



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

(ref. ARG/06/T/04/02/1884, Formerly NRAS survey 1209 bundle 911)

### 1. Letter/Journal of Lord Lorne on a visit to Tiree, 1884

Journal. Tyree. April 1884

1/

Tyree, April 23 1884

Dear Papa. A deputation came to see me yesterday, consisting of Ronald McDonald, cottar, Hyanish. Rent 11/10 – Niel McNiell, joiner, No land. Resides with brother at Vaul Rent £21.1s of brothers croft. John McFadyen, Coalis, Resides with mother who has croft £12.1s.4. Donald McDonald, crofter, Ballymartin £11.7s. Hector MacDonald, fisherman, Ballymartin. No rent. Neil McArthur, fisherman, Ruaig. No rent. John McLean, student at Glasgow. Ballyphuill. Living with mother who has small croft Rent £1.19.

I had given John McLean, University [of] Glasgow student, £10 on the previous evening when he came to see me saying he was an only son, and required £10 to pursue his medical studies during the summer term at Glasgow.

When the deputation came they gave McDiarmid the idea that they had been told that I wanted to see a deputation. I told them that I was glad to see them, but that I had asked for no deputation. (Perhaps McFarlane the Minister may have told them I expected a deputation, because when he said that one had been appointed to wait on me, I had asked him to say I should be glad to see all and sundry). I had heard from MacDiarmid since the last big meeting that they had all got it into their heads that I had come to force on them some grand emigration scheme, and that at this meeting they had very excitedly taken this into consideration and had determined to tell me they would have none of it. I therefore opened business by saying that I was glad to see them, that after many years of absence I wanted again to see people and estates at home – that I was going to visit Mull, Kintyre and other places – that here the great want seemed to be communication and a quay, continuing “~~that~~ I think quay necessary, also more steamers. Would double fishermen’s means by sale of fresh fish. Papers all wrong about Dukes “promise” of quay. What was promised was to ask engineers. Engineers had reported unfavourably. Impossible to have quay under £10,000. Duke could not do that, Government might. Would try to get government aid. For steamers there should be a petition. Would they join in petitioning Government to subsidize steamers visiting Barra, South Uist, North Uist, Coll, Tyree 3 times a week?” Several here upon expressed wish for harbours all over the island, one man wanting Heynish, another Gott, another Kilmaluag. If Government be petitioned and accede to request,” I said “They will send down a man to report, and his decision must be final. Would people help by giving unskilled labour?” - Answer “They might – but



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

they would have to be consulted. They would pay something” – I continued “If it be government pier, it would be free to all by Government Rule. All payment would have to be by contributing unskilled labour” – All preferred to think that the proposed petition would be signed. I annex copy of it as read to them.

2/

Hector MacDonald said in Gaelic that there never would be any good in the island “until a knife were put into the big farms” - ie division of them. Not knowing Gaelic I only heard of this remark afterwards. I asked them if they had come as a deputation, had they heard anything of my intentions? Dead silence. “Out with it” I said “Did you not hear that I wanted to clear the island, and send you all to America.” “Yes that is what we heard and we wanted to know if that were so, and to tell you we like Tyree best.” – “No” I said “I have spoken elsewhere about Canada, in Glasgow, London, Birmingham etc. But in Tyree there are so many that know from friends who have gone before all about the Colonies that I do not intend to speak of them now in public here, although I should be glad to speak in private or in public, if anyone asks me. They must know that we had always kept as many people as we could. Morvern and both sides of the Sound of Mull was full of people when we had it. Perhaps we should have to give up Tyree to one of the Rothschildes<sup>1</sup>. How would they like that?” “No – they would not like that But even they could not harm us more“. I then gave the number of people a century ago showing that the numbers had increased since then, but I knew how well Tyree men got on in Canada, and although I should wish those who were comfortable to remain, I should be glad to give the best advice should it be their interest to go. I then enlarged on Canada. Then I passed on to the wish you and our family had always had for the comfort and welfare of Tyree people, and spoke strongly on not listening to outsiders, but on speaking face to face and directly. They said that the family were always kind but the factors were the devil. I said that the factors had to make changes which were improvements but were not seen as such first by the people – who had for instance hated inoculation, preferring the smallpox, and had liked “Rundale“ holding, instead of what was universally now acknowledged as better, namely individual holdings. All changes were hated at first, but it was much by factors advice that Tyree was now comfortable. They said there was sometimes much destitution and the poor were badly treated by the big farmers. MacDonald, Lady Cathcart’s factor, spoke both about the Petition for the Quay and telegraphic and steamer communication, and Manitoba. Neil McNeill said that Manitoba must be changed now for he had a letter from a friend who had lost his

