-door industries, and we have a fair number of them in our police force.

46058. Is there any fair proportion of them employed in higher kinds of work or as foremen?—I am not aware to what extent they may be. I rather gather they act as unskilled labourers, and probably there would be a drawback in many cases where they had not an intimate acquaintance with English as well as Gaelic.

46059. They generally come to Glasgow as adults untrained for any except ordinary labourers' occupation?—I think so. Of course, there are a good many young women who come from Mull and Skye, as well as Lewis, for domestic servants—a very considerable number.

46060. There is a regular system of migration from the island of Skye, is there not?—It has varied very much with the demand for labour. When business was brisk in Glasgow, I daresay our larger employers were only too glad to get them. At other times I have had many painful instances of them coming without knowing how to look out for work.

46061. What islands do they chiefly come from?—A good many from Mull and from Skye.

46062. Islay?—Yes, I think so, but I don't know so many come from Islay.

46063. There has been a greater decrease in the population of Islay than of any of the other islands?—Yes, but I don't think that has been by migration to Glasgow. Of course, the circumstance that it is so accessible may cause them to remove, but the facilities are so great from the Lewis that there is no difficulty about it.

46064. And generally are their circumstances in Glasgow tolerably comfortable for the positions they occupy?—I think so. I don't think any large proportion of them are among what you may call the sunken classes. Of course, there is a natural clannishness which prevents them, I daresay, from falling away from the position they have been accustomed to maintain.

46065. Is there any peculiarity in their habits to distinguish them

either favourably or unfavourably from their fellow citizens?—There are Gaelic missions and Gaelic societies, that pay considerable attention to prevent their sinking down into a lower stratum of society.

EDINBURGH.

46066. Are there any of the islands besides Lewis which you think require emigration to relieve the population?—I scarcely think so. There may be some where there are complaints about want of sufficient ground, but I presume they are probably under the same conditions of sheep farms being allocated among crofters, and that they should be quite able, as far as I am able to form an opinion, to maintain all the population at present upon them.

EDINBURGH.

Sir William Collins.

46067. Would it not be possible to have a migration scheme to give them an opportunity of settling in Glasgow instead of removing to Canada?—Well, there is no use coming to Glasgow unless they are to find work there.

46068. But would there not be means of providing them with regular occupation there?—That must be regulated by the law of supply and demand. You will not get employers to hire men on day's wages unless they get profitable use of them.

46069. So far as you have observed the condition of the islands for the last eighteen years, do you think the condition of the people generally in these islands, and on the west coast, has improved or otherwise during that period?—It is very difficult for me to offer an opinion, but I have had always the feeling that they are not rising upwards in social position. It appears to me that the poverty they live in the midst of is increasing. There are other drawbacks. There are a great many social matters connected with them that I feel are a drawback. Their mode of dealing, their system of barter, and many other things, must be adverse to their rising in the social scale, but these are questions perhaps—with all respect for the Commission—that are beyond their powers.

46070. Have you observed any improvement through the educational development of the last few years?—It must be so, though I can scarcely say I am in a position to observe that.

46071. Do you find more English spoken?—Well, I think I may say that I very rarely have any difficulty in finding a person able to speak English. Generally I have my captain or some of the crew with me where I am likely to fail, but I think I may say I never find there is any difficulty in the case of any person I address—of middle age at all events—as regards speaking English, though I can say they have a preference for the Gaelic.

46072. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Have you any acquaintance with the rural population in the neighbourhood of Glasgow?—I cannot say I have.

46073. Does it ever happen that subscriptions are required in years of scarcity for these populations?—We have had no destitution in Glasgow that has called for assistance. After the failure of the City Bank, which happened simultaneously with a general depression in trade, we had great pressure from the rural districts. People pressed into Glasgow, and we had to be careful with the funds at our disposal; but I don't remember we had any general distress which required public aid in the shape we had then.

46074. The poverty you refer to did not arise from the failure of crops?—No. Of course, at that time, we had an enormous destitution to cope with. At the highest point we had to find food daily for 39,000 people in Glasgow.

46075. You mentioned that you think curators should have power from the court to exercise charity?—I say the trustees of estates that are under curators are placed at a great disadvantage. While the next in succession would be perfectly willing that assistance should be given of

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EDINBURGH.
Sir William
Collins.

course the trustees have no power, and as a fact we felt we were bearing a heavier part of the load than we otherwise should if these parties had had the same freedom to give assistance in cases of extreme want as other proprietors were doing.

46076. I quite understand that, but do you think it would be right to encourage the increase of the population when you have to look forward to the necessity of giving charitable relief from year to year?—I presume this was exceptional both about the loss that had to be met in regard to the boats, and the failure of the potatoes and grain that were in the fields. But I have at the same time been told that, in many places at all events, there are many of the people just bordering on semi-starvation, and that was the reason that was given me by perhaps one of the most intelligent men I ever met in the West Highlands. He was the son of a crofter. I asked, ‘Why don’t the landlords give them leases, ‘and that would induce them to improve their crofts and would benefit ‘the landlords?’ His answer was, ‘I am the son of a crofter, and I would ‘not accept a lease for this reason—that the crofters will have perhaps ‘a few good seasons, and get their heads up a little, and they are sure ‘these will be succeeded by a bad season, or succession of bad seasons, ‘that will break them down to starvation again, and they don’t want to ‘be fettered by leases.’

46077. Do you think that a correct description of the climate and condition of things in the West Highlands?—It is very difficult for me to say. I have mentioned that as the opinion of about the most intelligent man I ever met with, and who took a very broad view of the whole question.

46078. If that is a correct opinion, would it be desirable to retain a population in these districts at all?—If you ask me that question, I believe it would be better for all concerned that emigration, voluntary and assisted, should to a much larger extent prevail than I have ventured to indicate. I mean that where there is actual destitution these men will never rise very high in the social scale. If there were a kind of rising scale, different sizes of farms, so that the intelligent and hard-working man might be able to increase his holding from time to time till he got into the possession of a farm, that would be a great benefit; but if there is not to be a re-arrangement and a better opportunity than at present of improving their position, if I were in their position I would not remain in the country a day, and I believe they would be more comfortable and really have an infinitely better prospect for their families as well as themselves by removing.

46079. Are their circumstances affected mainly by climate and surroundings or by the laws of the land?—The only alternative I can look forward to is in the matter of reclamation of land. I am not able to form an opinion as to the value of reclaiming land, and as long as we have such tracts of it within reasonable distance the wiser policy would be rather to transplant them to where they could produce a much larger return from land than they can do in this country. I happened last Monday to meet with a gentleman who had returned from New Zealand, having gone out five years ago, and he was in the company of an agriculturist of great experience when he mentioned this fact. He mentioned the amount of cattle he had on a farm of one hundred acres, of which eighty were devoted to pasture; and the number of horses and cattle and sheep he had perfectly astonished this Scotch gentleman. He said there was no land in this country that would carry the number of cattle, horses, and sheep that these eighty acres were carrying and likely to carry.

46080. *The Chairman.*—You referred to the bad effects on the western

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EDINBURGH.

Sir William
Collins.

coast of something which you called a system of barter; will you be so kind as to explain that?—Well, I understand that, except in the towns, the people are largely dependent upon barter for the supply of various articles required for their household use, and merchants deal far more by barter than by ready money. They receive articles, such as eggs or sheep, from the people, and give the parties the supplies they want, whether groceries, or boots or shoes, or whatever it is. I have heard instances quoted of the unsatisfactory results of that. I understand in some cases they run on accounts without having balances for many years, and it is very difficult for them to keep accounts. I don't say the tradesmen who supply them are dishonest, but I suppose they lose so much money in that way that they find it necessary to charge very long prices.

46081. Does that extend to the payment of wages in commodities?—I don't think it would be in a case where these parties are receiving wages. I speak more of cottars and crofters that are not employed at regular employment and receiving wages. I know, in fact, that there is one price which they put down in their books and a different price that they would accept in ready cash, and I don't say they are to blame, because I don't believe these men make rich on that system, but I believe it is a very disadvantageous system to both parties.

46082. In what part of the country do you understand that system of barter or truck to prevail most?—If you keep off the larger towns like Stornoway and Portree—and I cannot speak so much about the mainland—but in the other islands it prevails.

46083. You think in the small local shops a great deal of business is transacted in the shape of an exchange of commodities?—Yes.

46084. Or rather an account current, which is settled by the delivery of commodities on either side?—I believe so, and never squared. I have heard of accounts running on for twenty years, and I was told that on the very best authority.

46085. Can you foresee any termination of that system except a termination by a rise in the rate of wages, general industry, and a greater amount of money in circulation?—It is very difficult to suggest a remedy. It is not a question of dealing with parties who are receiving regular wages. It is just as they have a sheep or some farm produce to sell that they take them to the party. It might be open to objection if a proprietor were to undertake some mode of supplying them. At the same time it would be a great improvement on the present if proprietors, where there was not a large population settled, were to have stores where they would supply their own tenantry at, I don't say cost price, but cost price including expenses.

46086. We have had examples of something of that kind. But would not the management of such establishments virtually be in the hands of the factors, and would not then suspicions arise of undue profits made by them?—I think, unless it was being carried on solely on account of the proprietor, it would be very unwise to place the factor in the position of being a middleman in the supply and disposal of goods.

46087. But I don't see how the proprietor could do it. He could not do it in person?—Not in person, but he might appoint a manager, who would have no interest whatever in the concern, pay him or her a salary, and see that the person whom he appointed was competent to manage such a business.

46088. But if the proprietor were to make no profit on the one side and pay salary to a manager on the other, it might be a very expensive transaction?—I don't think it could be more expensive than on the present system.

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EDINBURGH.
Sir William
Collins.

46089. Before we went to Shetland and Orkney we had heard a great deal of the evils of the truck system that prevailed formerly between the people and the fishcurer and shopkeeper, and that with the increasing prosperity of the country these evils were being gradually remedied, and had in a great measure disappeared, and we were not asked or recommended to do anything about the matter?—I understand one Glasgow gentleman did a great deal to alter that system in the Shetlands and Orkney. He felt they did labour under this disadvantage.

46090. But don't you think it very likely that the evils of which you complain on the west coast may disappear with the increasing prosperity of the country gradually in the same way?—Well, probably they will disappear as the population become more accustomed to read newspapers and see the prices of commodities.

46091. It is a curious thing that in the course of our inquiry I do not think that subject—except in connection with the island of Tiree and the local industry there—has been once brought under our notice?—I did not observe any notice taken of it.

46092. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—In your yachting expeditions among the islands, I suppose you had occasion to deal with those country shops?—Not much, because I generally had a supply of stores with me; but I could easily see that the crofters and small cottars were very glad to get a little ready money put into their hands.

46093. Their system, I presume, is this, that those small shopkeepers are obliged to give undue credit, and they charge undue prices?—Yes.

46094. They have two prices. They charge a good deal for the things they sell, and getting something for sale they resell it at a profit?—I cannot answer for that.

46095. A gentleman told us two days ago, with regard to the distribution of the moneys raised in public charity, particularly the moneys that came from the Relief Committees for the island of Skye, that it would have been better if they had been put into the sea. There is no doubt, we may take it, that in Glasgow, like other large cities, there is a great deal of benevolent feeling on the part of the wealthy merchants towards their poor countrymen?—Yes.

46096. But, on the other hand, I may assume, particularly with regard to Glasgow, that these rich Glasgow merchants are not at all people to throw away their money without knowing exactly where it is going?—More than that, I am afraid that if there were repeated applications of that kind our pockets would be stopped.

46097. In the matter of what may be called the destitution committee in the end of last year and the beginning of this year, were all the applications for relief carefully and minutely considered by different members of the committee before any money was granted?—The rule we followed was very much this. In dealing with the moneys sent for the repair of boats and otherwise, we had arranged that a committee should be formed, and that it should be fairly representative of the leading people. For instance, we tried to get the members of School Boards to take charge of the funds, and in many cases they did so. In the like of the Lewis and Skye, there were local committees which were entirely representative; and we thought that having no personal knowledge of these cases, it would be far wiser in fact to leave it in the hands of parties who were appointed and who had the confidence of the whole community. In addition to that, I had letters from many clergymen over Skye who gave me very strong accounts of the destitution. One told me of parties waiting in his kitchen till they got a little oatmeal to take home with them.

46098. Taking it all over, I presume you can mention that no moneys in

the Western Islands or other parts were given by the Glasgow Committee without the committee being either satisfied themselves or having precise local information as to the necessities of the people?—The largest proportion of the amount was given away in kind.

46099. I include kind in money?—I don't know how we could have aided the people except by intrusting it to parties there who had a standing. The School Boards generally included the clergymen as well as medical officers and ground officers, and I may state that one reason I had for visiting the whole of these districts in 1881 was just to satisfy myself in the first place, and to be able to satisfy the committee that the moneys we sent had been well administered; and I reported at the end of that season that I had reason to be satisfied that at every place I visited we had been exceedingly fortunate in the hands through which we had passed our funds.

46100. And that applies to the money or produce that was sent in 1883?—We have not been in the same position yet, and it has not been scattered over so many places. I may mention that in the Lewis the number of families that received relief were 2128 families of crofters and 653 families of cottars. I estimate that fully half the population in the island received relief. If you multiply these by $4\frac{1}{2}$ it is about half the population of Lewis, and I know Lady Matheson's chamberlain at one time when he came to Glasgow was very deeply distressed about the amount of destitution he would require to cope with.

46101. Were there any of your moneys distributed in Mull?—There was, but not very much.

46102. Did you or the committee satisfy themselves as to the necessity for so doing?—The first application we had was from the chairman of the Parochial Board about the Ross of Mull, who made a very strong representation and backed another representation about the destitution in the Ross of Mull.

46103. Can you tell us anything about Tiree?—That is the only place we have not received returns from. We sent £102 there to be distributed by Mr M'Diarmid, ground officer.

46104. Was any money sent to Iona?—No, not at this time. We gave considerable assistance to Iona previously in the matter of potatoes, and we made an exception in the matter of Iona—we supplied them with fuel. The high tide had swept off the whole store of peats, and the people were really suffering in health for want of fuel.

46105. *Professor Mackinnon.*—You stated you would only approve of voluntary and assisted emigration, but you think at present that Lewis is over-peopled?—I do, looking at the character of the land of the Lewis.

46106. And that, while other places under a different arrangement might put themselves to rights, it might be to the advantage of some of the people in such places also that they should remove to better land?—Well, they would better themselves. I don't say they could not remain there and do comfortably, but they would be able to reach a higher level in the social scale by removal.

46107. We met with great reluctance on the part of many of the people to emigrate?—I am quite aware of the unpopularity of mentioning the word.

46108. You stated, I think, that a different state of feeling might be brought about by the operation of the Education Act?—That was the general state of feeling represented to me by members of the School Board; that was the only remedy that seemed to be agreed upon by everybody I met with.

46109. The people themselves usually stated to us that their reluctance

EDINBURGH.
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Sir William
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Sir William
Collins.

to emigration arose from this, that they had not been a whit bettered by the emigration of former times, and that instead of giving them the lands left vacant by the people who went away these were converted into sheep runs, and that the latter end was worse than the first?—Of course, if that was so, it would not serve what was intended by emigration.

46110. When you recommend emigration you would recommend a different policy—that the land of the people who emigrated should be given to those who remained?—I have intimated that in my evidence.

46111. Thirty years ago emigration was not unpopular in the Western Islands, and some of the most popular songs were emigration songs, have you any idea what has brought about the change of feeling?—I am afraid they may have had a kind of prejudicial feeling against emigration, considering the nature of it at that time. They went away in sailing vessels, and endured great hardships before they crossed the Atlantic. That is all done away with, but they are in ignorance of all these changes now.

46112. I think you stated also that you found out the want, through the whole of the northern islands along the seaboard, of any middle-class people?—I have heard that stated.

46113. You did not observe it so much yourself?—No, I was not in a position to judge the extent of their holdings.

46114. The state of affairs we found obtaining in most of the places was that these crofts upon which a very large proportion of the people live were very small—that is to say, north of Ardnamurchan?—Yes, that is so.

46115. And that between them and the big farms there was no break?—That is one of the things I indicated—that there is no means of advance for the intelligent or prosperous crofter. The step is too large at present.

46116. Do you think that might perhaps account for the reputed lethargy and indolence of the people?—One cause of it I have indicated was that they had no incitement to exert themselves in the way of improving their holdings,—in fact, that they might be worse off if the proprietor were to take advantage of the improved land by increasing the rent.

46117. And even if they became successful, there is not an increased holding within reach for them to take and so get on a bit? We talk of the ladder of life;—the Highland ladder has only two rungs,—one at the bottom, where the great mass of the people are, and one at the top, where there are only very few?—That is so.

46118. And it is almost impossible to leap from the one to the other?—Yes, they are too far apart.

46119. *The Chairman.*—We have a very strong statement to the effect that the extensive distribution of relief in connection with the last destitution had produced a demoralising effect; do you or do you not think that the independence and honesty of the people in the Western Highlands have been seriously marred?—If there should be a continual repetition of that it might impair their spirit of independence, but in the exceptional circumstances I cannot think it will very seriously do so. There was only a complaint in one place about the distribution of food, by a person connected with some society; but I had evidence otherwise that he was not fairly representing the state of the case, and was not doing justice to it.

46120. You don't think that up to the present time the independence and energy of the people have been seriously impaired by this?—I am not positively able to say to what extent. It may be to an infinitesimal extent, because all eleemosynary aid has that tendency, and I don't know they are more unwilling to receive assistance than any other class. At the same time, I don't think, when we came forward in such a case as this, that that feeling is likely to be created or to exist. You might as

well say that the shareholders of the City Bank felt their independence destroyed when we raised a large sum of money to meet their position.

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Collins.

ALEXANDER CARMICHAEL, 30 Royal Circus, Edinburgh—examined.

46121. *The Chairman.*—I believe you have a written statement that you desire to read to the Commission?—Yes. ‘ I lived in the Outer Hebrides for sixteen and a half years as a Government official. I know the people, and they honour me with their confidence, and it delights me to say that those of North Uist have always spoken gratefully of the peace they have enjoyed, and the treatment they have received, since the late Sir John Powlette Orde, Bart, bought the estate in 1855. Sir John never raised a rent, never evicted a tenant. To his numerous tenantry in North Uist the late Sir John Orde was the kind, considerate, courteous gentleman, and the soul of honour. He died in 1879, regretted by his people. Both the late Sir John and the present Sir John Orde have been represented in North Uist by Mr John Macdonald Newton—a gentleman pre-eminently distinguished throughout the Highlands and Islands for his ability and integrity, judgment and sagacity, benevolence and modesty. From my knowledge of their condition, I have been urged from various quarters to give evidence before this Commission concerning the treatment of the people of the islands of Barra, South Uist, and Benbecula. I might say much, but, censuring being uncongenial to me, I refrain. In justice to the living and the dead I am, however, constrained to say this much regarding the late Sir John Orde and his factor, believing as I do that had the Highlands and Islands of Scotland generally been blessed with proprietors and factors of like-minded humanity and unselfish sagacity, this Commission of inquiry into the condition of Highland crofters had not been demanded.’

46122. We are very much interested in receiving your testimony as to the good qualities and good deeds of the family of Sir John Orde, but I observe you have dwelt particularly upon the fact that they have never evicted anybody, and have never raised any rents. Now, I would like to know whether there is on this property any system of active encouragement for the improvement of the people by their own exertions. For instance, is there any co-operation between the landlord and the tenant for the improvement of the dwellings?—I meant only to give in that letter—I did not mean to make any statement beyond that letter.