3/

fingers with frost bite, and another a joiner, had come home and could not get work. I said it was only farm life that was recommended, and then only if men could get an advance such as Lady Cathcart’s people get, and good local guidance. MacDonald the factor began reading a letter recently received from the Benbecula people there, but was told that they did not want to hear anything more about it. I spoke to them again generally, and they all left apparently much

---

<sup>1</sup> The Rothschild family



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

pleased, shaking hands very cordially, and when we passed out to dine, we found them in solemn pow wow on the grass astride the enclosure dyke, and they rose and cheered as I passed.

Mr. MacDonald thought we had good reason to be satisfied with the impression made, and repeated that he thought the seed sown would in time produce an emigration crop. But the feeling among the people is violent against Immigration, as far as it finds expression, although I think I notice a surreptitious inquisitiveness to hear more about other chances than those Tyree affords.

During the last two days we have seen several crofters and cottars and it is evident that the stories of the cold of Manitoba have been very industrially circulated among the people. In all the townships McDiarmid says he has taken care that they should know of his offer to follow Lady Cathcart's example, and that everywhere at present the people won't hear of it. MacDonald says this was just the same at first in Benbecula, and 250 have gone this spring.

The people visited were – Brown, Balavoulin. J. Cameron, ditto. Kennedy, ditto. MacMillan, fisherman to whom I gave £50 for a boat. J. McLean, Malcolm Campbell, Kilmaluig. A. MacDonald, Ballavoulin. A. MacKinnon, "Lord" MacDonald (a) Barrapol and brother. Donald McLean, Barrapol Stanford's Works. McLean of Greenhill (who complains of Kelp burning spoiling grass). Mrs. A. Campbell, Barrapol. John McLean, Barrapol and his nephew University student D. McLean for whom we got a Hamilton bursary.

We have explored 3 of the Danish dunes and found pieces of pottery in all – and in one many bones of pig – and some rude<sup>2</sup> hammers which are nothing but long pebbles, whose ends alone show that they were used as hammers. There was a small boar's tusk in the Hough Fort, which like the others is built on a rock

4/

summit near the shore. Here live also many limpets. There are two forts at Kenavara, one 300 feet above the sea, one on a most inaccessible rock close to the water. In each case there are the remains of a stony [and] generally circular outer wall, and this encloses the remains of several small circular houses, often not more than 10 feet diameter or less. Perhaps they were beehive shaped like those at Scarba.

April 24. Visited the forts at Vault. There are two there as elsewhere. Whether it was Danish work or older is doubtful, but it is evident that the builders whoever they were, built the forts in pairs. There are two at Kenavara – two at Vault, and two at Hianish. These last have almost disappeared. I suspect there must have been two at Haynish, and there are 2 at Caolish. But the big one (there is always one large, and one smaller one in the pair in each place) at Vault is by far the finest. Being removed from any village it has had its walls more left alone than have

---

<sup>2</sup> 'rude' as in basic



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

others, and the construction is most curious. It like others is situated on a natural rock elevation, and it has a very strong inner tower, of which the wall remains to a height of 8 or 10 feet in height on the sea face. This wall of the central round tower is at least 12 foot thick, probably 14 feet thick. It has a narrow passage in the thickness of the wall running all around it. Inside the space is about 30 feet diameter and is heaped full of stones fallen from the structure. Outside of this citadel, and following the irregular outline of the crest of the hill are other strong walls now only remaining in heaps, and with the order of the stones partly concealed with sods. There is at most on two sides a space of 25 feet between the citadel and the outer ballium walls and on two sides there is not more than 10 feet. Where the space is greatest there are the foundations of a good many small circular dwellings like those at Kenavara. We got again pottery and bones. One of the bones looks like the Vertebra of a porpoise, and there are teeth which seem to be pig's and oxen's teeth.

Several stones which had been used as hammers were again found, and in the lower of the two Vault forts were found in one "house" a single kern, split into two parts. The ashes of the fire were often found. I have left 6 men to dig the central passage in the walls to find out the height. I can't help thinking the passage in the sand we saw many years ago near Greenhill may have been connected with some old fort the stones of which have mostly disappeared or been buried in the sand.

5/

At Vault some women showed us a small bronze Scots brooch, which I shall offer for tomorrow. I have rather spoiled the market by giving £1 for a bronze pin found in the old battle field near Ballavoulin –

This is the worst place for begging for assistance I have ever known, not even excepting a Red Indian camp. Everybody comes and asks for something. Several today ask for assistance in getting fishing boats. I sympathise far more with those who wish to have a large boat and to follow the fish in Winter, than with those who merely loaf about the shore in the Summer for fish.

We visited many people at Caolish, and several at Vault and Ruag. The nervous man back from Manitoba where he went without guidance, and ignorant of English was amusing in his disgust. "They put me on a steamer. It had a mill wheel attached to its hinder end. I wanted to have good work. It was on the Red River. But they made me cut up sticks" (cut wood) The steamer had to be shoved off the banks with sticks. Everybody swore at me on shore and on water. On shore the Bosses, on the steamer everybody, and the Captain worst of all. I left my land, because my Father wants me back here. It was cold, fery cold, fery cold." But he mentioned one Tiree man near Rapid City who has 1200 acres of good land. The people have all been very nice in manner to me personally.



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

Mr. MacDonald is going very carefully over the valuation and rent rolls and finds that Ballymartin is much the highest rented – and too high – according to the valuation of stock on the most fair computation. Ballephuill is fully up to a good rent, and as the land is poor, being much composed of clay, the rent is really high. Both Balliphuill and Ballymartin, the latter especially, are much higher rented than are other townships.

All the people of all degrees are wild about the quay – And it is of course dreadful not to have one. I go on telling them it is a question of means, and that you cannot do it alone. Campbell, the man you wished me to see was here tonight, and of course wants it next to his door. Gott Bay is unpopular with all the fishermen as being too far from the Northern Banks. Our proposal is that all the fishermen and others sign a petition to goverment for a quay, and let a goverment officer decide the best place.

A petition also to the Post Master General for a subsidy for a tri-weekly steamer from Oban to North and South Uist, Barra – Coll and Tyree.

Also an attempt to get a cable.

6/

Campbell, the fisherman looked low spirited, and sulky, or sullen perhaps profoundly dejected. I could not get a smile out of him. He is out fishing every day now, but is not doing much. He knows New Zealand. He says the sand blowing is very bad just now on his fathers croft. The sand seems to blow in regular cycles. 30 years ago all the shoreward face of Hough was under sand. Now it is beautiful sward. Near Kilmaluag there is now a desert of sand. It was not long ago all turf. On Ballavoulin again people remember sand where there is now grass.

The prices of the goods sold at Stanford's Store are much complained of, but McDiarmid thinks that the complaints are not reasonable. "Trucking" should be prohibited during the next Lease if one be taken on by Stanford. They say that the Company recently sent a man round to say that any man employed by them to collect Kelp who complained of the prices charged, would be not employed any more.

There are flocks of 6 to 8 eider ducks to be seen at many places on the Northern shore. It is a beautiful bird, and I have never seen them wild, and near before. Sheeldrake and great northern divers are floating about in pairs, and there are scores of rock pigeon in the wild coast of Kenvara, and a few in some other places. For instance we found a pair breeding in a lovely grotto formed in the pink marble, which comes down on the shore in a great "stack" near Balliphetrish. Next to it is a red rock full of feldspar, and in this small sea grotto the two joined. The marble was hollowed out into an arch, covered with oddly shaped recesses and ledges and pinnacles, and the clear water was 4 foot deep below. The pigeons had a great choice of curiously shaped ledges on which to build, and had chosen a very secure place, vaulted with marble. Mr. Barr at whose house we again lunched has now a very complete establishment,



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

having a boiling room, a cheese pressing room, servants' kitchen and 2 byres and stable in connection and under one roof.

7/

I think you should get at least £100 for the shooting here – There are lots of rock pigeons, quantities of hares among the bent, snipe, woodcock, duck and 2 kinds of plover, not to mention seals, of which there are numbers to be got. The last shooting tenant asked about the seals and this was a Gaelic tenant's reply –

“Seals – yass – goot seals – scores and thirties and forties – and great hundreds – perhaps more – yass – and two”!

Nobody has ever been able to find out what the man meant by this computation.