46123. You don't desire to be questioned upon it?—Not to enter into particulars.

Alexander
Carmichael.

RANALD MACDONALD, Commissioner for Lady Gordon-Cathcart of Cluny
—re-examined.

46124. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement to make to us?—Yes. ‘ I was sorry I was unable to attend at your Inverness meeting, but I am now taking the earliest opportunity after returning from Canada to appear before you, in accordance with your request when I attended the meetings in the Outer Hebrides. Having already replied to the evidence at the Barra meeting, and partly to the evidence at the Benbecula meeting, I shall now be as brief as I can in making a few remarks regarding Benbecula and the evidence at the South Uist meeting, and

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EDINBURGH.
Ranald
Macdonald.

' will then allude to my visit to Canada, where I have seen the crofter
' emigrants who left Lady Cathcart's property this spring. With regard
' to Benbecula, I am desirous to trespass as little as possible on your time,
' and abstain from repeating what was formerly brought under your
' notice regarding the leases granted to the crofters, encouragement given
' to drain and enclose, and other plans made with the view of introducing
' a better system of agriculture. In carrying through these important
' changes great opposition and local prejudices had to be overcome. Two
' modes of action presented themselves, namely, to adopt what is popular
' or what will please the people best; the other mode, to adopt the course
' best calculated to promote the interests of the people, even though not
' the popular course. To illustrate this I may give you an instance. The
' township of Limclate had an island for grazing as part of their common
' land. When the kelp industry flourished the sea-weed growing around
' the island was all reserved for kelp. I pointed out to the tenants the
' advantage of utilising the sea-weed, and recommended that they should
' begin to improve the island by making potatoes on the lazy-bed principle,
' which is now the only mode for improving waste land in the Western
' Islands without incurring serious loss. They were very much opposed
' to any change. I made careful calculations as to the labour and expense
' of improving the lands in the mode proposed, and also a moderate
' estimate of the produce, and endeavoured to convince them that it would
' be for their interest to adopt the scheme proposed. I told them I had
' no doubt it was for their interest that the experiment should be made,
' and that each one would get as much land and sea-weed as he would be
' able to utilise. I then took down their names, and left instructions to
' set apart for each one ten times the quantity broken up the first year,
' so that for a period of ten years they would always have new ground,
' what was first broken up being sown out in corn and then grass. When
' I went to the island the following year I found only a single individual
' had broken ground. I was, however, much pleased to learn the experi-
' ment, in his case, had been successful, and being assured by him that
' the improvement was to go on from year to year, I gave him the whole
' island to himself. The following year he employed some of the people
' to assist him, and planted a considerable quantity of potatoes on this
' island, and in spring of this year, while others were paying unusually
' high prices for seed potatoes, he had a large quantity for sale, a portion
' of which he exported early in the season to the Glasgow market, and a
' portion of the remainder was purchased by Lady Cathcart and given to
' the crofters for seed. It was very gratifying to find that the experiment
' proved both successful and profitable. I may also mention that the
' Benbecula crofters who got leases have had an agricultural show of
' stock this season, and it is satisfactory to know that otherwise they are
' directing their attention to the improvement of their stock. I will now
' refer to the evidence taken before the meeting in South Uist. As it
' must have been apparent to the Commissioners that the complaints or
' grievances emanated mainly from one source, it is quite unnecessary to
' make a detailed reply. I may explain that after the leases had been
' given to the Benbecula crofters, Lady Cathcart, at considerable expense,
' got a careful survey made of the island of South Uist, with reports of the
' land available for crofters' holdings. The object was to increase, as far
' as practicable, the size of the crofts. Carefully prepared statistics were
' also obtained relating to the circumstances of the people to be accommo-
' dated. Every possible effort was made to ascertain how the social
' condition of the people could be improved. I had meetings with the
' crofters in all the townships in the south end of South Uist, and I

suggested to them to elect three from each township, who would be called upon to suggest, and thereafter to assist to carry out, such changes as might be thought conducive to the welfare of the people within the township. I asked the men thus elected to hand me a written statement of whatever they thought required consideration. It will thus be seen that Lady Cathcart has been engaged in a regular organised effort to do the best she could for her crofters, and last year the whole of the people appeared fully to appreciate this; but I regret to say that in consequence of outside agitators, and more especially the action taken by the Roman Catholic clergy, a section of the people have changed their attitude, and have made the attempt to distort into the shape of grievances what had been done exclusively for the benefit of the people. I shall take one township as an illustration. This is the township in which the Rev. Alexander M'Intosh, Roman Catholic clergyman, resides, being the one in which the most agitation existed. In September last year, when I had meetings with the people, neither priests nor people had any complaints to make against the administration of the estate. The first complaint of injustice and grievances was received on the 29th March, coupled with a demand that the whole of the common land should be settled on them as it was settled by Mr Macdonald of Clanranald. I now submit a copy of this petition. "Ranald Macdonald, Esq., Secretary to Lady Gordon-Cathcart of Cluny.—The humble petition of us the undersigned tenants of Kilpheder, humbly sheweth, That we have suffered much injustice during the last forty years, through having been deprived of a great extent of hill pasture by Dr Macleod, the then factor of Colonel Gordon, for which he promised us compensation, meaning a reduction of our rent. At the following Whitsunday he was expelled from the office of factorship, without fulfilling his promise. We claimed the compensation from the succeeding factor, but was refused, saying he would not make any alteration in the books, but leave them in the same way he got them. We approached every succeeding factor with the same result. We now approach you on the subject, claiming compensation for the land deprived from us as above mentioned forty years ago, there being upwards of forty-two crofters and cottars located on it in the meantime, while we pay the same rent yet as we were paying forty years ago, without any reduction whatever. That if we will not get such reduction, let all the above crofters and cottars be removed, and the whole common land settled as it was formerly settled on us by Ranald Macdonald of Clanranald. That further injustice was done to us, and which greatly vexed us, and that was the making of the potato parks on our rented land, and of situating seven or eight cottars (who have neither horses nor cattle wherewith to pay rent) on our former peat stance, while some of them engage crofters from other places to cultivate the land, and others trespassing already on our new peat stance, making potatoes. That, finally, whether we shall receive the former settlement of land or the new lots as was proposed and promised four years ago and also last year, at all events we desire the removal of all the cottars on our peat stance and adjoining thereto, because, as you may understand by the foregoing statement, that we are without hill pasture wherein to put our sheep and cattle at any time of the year, but only a small summit of the hill, and no sooner are our cattle and sheep placed there than they are driven in to our corn by the cottars' dogs. That, in conclusion, we hope to receive satisfactory redress for our grievances; and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray." [Signed by 30 persons.] The first name appearing on the petition is Alexander MacLellan, who was the township constable, and paid by Lady

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' Cathcart for superintending the reclamation fields now complained of as
 ' "further injustice" done to the crofters. This constable was the local
 ' representative of Lady Cathcart in the township, on whose advice the
 ' resident factor to some extent depended for carrying on the works
 ' intended for the benefit of the crofters. On receiving this petition I
 ' sent for the constable and for the three men elected by the general body
 ' of the crofters as their committee. I expressed my surprise and regret
 ' that these matters were not mentioned when I had meetings with them
 ' the previous year, and I entered into certain explanations which appeared
 ' to satisfy them. I had thereafter a meeting with the whole of the
 ' Kilpheder tenants, when I pointed out to them that the crofters' rents
 ' remained practically unchanged for upwards of forty years, whereas the
 ' rental all over England, Scotland, and Ireland had very largely increased
 ' during that period. I had with me one of Sir James Caird's books (the
 ' best living authority on agricultural statistics), and I read to them the
 ' percentages of increase of rents which had taken place in other countries.
 ' I also directed their attention to the increased rents now paid by the
 ' tenants of the large farms in South Uist, which in some cases is nearly
 ' double the amount paid forty years ago. I further alluded to the large
 ' sums expended by the proprietor on roads and other improvements, for
 ' which not a single penny of interest has ever been charged against a
 ' crofter. I referred to the new landlord's burdens, such as school rates
 ' and poor rates, which now considerably reduce the net income derived
 ' from crofters' rents. I then pointed out the large increase in the price
 ' of labour, and the extraordinary increase in the price of stock. I read to
 ' them from an original statement sent in by Dr Macleod forty years ago
 ' the prices realised by stock purchased from the crofters and sold by him at
 ' Falkirk Tryst. For 150 horses he got £219, 13s., being an average of
 ' £1, 9s. 3d., and for two-year-old cattle, after being grazed at Barra, he
 ' got an average of £3, 18s. 8d. With regard to their complaint about the
 ' cottars, I pointed out the great difficulty the estate officials had in deal-
 ' ing with these cottars, more especially as the crofters themselves used every
 ' means in their power to get married sons and sons-in-law located near
 ' them, either on part of the croft or on the common lands; and while they
 ' objected to cottars collectively, the most of the crofters were individually
 ' interested in cottars whom they wished to retain near them. I referred
 ' in a general way to the proofs Lady Cathcart had given of her earnest
 ' desire to do the best she could for them. I then frankly told them
 ' that I was disappointed to receive such an absurd and unreasonable
 ' petition, and I assured them if they knew how gladly tenants in other
 ' counties paid interest for the expense of all improvements which
 ' benefited them, besides paying largely increased rents, they would, after
 ' considering all this, come to the conclusion there were very few tenants
 ' so indulgently treated as they had been during the last forty years.
 ' After this not one said a word in support of their petition, and the only
 ' practical step they wished carried out was to prevent certain cottars from
 ' interfering with their cattle. The only other practical step arising out
 ' of the petition was an intimation to the constable and one of his neigh-
 ' bours, who took an active step along with him, that they would be
 ' removed to another township, where they would be free from all such
 ' grievances as they had experienced in Kilpheder. These two were
 ' served with summons of removal in order that the proprietrix might be
 ' in a position to enter into new bargains with them. I have now to read
 ' a letter received from the constable referred to, and I may remark that
 ' this letter is not only written by, but also signed for Maclellan by Rev.
 ' Alexander M'Intosh, Roman Catholic clergyman. For the first time I

' now learned this constable was compelled to sign the petition against his
' will, and I think it right to direct the special attention of the Commissioners
' to the circumstances revealed in this letter written by the priest
' as explaining the different attitude adopted by the tenants, and the
' influences which have been at work in getting crofters committed to
' complaints and petitions about alleged grievances. In these cases which
' have been specially investigated it has been found that the tenants were
' obliged by external influences to take up a position of antagonism
' to the proprietrix, for which they expressed their deep regret.
' "Kilpheder, South Uist, April 16, 1883.—Ranald Macdonald, Esq., Cluny
Estates Office, Aberdeen. Dear Sir, I received some days ago notice of
removal from the lands and houses at present occupied by me in this
township. This notice, I understand, has been sent to me because my
name appeared, along with the names of others subscribed to a petition
(regarding certain lands) presented to you during your recent visit to
Uist. I am sorry that no explanation was demanded of me as to the
reason why my name appeared on that paper, as I think it probable that
I could have given such an explanation as would induce you to take a
more lenient view of my conduct. I have not hitherto, and I do not now,
complain of the lands which I at present occupy, and I have never
expressed myself as dissatisfied with the lands which were pointed out
as my probable lot under the new system which is shortly to be carried
out. I have always been a diligent and peaceful tenant, and have always
paid my rent. My name was put to that petition, not for reasons of dis-
content or anything of that kind, but because of the seven men who came
to my house for my permission to let my name be put to their petition;
several had in presence of witnesses mentioned their determination to do
serious damage to my cattle and property in the event of my refusing to
let my name be put down. Of their malice and ill-will I have on former
occasions had ample proof, and fearing loss and injury I allowed my
name to be put down, and counted on having, before your departure, an
opportunity of explaining why I had done so—an opportunity which I
failed to find, when so many were gathered from all quarters and had
business with you. In order to show you how much reason I have to
fear the malice of certain persons in this township, I may mention that,
in the spring of last year, a report was got up and diligently circulated
throughout this district to the effect that I had persistently appropriated
to my own use, and sold for my own benefit, large quantities of potatoes
from one of Lady Cathcart's parks of which I had charge. Messrs Walker,
Askernish, and Maclean, Milton, made a searching inquiry into that report,
when it was found to be utterly false, and got up by malicious persons in
order to damage my character and bring about my dismissal from the office
of constable. Again, in the month of November last, one of a certain
number of cornstacks belonging to Lady Cathcart and in my charge was
deliberately knocked down, in order to cause me trouble and annoyance.
At a subsequent period, while one of my cows at calving was tied in the
byre, the door was by some evil-disposed person thrown open and my other
cattle allowed to make their way in, and had I not by the merest chance
come that way, my cow which was tied would in all probability have
been gored to death. I mention these things in order to let you see that
I had every reason to fear that the threats which had been made to
damage seriously my cattle and property would be carried out. I trust
then, that, taking into consideration my past good character and conduct,
and the means which were brought to bear upon me, you will kindly
overlook a fault which has arisen from weakness or imprudence, and not
from any desire to give trouble or encourage others in giving trouble, or

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 in my present house and lands, where I shall strive so to live as to cause
 no trouble to you or any one else. I am very sorry for what has
 happened, but I need hardly assure you of my intention to let nothing
 similar happen in future. Hoping that, considering my circumstances
 and the influence brought to bear upon me, and also my regret at having
 allowed myself to be so influenced, you will be good enough to take as
 lenient a view as possible of my fault, and permit me to remain in
 occupancy of my house and lands.—I am, Dear Sir, your obedient servant
 (signed) p. ALEXANDER MACLELLAN, A.M.' My reply was as follows:—
 " *Cluny Castle, Aberdeen, 16th May 1883.*—Dear Sir, Absence from home
 and pressure of term business prevented me from replying sooner to your
 letter of the 16th ultimo. I have to point out that you are mistaken in
 supposing that the simple fact of your name appearing subscribed to the
 petition handed to me on the 31st March last was the cause of your being
 served with a notice of removal. The petitioners complained of 'much
 injustice during the last forty years,' and that further injustice was done
 by the making of the ' potato parks,' and they also complained about
 cottars, and demanded that they should be removed, and the township
 restored to the state in which it was in Clanranald's time. You say no
 explanation was asked from you, but you forget that you had been allowed
 to make an explanation. You are aware I sent for you, being the con-
 stable of the township, and discussed with you and the members of the
 committee selected by the crofters the different matters referred to in the
 petition in a very frank and friendly manner, and afterwards I met the
 whole of the crofters, along with you, and substantially repeated to them
 what I had previously stated to you and the township committee. You
 will recollect I said I knew nothing whatever about any alteration of
 marches made by Dr Macleod forty years ago, but I produced a list of
 cattle and horses got by him in 1844 from the tenants for arrears of rent,
 and sold by him at Falkirk. For 150 horses he got only £219, 13s.,
 being an average of £1, 9s. 3d.; and two-year-olds, after being grazed at
 Barra, on farms then in the occupation of the proprietor, realised an
 average of £3, 18s. 8d. each. I asked you to think of the money expended
 on roads and other improvements during the last forty years, and you
 will also remember that in addition to the extraordinary increase in the
 value of stock I pointed out that according to the best living authority
 on agriculture the increase of rent all over Scotland in eighteen years, from
 1857 to 1875, was equal to 26 per cent.; that the rents of tacksman had
 even in South Uist in some cases been doubled, while the crofters of
 Kilpheder paid the same rent now which they paid forty years ago. With
 regard to the cottars, I said I would be glad if any practicable mode could
 be got of removing them, and I stated very frankly that no one had pressed
 me so much to give land to cottars as yourself and Roderick M'Intyre,
 whose son is married to your daughter, and I thought it was wrong to
 try to mislead me in this respect, and then come as ringleaders complain-
 ing about the cottars located within the Kilpheder township. These
 cottars have increased in consequence of the action of the crofters them-
 selves, in using every effort to locate married sons and daughters near
 them. As to the complaint about the potato fields, I admitted that in so
 far as you or any one suffered injustice I would accept the whole blame;
 and I explained that when the kelp industry failed, Lady Cathcart was
 anxious to provide some employment for the crofters, and I suggested the
 formation of enclosed pieces of waste land to be reclaimed by lazy-beds,
 which it was expected would not only benefit the crofters by giving
 employment, but would also add to the food-producing area of the town-

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' ship, and show the benefit of having enclosed parks, and thus induce
' crofters to make parks for themselves. The whole of the produce of
' these parks had been given to the crofters this season, including about
' three thousand barrels of potatoes used for seed, and the corn and fodder
' was given away this spring to those who had no provender for their
' cattle. You were the superintendent of these reclamation parks, and no
' one in South Uist got more benefit from them than you did, and yet
' your name is the first on the petition complaining of this scheme as an
' injustice to the crofters. When these views were presented to the
' crofters at the meeting we had at Daliburgh, they admitted the reason-
' ableness of them, and stated they would be satisfied if a few cottars were
' removed who they said turned back and disturbed their cattle. These
' cottars had no right to interfere with the crofters' cattle, and it was
' promised this would be stopped. I must confess that I am unwilling to
' believe that your action was entirely caused by fear that your cattle
' would be mained if you had declined to co-operate with the seven persons
' whom you say came to your house and pressed you to get up an agitation
' about alleged grievances so far back as forty years ago; and I should be
' glad if you would kindly give me the names of these seven persons, that
' the whole origin of the agitation may be investigated and remedied so far
' as found to be based on substantial grounds. You are aware that great
' pains were taken last year to consider how most advantageously to divide
' the available land among the Kilpheder crofters, and lay out the crofts so
' as to encourage the tenants to enclose and improve them, and you and
' the township committee were specially asked to suggest all you could
' think of what would be an advantage to the crofters generally. I have
' the written memorandum by your committee, of their suggestions, signed
' by John Mackellaig, John M'Aulay, and Donald Martin, being the repre-
' sentatives elected by the whole body of the Kilpheder crofters. The cir-
' cumstances of the crofters and the proposals for improving their position
' were anxiously considered. The stocking belonging to them consisted of
' 84 horses, 202 cattle, and 114 sheep, moderately valued at £2123, 16s.
' The rent of the township is £215, 6s. 8d. If the value of implements,
' crop, &c., is added to the stock, the total value would be thirteen times
' the rent, which is more than can be equalled on any cluster of small
' farms on the mainland. The cash received from Kilpheder crofters last
' year amounted to £59, 13s. 7d., barely sufficient to meet the taxes and
' local burdens payable by Lady Cathcart affecting the township. The
' arrears amount to £292, 18s. 9d., being nearly three times what the
' amount due was twenty years ago. Taking the whole circumstances into
' account, any impartial person will admit that the Kilpheder tenants were
' indulgently dealt with, and that they ought to consider themselves in a
' better position now than they were forty years ago; and you and
' Roderick M'Intyre were the last who ought to raise a cry of injustice.
' Although each of you keep a very large stock of cattle, I find that not a
' penny of cash was paid by any of you last year. In 1881, 1878, 1877,
' you paid nothing in cash. As you are both discontented where you are,
' it was determined after careful consideration to change you to another
' township, and to pay you for the value of your houses and any other
' substantial improvements you may have made which adds to the letting
' value of your croft. Mr MacLennan is prepared to offer you a croft at
' Stilligarry, with good houses and fences, and the houses on both crofts
' can be valued, and any difference in the valuations can be settled in the
' usual way between you after the amount is fixed by arbiters mutually
' chosen. Or if you prefer to remain in your present house, you will get
' from six to eight acres at 7s. 6d. per acre, provided you will undertake

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' to enclose this piece of ground, and not to encroach beyond the enclosure.
 ' You will be paid at removal for the ring fence by mutual valuation.
 ' You will thus get the full benefit of the land enclosed, and you can have
 ' no difficulty with cottars or others after your rights are clearly defined.—
 ' I am, Dear Sir, yours truly (signed) RANALD MACDONALD.—Mr Alexander
 Maclellan, Kilpheder, South Uist." For a time the crofter agitation in
 ' South Uist seemed to subside, but immediately before the meeting of the
 Royal Commission, the Rev. Alexander M'Intosh convened meetings and
 renewed the old agitation, repeating again the same complaints which the
 Kilpheder tenants had acknowledged to be unreasonable. I will not enter
 into detail in dealing with the evidence of the delegates brought forward
 by Mr M'Intosh; I think it sufficient to direct attention to the fact that
 mainly these complaints referred to a period eleven years before Mr
 M'Intosh was born, and the fact that the witnesses dealt almost exclu-
 sively with this period may legitimately be taken as the best proof that
 they found it difficult to find fault with the recent and present adminis-
 tration of the estate. As I wish to be brief, I shall only allude to the
 first three witnesses put forward by Mr M'Intosh. The first two
 referred to this period forty years back, and I wish to point out that
 these witnesses were sixteen years and five years old respectively at the
 time to which they referred, and none of them could have then occupied
 an independent position, and the younger one could not personally have
 known much of what was going on around him when he was only five
 years old.'