April 26 We have been going carefully over rents according to acreage and “souming” and actual stock kept. The results show that the east end of the island is modestly rented, but Ballephuill, Ballemartin and Kilmaluaig highly rented. This explains why the people of the east end are “much nicer” as MacDiarmid calls it than the west end people. These too are not highly rented if one takes them as compared with the prices given by large farmers. They pay only 4 or 5 shillings per acre, and Barr pays 11 shillings which MacDiarmid's brother who is the applicant for Heynish will pay 9 shillings per acre. Yet for the small man's capacity to pay they are highly rented. As in Ireland the valuation must be by this man's capacity to pay, and a small holding as MacDonald says, cannot pay. For instance we visited Ballephuill yesterday, and the man (McNeill) who was most sulky pays only £4.10. but he has only 9½ acres of poor land. McNeill is one of those who recently got one acre of the croft split up and given for potatoes, but he showed no gratitude – only saying that Mr. Geekie removed him from Barrapol where they were doing well, and that he detested the piece he had got now. MacDougall who is the man who is to go to New Zealand is not in good health, and has a large family, only one of whom a boy 17 years of age will be able to assist him. He has a wretched scrofulous girl, whom someone has told him would not be admitted on the ship. He was very anxious to know if this were true. I told him that there would be no difficulty. He asked about the securities for money. I told him you had agreed to sign as security for him, and that I would take care of the child, and put her into Larbert if he liked. He said that he was glad that there would be no more money difficulty but the Doctor had said the child might go with him. He seems a weak headed man. The wife evidently does not wish to go and the mother who goes on scolding him for leaving, is to remain in one of the houses he has fitted up for her. Mr. MacDiarmid is to try to get him off as soon as possible. I saw all the other Ballephuill tenants and,

8/

went on to the fishing village where I found the men much discontented. I made them show me their boat quay which is some way from their houses. They went with me talking of their fathers having had the ground in croft over which we were walking, and in Gaelic were joking as to



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

which piece of land would now belong to different members of the party of them which accompanied me. I picked out the best looking man of them, a Campbell, and offered him £50 (as in the case of the Ballivoulen men) to fit out a boat, telling them that this summer loafing-round-the shores-fishing was poor work, and they must have a good boat, manned by 6 of them to follow the fish in Winter. They seemed grateful, and the arrangement is concluded. There was one particularly fine looking young man named Black, of a cottar family, but who has travelled and speaks English. Him we have persuaded to go to Manitoba. He leaves the Island with us, and if successful, will make a capital Bell wether<sup>3</sup>. Besides the £100 which he will get, half from you as advance, and half from the North West Land Company, I have given him £15 for the journey, so that he may begin when he gets to Brandon, in Winnipeg with £100 clear. We have thus thrown a bombshell into the dissatisfaction in the Balliphuil camp. But I anticipate great excitement when the Crofters Report is published, and that unfortunate sentence which is to obscure about cottars who have "holdings" (whatever that may mean – perhaps only a house) having a claim to share in the Crofters' Expansion Scheme, is read. We visited Heynish, and next day Gott Bay, and although every soul in the island connected with the sea, is against Gott, I am sure that it is the only place at which a pier can be made without the most ruinous expense. Heynish is almost quite open. When the row is over and legislation has settled matters, I should discourage individual fishermen at scattered places. I should make a little fishing town with a cow's grass and garden for fishermen near the pier that is to be. I would repair the 3 small boat piers now much damaged (This would cost very little) and allow a small number of men near them with the same privileges. The new fishing company may help in giving advances for big boats which are the things really wanted.

9/

April 28

Except at places where there are small fishing quays already, I would not encourage the isolated ling fisherman, but assist only in getting large boats, employing at least 6 men.

Today MacDougall the Balliphuil Crofter settled to go to Manitoba. I have given him £50, so that with his £100 advanced by you and the North West Company he will have enough for his journey and the starting of himself and 8 children.

I am sorry to say I have come to the conclusion that you would be well rid of this island if you could get even 10 years purchase. They are the most begging lot I ever saw, and the place is at best a miserable one. The old bonds of affection are completely loosed. They think the Proprietor should feed them with a golden spoon and are not grateful then. If you got 50, 60 or £70,000 put out at 5½ percent in America you could get more profit from it than you ever will by pouring money down their insatiable throats.

---

<sup>3</sup> Bellwether as in something or someone who leads or indicates a trend



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

We have visited today the Moss. I have ordered some net wire for one of the cottages. The land there is wretched, and the people worse, but if they got a share of Hough and Helipol at the end of the leases it would be another matter! They will probably get sick of it and go before that time. MacDougall told us today that he thought every crofter on the Island would go if he got the money he had got – but they do not say that at their meetings – never the less I believe that next year a good number will apply unless they are stopped by the expectations created by the Commissioner's Report.