46124*. It is rather difficult for us at this stage to enter into details, and also we must remember that Mr M'Intosh is not here; and even if he were, we should not be able to afford him an opportunity of contradicting the statements. I would ask you, therefore, to omit as many personal details as possible?—Yes; I am almost through with this. The third witness had learned his lesson very badly. Like the rest, he presented a paper, but when he was cross-examined it was found that he didn't know fully what the paper he presented contained, and he positively denied some of the statements in the paper. The only grievance of which the tenants complained, and for which I am personally chargeable, refers to the reclamation fields. The Kilpheder people collectively admitted that this was done for their advantage, and further that it was calculated to benefit them—(1) by providing work, (2) increasing the food supply of the island, and (3) adding to the extent of arable land. The Rev. Mr M'Intosh, when cross-examined, still adhered to the opinion that these reclamation fields were against the interests of the people, even though paid for the work done, and said no amount of wages compensated people for doing this work when they ought to be working their own crofts. It is, however, very well known that the people cannot be fully employed working on their own small crofts, and one of the chief objects in view in making these reclamation fields was to prove to the people the advantage of beginning their tillage early in the season, and it was expected these fields would be completed before the time when crofters usually commence tillage on their own crofts. I will not say another word about these fields, as the Commissioners have seen this year's crops, and can compare what was within the fence with the waste useless ground outside. I turn now to a more pleasing subject, and will briefly allude to my visit to Canada. Mr Edwards of Edinburgh, who is Lady Cathcart's principal law agent, went out at Lady Cathcart's special request, and I accompanied him. The first thing we did after landing was to have interviews with the Government officials at Ottawa and the Canadian Pacific Railway officials at Montreal, then we proceeded to

' Winnipeg, and immediately thereafter to the Benbecula settlement near the western boundary of Manitoba. I can never forget the very hearty welcome we got from the emigrants. It was to me most gratifying to find that they had got excellent land in a beautiful part of the country, with sufficient timber and water on the places. They are located near Pipestone Creek, where each one has got 160 acres of homestead lands free, and some of them have also got homesteads for their sons. Thus one man who has two sons has 480 acres of good arable land free. They are situated within 8 miles of Wapella station, on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which in a short time will connect the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean. Both the officials of the Canadian Government and Canadian Pacific Railway have been most obliging in giving every assistance to Lady Cathcart's emigrants in journeying from Quebec to their destination, and in assisting to select suitable lands. I was exceedingly glad to learn that these emigrants have made a most favourable impression, and without a single exception all those who have come in contact with them say they only want for the development of their country more settlers of the same kind; and from what I have seen myself I am proud that the Benbecula emigrants have since they landed in their new country acted throughout in such a way as to deserve the praises lavished upon them. They reached their destination on the 28th May last, and immediately commenced temporary habitations for themselves. They then lost no time in commencing to plough, and planted potatoes and sowed oats and barley. One of them told me that when he was turning over the ground, and placing the potatoes below the sod without manure at such a late period as the second week of June, he did not expect his labour would be of any use. In seven weeks and four days after planting, the potatoes were quite fit for use. The fields of oats and barley were also looking wonderfully well, although, having only commenced to plough in June, the settlers had not an opportunity of cultivating in the usual way. We then spent several days inspecting lands in Southern Manitoba, accompanied by Professor Tanner of the Agricultural College, London, and again visited the Benbecula settlement. After seeing so much of the country, it was most gratifying to us all to find that the selection of the lands for the Benbecula emigrants was judiciously made, and that they themselves were contented and happy, and had every confidence that in a few years they would be comfortable and independent. Their reply to Professor Tanner was—"This is a godly country," and "we have so much grass that one cow here is worth three in the old country." We all stayed with them during the night, and we were not made so comfortable for several days as the night we passed with the Benbecula settlers. Besides grain producing I was pleased to find these settlers had directed their attention to stock breeding. They have already purchased a good shorthorn bull, and I have no doubt whatever the breeding of stock will be a considerable source of profit, as well as the production of grain. There are portions of the level prairie in the north-west territory specially suited for growing wheat, oats, and barley, but on account of the want of shelter and scarcity of water not suited for stock. The lands on which the Benbecula emigrants are located are eminently suited both for producing grain and maintaining stock. I saw within a few miles of the Benbecula settlement the finest crops of wheat and oats ever I saw growing anywhere. The weather since they went out was most enjoyable, and as they found all the reports about being "burned in summer and frozen in winter" were false as regards the summer season, I was afraid they might not make their houses sufficiently comfortable for winter. After being

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EDINBURGH. ' upwards of four weeks in Manitoba and the north-west territory Mr
 ' Edwards and I returned to Winnipeg, and on the 14th of last month
 ' we passed a most interesting afternoon at Kildonan, in the neighbourhoood of Winnipeg, where Lord Selkirk's original settlers got their
 ' lands in 1815. We found that there are seven individuals of the original
 ' settlers still alive. These old people still speak Gaelic, but their descendants speak English. They are all in most comfortable circumstances, having good well-furnished houses. Some of the descendants of these settlers
 ' occupy influential positions at Winnipeg, and are highly respected. We had
 ' an interesting interview with Mr Robert Macbeth, who was born in Sutherland in 1806. He told us they sailed from Thurso, and were landed at
 ' the Hudson Bay and travelled from Hudson Bay to Winnipeg in Red
 ' River carts. I may explain that these are the carts used by half-breeds
 ' and Indians, all made of wood, not a nail or single piece of iron about
 ' them. Mr Macbeth told us that he had land producing good crops con-
 ' tinuously without manure for forty years. On being asked about grass-
 ' hoppers, he said there had been five visits from these in sixty-eight years ;
 ' and on being questioned about the winter, he replied, "We like the
 ' winter as well as we do the summer." The Hon. John Sutherland,
 ' a descendant of one of the original settlers, was examined before a Committee in 1876. He was then fifty-three years of age, and gave his designation as being a "practical farmer." He said—"From my long experience and from what I have seen in other provinces, I have come to the conclusion that the soil, climate, and other natural advantages of Manitoba are conducive to successful farming, and that a poor man can more easily make a living there than in any other part of the Dominion." He added,
 ' "I consider the country healthy." In the course of our visit Mr
 ' Edwards and I ascertained that there are hundreds of thousands of
 ' acres of good land within a few miles of a railway, where thousands of
 ' families could be comfortably located, each getting 160 acres of good
 ' land free from Government. We think there could be no risk whatever
 ' in advancing 500 dollars to each *bona fide* settler ; and if a Government
 ' loan could be obtained on terms similar to those indicated to support
 ' Irish emigration, those who take an interest in the Scotch crofters would
 ' run no risk whatever in associating themselves together to give the
 ' Government the necessary guarantee that the advance would with moderate interest be repaid within ten years. A scheme of this kind could
 ' be placed on a sound financial basis, and would be the means of securing
 ' comfort and independence for the crofters who might be disposed to take
 ' advantage of such a scheme. It may be said—"Why not supply the
 ' money for the improvement of land in the old country ?" It would,
 ' however, be most difficult to get any one who has a practical knowledge
 ' of the expense of reclaiming land in Scotland to become security for the
 ' payment of the amount advanced, if the money were expended in the
 ' old country, where the produce could never meet the expense of reclamation and cultivation, and where the crofters would be utterly unable to
 ' repay the principal. While I have no hesitation in referring to emigration as one of the chief means for improving the Scotch crofters, I wish
 ' to say that I am as strongly opposed to what is termed depopulation as
 ' any one can be, and I think every one who has true patriotic feeling
 ' would like to see as many in the old country as the land can maintain in
 ' a position of comfort ; but when we come to districts where it is impossible for the population to get steady profitable employment, and where
 ' seasons of famine and distress are of periodical occurrence, then it
 ' becomes a most serious question whether the surplus population should
 ' not be helped to go where—in the course of a few years—they will cer-

'tainly attain to positions of comfortable independence, if they are industrious and sober. When I saw, in America, even the negroes, the descendants of those who came there as slaves, in a prosperous condition, it made me sad to think of the misery of the population in the Western Isles of Scotland. No class of people will be made more heartily welcome than the Scotch. In many parts of Canada the manners and customs are more Scotch than in Scotland, and in travelling through Canada it is very difficult to realise that you are thousands of miles from Scotland. It is difficult to go anywhere without meeting Scotchmen; and as a rule they hold the best positions, even from the prime minister downwards. The syndicate who have the control of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which, including branches, extends to upwards of 3300 miles long, are all Scotchmen; and we were told that in the new town of Winnipeg on St Andrew's day over 300 Scotchmen are in the habit of dining together, cheered by the music of the bagpipes. Emigration to Canada with large and fast ocean steamers, making the passage in about nine days, and the railway to take emigrants from the port of landing to their destination, is different altogether from what emigration used to be in former days; and as arrangements can be made for hundreds of emigrants to travel together, and to be located so near each other as to get the benefit of schools and churches, the disadvantages formerly connected with emigration may be made to disappear altogether. This affords an opening for the cottars, of whom the crofters as well as the proprietors complain, and if these cottars had any idea of the advantages they would reap by going to Manitoba they would not remain a day in their present miserable position. The Canadian Government are most desirous to afford every facility they can to Scotch emigrants. They say what is true, that the land, however fertile, is of no value till cultivated, and hence their readiness to give good land free to *bona fide* settlers. It was my intention, while referring to emigration, to refer to some of the reforms that would be necessary for those who remain, and there are one or two things which I wish in a sentence or two with all earnestness to impress upon the Commissioners. In the Western Islands the fisheries must be looked to as one of the means of providing a livelihood for a considerable portion of the inhabitants, and unless postal arrangements and steam communication are provided it will be utterly impossible to develop the fishings in the manner in which they could be developed. At present the steamers going to the Outer Hebrides leave those islands on the Monday morning, the very worst day of the week. It is impossible to send fish or perishable articles away on the Monday, and consequently the people are debarred from sending these to market. If any arrangement could be made to improve the postal communication three times a week in summer and twice in winter, the steamer carrying the mails might be used for conveying fish or other articles to market,—a much greater benefit to the people than any aid that might have to be sent to them from time to time in seasons of distress and famine. The extension of the telegraph also to these places is a matter of very much importance. I believe this has been brought under the notice of the Commissioners by fish-curers and others. So deeply impressed was Lady Cathcart with the importance of the question, that she came under an obligation some years ago to the Post Office to pay a considerable sum, which extends over a number of years. Through the assistance thus given the telegraph has been extended to Loch Boisdale; but Barra is the principal place, and a cable would be necessary to extend it to Barra. I have only, in conclusion, to refer in a few words to what came under my notice when I was going across to America. I had the pleasure of meeting the Roman Catholic

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Ranald Macdonald.

EDIN-BURGH. ‘ Bishop of Kingston, who is intimately acquainted with the Highlanders in Glengarry county and other places in Canada. He says they are comfortable, and a deserving class of people. He told me that the first bishop was the Rev. Alexander Macdonnell, whose history is very remarkable. He (Rev. Alexander Macdonnell) was a native of the west of Scotland. He had first the charge of a congregation in Dumfriesshire, and removed his flock from that place to Glasgow to get better employment for them. Depression of trade took place sometime thereafter, and he transferred his people to London, and went along with them. They did not succeed in London so well as expected; and rather than see them in poor circumstances, he went out and established them in Glengarry county, Canada. On account of his devoted services, he was consecrated a bishop in 1819. He was the first bishop of Kingston, and at that time his diocese extended to the North Pole on the one hand, and to the Pacific on the other. The church he built, called St Raphael, is still standing near the boundary of the township of Lochiel. There are now in the western portion of what was originally the diocese of the late Bishop Macdonnell, seven different bishoprics and three hundred priests. When Canada was threatened with invasion, Bishop Macdonnell offered to place himself at the head of his place, and guard a certain portion of the boundary. On account of his loyalty he was made a member of the privy council. He was a true patriot, a devoted Catholic, and a loyal British subject, and his example is one eminently deserving of imitation.’

46125. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—To whom did the lands belong on which the Benbecula settlement was made?—To the Canadian Government.

46126. What stock did the settlers put upon their lots?—Most of them had a pair of oxen to work the land, and all the others have got one cow or two cows, except one crofter. I was very much disappointed to find that one of the crofters had got everything else, but was not able to get a cow.

46127. What was the value of the implements they required?—They would require as a start from £75 to £100 between the cattle and the implements.

46128. And the house?—The house they put up themselves.

46129. How did they live before the house was erected?—They lived in a tent for a week or two, and then put up a sod hut. They arrived there in May, and when they had time they put up a wooden house.

46130. Who provided the tent?—They provided it themselves.

46131. Had they money to buy it?—Yes.

46132. Is there ample wood for building houses upon these lots?—Yes.

46133. And for fuel?—Yes.

46134. You remarked that these lots had been selected with great judgment. You have travelled over the district. Are there many lots of the same kind to be had?—There are not a great many to be had so near the railway. There were a great many vacant lots at the time they went there, but the best lots have been very fast taken up.

46135. Are there other lots well wooded and well watered?—Yes, the only disadvantage is the further distance from the railway, which is a great disadvantage.

46136. Now, these people took £100 to stock their lot of land; do you think a settler could advantageously settle down on such a lot with less than £100?—Not less than £100. I have given very considerable attention to that subject, and after making inquiries as to how the people succeeded who had perhaps a smaller sum, and others a larger sum, I am inclined to think if they have enough to give them a start, it is not a dis-

EDINBURGH.
Ranald
Macdonald.

advantage to have but little. It is generally those who commence with small capital that are in the end the most successful.

46137. Did you hear of any who were unsuccessful from the smallness of the capital with which they started?—Not a single one.

46138. You think £75 is the minimum?—I think so.

46139. *The Chairman.*—Do you think the Highland settlers, from the nature of their previous life and habitations, are more competent to put up the first house than people who come from other parts of the country, and are accustomed to better houses?—I have not the slightest doubt of it. No class of settlers can more easily get into the way of making a start in such a place as Manitoba than the Highland crofter.

46140. Do you think there is any advantage in the poorest class of settlers starting on a small area, or do you think the more land they get the better as long as they get it for nothing?—I think they should not take less than 160 acres. In Glengarry I ascertained that the extent was 100 acres, and they all regretted that it was so small. It is admitted by all that 100 acres is too small, and I should say 160 is the minimum extent that they should begin with. If they have even a daughter above a certain age they could take 320, and if there are two sons and a daughter in the family they could get 640 acres of excellent land, and nothing to do but begin to plough.

46141. A family so constituted might consistently with the regulations in force there get a square mile all at once. So much the better for that family. But does not the concession in advantageous positions of such large areas to a single family with various members rather operate prejudicially to other people who are coming at their heels, and who want to be provided for too? The land is after all not inexhaustible?—That is a most natural observation to occur to those who are acquainted with the small extent of land in the old country, but any one going there, and seeing the vast extent of excellent land only inviting people to come and cultivate the surface, would never have to complain that 160 acres was too much, or 320.

46142. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—With reference to your very interesting statement about the emigrants whom you sent out, what is done with the places that are vacated by them?—The instructions were to add them to the adjoining crofts.

46143. In all cases?—These are the distinct instructions—add them to the adjoining crofts.

46144. And if emigration to any extent will now go on, such as has been begun by you, it is Lady Gordon-Cathcart's orders that the places they vacate be added to the neighbouring crofts?—Her most distinct and imperative orders.

46145. That was not the case of old, I think, because, from a statement you yourself rendered, when some emigrants were sent away from Barra, their possessions were not given to the crofters that remained, but were incorporated into the farm of Eoligary?—From my own knowledge I cannot say. It was long before my time.

46146. This is what you stated yourself on 26th May—‘I have made inquiries as to what changes had taken place since 1836 as to boundaries and otherwise, and I have noted the result of these inquiries in pencil on the original copy. I find that the following townships and islands then under crofters have been added to the large grazings, viz., Hillesay, Fuay, Nigh, Green, Cliad, Fuday, and Gigha,—in all, sixty-one crofters; rent, £446, 8s.’?—Yes; I made inquiries at your request, and gave you faithfully the result of my inquiries.

46147. But no such thing is intended now?—No, certainly not.

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46148. Now, did you satisfy yourself, after the most careful inquiry, knowing the dislike of the people to leave their native place, that it was not possible when leases of large grazing farms fell out, to distribute these farms among the remainder of the people with advantage to themselves and the estate?—I have given that matter very careful consideration, and it would be rather difficult for me to compress my answer into a few words. But I may say this, that I don't think any scheme could be devised by either distribution or exchange or migration from one place to another, within the limits of these islands, that could possibly benefit the people to any extent to be compared with the benefit they would certainly derive, if they were sober and industrious, by going where they would become at once the absolute owners of the soil they till, and get such a large extent of land that one would think they would almost be unable to make use of it.

46149. Lady Gordon-Cathcart is giving them £100 each; will she give £100 to any of the other crofters if they remove from any of her estates here without compelling them to go abroad?—I don't think so.

46150. To enable them to take a croft in some other part of the Highlands?—No, I think not; at least I could not recommend her Ladyship to do so. My desire to benefit the crofter who might go to some place on the mainland and the crofter who might wish to go to Manitoba would be exactly the same; I would wish to benefit the one the same as the other, but if a crofter went and settled down upon any place in Scotland known to me with £100, and another went to Manitoba, the difference is simply this, that I feel convinced and satisfied that the one who went to Manitoba would in a few years be perfectly able to pay back the money with interest, whereas I should be very much afraid that the crofter who merely migrated to some other place in the old country would not be in that position, even if the one was as honestly inclined as the other—the circumstances are so different, and the opportunities of getting on are so different altogether.

46151. Then emigration is your great panacea?—Well, I know that to many people the word emigration is a most unpopular one in the meantime, but as long as I hold the convictions I do hold I don't wish to shrink from the position of saying that I think for a man whose capital is his arms—for a sober working man—to go to Manitoba is infinitely better than anything he could do at home.

46152. Supposing that to be so—and I have no doubt you conscientiously hold that opinion—what about the aged parents or the young families? What are you going to do with those dependent upon them at home?—Supposing a man who had four or five young children asked my advice, I would say, 'You should not go to that country till your children are older and able to help you.' If there were two aged people who had no person to support them there, I should say, 'Don't go'; but, if they had sons and daughters able to maintain them, I would not say to an old man who had pluck to say 'I will go,'—I would not say 'Stay at home.' From what I have seen of the people there, I believe notwithstanding the climate it is a very healthy place.

46153. You made one or two remarks which rather grated upon my ears about the Rev. Mr M'Intosh the priest, and you spoke about the delegates as the M'Intosh delegates. Now Mr M'Intosh, I understand, was examined at Loch Boisdale?—He was.

46154. And we had a third meeting at Benbecula the day after?—Yes.

46155. Would it not have been better for you to have made those observations then, as you were present at all the places within a reasonable distance, and given Mr M'Intosh the opportunity of answering them?—Well, I am quite sure, from what you have seen of me at the different

meetings, you must know I am desirous to act with perfect fairness to every one. I was unwilling to appear before you repeatedly or to take up too much of your time, and it was for the very reason to which you have adverted that I came to Lord Napier, and he was good enough to give me an opportunity in Barra to reply on the subject of some statements made there. In South Uist I was not afforded that opportunity, and at Benbecula there were so many anxious to speak, that I abstained from finishing my statement, and I arranged to meet you at Inverness. I regret I had not an opportunity of referring to those statements on the spot, but it is not my fault; and I regret extremely that I felt called upon to refer to them at all, but I thought it was proper to do so, because I stated nothing but what was strictly true.

46156. *Professor Mackinnon.*—I suppose you are more satisfied since you came back than before you went away of the suitableness of the northwest territory for emigrants?—I would not have taken upon myself to give expression to what I have stated before I went and saw the country.

46157. And I suppose with your very great knowledge of the Outer Hebrides, you are satisfied there is a very large number of people there who would be the better of removing to a richer country?—I have not the slightest doubt whatever that if they were voluntarily to say 'We want to be helped to go there,' in the course of a few years they would bless those who had given them assistance to go to that place.

46158. From the accounts we have already had of the estates that are under your management, it is quite manifest that the expenditure of the past cannot be continued. I understand Lady Gordon-Cathcart spends more money on these estates than she takes out of them as rent?—Yes, it is quite impossible to continue spending the money that has been expended.

46159. I have no doubt there are many proprietors who have the will to benefit the people that she has, but comparatively few who have the power; but these things have their limits, and you think a large number of these people in their own interest ought to leave these estates and go abroad?—Well, I have no hesitation in saying it is for their interest. I will never say anything to Lady Gordon-Cathcart beyond offering to assist them, and if they, after hearing what their friends write, and considering the prospects they would have by staying at home or by going away—then if they come to a conclusion in favour of emigration, without any pressure being put upon them to go, they would get every assistance possible.

46160. You are quite satisfied it would be a very great advantage to those that remain that their crofts will be enlarged?—I have not the slightest doubt of that.

46161. If they were trebled and quadrupled all the better?—They would require to be quadrupled.

46162. Well, looking to the utmost extent that it is reasonable to look to, the overplus of the population being provided for by emigration—taking the most favourable view of it—don't you think that as a matter of policy, if it were practicable, alongside of emigration there should be more of the land in these parts put into the hands of the people?—Well, we have been endeavouring to work in that direction. During the last few years Lady Gordon-Cathcart felt there was something wrong when there was nothing to supply the gap between the very small crofter and the large sheep farmer, and we have within the last two years been endeavouring to supply this gap. At Barra the farm of Allosdale is given to seven people, and that, practically, would be a step of the ladder, and offering an inducement to the industrious to step up higher and higher. At Gransdale we were unable to give the land to the middle class people, because we had so many of the small class to be supplied, and I made that into

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'Macdonald. 46163. At the present moment matters are roughly in this way, that the estates are just about in equal parts divided between large and small tenants, acre for acre ?—There is a larger extent of the arable land under crofters, and a larger proportion of the hill ground under sheep.

46164. But it is about the same in acreage ?—There is more under sheep.

46165. And the small crofters number ?—Upwards of 900.

46166. Along with 300 or 400 squatters ?—Well, the number of squatters is indefinite.

46167. And the number of large farmers is short of a dozen ?—Something like that. These statistics have been prepared and given in by Mr Maclellan.

46168. Now, I suppose, by no possible scheme of emigration could it be expected that the number of small tenants would be reduced to anything approaching the number of large tenants ? By that scheme alone you could not provide the regular system of gradation you wish ?—No.

46169. Then, to carry out the scheme you wish, it would seem almost necessary that alongside of it the other process should have to be adopted too ?—Yes.

46170. And you think the two might perhaps be attempted together ?—Well, gradually.

46171. And with a fair prospect of success, because I suppose the small mixed farm—half arable and half pasture—at £100, in these parts, would have as many competitors as the big farm ?—Possibly more ; but there is this difficulty. If you have a large piece of hill ground you could not so easily let it into small farms as you would do with arable land. In fact, the physical features of the ground have to be taken into account, and the places capable of subdivision.

46172. You would yourself approve, as a matter of policy, where practicable, that not only should every opportunity be taken for increasing the crofts, but also and at the same time that every opportunity should be taken of giving to the smaller tenants a greater portion of the area of those estates than they have just now ?—Yes, to supply the middle steps of the ladder—having more of the middle class farms.

46173. So you would have a double outlet—on one side by emigration, and on the other hand by spreading them out on the surface of the land where they are ?—Yes.

46174. You think that would be a wise policy to carry out in all these places with which you are best acquainted in the Western Islands ?—I have no doubt of it.

46175. And you would like to see it carried into effect ?—I would like to see it carried into effect in such a way that there would be some reasonable prospect of the people being benefited by it. I am quite satisfied that certain propositions have been made for the distribution of the people in unsuitable places, and though I don't wish to appear to make anything like a prediction, I would have the greatest fear that if these people were squatted down upon sheep pastures, the result would be very disappointing ; and I think no one would seriously propose such a thing as has been proposed except people who really had no practical acquaintance with the subject.

46176. But where the places would be suitable for mixed farms or the like of that, you would like that there should be a larger number of substantial crofters or small farmers on these places than there have been for

a generation back?—I should like exceedingly to see in the Highlands, where the ground and soil are both suitable for such an arrangement, something like what we have in Aberdeenshire and Banffshire. We have large farms with tenants paying £300, £200, and £150, but the great bulk pay from £80 to £150.

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Ranald
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46177. And considerable tracts of the Hebrides are suitable for such a distribution as that?—Well, they are not so easily distributed in that way as on the mainland, but there are portions, and these portions might be selected.

46178. Of course, it is no secret that that was not the policy of the past?—It was not, either in the isles or on the mainland.

46179. And you are quite convinced from your own experience that that past policy was not a wise one?—I am quite satisfied, from my observation on the east coast of Scotland as well as the west coast of Scotland, that the farmers who are the strongest—I mean those who will stand bad times—are not either the very smallest or the large farmers, but what I would term the medium-sized farmers. I have found during the late period of agricultural depression, not only in places which came under my own official notice, but from inquiries I made in regard to other localities, that the farmers who complained least throughout the east and west of Scotland were the tenants of medium-sized farms. I don't propose that an estate should be all divided into medium-sized farms. I think the sizes should be various, but my idea is that there should be more of the middle-sized farms than of any other class of farms.

46180. And that would just mean a reversal of the policy of the past as it has existed for the last thirty or forty years?—To a large extent it will be.

46181. And you would gladly see that carried out?—Yes.

ALEXANDER ROBERTSON, Journalist, Edinburgh (58)—examined.

46182. *The Chairman?*—You have a statement to make?—The testimony I propose to adduce is founded on personal observations made in different parts of the Highlands, including Easter Ross, the Black Isle, Badenoch, Lochaber, Rannoch, Athole, Strathtay, Strathbraan, Braemar, Breadalbane, and Lochaweside. I have also during the last forty years sought every opportunity of acquiring authentic information from old people belonging to the north, some of them centenarians, whose memories, clear and distinct, reached back to a period close on the Rebellion of 1745. I have had important opportunities of knowing the condition of the land question, not only in this country but in America, where I was editor of the *Produce Exchange Bulletin* of New York. The result of my inquiries was to satisfy me that the disabilities of the Highlanders originated from three distinct laws,—the game laws, the law of hypothec, and the laws of entail and primogeniture. As your time is short, I shall pass over a variety of matters and go into the exact state of affairs as they stand at present, and the main causes of distress in the Highlands. ‘Within the last thirty or at all events fifty years there has been a falling off in the material productions of the entire north country of not less than 50 per cent., with a consequent injury to the population of the Highlands. Instead of improving as other parts of the country has done, the section alluded to has retrograded, and there is now less food and other products raised there than there was at the Rebellion of 1745, or at the commencement of the century. The introduction of the blackfaced breed of sheep

Alexander
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Alexander
Robertson.

' about a hundred years ago, and the more recent raising of Cheviots, helped greatly to increase the prosperity of the north country ; but these advantages have been more than counterbalanced by the enormous increase of sporting grounds, both for grouse and deer. So far from the Highlands being over-peopled, they are greatly under-stocked, for by the present methods of cultivation there is abundance of room for three times the number of inhabitants now in that country. It is true that in certain centres the number of families on the land has dangerously increased, owing to the people being huddled together in townships where they have heedlessly been allowed to squat, and where they have become utterly demoralised, or at any rate pauperised. Before the Highlanders were removed from their native glens famines were unknown ; and they suffered less from deficient harvests than the inhabitants of the low country. This is pretty evident from the large number of stalwart recruits furnished to the army and the navy ; and there were few if indeed any districts in the empire which turned out larger contingents than did the now unfortunate island of Skye. The counties of Sutherland and Ross furnished the rank and file of the 93rd Highlanders—there being only thirty-six out of 1049 not belonging to the country—and this corps was considered the most stalwart of any foot soldiers under the Crown, proving incontestibly that they could not have been reared in a famine-stricken country. It is not then to the natural infertility of the Highlands that the present and former famines are to be attributed, but to unwise arrangements made in regard to the management of the landed estates, more particularly in the Hebrides. Further, there is not the least reason to fear that if more enlightened and more humane counsels prevailed, such calamities as those of last season would again require to call forth public sympathy and benevolence. While great changes for the worse have taken place in the Highlands, it is proper to notice that in one respect there has been quite a change for good, and that too in a very important matter. With but a few exceptions—very few indeed—thirty years ago the landowners and factors were a cruel and heartless race, who cared nothing for the feelings or interests of the people who had been born and bred on their properties, and they drove them away to America or to the large towns as unceremoniously as they did flocks of sheep or herds of black cattle. Now, with the exception of the Duke of Argyll, his factor or chamberlain, and a few others, the landlords enjoy the respect which they certainly deserve of the people, whose destinies are to a certain extent confided to their care. No kinder or more considerate owners of land ever lived in the Highlands or elsewhere than Lady Gordon-Cathcart and Lord Macdouald, and their representatives seem actuated by a like noble spirit. Tormore and Mr M'Donald, Portree, are quite different men from those who had the management of the Breadalbane and other Highland properties since I recollect. Now, the crofters and cottars are treated with becoming consideration and civility ; whereas formerly they were generally spoken to as if they were a horde of drunken tinkers squatting on a lawn, and as was stated by one of them in Breadalbane, "we are not thought of so much account as a pheasant or a pointer dog." At the beginning of this century the shooting of moorfowl had not become fashionable, and very small sums were received by proprietors for the privilege of shooting over their heathery wilds. Game preservation in the times of our grandfathers was confined to keeping down foxes, hawks, and eagles ; and poaching, excepting in the two royal forests of Glenartney and Benachrombeg since named Glen Tilt, was an unknown offence. While the letting of moors for grouse shooting has enriched landed proprietors all over the Highlands,

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EDINBURGH.

Alexander
Robertson.

owing to the abundance of the heather to be found there, without which the grouse cannot thrive, there has been a corresponding and progressive injury to the country. Every sovereign paid by south country sportsmen to Highland lairds is just so much of a premium given for keeping the country desolate, and for crushing down whatever native industry existed among the clansmen of the land of Albion. But for the heath-fowl there are now thousands of fine slopes in the northern counties, and millions of acres lying unproductive comparatively, which would have been planted with the hardy *Pinus sylvestris* or the rapidly-growing Swiss larch, so valuable for railroad and other purposes. Such forests would have greatly sheltered the country and sensibly have improved the climate. They would have afforded abundance of employment for the spare time of crofters and cottars, just as the districts of Athole and Breadalbane have done for half a century past, and where in consequence there is to be witnessed as hardy, industrious, and intelligent a population as can be found in any part of the world. On the small estate of Dalguise, as well as on the surrounding properties of Kinnaird, Craig Vinean, Ladywell, Murthly, &c., forests have produced £1 per acre per annum, which, but for said plantations, would not have yielded more than 1s. per acre for sporting purposes. Then, but for the grouse, there are millions of acres of heathery wastes which would have been smiling under grass, capable of yielding double the quantity of beef and mutton and wool now sent from the Highlands to southern markets. From an economic point of view, the grouse reared in the north (which cost the country so much) is of no account as an article of food. Such a writer as Adam Smith would not have claimed for the heath-fowl any more protection or consideration than for a wood pigeon or wild duck. The raising of grouse by the artificial and legislative inventions has then become a most serious injury to home colonisation, and the restrictions so placed on the natural development of the soil by the heath-fowl mania has had the effect of banishing many of the most worthy and patriotic sons of Caledonia to Canada, Australia, and the United States, to seek homes in place of those denied to them in the land of their birth—a land which had been fertilised with the blood of their ancestors poured out like funeral wine in its defence, and which they too would have been so willing and able, if necessary, to protect with their claymores. So far from any one being able to speak a single word on behalf of the legislative cultivation or development of the heath-fowl, it ought to be condemned strongly as a cruel and heartless means of inflicting unnecessary pain and torture on the lower orders of creation. The Cockney who fires at the centre of a covey of grouse, wounding a greater number than he can kill, is much more deserving of fine or imprisonment than the Gilmerton carter who overworks his horse seeking to procure an income for the support of his family. As Lord Denman observed in the House of Lords, when the Pigeon Shooting Penalties Bill was being discussed on the 17th August last, that the said sport was less cruel than a grouse drive. It cannot be pleaded on behalf of this grovelling and unmanly occupation, totally unworthy of the name of sport, that like fox hunting it encourages brave and resolute action or invigorating exercise. There is literally no excitement in grouse slaying, any more at least than there would be in firing into a flock of geese or other barn-door fowls. In shooting the tiger or in wounding a bear there is the excitement created by danger, and the same feeling is raised in the breast of the lion hunter, but the grouse devotee has nothing enlivening or exciting in his rôle, any more than a butcher has in taking the life of an innocent bleating lamb just removed from its dam. Another objection to the development of heath-fowl in the Highlands is

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EDINBURGH.
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Alexander
Robertson.

' the low, degrading, and demoralising manners it develops among young
' watchers and gamekeepers, who as part of their profession endeavour to
' entrap their neighbours into breaches of the highly injurious legislation
' for the protection of game. These novitiates are educated to become
' suspicious, lazy, and quarrelsome, and the only advantage they are to the
' State is the duty they pay to the revenue in the shape of whisky duty
' —that is when they cannot procure their favourite beverage from such
' a smuggling bothy as William Black describes as having been operated
' by big Murdoch near Ault-nam-Baá. The encouragement given by
' Government to the growth of heather in the Highlands—a plant all but
' worthless to man, has another disadvantage by no means unworthy of
' attention. In the higher glens, which are usually late in their harvests,
' the grouse very frequently "pack" on the stooks of the crofters and
' farmers, and destroy not a little of the grain which they have been at so
' much pains to get brought to maturity in face of the steepness of the
' fields they have often to cultivate, the severities of a fickle and tempestuous
' climate, as well as from forcing their crops from a soil not usually
' very deep nor naturally fertile. From the special inducements held out
' by Government for the extension of sporting estates, as they are called,
' the prosperity of the population has been heavily handicapped, as from
' the mountainous nature of the country, the constituents of the rocks—
' mostly Lawrentian in character—the game law presses with unequalled
' severity upon the north country ; and so long as this arbitrary and iniquitous
' legislation is allowed to defile the statute book, anything in the shape
' of remedial measures cannot fail to be of a disappointing description, as
' "fixity of tenure," "valuations for improvements," &c., will have no meaning
' where the cultivators of the soil are forced to leave their straths and
' their glens to make room for the feathered denizens of the mountain and
' fell. Had the Highlander and his natural enemy been left alone to fight
' out their struggle for bare existence, the landowners would have been
' forced, as they certainly should be forthwith, to spend their energies and
' invest their capital in the endeavour to obtain returns in a legitimate
' manner. They would have had to drain the mosses, and to irrigate the
' bare ridges, as the people in Switzerland have long done even under greater
' disadvantages. But for the highly injurious effect of the game law there
' could now be a million of sheep raised in the Highlands in addition to
' the number now maintained ; and besides, there could certainly be more
' than a million of acres under thriving plantations yielding timber to the
' value of £1 per acre and more south of the watershed, after paying all
' the expenses of planting the seed, making roads through the woods, and
' building dykes for protecting the plants. Were the heather burned, rich
' grasses like *Poa alpina* could be sown, and doubtless some of the varieties
' recently discovered in the Himalayas and other foreign countries would
' be found most suitable for transplantation to the Grampians. Landed
' proprietors should be compelled to turn their lands to account, or suffer
' them to be operated upon by the State or by other hands. The English
' statute called interdict of waste could be most advantageously introduced
' into the Highlands. Those having any doubt as to the suitableness of
' the Highlands for growing fine timber need only examine the natural
' woods of Strathspey, Rannoch, Braemar, Murthly, and Strathdulnian (or
' Duthil) to come to the conclusion that enterprise could do much to assist
' nature. Birch grows wild high on Benvenue, Birnam, and many other
' high hills, so where it can be seen in a thriving condition timber of a
' more valuable description could be successfully grown. In fine, what
' between arboriculture and sheep grazing, the products of the Highlands
' could be reasonably expected to be increased two million pounds sterling

EDIN-
BURGH.

EDINBURGH.

Alexander
Robertson.