McLean of Griannal has been having a long complaining talk.

McDiarmid says he knows the farm is high rented.

If reduced to £100 you would save it from future partition, and the old man's life for which term the lease extends, must die soon – probably in a few months. They complain much of the kelp burning destroying their grass, and say the sand comes up immediately through the destroyed sward.

A very fine sculptured stance from a cross has turned up at Kirkapol. I have taken a rubbing of it.

I have asked MacDiarmid

10/

to collect all the good sculptured stones, and put them in the old chapel at Kirkapol. It is a shame to leave them to be trampled and weather beaten. On the fine oak pattern one I took a rubbing of in 1877 at Kirkapol, there is a deeply graven inscription on the side, which we had not time to uncover.

Among others who came this morning was Sleiven [Sleven]<sup>4</sup> the work Manager of the Stanford Factory. He says Stanford is much put out about the mention in the papers of his Irish system. I told Sleiven I thought it would be much better to get on a cash basis system. The present agitation is of course chiefly MacQuarrie's work as far as it relates to the accusation against Stanford. But the prices at Stanford's store are high. I got Sleiven to say that it was quite immaterial to them whether they kept a store or no, and that if cash payments were wanted and preferred they could be made. The chief difficulty was, he said, with the small amounts wanted to the extent of £600 at certain seasons. It was difficult to keep so much cash. But surely some

---

<sup>4</sup> Mr Sleiven, Irishman who was manager of Stanford's Kelp Works on Tiree. NRAS 1209/3221 includes 13 July 1887. Letter by the 8th Duke of Argyll complaining of the conduct of S[leiven], manager of the Kelp Works, and Irishman 'liable to have a bad influence on the people' – 'lately complaints were made to me of the rude conduct of the men about S[leiven]'s works to all who were not Landleaguers. Particularly complaint was made of horns being blown at people passing who are not Landleaguers, and at some who were collecting money for the Queen's Jubilee'.





## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

cash might be kept, and cheques given for the rest Mr. MacDonald thinks this plan would answer

There are "Mail" correspondents here writing all the trash possible and impossible. I send you their pamphlet marked nearly at all places – there being few unmarked, and these Mr. MacDonald and Mr. MacDiarmid would prefer to omit in translating. This is the address of the best people to do the translating.

MacLachlan and Stewart, Publisher and Bookseller, South Bridge, Edinburgh

11/

I see that Mr. Anderson, the fishmonger, gave last week before the Harbours of Refuge Committee of the House of Commons (of which Mr. Marjoribanks is Chairman) evidence that Loch Buy and Tyree or Coll would be the best places to have harbours built at in the West Coast. Colin should look to this that his evidence is supported in regard to Tyree. All people we speak to say that my visit has done great good, and that the savages are pleased. I think them decidedly inferior to the Cree, Gibberwags<sup>5</sup> or Blackfeet<sup>6</sup> – As for the Chinese they are whole pig tails length ahead of, and above them. The island is like the worst bit you could pick out of Central America, minus the soil [and] grasses or the independence and brain of the people of dear old Canada. Thems my sentiments, and no amount of sky larks will alter them. Your affectionate, Lorne

### 2. Letter W.P. Edwards, London to Lord Lorne on emigrants to Canada.

#### Page 1

The most Noble, the marquis of Lorne, Inveraray Castle, Inveraray  
39, Dover Street, Piccadilly, W3 May 1884

My Lord, I have to thank your Lordship for your letter of 29<sup>th</sup>.ultimo, written on board the 'Dunara Castle' which has been forwarded to me here. Poor Mr. Macdonald has indeed been very unfortunate in meeting with a second accident. I hear he reached his own home today and is getting on very well.

---

<sup>5</sup> Jigaboo, jiggabo, jigarooni, jijjiboo, zigabo, jig, jigg, jigga, jigger (U.S. and UK) term for a black person with stereotypical black features (e.g. dark skin, wide nose, and big lips). Jiggaboo or jigabo is from a Bantu verb tshikabo, meaning "they bow the head docilely", indicating meek or servile individuals.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_ethnic\\_slurs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ethnic_slurs), visited 2018-05-04.

<sup>6</sup> The Blackfeet Nation also known as the Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation is an Indian reservation and headquarters for the Siksikaitstapi people in the United States



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

I am glad you are sending out two pioneer settlers, as I feel certain that is the best made of influencing those at home, and of bringing to their knowledge the advantages of the north west. - next year I hope and believe a large number from Tiree will follow as they did from Benbecula and South Uist.