' in annual value, while giving employment to a vast number of people, all
' by the abolition of the game law or laws, which are at present the
' source of much injustice and misery. With regard to deer forests, at the
' commencement of the ceutury there were only a few thousand acres
' under deer, as no one was at liberty to have a forest, chase, or park with-
' out a charter from the Crown. Anciently there were courts specially
' constituted for the trial of persons offending against the forest laws,
' and I knew one trespasser who was fined £5 for shooting a deer, by the
' keeper of one of the royal forests, Benachrombeg, now forming a part of
' the Glen Tilt sporting ground. These forest laws have, it is believed,
' fallen into desuetude, and their penalties could not now be enforced.
' Whether red deer are royal game now is a question regarding which
' there is a good deal of room for dispute, and also whether there is any
' law in existence which could be applied for their protection. The right
' of unauthorised landowners erecting forests is also one which claims con-
' sideration, as many lawyers are of opinion that the royal authority is still
' necessary for legalising the throwing of lands waste for this purpose.
' In ancient times, even when moors were of little or no agricultural value,
' there was a strong feeling against apportioning land for sporting pur-
' poses; and the qualification for shooting all kinds was the ownership of
' a ploughgate of land, whatever that meant. In other words, the owner-
' ship of an estate gave no special privilege for sporting upon it. I knew
' a gentleman who, in travelling from the south of England to Lochaber,
' shot over all the ground where he could find game, and he was only once
' challenged, and then he was not put to any trouble. Our ancestors were
' very chary as to sanctioning the appropriation of lands, or misappropri-
' ation rather, for such useless purposes as deer shooting; and the sooner
' public attention is drawn to the erection system the better, as the land
' devoted to this purpose is wholly lost to the nation. Forests certainly
' do not more than repay the current outlays for wages to keepers, and for
' feeding stuffs such as hay during winter. Their flesh is of no commercial
' value in our markets, and the sole reason for the maintenance of these
' vast preserves is the gratification certain people receive from witnessing
' the destruction and death struggles of the antlered monarch of the glen.
' The same sort of pleasure could be obtained in any abattoir at no cost to
' the highly refined observer, while no loss would thereby be caused to the
' nation. The case was different formerly, when stalking was in fashion,
' and when the shooting of a stag, say in Glen Tilt, half a century ago, was
' an event of considerable importance in the locality, and when leading
' statesmen triumphed in such an achievement. In centuries gone by red
' deer were to be found straying all over Scotland; and so far as the High-
' lands are concerned, even if the supposed legal protection were withdrawn,
' there would still be found no inconsiderable number roaming over the
' mountain fastnesses, yielding far more sport in their capture than is now
' enjoyed by the present so-called sportsmen of the Winans type. Indeed,
' so cruel and wanton is the present mode of deer-slaying, that those engaged
' in it should be criminally prosecuted for cruelty to animals. The
' American millionaire is a typical deer-slayer, who pays some £20,000 per
' annum as rent for forests, and while sitting in an easy chair he has
' droves of deer driven past him, at which he fires off his rifle, which has
' been loaded to his hand.'

46183. I think you had better not descant or enlarge too much upon an individual case. Mr Winans is not here, and we have no opportunity of correcting any errors into which you may fall!—Very well. 'In order to arrive at some idea of the national resources altogether wasted for the grovelling excitement of deer slaughtering, reference may be made to the

EDINBURGH. ‘ Black Mount forest belonging to Lord Breadalbane, which covers over
 80,000 acres. A census was taken some years ago of deer roaming over
 it, and there were found to be 18,000 in all. Allowing six sheep for a
 deer, this would show grazing for 108,000 sheep. In former times the
 sheep from this now unproductive region “topped” the market at Falkirk
 Tryst. Glen Tilt, or what is now called the forest by that name, was
 stated in evidence by the late proprietor—so-called—as covering 100,000
 acres. It must be borne in mind, however, that only a small part of the
 glen has forest rights, viz., Benachrombeg, and of which forest the Duke
 of Athole is but hereditary keeper. This lovely and fertile strath
 formerly maintained some 800 of a population; but the people were
 evicted, because they would not compel their youth to enlist in the Athole
 volunteers, a fencible regiment designed for seven years’ service at home,
 and to be thereafter disposed of to the East India Company, by which
 corporation the regiment numbered the 77th was regularly purchased.
 Over and above the stock kept in Glen Tilt at present, which is one of
 the most fertile pasturages in Britain, a large stock of cattle and sheep
 could be fattened for markets in the south; the exact number it would be
 somewhat difficult to name, but farmers in the north maintain that Glen
 Tilt could graze a stock of 90,000 sheep over and above its present num-
 ber. Not a small part of the waste ground is well suited for plantation,
 and owing to the fertility of the soil, land so utilised would, if judiciously
 managed, yield from £2 to £3 per acre while under crop, besides all
 expenses. Many of the forests are not so well suited for pasture or
 plantation as Tiltside; but, wherever deer can find subsistence, the hardy
 blackfaced wedder can thrive; and were wind-breaks reared on suitable
 spots, the grazing would be much more valuable. A great improvement
 could be introduced by the north country proprietors into their pastures by
 the erection of stells, i.e., wooden shades for sheltering the sheep, parti-
 cularly ewes at lambing time, and for storing hay and corn meal for feed-
 ing when pasture was not to be had owing to the depth of snow. Ensilage
 too would prove more beneficial in the Highlands than anywhere in
 Britain, owing to the drenching rains washing the substance out of the
 coils of cut grass. The opening up of grouse and deer forest lands to the
 magical influences of capital, enterprise, and industry would not only
 extend a hundredfold whatever remains of commerce there may still be
 left in the north, but an enormous addition would take place in the
 supply of wool and skins, the graziers receiving large quantities of smear-
 ing materials *per contra*. Farmers in the lowlands of the counties of
 Perth, Stirling, and Forfar would benefit largely by an increased demand
 for winterings, and the enterprising agriculturists of the Lothians could
 then depend upon obtaining supplies of wedders for fattening on their
 turnips, of which at present there is a marked deficiency. Taking a
 moderate calculation, probably the land now lying waste under deer could
 carry a stock of 2,000,000 sheep—including equivalents, as cattle, ponies,
 &c.; this would yield an outcome of say 650,000 sheep, which would form
 no inconsiderable addition to our food supplies. Then again their skins
 would be worth say 2s. 6d. each, which would extend the trade of
 skinneries in Edinburgh and other places. Altogether the loss which is
 now suffered by the country by deer might be safely enough set down at
 £1,000,000 per annum. Although this may not appear a great find or
 gain to the nation at large, the abolition of the legal protection to deer
 forests in the north would entirely revolutionise the Highlands, and that
 in a very few years. Large tracts of moorland now lying utterly desolate
 would soon be waving with a rich foliage, and other wilds would again
 become resonant with the bleating of sheep. I come now to the law of

' primogeniture and entail, in regard to which my sentiments are exactly in
' accord with those of your Lordship as stated before the Social Science
' Congress in 1872.'

46184. I cannot allow a general discussion of the law of primogeniture and entail to be read aloud. If there is any particular passage that has reference to the condition of the crofters or cottars I shall not exclude that, even at this hour?—' Well, I wish to call your attention to the consolidation of estates in the Highlands by the operation of the law of primogeniture and entail, as shown by the following list:—The Sinclair estates, 78,000 acres; the Menzies estates, 68,000 acres; the Ramsden estates, 69,000 acres; Huntly estates, 85,000 acres; Glengarry (Ellice) estates, 99,000 acres; Lochiel estates, 126,000 acres; Chisholm estates, 113,000 acres; Evan Bailie's estates, 165,000 acres; Gordon Cluny estates, 112,000 acres; Invercauld estates, 109,000 acres; Lovat estates, 161,000 acres; Macdonald (Lord) estates, 129,000 acres; M'Intosh estates, 124,000 acres; M'Leod estates, 143,000 acres; Gairloch estates, 164,000 acres; Poltalloch estates, 84,000 acres; Matheson (M.P.) estates, 220,000 acres; Matheson (trustees) estates, 406,000 acres; Richmond and Gordon estates, 286,000 acres; Seafield estates, 305,000 acres; Balnagowan estates, 166,000 acres; Argyll estates, 175,000 acres; Athole estates, 194,000 acres; Fife estates, 257,000 acres; Sutherland estates, 1,358,545 acres. My argument goes to show that all these estates are so largely consolidated by the law of entail and primogeniture that they are injurious to the public, and dangerous to the liberty of the citizen; that they restrict all manner of production in respect of many of the landlords being heavily burdened already, and incapable of supplying the capital necessary for their development; and that it is impossible to suppose that any remedy your Lordship and the Commissioners can devise can be of any avail so long as this process of consolidation goes on. In conclusion, as no part of the British empire has suffered so much from the effects of feudal institutions for the last hundred years, it is now full time that the Legislature should devise measures for, as far as it is possible, correcting the errors of the past. While much undoubtedly may be accomplished by building harbours on the northern and western coasts, no real prosperity need be hoped for so long as the great class laws of primogeniture and entail are allowed to remain in force; and the same may be affirmed concerning the statutes protecting grouse and deer to the great detriment of the country—for, as Lord Brougham said, these feudalistic institutions spoil one class and degrade all others. To attempt any minor remedial measures for improving the condition of the Highlands and Islands, without in the first place removing these great stumbling-blocks, would be like pulling down a wall with the right hand, and trying to build it up with the left.'

46185. I want to ask you one question with reference to the matter of grouse moors; can you give me any opinion on this point, whether there are any moors used and let for shooting grouse, from which live stock is entirely excluded for the purpose of encouraging shooting?—There is no grouse ground that I know of in all the Highlands from which stock is excluded entirely.

46186. Then do you know any cases in which a smaller stock is studiously kept for the purpose of encouraging grouse shooting?—I do not know of any grouse moor in the Highlands where a contrary law operates; in other words, I do not know of any grouse moor but would be immensely increased in production but for the rearing of grouse.

46187. That is not exactly an answer to my question. Do you know any moor on which, for instance, a half stock is kept, in order to increase

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Alexander
Robertson.

EDINBURGH. the number of grouse or the value of the shooting?—Not exactly shooting, but deer forest.

EDINBURGH. 46188. I asked in reference to grouse?—There is none that I know.

Alexander Robertson. 46189. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Do I understand you to say that Lord Breadalbane's forest, the Blackmount, would carry 108,000 sheep?

—Yes.

46190. It contains upwards of 80,000 acres?—Upwards of 80,000 acres.

46191. That is to say, it is ground of such quality as will carry one sheep and one-third to the acre?—I have obtained statistics showing that there were 18,000 deer counted, and I take six sheep for one deer (though some would make it seven), and on that calculation, and from information I have received from graziers in that part, I believe the Blackmount would carry a stock of 100,000 sheep; and I may tell you further that there are various farms there which are calculated to produce the finest blackfaced mutton in the Highlands.

46192. Then practically you take one sheep and a quarter or one sheep and one-third to the acre?—That is so.

46193. Have you made calculations regarding other forests on the same basis?—Glen Tilt I have calculated on the same basis.

[ADJOURNED.]

TARBERT, ARGYLLSHIRE, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1883. ARGYLL.

TARBERT.Present:—

Lord NAPIER and ETTRICK, K.T., *Chairman*,
 Sheriff NICOLSON, LL.D.
 Professor MACKINNON, M.A.

HUGH CARMICHAEL, Fisherman (40)—examined.

46194. *The Chairman.*—Are you proprietor of more than one boat, or are you strictly a fisherman yourself?—A fisherman. Hugh Carmichael.
46195. Have you any land?—Yes, I have a small cottage and garden.
46196. But have you any kind of croft or field?—No.
46197. Nothing but the house and the stane?—And a small garden.
46198. *Professor Mackinnon.*—You have been engaged in fishing all your life?—Yes, mostly.
46199. In this place and round about?—Yes.
46200. So that you know the condition of the fishing in Loch Fyne thoroughly well?—Yes, pretty well.
46201. Of late years, I suppose, the fishing has improved very much in this place?—Yes.
46202. To what do you attribute this improvement?—There are various reasons. The first reason is that there are screw steamers plying between here and Glasgow, and we get a better price owing to that. In former years there were no screws, and of course the price was not so good. Since these screws have been introduced, the price is double what it used to be formerly.
46203. In addition to getting a larger price for the fish, do you think there is more fish landed now in the village here?—Yes, owing to the trawling system.
46204. So there are two causes—there is more fish caught and there is a better price?—Yes.
46205. When does the fishing season begin here?—There is no close season at all.
46206. But when do you actually begin to fish?—In May.
46207. And you continue right on from May till when?—Till December.
46208. Of late years, I understand, a good number of the fishermen here go over to the Ayrshire shore?—Yes.
46209. When do they go there?—About the beginning of January.
46210. And they are there, off and on, for about two months?—Yes.
46211. And from that time till the fishing in Loch Fyne commences again they are at home?—Yes, they are at home.
46212. What do they do during that time?—They prepare their nets and boats for the beginning of May.
46213. Is it the skills you use here that you use on the Ayrshire coast?—Yes.
46214. Do you find they suit quite well on that rough shore?—Yes,

ARGYLL. they are very suitable. Of course, they have got them larger these few years back.

TARBERT. 46215. They are getting larger year by year?—Yes.

Hugh Carmichael. 46216. Is that specially for the Loch Fyne fishing or for the Ayrshire fishing?—For the Ayrshire coast. They would do smaller for Loch Fyne, but larger boats are required for the Ayrshire coast; it is a rough coast.

46217. You do not live in the boats; you live ashore?—We lodge ashore when we go to Girvan.

46218. Do you carry on the fishing by trawling at night, just as here?—Yes, just in the same way.

46219. You have not such a good harbour there?—No, it is not good at Ballantrae or Girvan. Of course they have improved Girvan harbour this year.

46220. Can you enter it at all states of the tide?—No.

46221. Where do you go?—We have to lie at anchor off the mouth of the harbour till the tide makes, in a storm. It would be of great advantage if the mouth of the harbour were made deep, so that boats could get in at any time.

46222. Is it of late years that that fishing has developed?—It is a good many years since.

46223. Where do the fishermen go from to that place?—From almost every fishing port in Loch Fyne—from Campbeltown, and down by Troon and Ardrossan, and all these ports.

46224. Have they much the same style of boats that you have?—Yes, most of them.

46225. They are not big boats, in which the men sleep?—Well, this year or two back they have been getting what they call decks, and they live in them now.

46226. It is just a larger skiff, with a deck?—Yes.

46227. But there are none of the big boats that we find on the north and east coasts?—These would not suit for that coast at all; they would be too large. There is plenty room to work them, but they would not be suitable for that fishing at all.

46228. Is that because it is too near shore?—The boats would be too large; they could not work.

46229. They could not pull the trawl?—No.

46230. I understand you consider your own skiffs large enough for that purpose?—They are quite large enough, worked with the oars.

46231. Then you have given up entirely the white fishing in the winter?—There are very few boats prosecuting the line fishing.

46232. They used to go to the west shore for the line fishing?—Yes, they used to go with the long line to Jura Sound, and some boats prosecute it yet from here in the beginning of spring.

46233. I suppose you yourself were engaged in the fishing years before trawling was legalized?—Yes, with drift nets.

46234. These have been entirely given up, or nearly given up?—They are nearly given up, especially in Tarbert; but they have been prosecuting the drift net fishing in Upper Loch Fyne more than here, and it has been almost a complete failure this year.

46235. Your fishing here for the last two or three years has been quite as successful as ever it was?—For about four years it has been very successful with the trawl.

46236. So, whatever may be said about other places, trawling has not injured the fishing here?—Not in Loch Fyne.

46237. The fishermen consider the trawl of great advantage as compared with the old drift net?—Yes, it is a great advantage to them, and it is a

great advantage for the market too. They get the fish earlier than they would by working with the drift net.

46238. Do you mean that you pull the trawl earlier in the night?—Yes; we fish in daylight too.

46239. So you can send away the fish at any time?—Yes.

46240. Has the population increased in the place within your time?—Yes, very much. There is double the population in the town, I think, than there was twenty years back.

46241. Has that been by fishermen coming from the outside and settling, or by people growing up in the place?—By people growing up in the place.

46242. Are there many fishermen who have come in from the outside to Tarbert?—Not very many.

46243. They are all the people of the place?—Yes, there are very few strangers.

46244. I suppose this has been a herring fishing station for a long time back?—Oh yes.

46245. Have the people always been fishermen, fishing summer and winter, as they are now; is that the way it used to be in old times?—So far as I remember, they did not follow it in winter; in olden times they only followed it during the summer.

46246. What did they do during the rest of the year?—Some of them had crofts, and others went away to sea, and so forth.

46247. Are you acquainted with the conditions of life away in Skye and Lewis?—I was only two years fishing north.

46248. Was this the kind of life they led here a good while ago,—partly engaged with the crofts and partly engaged with the fishing at home and elsewhere?—I think so. There were a good many who had crofts about a mile out of the town.

46249. These went also to the fishing?—Yes.

46250. But they have given these crofts up?—Yes.

46251. The fishermen have no crofts now?—Very few. Three or four, or perhaps half a dozen, have crofts, and follow the fishing too.

46252. How do they get their crofts attended to?—They work them partly themselves, and their families.

46253. But they do not remain at home from the fishing to work the crofts?—No.

46254. As the fishing is carried on here, with a ready market, and with a good fishing ground for so long a period of the year, do you think it would be an advantage for a fisherman to follow both occupations or a disadvantage?—It would be no advantage just now, in the present circumstances, seeing the fishing is doing so well; but in the event of the fishing failing in Loch Fyne I think it would be an advantage for them to have crofts at a reasonable rent, because there is no other work that could be done in this village by which they could earn a livelihood; they must leave home and go to sea.

46255. But with the Loch Fyne fishing as it is?—As it is at present, they would do as well without crofts.

46256. You do not think they could work both?—Not very well, owing to the way the fishing is prosecuted now, because they work day and night, you may say, at the fishing.

46257. And it will take up all their time?—It will take up all their time.

46258. And you think that as things are in this place, it would be better for the man who would be a fisherman to be a fisherman, and not be hanging about between the two things?—Yes, that is my opinion.

ARGYLL.

TARBERT.

Hugh
Carmichael.

- ARGYLL.** 46259. Of course that would depend entirely upon the circumstances of the place?—Yes.
- TARBERT.** 46260. In this place that would be the best, in your view?—Yes.
- Hugh Carmichael. 46261. How many nets has each boat, with the trawl?—They have only one trawl net in each boat.
46262. What is the length of it?—About 90 fathoms
46263. And the depth?—About 18 fathoms.
46264. And there are always two boats working together?—Yes.
46265. They arrange among themselves at the beginning of the season which two boats shall go together?—Yes.
46266. And they work together the whole season?—Yes.
46267. I suppose their two trawls are attached end upon end?—No, there is only one trawl in each boat, and when they come across a shoal of herrings the one boat shoots round the shoal, and each boat pulls in its own net; and then, when the net is at the stern, they lift it out of the water, and if there are fish in the net they take them into the boat.
46268. Has the net a bottom?—Yes, and there is a sole rope to the bottom of the net.
46269. So you can make a complete circle?—Yes; we can either draw to shore or wring out in deep water.
46270. Which is the more common practice?—Drawing to shore is the most common.
46271. And, I suppose, the surer to catch the fish?—Exactly.
46272. There is less danger of the fish slipping away from you?—Yes. There is one thing I would suggest, viz., a weekly close time, which would be a great advantage to the fishermen at Loch Fyne. I mean a close time from sunset on Saturday till sunrise on Monday.
46273. That you would not be allowed to fish between these two times?—Yes.
46274. Is that not the law just now?—If it is the law, it is not carried out. There are fishermen from Campbeltown allowed to fish on Sabbath and at any time they choose, and we the fishermen of Tarbert are at a great disadvantage in that respect. It would be a great improvement if there was a weekly close time, so that all fishermen would have the same opportunity on the Monday morning. There would be better prices, too, because the market would not be open to receive the fish on the Monday.
46275. So that the Sunday fishing injures the market and diminishes the supply of fish?—Yes, and it would be an advantage for the herrings themselves. They would come in to the shore better if they got quiet from Saturday till Monday morning, seeing the whole fleet is working the whole week just now.
46276. As to those that do go out, I suppose it is in the early portion of Saturday night or Monday morning that they go out?—Yes, and some of them work on Sabbath.
46277. And those who do that have a great advantage over the others?—Yes, of course; and we wish to have them all put on an equal footing, so that every fisherman would have a better chance.
46278. You think the total supply of fish would be quite as great as it is now, supposing the Sunday fishing were put a stop to, and it would be fairer to all the people engaged in the fishing?—Exactly.
- Sheriff Nicolson.*—Is this the principal fishing station on Loch Fyne?—Yes.
46280. And it has been so since time immemorial?—Yes, on Upper Loch Fyne.
46281. The whole of Loch Fyne has been a good place for herring, so far as history tells us?—Yes.