I have instructed the best possible arrangement to be made for their comfortable settlement in our Colony, where they cannot fail to prosper, and I hope the seed thus sown will bring forth good fruit. I have also arranged that the same advance shall be made to them viz. £100 to each family to be applied on their arrival in stocking their Homesteads on arrival, one half being contributed by the Canada North West Land Company and the other half by the Duke. I observe you have paid Donald Macdougall £50 and Donald Black £15. Are these sums intended to be in

2/

in addition to, or on account of the £100 advanced? If Macdougall has no means of his own I think it might be well to let the £50 be in addition. The steam boat and railway fares of so large a family from Glasgow to Winnipeg may be about £40, a little over or under according to the ages of the children and your Lordship knows that £100 is the least the family should have on settling on the homestead. In some cases we have advanced more than the £100 which alone can be charged on the homestead, but, for the excess we take the settler's personal obligation to repay with interest along with the £100. I will be glad to know how your Lordship wishes this dealt with. We like the settler's obligation to repay the £100 in favour of the North West Land Company, as they have facilities for collecting, and refund to us one half. I recommend that the Duke should make the same management, for besides saving the trouble of collecting it relieves the proprietors of the position of being creditors of these crofters after they leave their Estates.

You are no doubt aware that the Duke kindly introduced a deputation to the Lord Advocate yesterday, the object being to contradict some false statements made by The Highland Land Law Reform Association of London in the Times newspaper, and repeated by a deputation of said Association introduced to the Lord Advocate by Mr. Macfarlane, MP for an Irish constituency on 21<sup>st</sup>.ultimo. There is a short report of our deputation in Times of today, but I expect it will be fully reported in the Scotsman, the editor of which also promises us a Leader in his issue of Monday. Such statements do much

3/

much harm if left uncontradicted and the Highland proprietors and all who wish well to their country are greatly indebted to His Grace for this service. The charge contradicted was that the crofters were being evicted for having given evidence before the Commissioners which I was able to disprove.

I am detained here by private parliamentary business and may not return to Edinburgh for ten days. Should you return to town before I leave I will do myself the honour of calling at Kensington Palace as I am interested to know further particulars about Tiree. I have the honour to be your faithful & obliged, Wm. P. Edwards.



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

### 3. Names of Cottars who invaded Hough & Cornaigmore 8th December 1884

Cottars of Balevullin who put their cattle on Hough.

		Cattle
John Kennedy	fisherman	6
Neil McNeill	carpenter	2
Donald McNeill	cartwright	3
Donald Kennedy	labourer	4
Archibald McLean	fisherman	2
Donald McNeill	fisherman	1
Widow Mary McLean or McKinnon		1
Lachlan Cameron	labourer	1
Duncan Campbell	labourer	1
Neil Brown	labourer	1
		22

Cottars of Kilmoluag who put their cattle on Cornaigmore.

Colin McDougall	seaman	1
Alexander McLean	labourer	1
Donald Kennedy	fisherman	1
Allan McLean	fisherman	1
Hugh McLean	tailor	1
Angus McInnes	labourer	2
Charles McNeill	carpenter	1
		8



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

### 4. List of Cottars Tyree. [undated c.1884]

#### Page 1

##### List referred to

##### Mannal

###### Cottars (Fishermen)

Peter McKinnon

James McDonald

Lachlan McDonald

Arch[ibald] Campbell

John Lamont Jun[io]r

Hector Campbell

Malcolm Campbell

Hugh McDonald

###### Cottars (not Fishermen)

Donald Brown

Hugh McDonald

Allan McPhail

Neil Kennedy

John Lamont

Lachlan McMillan

Thomas Campbell

Donald McMillan

Alexander McFadyen

##### Balemartin

Donald McDonald

Hector McDonald

Donald McDonald

Allan McLean

Neil Lamont

Cha[rle]s Campbell

Neil Campbell

Gilbert McDonald

Lachlan McDonald

Arch[ibald] McFadyen

Allan McKinnon

John McKinnon

Hugh Shaw

Malcolm McLean

Arch[ibald] McLean

James McArthur

John McFadyen

Donald McFarlane

Neil McKinnon

John McKinnon

Roderick McKinnon

Neil McDonald



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

John McLean

John Campbell

### Balinoe

Alexander McNeill

John McArthur

John Paterson

Arch[ibald] McLean

Neil Campbell

2/

### Balevullin

John Kennedy	(Cottars)	2 Cows & horse
John McKinnon	(Cottars)	2 Cows & Stirk
Donald Kennedy	(Cottars)	1 Cow & 3 Stirks
John McNeill	(Cottars)	1 Cow
Mary McKinnon		
[ ] McLean	(Cottars)	1 Cow
Neil McNeill	(Cottars)	1 Cow & Stirk & horse
Donald McNeill	(Cottars)	3 Cows
Arch[ibald] McLean	(Cottars)	2 Cows
Hugh Cameron	(Cottars)	1 Cow