46282. The herring have never left it yet?—No.
46283. Is there any likelihood or fear that they will?—No, so far as we can judge.
46284. What are the limits within which you fish in Loch Fyne?—We fish from Campbeltown up to the head of Upper Loch Fyne. We are not restricted to any certain portion.
46285. Where is your chief fishing ground?—From Campbeltown to Ardriehuig.
46286. The boats you use are not so large as those used at Wick and on the east coast generally?—No.
46287. Will you mention exactly what their distinctive character is in comparison with the east coast boats?—The boats we use run from twenty-four to twenty-six feet keel, and we find they are quite large enough for the trawl fishing here, because larger boats could not be handled with oars.
46288. You make great use of oars instead of sail?—Yes.
46289. Have your men sometimes to pull for hours without raising a sail?—Yes.
46290. Is it not a characteristic of the fishing ground and coast here, as distinguished from the northern and east coasts, that you are more sheltered?—Yes, we are more sheltered in Loch Fyne.
46291. That gives you a great advantage over the inhabitants of the north-west Highlands?—Yes; the loch is more sheltered and safer.
46292. It makes it possible for you to fish always, except when there is a storm?—Yes.
46293. I suppose you know there is a very great difference in that respect in the coasts of Skye, Shetland, Barra, and these places?—Yes, these places are far more exposed. We could not prosecute the herring fishing away north with the trawl. It is quite a different system from the drift net.
46294. Do you think the trawl fishing could not be carried on profitably there, as it is here?—No, not in the ocean.
46295. Why?—Because our boats would be too small, and we could not work the trawl with large ones.
46296. What kind of boats do you consider best for trawling?—These boats that we have got here, about twenty-six feet keel and eight or nine feet beam.
46297. A big heavy one would not be suitable?—No, it would not be suitable at all.
46298. Why?—We could not manage it with oars, and it is with oars principally that we work.
46299. Then the only other alternative is a steamer?—A steamer.
46300. Which they use in the Firth of Forth with great profit?—Yes. The trawl may through time come to be worked by steamers.
46301. Could a small boat work with a big one, trawling in the open sea?—It might, but the weather would require to be steady and calm.
46302. Is the condition of most of the inhabitants of Tarbert comfortable as compared, for instance, with that of the people of Skye and the Lewis and the west coast of Ross-shire?—Yes, they are very comfortable.
46303. They are well-to-do?—Yes, they are well-to-do.
46304. Are there any of the fishermen who are poor and in debt and in bad circumstances, owing to causes over which they have no control?—Not that I am aware of. If they are they have no cause to be, because the fishing has been very good these five or six years back.
46305. There has never been any destitution here?—Yes, in former ears.

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TARBERT.

Hugh Carmichael

ARGYLL.

TARBERT.

Hugh Carmichael.

46306. How long since?—About six years back, there were very few fish to be got in Loch Fyne, and most of the fishermen had to go away north. There were plenty of herrings in the loch that year, but they could not be caught. They were lying out in the deep.

46307. Did that cause much distress among the population?—Yes, for that year.

46308. But it never approached to positive want or scarcity of food?—It did not exactly come to that, but it was very severe for that year.

46309. Originally the population here, like those on the rest of the west coast, were occupying land as crofters or cottars, fishing occasionally?—Yes.

46310. When did that cease? Has it come about gradually, or did it happen at any particular period?—There is another of the delegates to speak, and he has more experience and knowledge of that than I have, being an older man than I am.

46311. Has everybody here a kail-yard, at least?—No.

46312. Are there some without a bit of ground at all?—Yes, most of the people in Tarbert are without any land at all.

46313. But they manage to live quite comfortably notwithstanding?—Yes, these four years back, anyway.

46314. Have any of them got a cow?—There are a few about the village who have got a cow—say ten or fifteen fishermen.

46315. Is the supply of milk good?—Well, it is very scarce—at least there is not a sufficient supply for the people of the village.

46316. Where is it supplied from?—It comes from about four miles from here, and a farm about two miles away, but there is not a sufficient supply of milk for the village.

46317. What is the number of boats here?—There are sixty-seven trawling skiffs.

46318. Are these generally the property of more than one man?—Yes, they are always between four men. Each boat has four men, and each man has a share of both boat and nets.

46319. But they all belong to themselves?—Yes.

46320. They never have to work for fish-curers?—No.

46321. What is the cost of an average boat without its nets?—Between £60 and £70.

46322. And a complete set of nets or trawls?—About £35 or £40; say £35.

46323. Your boats are made here?—Yes, they are built here.

46324. *The Chairman.*—You stated that the price of the fish had increased, and that the quantity of the fish procured had increased; what is thought to be about the number of fish that exists? Are the fish being reduced in number, or do you think they are just as abundant as they ever were at any previous period?—To my judgment, I think they are as abundant as at any previous period.

46325. They are as abundant, but we have been told that they are differently distributed—that they do not come as high up the loch as they used to do; is that so?—No.

46326. Is it observed that they are gradually getting further and further down towards the deep water, or are they stationary now?—Well, they have taken an upward course these fours years back. They have been stationary about two miles from this harbour. Most of the fish were lying at the mouth of Upper Loch Fyne last year.

46327. Then you think the fish are beginning to go higher up again?—Yes, that is our experience of it these four years back.

46328. That formerly they were higher, and then they fell back, and now they are going up again?—Yes, they are going up again.

46329. So there is no apprehension that the fish are going to leave the loch and gradually get outside or lower down?—No.

46330. About how long has the winter fishing on the Ayrshire coast been prosecuted; how long have they been in the habit of going there?—About thirty years.

46331. At what period of the year is that?—January, February, and March. They leave the banks of Ballantrae about the beginning of March.

46332. And all the fish caught upon the Ayrshire coast during those months are in a spawning condition?—Yes.

46333. Do you think it is a wasteful and abusive system to catch the fish on the spawning beds, or do you think the number of fish and their prolific character is so great that it will never have any effect upon them, whatever quantity you catch?—Well, the Ballantrae fishing has been prosecuted these six years with great success, and we do not find that the fish are diminishing in the least.

46334. You do not find either that there are fewer fish in Loch Fyne or fewer fish on the spawning beds?—No.

46335. Then it is not considered that there is any dread or fear that the fish will be diminished by being killed on the spawning beds, or diminished so much as to effect the fishing?—No, I do not think so, because it has been prosecuted these four or five years back with great success, and the herrings in Loch Fyne are as plentiful as they were previous to that.

46336. Still, four or five years is not a very long time to judge by?—No.

46337. In catching the fish on the spawning beds, are there a great number of the fish destroyed and wasted, or are all those that are taken taken in such a condition that they can be sent to market?—All that are fished are sent to market. Most of them are sent to the English market.

46338. There are not many thrown into the sea?—No.

46339. Are not fish a great deal more delicate at that time, and apt to be injured and fall to pieces?—Yes, but they are very speedily got to market.

46340. Are they just lightly salted and sent as it were fresh to market?—Some put salt on them, and others send them away fresh to market.

46341. Quite fresh?—Yes.

46342. Do the people here think it is a great advantage to go down for these two months to Ayrshire, or would they rather not go?—Some of them reap the benefit, and others do not; but it would be more injurious to the people on the Ayrshire coast than it would be to the Loch Fyne fishermen if it were not prosecuted, because they depend on that fishing principally for a livelihood.

46343. Do they use the same kind of boats that you do here?—Yes, about the same.

46344. You mentioned that the harbour at Girvan had been improved last year; who gave money to improve it?—The Railway Company, I believe, and the town's people.

46345. Did they get a loan for that purpose from Government?—I am not sure.

46346. Was it a very expensive business; did they spend a great deal of money?—I think, £9000 or £10,000, but I don't remember. Some of the fishermen present will have an idea of the amount that was spent.

46347. When you speak of trawling here, is trawling the same thing

ARGYLL.

TARBERT.

Hugh
Carmichael.

ARGYLL. that it is upon the east coast? Is the word used in the same sense?—It is a different system altogether.

TARBERT. 46348. You have none of the instruments or machinery by which they rake the bottom upon the east coast?—No.

Hugh Carmichael. 46349. Is there any apprehension that steam trawling will be introduced here, and that they will bring the same description of machinery and contrivances here that they have on the east coast?—There is no apprehension of that, because the bottom of this coast is quite rocky and rough, and these steam trawls would not work in Loch Fyne. They would tear all their nets; the bottom is quite rough.

46350. But people are very ingenious; do you not think they might contrive something?—I do not think so. The water is very deep.

46351. Nobody, in fact, has tried steam trawling with machinery here yet?—No.

46352. When the two boats work together and have one net between them, and when they take the fish out between them on the sea, how do the two boats lie when the fish are being lifted into them? Do they lie close together?—Yes, there is about a foot between them, and the fish are in between the two boats and they lift the fish into the boats with baskets.

46353. They haul them in by the middle of the side of the boats?—Yes.

46354. Then they divide the whole quantity caught between the two boats?—Yes.

46355. When they have taken the fish into the two boats where do they fetch them to?—There are screws at hand ready to take them off to Glasgow.

46356. When they get the fish into the boat what do they put them into?—Into boxes.

46357. And they are just taken on board the screws at once?—Yes, and there is one thing that we as fishermen desire, and that we petitioned the Fishery Board for, namely, a standard measurement. We wanted to have a quarter cran brand by Government, so that we might have an imperial measurement for selling our fish. There is not an imperial measurement for selling fish here at all. The buyers have got boxes.

46358. Are the boxes sometimes bigger and sometimes smaller?—Yes; we as fishermen believe that anyhow.

46359. Has there been any imposture practised upon the people in that way?—Yes.

46360. So you want to have a box of a standard size?—Yes, either that or a quarter cran measure—some fixed measurement that we might sell our fish by.

46361. Supposing there was a weekly close time as you mention, and no fishing was allowed between sunset on Saturday and sunrise on Monday, that would be during all the summer months. Well, they would begin to take the fish on Monday morning at daybreak—about three or four in the morning?—Yes.

46362. Could the fish be got to Glasgow in time for the Glasgow folk to eat them that day?—Yes, in the morning.

46363. Because the Glasgow people will complain that they cannot get their fish. They won't care perhaps very much about Sunday there, but they want to get their fish. Would you be able to deliver the fish in time for dinner on Monday?—Yes, I believe in time for breakfast.

46364. Suppose you started as early as twelve o'clock on Sunday night, you would have to go out from here by eight or nine o'clock on Sabbath evening?—Yes.

46365. You would not like that?—No; we would not have that at all.

46366. What o'clock do you think would be the soonest you could start on Monday morning—two or three o'clock?—Yes. ARGYLL.
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46367. And you would be on the ground fishing by four?—Yes. TARBERT.
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46368. And the fish would be in Glasgow and in the shops I suppose by two o'clock?—The steamers go up from Loch Fyne in five hours. Hugh Carmichael.
46369. Straight into the river?—Yes, between Loch Fyne and Glasgow in five hours.
46370. Where do they discharge?—At the Broomielaw.
46371. How long are the people busy and how long are they idle? The summer fishing will last fully six months?—Yes.
46372. The half of May, June, July, August and September, October, and into November?—Yes, that is the general time.
46373. And then it begins again in January—January, February, and March—may we call it two and a half or three months?—Two and a half.
46374. That makes eight and a half months?—Yes.
46375. And it leaves three and a half months of comparative idleness. Now, how do the people get on during those three months; what do they do?—Some of them try the long lines over in Jura Sound.
46376. In what months would they go to that long line fishing?—April. They prosecute it for about a month.
46377. Then November and December are partly idle, and part of April and May; what do they do in the idle spring months?—They get their boats and nets put in order, and prepared for the next season's fishing.
46378. Is it considered that the work during the eight or nine months when they do work is so hard and exhausting that the people require rest to recruit themselves, or if they had work to do during the idle months, would they be able and willing to work all the year round?—I believe they would be able and willing to work all the year, especially those who had families.
46379. Then you don't think there is anything so hard in a fisherman's life that he requires more rest than other labourers?—That is the very reason why we as fishermen of Loch Fyne would like to have a weekly close time, so that we would get the rest from Saturday till Monday.
46380. You would rather have your rest every week than have a long period of idleness in the year?—Yes, for we find we have plenty to do in getting our boats and nets in order for work again.
46381. We have been told with reference to the effect of fishing labour upon the health and strength of the people engaged in it, that there are not very old people among the fishermen in this country—that they don't live very long; what do you think about that? Did you ever hear that remarked?—No, I think they live to a good age in Tarbert in general.
46382. You think they live as long as other people?—Yes.
46383. But still I have heard from two or three persons capable of judging that you don't see as many old people about here as you do about Skye and the north-west, where the people live half on the water and half on shore?—The reason I would give for that is this, that in former years people had not boats and material in as good order as they have at present, and seeing they are improving in the matter of oilskins and keeping themselves drier than they formerly used to do, that might be a reason why the fishing would affect their health in former times.
46384. They will be older in the future?—Yes.
46385. Where do you get your nets?—We get them from Kilbirnie and Paisley.
46386. Are they made there?—Yes, and in Campbeltown.
46387. Would it not be possible to make them here if you bought the

ARGYLL. materials? Could not part of the idle time be employed in making nets—If there was a net manufactory got up, there is no doubt it would be a great advantage and improvement to the people.

Hugh Carmichael. 46388. Are the nets made by machinery generally there?—Yes.

46389. What sort of machinery—steam machinery or water power, or what?—They are worked by something like weaving—by hand work.

46390. Then the fishing net is made where it is made by hand looms?—Yes.

46391. And there is no reason why there should not be a handloom here just as there is elsewhere?—No.

46392. Do women work these looms, or men?—Women.

46393. Always?—Yes.

46394. Then it would not give the men more labour here, but just the women?—That is so.

46395. How would they like that if they had not been accustomed to the work?—I don't know.

46396. Has any proposal ever been made to add the manufacture of nets here to the fishing industry; could not somebody try it?—It was never proposed or tried.

46397. Are you quite sure there are no steam looms for making nets, or are they all hand?—They are all hand. I have been in the factory at Campbeltown, and the women work them just something like weaving by hand.

46398. You are sure there is no steam engine about?—It is by the handloom.

46399. Just like a loom in a cottage?—Yes.

46400. Is there any weaving here at all?—No; there are no weavers in this town at all.

46401. To whom does the land in this place belong?—To Mr Campbell of Stonefield.

46402. Does Mr Campbell give facilities for feuing?—Yes.

46403. Can anybody get a feu who wants it and will pay for it?—Yes, but they require to pay very dear for it.

46404. How much is it?—The general run for feuing is 2s. per foot of frontage for a stance with a frontage of forty feet and going ninety feet back.

46405. How much per acre?—I think it would come to about £48 or so, but I am not sure.

46406. Then there is land to be had for feuing, only you say it is dear? Has the town been increasing of late years, or is it the same as it has been for a number of years?—It is increasing. They are building more these few years back.

46407. They are building more, but do they pay a higher price?—I think it is the same price.

46408. You say the people about Campbeltown and elsewhere come up and fish on Sunday; does that depend at all upon difference of religion? Is it the Roman Catholics who go up on Sunday, or do Protestants do it too?—I think the most of them that do it have no religion at all.

46409. But you do not find that the Roman Catholics are worse about that? There are no boats that are manned altogether by Roman Catholics?—I am not sure with regard to the Campbeltown fishing, but I know there are no Roman Catholics in Tarbert.

46410. It is not a religious question?—I do not think so.

46411. Not a question between the different churches?—No.

46412. Just the custom of the place?—Yes.

46413. Has any voluntary attempt been made, by representations to the

people themselves or to the clergy down there, to try and prevent Sunday fishing? Have you ever entered into communication with them to try and negotiate a common understanding not to fish?—Yes, we have tried that at different times.

46414. But you do not find them willing to stop?—They will not succumb to the rules at all.

46415. Have you found that the clergy down there tried to assist you at all?—Yes, I believe they have. They used their influence to get the men not to work during the weekly close time.

46416. But it has not succeeded?—No.

46417. If the people who buy the fish refused to buy fish caught on Sunday there would be no use in fishing; but you don't find that the people who buy the fish have any scruples about it?—No, they are quite open to take them.

46418. *Professor Mackinnon.*—When you said there was considerable destitution six years ago, I suppose you meant that the people were hard up?—Yes.

46419. You did not mean that they had to apply to people outside for assistance?—No.

46420. They were able to live upon their credit till better times came?—Yes.

46420*. So there was not what we call destitution—there were only harder times?—Yes, only hard times.

ARGYLL.

TARBERT.

Hugh Carmichael.

JOHN MACMILLAN, Fisherman (53)—examined.

46421. *Professor Mackinnon.*—You have heard what Mr Carmichael said?—Yes.

John Macmillan.

46422. Do you agree with the representation he gave of the fishing of the place?—Yes.

46423. Is there anything you wish to add yourself in the way of explanation?—No, not a great deal.

46424. Have you always been a fisherman yourself?—Yes.

46425. Were your people at the fishing too, or did your father have land?—Yes, he had land.

46426. Was it on your father's land you were brought up?—Yes.

46427. And you remember very well the time when the people used to fish and have crofts?—Yes.

46428. There was not so much fish caught then at Tarbert as there is now?—No, not so much; there was no trawling at that time.

46429. The trawling has increased the amount of fish that is caught?—Yes.

46430. Do you agree with Mr Carmichael that in Loch Fyne—in Tarbert at least—the fishing is quite sufficient during the season for any man to attend to?—Yes.

46431. And not to spend his time between fishing and working land?—We have plenty to do to work at the fishing itself, only there are some people here who have crofts and attend the trawling as well.

46432. Are they able to do as much as those who give their whole time to the fishing?—Yes. In the case of a small croft, I do not think it would do any harm to any one. I do not think it would keep a man back in the least if it could be got at a reasonable price.

46433. But there is no croft here to be had?—No, there is not a great deal.

ARGYLL.
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TARBERT.
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John
Macmillan.

46434. And it would be only a very small bit that one could work ?—Yes, a cow's grass, or a piece of potato ground, or the like of that.

46435. Where were you brought up?—About two and a half miles from here on the Kintyre side.

46436. On the Loch Fyne side or West Loch Tarbert side?—On the West Loch Tarbert side.

46437. All the fishermen here have a share in their boats?—Yes.

46438. There is really no curer to speak of ashore; the fishermen send the fish away daily?—They do cure when it comes on in the year, when there are more herring coming in than they can send fresh to market. The great bulk are sent fresh to market, but there is a little cured at the end of the season.

46439. Do the fishermen pay for their boats when they get them, or do they purchase them on credit, and pay for them in so many years?—They very often pay them when they get them.

46440. They just club together and buy the boat?—Yes.

46441. And buy a new one when the old one is done?—Yes.

46442. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—How long does a boat last?—Generally about eight or nine years. They get weaker then, and need repairs.

46443. Do you sell the old ones?—Yes.

46444. Who buy them?—Some north country people buy them, and Loch Fyne men, and so on.

46445. People who cannot afford perhaps to buy new ones so easily?—Yes. The boats are good enough, though they are getting a little frail.