## 5. Letter Rev J McRury to Lady Elyn 1884

State of Tyree 31<sup>st</sup>.March 1884 [Docquet]

1/

### Private & confidential

J.W. McRury, Manse of Hylipol, Tiree. N.13 to The Right Honourable Lady Glyn



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

March 31 1884

Madam, At the outset I must apologise for not acknowledging receipt of your Ladyship's very kind letter before now. I knew very well that the account for the books was mislaid and that it would turn up some day. It is as useful to me now as it could have possibly been at any previous time. Allow me to thank Your Ladyship cordially for kindly inviting me to call at the Vicarage if I happen to be in London. I am sure I will be very happy to do so.

I am sorry to tell Your Ladyship that the people of this end of Tiree are in a state of great agitation over the starting of a branch of the Land League among them. They are I am afraid in a fair way to bring themselves into trouble. I am the chief object of their hatred.

Before the Royal Commissioners came

2/

the tenants of the township of Balinoe wished me to write a statement for them which they intended to lay before the Commissioners. As I am crofter in Balinoe they thought I should at once write out their statement. I refused to have anything to do with them or write any other township or individual, giving as my reason, that clergymen should have nothing to do with political agitation and quoting the following passage from Luke xii 13 [ ]

"Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him. Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you". At the first meeting of the delegates at Baugh mention was made of what I did or rather what I did not do and I was afterwards abused throughout the island like a pick-pocket. Many of my con-

3/

-gregation grumbled, but gradually the grumbling seemed to stop. The Baptist minister like myself kept aloof ~~like myself~~, but he got very little scolding for it. As people generally go to the parish minister for certificates of character and to sign documents of every description for them they think he is bound to write letters and papers for them. But the Free Church minister being anxious to gather a congregation attended some of their meetings.

A day or two before the Commissioners came he had to leave the island on urgent business, and he wrote a letter to Rev. John McNeill, a native of Tiree who happened to be in the island



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

on his holidays asking him to take his place at the meeting. Mr. McNeill was not willing to do so. However he latterly went.

4/

Among other things Mr. McKay the Free Church minister said that future generations would bless Mr. McNeill or any other man who would help to rid the people from the tyranny of the landlord, or words to that effect. Yet the same Mr. McKay had the Cheek to ask the Marquis of Lorne to open his bazaar in December. After a while the stir which the coming of the Royal Commissioners caused gradually died away. About a fortnight or three weeks ago papers printed in Gaelic [and] English were extensively circulated among the people.

I did not see any of them nor did I but partially hear of what was in them. I heard that there were meetings held about the

5/

land laws, but as I was not in the least interested in the matter I never enquired about what was discussed at these meetings. On Friday the 21<sup>st</sup>. instant two respectable men, members of my congregation called. They were shown into the living room where I happened to be writing at the time. On enquiring why they called they told me they were sent as a deputation to ask the use of myself and the parish church for their meetings. I had some conversation with them as to the nature of the society they formed, and they told me they got word that they need not expect anything from the Royal Commissioners Report, and that they were advised to band themselves together and that

6/

they would get whatever they wanted. "What do you want" I said. They replied "We do not want reduction of rent, or more land for the same rent. We want to do away with the landlords and have the land divided among ourselves." "You will never get that" I said. "Are you prepared to take up arms and fight your way untill you get the land for yourselves?" "Yes, we are, God made the land and every man has as good a right of it as another." "Well", I said, you will never get permission from me to use the church. The church is a house of prayer and it must not be made a den of thieves. You know very well that I abstain

7



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

on principle from taking any part directly, or indirectly in the present agitation on the land question. I should be the very last man in the parish to break the law of the land [and] if I would give you the church I would be helping to break the law. Just go you away and tell those that sent you that they will never get the use of the church to discuss the land question in it.” One of them said “You are doing a foolish thing in refusing the church.” On the following day rumours reached me that the people banded themselves and vowed that they would never darken the church door again. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>. I went to the church, I must say with the expectation of finding only a few, but as many as usual, upwards of 300, were present.