46446. But not good for the hard work they have to undergo with you?—No.

46447. Where do your people get their nets?—They buy the nets in the village very often, from the shopkeepers. There are plenty to be had in the village.

46448. And there are plenty of shops?—Plenty of shops.

46449. There is nothing here of what we found in the north and other places, of people contracted to a curer to whom the boats sometimes belong, and to whom the nets belong?—No; nothing of that sort.

46450. You fish for whomsoever you please?—For whomsoever will give the best price.

46451. And you buy in any shop you please?—Yes, there is no compulsion as to that.

46452. Of course, your system of trawling herring here is quite different from the bottom trawling that is carried on at the white fishing?—It is not the same at all; it is on a different scale altogether.

46453. The fact is that so far as we know the habits of the herring, that system would not suit?—No.

46454. You might trawl the whole day and not get a herring at all?—You might trawl for a year and not get a herring at all with the big trawl, although we do trawl on the ground whites.

46455. When you come to shallow water?—Yes.

46456. Your mode of trawling is not so popular away in the north?—No, they have a sort of superstition against it.

46457. But so far as your experience goes, it does not injure the fishing ground?—I do not believe it does.

46458. And I suppose the Loch Fyne fishers think that instead of people objecting to this system, it would be better if they would accept it for themselves?—The upper Loch Fyne fishermen used to be against it too, but they are now at it as well as we.

46459. Instead of the long drift net which is used by the big boats on the east coast, and out on the ocean on the west shore, do you think,

if it could be done, a shorter trawl net would take as much fish on board—in the ocean too?—It would need good calm weather. I do not think it would work very well.

ARGYLL

TARBERT

John
Macmillan.

46460. Of course, you could only work it with a light boat?—Yes, and then if you took a circle in a heavy sea you would smash your boats together. I do not think it would do very well.

46461. The boats require to be so close when you haul in that you would require to have more or less calm sea, or you would injure the boats and perhaps the men?—Yes.

46462. In any case, it would require to be a boat that could be handled with the oars?—Yes.

46463. You cannot work your system by sailing alone?—No.

46464. You cannot make your circle?—We could make a circle, but we could not go about it altogether with the sail.

46465. You just go about the loch, and when you find a place where to all appearance there are fish you sweep it with the net?—Yes, just circle the net about, and draw it in towards the boat again till we have them as in a bag.

46466. Of course the screws, the buyers, are more numerous every year?—Yes.

46467. Do you remember the time when there was more delay in sending off fish?—Yes, there were only the luggage boats.

46468. And you could not send the fish then so fresh?—No, they might go fresh enough, but they would not be so early in the market.

46469. And you did not get near so much for them?—No, we did not get so much for them.

46470. So the reason for the success of the fishing in recent years is just that you take more fish ashore and get more money for them?—Yes, although I have seen us take in as much fish in former times.

46471. How long is it since you commenced trawling?—About thirty-two years.

46472. But it was not legalised?—There was a step put to it since that time.

46473. But now for the last sixteen years you have been allowed to trawl?—Yes.

46474. But for some years before that you did not trawl except at the risk of your liberty?—Yes, we were prohibited.

46475. *The Chairman.*—The previous witness said there were more herring brought on to the shore than were lifted out in the sea; is it the case in your opinion that there are more drawn to the shore than are taken out into your boat?—There are more drawn to the shore. In drawing to the shore we get more of them when we get to the shallow water.

46476. But is the net not more liable to be injured when drawn to the shore than when drawn in deep water?—Yes, but we generally lift them out where they hardly catch the ground.

46477. Is the whole of the shore along here quite clear for the fishermen? Can they draw where they like?—No, there are some rocks and foul ground that they cannot get near.

46478. But I mean is there any restriction on the part of the proprietor, or does he allow you to draw wherever you like?—Yes. I may say there is nothing to stop us here; there is no restriction.

46479. Are there any stake nets for salmon along the shore?—Yes, there are some.

46480. How do you manage with them?—We do not go near them. They are inside of where we draw. We work outside the stake.

ARGYLL. 46481. But when you draw on the beach?—We do not draw so near in as the stake nets.

TARBERT. 46482. In fact, there is no difficulty about stake nets?—None at all.

John Macmillan. 46483. Do you ever catch salmon in the herring nets?—No.

46484. You never catch salmon by accident?—Well, we will see one at an odd time, but very seldom. A man may be working all his days and never see a salmon in a trawl net.

46485. There are a great number of boats in the loch, and they come from different quarters; is there any kind of understanding or arrangement that the boats from one place shall take one part of the loch and the boats from another place shall take another, or does everybody go where he likes?—Just where he likes. There are boats from Ardrishaig, and we draw side by side on the shore; and those coming from Campbeltown do the same.

46486. Is there ever any conflict or quarrel between boats from different places that want to fish on the same spot?—There is that among ourselves whiles.

46487. Who regulates that? Who keeps you all in order?—It very often goes out in smoke. We do not say much about it.

46488. Then there is no practical difficulty about each party finding their ground and taking their fish—no confusion?—None in the least.

46489. You said that boats are generally bought by people at once; I suppose a man will sometimes sell a share of a boat to another man?—Yes.

46490. Is there a good deal of that sort of buying and selling shares of boats?—Yes, very often at the hinder end of every year a good deal of it.

46491. Is there any speculation; does the share of the boat rise and fall like the share of the company or mine?—According to the notion the man has of the boat; if he is going to keep her or give her up. Very often some are kept up high and some are not.

46492. But does a man ever buy or sell a share of a boat as a speculation?—No.

46493. When he buys a share of a boat he expects to work it?—He expects to work it.

46494. There is no stock-jobbing or speculation?—No; there is not any money-making business in that way.

46495. Are the boats insured?—I do not think any of them are insured. —never heard of it.

46496. You never heard of anybody insuring his boat?—No. They might have it insured for all I know, but I never heard of it.

46497. Is there any insurance of life; do the men ever insure their own lives?—I do not believe many of them insure their lives here.

46498. Do you think there is anybody who does it?—There may be a few, but it is not known if there is.

46499. Has it ever been the practice, with reference to their families, for people to insure their lives in the fishing industry?—Well, there are some who have their lives insured, but I think it is the fewest number.

46500. Then, in regard to the loss of boats, is there any system of mutual insurance or mutual assistance by which people who lose a boat at sea can buy another?—No, there is nothing of the sort that I am aware of.

46501. Any club?—No.

46502. Then I would like to know is there any loss of boats or loss of life here; are there any widows living in this place of men who lost their lives at the fishing?—Yes, there are one or two; there are very few of

them. We are very fortunate that way. Two or three years ago there was a sad accident in the loch here, about two or two and a half miles from this place.

46503. Were the boats run down by a steamer?—No, it was a squall of wind.

46504. But the loss of a boat or life is very rare?—Very rare.

46505. Has the loss of life increased since they have been in the habit of going to the Ayrshire coast?—No, I cannot say it has.

46506. Suppose the weather to be extremely bad on the Ayrshire coast, and the water to be in such a state that they could not run into the Ayrshire ports, what do they do?—They have to anchor at the mouth of the harbour till the water rises.

46507. They never run down to Galloway?—They cannot go to Girvan without a bit of tide.

46508. If they had to run in very bad weather, where would be the nearest place of natural shelter, supposing them to be fishing on the spawning beds?—Ballantrae is the only place they can run to at all. Sometimes they run to Loch Ryan.

46509. Do they run to Loch Ryan?—Yes, if the wind favours them.

46510. But the west wind would not favour them?—No.

46511. They could not get down?—No. I believe if there was a right north-west wind and them on the banks, most of them would be ashore. I think they would have to run ashore as a last remedy.

46512. We were told yesterday that they were putting half decks upon their twenty-five feet boats. They are doing that in the fore part?—Yes.

46513. You draw the net in to the side?—Into the middle of the boat.

46514. Why should they not have a half deck at each end?—They have the net in the stern when they take it on board ready for shooting again, and the aft deck would be in the way.

46515. Does the deck in front make the boat any safer, or is it simply for shelter?—Not a bit safer—just for shelter.

46516. Is there anything that occurs to you that would make the fishing better, or is it just going as well as possible?—I think it is going on pretty fair, only we would like to get a weekly close time, and boxes of a certain size.

46517. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—What is the rig of your boats?—What is called a lug jib.

46518. With one mast or two masts?—One mast.

46519. The old fashioned style, the same as the Newhaven boats?—Not exactly like the Newhaven boats.

46520. What is the difference?—We have more of a peak.

46521. Have you to haul down the sail every time you tack?—No, we do not haul it down the same as the Newhaven boats do.

46522. Are your masts very tall?—Not so tall as theirs.

46523. There are some boats in other places we saw as we went round the coast in summer which seem to compete with each other in having as tall and heavy masts as possible?—Yes, but these boats are bigger than ours, and require higher and taller masts.

46524. You don't carry very heavy spars?—No, as light as we can.

46525. There has never been any great disaster to the herring fleet from Loch Fyne and down to Campbeltown?—No.

46526. Nothing like what has happened on the east coast, in Shetland, at Eyemouth, and other places?—Nothing at all. We are in a more sheltered place.

ARGYLL

TARBERT.

John
Macmillan.

ARGYLL.

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TARBERT.

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John

Macmillan.

46527. Are your boats all made here?—There are some that come from Fairlie and Ardishaig, but the most of them are made here.

46528. Are they as well made here as you can get elsewhere?—Yes, as good as we get elsewhere.

46529. As pretty to look at and as good sailers?—Yes; every bit as good looking and as fast.

46530. And I suppose you pay less for them than you do at Port-Glasgow and other places?—The price is about the same.

46531. Do you think the rig is as good and as safe a rig as you could have?—Yes, I think it is as handy a rig as we could have.

46532. Did you send some men to the Fisheries Exhibition?—We had a few there.

46533. They saw great varieties of new rig there?—I suppose they did.

46534. Did they see nothing that they thought an improvement?—Well, I did not hear.

46535. Did you exhibit anything of your own?—I do not think there was anything out of here exhibited.

46536–7. Except herring?—I suppose they are exhibited everywhere if they can get them at all.

ARCHIBALD PATERSON, Fisherman (37)—examined.

Archibald
Paterson.

46538. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—You have heard all that has been said by Mr Carmichael and Mr Macmillan?—Yes.

46539. I suppose you agree with what they said, or have you anything additional or different to state?—I do not think it. I think they have told near as much as they could tell you in connection with the fishing.

46540. You have been a fisherman here all your life?—Yes, except when there were bad seasons when I had to go away from home.

46541. To fish in another place?—Sometimes to fish in other places and sometimes to sea.

46542. Have there been many bad seasons here in your recollection?—I remember four or five since 1859.

46543. Was the fishing in Loch Fyne at that time a comparative failure?—Yes, a comparative failure in 1859 or 1860.

46544. Did many of your fishermen go away as you did to other places? Yes, they went to Jura to fish, and some went to sea, and some, I suppose, went to work in Glasgow and different places where they could get work.

46545. Did they all go away?—Well, those that had not a bit of ground had to go away. I suppose those that had a bit of ground stopped at home.

46546. How many are there that have ground?—I cannot say how many have ground, but there are a few. I suppose there were more in olden times that had ground than there are now.

46547. But it is only very small crofts that they have?—Very small.

46548. How many acres?—They vary in size. I cannot say how many acres they have.

46549. Do any of them keep more than one cow?—Not just now; but they used to have a great many cows about the village long ago. I was told there were so many as eighty cows about the village at one time.

46550. Belonging to the inhabitants?—Yes.

46551. Where did they get grass?—I suppose they had the hill as grass for their cows at that time.

46552. Is that hill now joined to a large sheep farm?—Yes, joined to a sheep farm.

ARGYLL

46553. And they are generally satisfied with their condition?—Yes, so far as I know.

TARBERT.

46554. There is none of that great desire for additional land that exists in other parts of the Highlands?—No, I do not think it; but I daresay there are no fishermen but would like to have a bit garden if they could get it.

Archibald Paterson.

46555. Would they be quite satisfied with that?—Yes. Of course, everybody could not have crofts about here.

46556. But I suppose everybody would like to have a cow if possible?—Yes, if possible.

46557. You are well acquainted, I suppose, with most of the inhabitants of Tarbert?—Yes.

46558. Does every fisherman whom you are acquainted with make a good living by his occupation as fisherman?—Taking one year with another, they get through pretty well; but I know different ones that perhaps two or three seasons might go against, while the rest did well enough; and if you had a year or two of bad seasons, you had plenty to do to make both ends meet.

46559. Are there any that lay by money, or are able to do so?—Yes, there are some that lay by money.

46560. Any considerable number?—I cannot say. They seem to be pretty well off in general.

46561. Have you any mutual aid society?—They have a branch of the Foresters' Society here.

46562. Is it composed largely of fishermen?—They are mixed, some fishermen and some tradesmen.

46563. What are the objects of that society?—I believe there is a benefit attached to it if they happened to get hurt.

46564. And in case of death is anything given?—I have not read the regulations of the society, and I am not a member myself.

46565. Is there any difference between the style of fishing and boats used by the people here and those in Upper Loch Fyne?—Yes, there is a difference; although you were to go from Land's End to Cape Wrath you would get a difference in every port you came to.

46566. What is the difference between your boats and those at Ardrishaig?—The Ardrishaig people generally have their boats made to suit both the drift net and the trawl. Our boats are built to suit only the trawl. They are pretty generally on the same lines, but the others have more beam, and use more sail and have taller masts.

46567. Is there a considerable number of the fishermen at Ardrishaig occupied entirely as fishermen the same as here?—Yes, between Ardrishaig and Lochgilphead.

46568. Are there many on the east side of the loch who are exclusively fishermen?—Yes, there are some small villages up the loch.

46569. And the people are constantly engaged in fishing the same as you are?—Yes.

46570. Do they make as good a living by it, so far as you know?—They used generally to be working drift nets, but the way the herrings were this season they had to give up the drift nets entirely and begin trawling, as there is a fleet of trawlers up there now, and they did pretty well last year and this season, but they do not make their tobacco at the drift nets.

46571. Are their circumstances as regards land in those villages on the other side of the loch similar to yours?—I suppose Ardrishaig and

ARGYLL. Lochgilphead are similar to us, but I don't think they have as much benefit as we have. We can draw our boats on the beach, and we are charged nothing for it. I believe they are charged for beaching their boats up there.

TARBERT. Archibald Paterson. 46572. Who charges them?—The proprietor.

46573. Who is the proprietor?—Campbell of Auchendarroch, and Sir John Orde.

46574. What have they to pay for the privilege of hauling up their boats?—They have to pay 2s. 6d.

46575. For the season?—Yes.

46576. They only pay it once?—Yes.

46577. They have no other dues to pay there?—They have dues to pay if they take their boats into the canal basin.

46578. What do they pay?—I think 1s. every time they take them in.

46579. You have no dues to pay here?—Only 1s. 3d. a year for harbour dues.

46580. And your harbour is a very good one?—It is a very safe one.

46581. Your piers also are quite satisfactory and well built, are they not?—Yes, they could be improved.

46582. What improvement?—There could be better quays built and the harbour improved a little, to make work for men when they are going idle.

46583. Would it be a very costly thing?—No, I do not think so.

46584. What do you propose?—I would propose deepening this end of the harbour and making more room for fishing boats, as the fishing fleet is increasing very greatly on this coast, and in the summer when steamers and herring boats are in the harbour you cannot move; sometimes you get boats smashed.

46585. At whose expense do you think that should be done?—I suppose the Government and the proprietor.

46586. But I suppose if that were done you would not object to pay something for it?—No, I do not suppose we would object to pay a little extra.

46587. For the benefit you would receive through it?—Yes.

46588. *The Chairman.*—We were told there is no truck system here—that you were under no obligation to buy at any place, but that you have perfect freedom in that way?—Yes.

46589. Has it never been the custom at all for people to keep an account with a shop, and to receive goods on credit, and to pay any debts in fish or in any other way?—No, that is not a customary way here. We begin to fish say at the beginning of the week. Well, on Saturday the cash is made up between the eight men, and we divide it. Perhaps we may keep a share out to pay debt for boats or nets, and then go and settle with the merchant.

46590. But you always settle with the merchant in money?—Yes.

46591. You never deliver fish to the merchant?—No.

46592. So there is no barter?—No.

46593. Did you ever hear of that system in old times?—Not in my recollection, and I never heard of it.

46594. You mentioned that in former times there were a number of cows kept here, and that they went out on the hill?—Yes.

46595. Which hill?—The village was divided, and I believe some went to each side of the harbour.

46596. The pasture is not very good, I suppose?—I think they were thriving pretty well at that time.

46597. How many acres would it take to keep a cow upon these hills?

—I cannot give you any right idea, as I was never in the line of keeping them.

ARGYLL.

46598. Is there anybody here who can tell me how many acres it takes to keep a cow on the pasture here?—*Mr Hugh Maclean.* About three acres.

TARBERT.

46599. Do you mean the hill?—Yes.

Archibald Paterson.

46600. But upon the wild heather pasture, how many acres would it take?—It is not on the heather pasture that the common is.

46601. But I do not see anything else?—There are twenty-one cows upon the pasture.

46602. About these cows, when the cows were kept how was it managed; was there a common herd for all the cows, who drove them out and brought them home?—*Mr Paterson.* Yes; there was a herd during my time, and I was speaking to one of the old herds who used to herd fifty or sixty years ago, and he told me that he used to have like a fog-horn which he blew to drive the cattle away on each side of the village.

46603. Is there anything of that sort now?—No; I think every one looks after his own cow.

46604. So there is still common on which the cows go?—Yes.

46605. How many cows would there be now?—I cannot say how many there are in the village now, but some have bits of fields of their own.

46606. Are there any small proprietors that have their own fields?—No, I do not think so. There is no proprietor except Stonefield.

46607. How much will a man pay to the proprietor for the grazing of a cow?—I think it is £1.

46608. For the summer grazing?—Yes.

46609. Or for the grazing of all the year round?—Yes.

46610. How does he keep his cow in winter?—I suppose he has a little hay, and if he has not, I suppose he just purchases it.

46611. How long is it since the hill was withdrawn and given to the farm?—*I cannot answer that.*—*Mr Macmillan.* About forty-two years.

46612. If the proprietor gave you back the hill would the people consider it a benefit, or would they consider it a trouble to have the cows?—*Mr Paterson.* I think those that are able to work with a cow would consider it a benefit. There are a considerable number that would not be better with it, but for those who are acquainted with it I suppose it would be a great boon to get it.

46613. Is there anybody in the neighbourhood who keeps a number of cows for the supply of the place?—There is a dairy about one and a half miles, and another about six miles, and another about half a mile away, and they supply the village with milk.

46614. Does the milk come in every morning?—Every morning.

46615. Is it getting dearer, or is it the same price that it used to be?—Pretty much about the same price, only the supply is scarce for the use of the village in winter.

46616. We heard that the proprietor is willing to give ground to feuing, but that the people consider the price high. When a fisherman saves a little money here, would he generally wish to put his money into a piece of ground and a house, or would he rather put it into the bank?—Well, there are some of them who generally build when they save up what will manage to build a house.

46617. They like to build?—Yes.

46618. Is the desire to possess a house increasing in the place?—It has been increasing this few years.

46619. When they build do they do it more for the convenience of their own families and for their own satisfaction, or do they do it as a

ARGYLL. speculation to let it to others?—I think they do it for their own benefit, and also to let it. Their money will draw more interest than lying in the bank.

TARBERT. 46620. So they would build a house bigger than they require for their own families?—Generally they do.

46621. Would they let it to strangers, or would they let it to people of their own condition—other fishermen?—Some let them to fishermen, and some keep them for letting to visitors in summer.

46622. Do they often sell houses; is there a good deal of sale and purchase going on?—I know of only one house that was built by a fisherman and was sold.

46623. There is no society or association which builds houses on the principle of the members gradually paying up the price?—No.

46624. When a man builds a house does he generally have money enough to build and finish it, or does he have to borrow money or partly borrow money?—I suppose they generally start with the intention of finishing it; but if they have not enough they generally borrow from the nearest bank.

46625. Would they borrow from a neighbour or friend, or from the bank?—Well, the bank is very good to the natives of the village in advancing money.

46626. Suppose a man wanted money advanced upon his house, what interest would he pay?—I suppose about 4 or 5 per cent.

46627. Not more than five?—I cannot say.

46628. Are you proprietor of your own house?—No.

46629. Or your father?—No.

46630. *Professor Mackinnon.*—During the bad years you had to go away to the fishing, what parts of Scotland were you fishing in?—We were fishing in Jura in 1859 and 1860, and four or five years ago we had to go to Loch Seaforth in Harris and Loch Hourn.

46631. You took your own boats along with you?—Yes.

46632. Then, of course, the boats you met with in these places were different from yours?—Yes.

46633. Bigger?—In some of the lochs they had boats as small as ours, only built on a different principle, to suit drift nets.

46634. Your boats are built to suit Loch Fyne and trawling?—Yes.

46635. And for that purpose you think they are perfectly suited?—They are suited for trawling.

46636. During all the time you have been a fisherman yourself have any strangers from the outside come in and settled here as fishermen?—Yes.

46637. From where?—Some from round about Kintyre, and perhaps Knapdaleshire.

46638. But I may take it that all the fishermen of Tarbert are really natives of this country?—Yes.

46639. And the children of people of this country?—Yes.

46640. So that they have grown up to be fishermen here by their own training?—Yes.

46641. Of late years there has been more building going on. I suppose that has been the result of the successful fishing of the last few years?—Yes. The village depends entirely on the fishing.

46642. And you think there are a greater number every year who are able to lay by some money?—Yes, I think so, because we have improved both in nets and boats, and we have a better market.

46643. Of course, your memory does not go very far back, but do you think that the practice is growing of laying by some money when people

can lay it by?—I think it is more so now than it was formerly. I think people are more saving now than they used to be in former times.

46644. So in two ways their condition is being improved; they are getting more thrifty, and they are getting more of an income from year to year?—Yes.

46645. A favourite way of investing the money seems to be in building a house?—It seems to be so.

46646. When one is able to lay by money, or his family is able to lay by money, he likes to build a house, and he generally builds it better and larger than if it were for himself alone?—Yes.

46647. In those places, Loch Seaforth, Loch Hourn, and so on, the people are not nearly so well off as they are here?—Well, I saw some people who were very well off away down about Scalpa Island, at Loch Tarbert in Harris.

46648. But take them all over, the people on the west coast are not so well off as they are here?—Of course, they are not; but there are people away up towards Stornoway that are very well off, with large boats, and working on an extensive scale.

46649. Those that have big boats, and are able to go anywhere, will be quite as well off as the fishermen here?—Yes.

46650. But in those places they do not have boats except in comparatively small numbers. Everybody here has generally a share of a boat?—Anybody that works here can only work in a company of four, so that the boats and nets are among the four, and Jack is as good as his master.

46651. While in other places the master has hired men and pays them wages?—Yes.

46652. And then the master is usually better off?—Yes.

46653. I suppose in fair average years the condition of a fisherman here is better than that of a common sailor?—Yes, unless a man was perhaps on some part of the coast where he got high wages.

46654. But taking it generally, and comparing the condition of a fisherman living here from year to year and that of a man sailing from Greenock, with his family living there,—you would consider the condition of the Tarbert fisherman quite superior?—Quite superior—quite different altogether—because we are our own masters; and when we are working it is for ourselves, and we do our best to make a living.

46655. And as a rule, one year with another since you began to fish, you do well—you are very much better off than a man sailing from Glasgow or Greenock?—Yes.

46656. *The Chairman.*—If a fisherman makes a good deal of money and saves it, is he inclined to embark in trade or in some other occupation, or does he generally keep his money and go on with his own proper business?—They very seldom go to any other business, except that an odd one may take a shop or the like of that, but they have been very scarce that have done that. Some have gone to the fish buying.

46656*. But generally they would just put the money into a house, or keep it in bank and live on the interest of it?—Yes.

ARGYLL.
TARBERT.

Archibald
Paterson.

HUGH MACLEAN, Factor for Stonefield and Kintarbert (51)—examined.

46657. *The Chairman.*—I wish to have a little information about the system of feuing. There is a considerable amount of ground about here

Hugh
Maclean

ARGYLL. still available for feus for the fishing population?—There is very little ground available for feuing or for building.

TARBERT. — 46658. But still there is some?—Yes, there is.

Hugh Maclean. 46659. Is there room for the expansion of the place for some years to come?—Well, they require to go to the back part of the village.

46660. Are the stances inconvenient for the people there if they do go back?—They are very convenient.

46661. How far would they have to go back from the sea to get a stance?—From the head of this loch about 300 yards—just a little past the church there.

46662. And at that sort of distance from the sea is there still a good deal of room?—Plenty of room there.

46663. So if they go a little way from the sea there is still an unlimited amount of ground to feu?—It is not unlimited, but there is more ground out there.

46664. One of the witnesses told us what the price of ground was, but I did not quite understand it; about how much is it per acre?—It is not by the acre that the ground is feu'd—it is by the frontage—forty feet in front and ninety feet back. The old feus were 1s. per foot of frontage, and the new feus are 2s. That is within the village proper, but in other places outside the village £4 per rood is taken, being at the rate of £16 per acre.

46665. If you feu by the acre outside the village, it would be about £16 per acre?—Yes.

46666. And if you feu in the village or in the future village, it would be at the rate of forty feet by ninety?—Yes, 2s. per foot of frontage, equal to £4.

46667. How much could they build an ordinary house for?—Some can build an ordinary house for £700 or £800, and you could build some for £500 to £600.

46668. But if a man builds a house partly for his own accommodation and partly for letting to another family of the same rank, he would build a house say of four rooms and a closet; how much would that cost him—two rooms upstairs, two down stairs, and something at the back?—About £300.

46669. Do they build such houses?—Yes, they have built such houses.

46670. And that would give lodging to the man who built it and lodging to another family to whom he would let two rooms?—Yes, but it would be better for him to build a bigger house when he has the ground, and is only paying the same amount for the ground.

46671. Is that the cheapest and best sort of house that a man would be likely to build?—Yes.

46672. Then that would be £300, and it would be worth £12 a year, taking the money at 4 per cent?—He would require to get more than that; the houses here let at 8 per cent.

46673. I want to ascertain how much it costs him to have his house. He could not in any ordinary investment get more than 4 per cent?—No.

46674. Well, he puts his £300 into the house, it is equal to £12 a year, and he pays £4 for the stance; that would be £16. He lives in it himself, and lets half to another person; how much would he get from that other person?—I do not know. I know that, so far as our rents are concerned, they are the cheapest in Tarbert. The feuars charge bigger rents than we get; but I should think that, taking a house of that kind which you would build for £300, you would get a rent of about £20 for the whole house.

46675. £10 for the half if he let the half?—Yes.

ARGYLL.
TARL
Hugh
Maclean.

46676. And his own rent would be £10?—Yes.

46677. If you let a respectable slated cottage here of two rooms and a closet, what is the sort of rent that a fisherman's family would pay?—He would not take a whole cottage.

46678. Are there not some small old-fashioned cottages with just two or three rooms?—Yes, there are some of that class. They pay about £8 for these, but that is a different class from what we have been speaking of.

46679. I understand that, but I wanted to know what would be the rent payable by a respectable fisherman's family for an old-fashioned cottage. You say it would be about £8 a year?—Well, it depends very much on the cottage. We have cottages that do not fetch anything like that. Mr Macmillan pays £12 for his house and for the ground. I should say he does not pay more than £3 for the house alone.

46680. You have two kinds of feus; if you feu outside it would be £16 an acre, and if you feu inside it would be 2s. per foot of frontage for a plot forty feet by ninety?—Yes.

46681. Is there any land feu'd upon the acre system at all outside?—Yes.

46682. At the rate of £16?—Yes. They have not taken a whole acre, but they have taken two roods or one rood upon that scale.

46683. What class is it that take them upon that scale?—One of them is a herring buyer, and another is a tailor or was a tailor in the village. There are some of them that are on a different footing. They have got a rood, but they are only paying a nominal sum for the difference between that and the forty feet by ninety feet system; for instance, there is one man who has a rood, and he pays £4, 0s. 6d., the 6d. being a nominal rent.

46684. As regards those who give the difference and take plots of that sort, for what purpose do they do it? Is it for the purpose of speculation, to build a villa and to let, or for their own residence?—Partly for their own residence and partly to let to other people—fishermen like themselves.

46685. Do you find a constant demand for feus of both kinds?—We find a constant demand for feus within the village—for the forty feet by ninety, and a nominal rent for the difference.

46686. A constant demand for that class?—Yes.

46687. Do you think it is a great advantage to the people, moral and social, that they should get feus and build their own houses?—Yes, I do think so.

46688. And they take a pride in it?—Yes. I always think a man considers himself something better than he was before when he becomes the landlord of a house.

46689. Do they generally do it out of their own earnings, or is there an inclination to borrow?—Of the fisherman class I only know of one who has borrowed. Of the other class that are not fishermen at all I know they have borrowed.

46690. Then there is a decided desire on the part of the fisher class to become proprietors of their own dwelling?—We find that a great many of them wish that. I know some seven or eight of them altogether this last year.

46691. And you think that is more for their good and satisfaction than as a speculation to let?—Yes.

ARGYLL.

ARCHIBALD CURRIE and JOHN MACALISTER—examined.

TARBERT.
Archibald
Currie
and John
Macalister.

46692. *The Chairman.*—I have received a letter signed by Archibald Currie and John Macalister, requesting me to give them an opportunity of exposing some grievances in connection with the imposition of taxes upon property in this place. Will you state as shortly as you can what is the nature of your grievance?—*Mr Macalister.* The grievance is that we are not evenly assessed.

46693. Whose fault is that?—It will be the tax-gatherer in not valuing the house according to size.

46694. Does that refer to houses of all kinds?—Yes. If we would be regularly assessed according to size, the house would be measured and we would not be so heavily assessed as we are here.

46695. Are you treated differently here from the way in which people are treated in other places?—I do not look to other places at all. What we are looking at is our own place.

46696. Our duty is to inquire into the condition of crofters and cottars and everything that affects them. I do not think that this complaint falls within the limits of our duty?—I think there should be a man from Government to go and assess the people according to the size of their property.

46697. That is a general question relating to the assessment of property of all kinds?—Of all kinds.

JAMES E. MACLARTY, General Merchant (46)—examined.

James E.
Maclarty.

46698. *The Chairman.*—What is the nature of your business; do you deal in drapery and dry goods?—Yes, and all sorts of goods.

46699. Do you find in your trade as it stands now, compared with what it was a few years ago, evidence of increasing welfare and resources on the part of the people?—Most undoubtedly—very marked.

46700. Is that with reference both to food and to dress?—Yes, with reference both to food and to dress.

46701. With regard to the matter of food, is there more wheat flour consumed, for instance, as distinguished from oats and barley?—Yes, there is more, and the food of the people is very much altered from what it was perhaps twenty years ago. There is still a considerable quantity of oatmeal consumed, but at the same time they live better. The circumstances of the people have so improved that they live better. They use a better class of provisions, and have a more plentiful supply of them.

46702. More and better?—More and better.

46703. Is there a great increase in the consumption of tea?—There was always a good consumption of tea at Tarbert, and it still keeps up.

46704. Is there a diminution or increase in the quantity of coffee sold?—There is a diminution in this way that there is not the same quantity used away from home. In all the boats they used to have a supply of coffee, but they do not have it now. It is principally tea and tinned meats and tinned milk. They are getting into the use of these things now.

46705. What do they take in the boats with them?—Tea, sugar, perhaps a little coffee, preserved milk, preserved beef, and wheaten bread.

46706. Is it common for a crew to take preserved beef with them?—It is becoming common.

46707. Then as to those that take meat with them to sea in their boats, how many nights are they away?—I speak of the week's supply.

46708. But you do not know how many nights they are away from home?—When they are away from home it is not in our own immediate neighbourhood. They go away early on Monday morning, and return on Friday night or Saturday morning.

46709. And they would take away a week's provisions with them?—Yes.

46710. Are they in the habit of taking spirituous liquors?—No, not as a rule. That will be an exception.

46711. In regard to dress, do they buy a better and a more substantial quality of things, or finer things?—The ladies buy finer things, but the gentlemen dress very much the same, only they get a more abundant supply perhaps, more than they did in former years.

46712. Do they make greater use of waterproof stuffs?—They do—rather a wasteful use sometimes.

46713. Wasteful in what respect?—I mean they do not grudge to buy new things. If a coat or a pair of trousers gets old, they don't grudge to buy new things. They like to keep themselves comfortable from the damp or wet—much more so than they did formerly.

46714. We understand there is nothing done in the way of truck, barter, or interchange of commodities at all?—Nothing whatever.

46715. Did you ever hear that such a system formerly existed in this part of the country?—Not here.

46716. The fishing people of Loch Fyne lie under no obligation to anybody that the labouring class elsewhere do not incur?—No.

46717. *Professor Mackinnon.*—You have been connected with the trade of the place all your life?—Yes, except a short time I was in Glasgow.

46718. And you have known about it through your family for a long time?—Yes.

46719. In those exceptionally bad years when the fishing was a failure in the place, although people were harder up than in a good year, they were able afterwards to pay up?—Yes, the people are honest, and no matter how they fell behind—though it might be for five or six years—when the time came that success attended their efforts, they always paid up. I never had a bad debt with any one, and so long as a man lived I never despised of his debt and always got paid eventually. The people are honest, industrious, and always willing to pay.

46720. And they are able to lay by more money than they formerly did?—Yes.

46721. But there is not a system of insurance against accident or loss of life?—That would not be of very much service here, for really there are very few accidents. In twenty years I do not think three boats have been lost. It would really be of very little service here.

46722. And since the trawling has been recognised there has been no loss of gear to speak of?—Well, nets get torn, but these are usually made up, and at the expense of a few pounds at the outside. It might be an advantage for the people to have a mutual insurance society—that is, to insure their lives. If that could be introduced among them it might be an advantage, but so far as insurance of gear is concerned I do not think it would be of advantage.

46723. Do you remember the time when the people were engaged on land and in fishing at the same time?—I remember one or two places on the other side of the loch, where there was a very prosperous community, but they died out and some of them emigrated.

46724. Did they take more of their livelihood from the land or from the sea?—They did not prosecute the fishing with the same rigour that

ARGYLL

TARBERT.

James E.
Maclarty.

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we do now-a-days. They went during the summer months when the weather was fine, and returned to work their crofts in harvest, and they were also engaged on the crofts in spring. They did not follow the fishing in the systematic manner in which we do now, because we have reduced it to a trade and science. Our men are east, west, north, and south; if the fishing is not prosperous at home, they go wherever it is to be had.

46725. As the conditions of fishing now are, you do not think it would be an advantage to have land?—No; I do not think that land would be an advantage to the fishing.

46726. They could not work the fishing so successfully as they do if they had land?—No.

46727. So even if it were possible it would not be desirable that they should have it?—I do not think so.

46728. That of course has reference to this particular place?—Yes. I think the same remark will apply to Ardrishaig.

46729. I mean the whole of Loch Fyne?—Yes.

46730. The great development of the fishing is partly due to the ready market?—Yes, and better prices.

46731. And partly to the more energetic prosecution of it by the people themselves?—Yes, we are very much indebted to the system of sending fish to Glasgow so early in the morning by these screw steamers, which enables them to get much better prices than they formerly got.

46732. With respect to a close time, what would be your own opinion about that—whether it would not be desirable that there should be a close time?—Most assuredly it would be desirable to have a close time. So far as I am aware there is a law at present, but it is not enforced, prohibiting fishing during the twenty-four hours of the Sabbath. Certainly we find it to be our experience here, that the Monday night's fishing is the best of the week, showing that the rest from Saturday till Monday night brings the fish in close to the shore where they are more accessible.

46733. I suppose there is not much Saturday night fishing, because there is not a Sunday market?—I think there is a Sunday market. They do not scruple to buy. They take the fish up on the Monday morning, and have the chance of the two days. But our men have not done anything for years on the Sunday, and what we complain of is that other men come and take advantage of the Sabbath rest.

46734. I suppose you consider it a grievance that the people here are injured by their own supply being made less, and the prices being spoiled for the Monday market?—What we wish is that we should all be put on an equal footing, that the law as it stands should be enforced, and that we have the rest on the Sabbath carried out and secured to us. We have a cruiser on the coast, and one or two boats have been seized, but the law has not been rigorously enough enforced to have a complete observance of the Sabbath rest.

46735. You obey it voluntarily, and you wish that others should be compelled to obey it?—We find it to be our advantage to do so.

46736. And I suppose that is quite the feeling of the whole of the people of this place?—I believe it is the feeling of the community.

46737. *The Chairman.*—And there would be no great inconvenience to the great markets either in Glasgow or the north of England?—Not the slightest.

46738. *Professor Mackinnon.*—They would get the fish at least by the Monday afternoon?—There might be no fish upon Monday. There might be on Monday afternoon. If all observed the law there would be no fish sent in practically till late on the Monday, and then there would be an

increased take on the Tuesday, as it is invariably the case that the Tuesday's take is the best of the week.

46739. *The Chairman.*—But one of the previous witnesses said that the fish could be delivered in Glasgow on Monday afternoon?—After a certain season—we shall say after 20th September.

46740. But not in summer?—Not in summer.

46741. *Professor Mackinnon.*—It would be daylight in summer by the time you could get a chance of getting at the fish?—Yes, till about the 20th September.

46742. After that date there would be sufficient darkness to catch some fish on the Monday morning, and send it up to Glasgow that day?—Yes.

46743. *The Chairman.*—Can they not catch herring by daylight?—They do it at certain seasons, and in certain circumstances, but not as a rule. The best fishing is got at night.

46744. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—Is the population of Tarbert increasing considerably within your recollection?—Yes, very much so.

46745. Is it steadily increasing?—It has increased about two hundred in the last decade.

46746. What do the additional inhabitants do—do the men follow their fathers in the profession of fishermen?—Yes, always.

46747. Do any of them migrate to other places, or do they stay at home?—The boys stay at home as a rule.

46748. Do they continue to live with their fathers, or do they set up house for themselves?—Some of them do remain at home, but the bulk of the boys make settlements for themselves as soon as possible. Fishermen, as a rule, are blest with large families, and the boys get out as soon as they can.

46749. Are any considerable number of them employed as sailors?—No. The fishing is much more profitable than going to sea.

46750. Are any of them enlisted in the Royal Naval Reserve?—Not at present. We had a number at one time, but we have a Volunteer corps here.

ARGYLL.

TARBERT.

James E.
Maclarty.