8/

Many of them I understand went expecting to hear me making a statement in regard to my refusal to give them the church. They were disappointed. I preached as usual and made no allusion whatever to the matter. During last week, I heard ever so many rumours of war. A proposal was made to boycott the church but it has not been acted upon. Yesterday was rather a threatening day, and though the attendance at the church was rather small I cannot attribute it to the action of the Land Leaguers. The feeling against me runs so high that I am resolved to leaving the parish as soon as I can. I wrought very hard among the people for close upon five years. For the last four

9/

winters I taught a singing class in three different parts of the parish for about four months each winter. I might have left long ago if I liked. When the parishes of Kilmeny [and] Colonsay were vacant I got letters from both congregations saying that they would elect me if I would accept of a call. I always disliked the habit rather common among some of our ministers in the Highlands namely leaving their parishes too soon. Any man who wishes to be useful in the Church of Christ must be prepared to sacrifice much for the Church. My usefulness in this parish is now at an end. Though I have no ill-will towards the people they have

10/

plenty of ill-will towards me. No one can listen with pleasure or profit to the words of a person to whom he has a dislike. What makes my action in refusing to give them the use of the church so very bad in the people’s estimation is that the Baptist minister gives them the use of his





## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

church. I know he does not approve of their work but he is afraid to go against them. The Free Church is in favour of the people. I do not know whether he has as yet joined the ranks of the Leaguers but on good authority I know he said to several that the people should be helped in their struggle for liberty. He and the Baptist minister are

11/

dependent on their congregations for their bread [and] butter, and they try to keep the people on their side. What a grand thing the principle of establishment is? The established church minister is the only independent minister in the parish, though he is supposed to be afraid of the Duke of Argyll. He need not be afraid of anybody if he does his duty. After all the people say against me behind me not one of them has courage enough to say to me in the face that I did wrong in refusing to give them the use of the church. I think this rather a cowardly act on their part.

I am afraid I act very injudiciously in writing this long letter on an unpleasant

12/

subject to Your Ladyship. If I have done wrong I beg to be excused, and as it is the first offence I promise never to repeat. I inferred from a sentence in Your Ladyship letter that the news of the island may not be unpleasant, But the present news must be unpleasant, and I am very sorry I have them to relate. I am Your Ladyship's most obedient and humble servant, John W Rury.

### 6. Emigration to Canada & Storm Damage 1884.

Copy of Report by Hugh Macdiarmid, Tiree 12<sup>th</sup>.April 1884.

1/

#### Emigration to Canada



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

In putting The Duke's offer before the people none has signified their intention of accepting it and from the present state of feeling among them I fear that there is no use in pushing the matter, in the meantime at any rate.

The agitation has now spread to the east end and the people had a meeting the other night when a number joined this London League. There was a procession with a piper at the head, they also had flags.

### Balephuil

The acreage of the croft of the/

2/

the late John Macdonald is about 8 acres. Besides dividing this croft among 8 crofters for Potato land the right of grazing land was added to the whole. The part of this farm that was added to Heynish (about 220 acres) is not all Hill pasture, it consisted of 8 crofts with what was considered their share of the Hill pasture.

### Reef

Any damage done to the Sand Banks is gradual and no person can make out any specified time at which this happens, you can therefore see that it is impossible for me to give the time at which the damage occurred.

I would say that there is

3/

is no doubt at all that the last three winters have been exceedingly severe on the Banks owing to the heavy and continuous storms, though at the same time it would be difficult to prove when the damage occurred.

## 7. Letter Duke to Fishermen of Balemartin, Tiree 1884.

1/

Inveraray October 16 1884



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

Hector Macdonald, I have received a message from you and certain other fishermen of the village of Balemartin that unless I agree to some proposals of yours about land which does not belong to you, and never did belong to you, or your village, you will break the law, commit violence, and seize the property of other people.

This conduct is the more unreasonable because if you are able to occupy and cultivate the farm of Heynish which has always hitherto been let to one tenant, you had ample time and opportunity to make an offer or proposal to me when it was advertised as a vacant farm, no such offer or proposal was ever made, because I presume you knew that you have not the capital required to stock it, and because farming is incompatible with systematic fishing.

And now after a new tenant has entered into possession, and expended his capital in stocking the farm, you do not even offer to take the farm or to be responsible for the rent, but you threaten to seize some parts of it by violence which would render the rest of the farm practically useless to any tenant.

I can only believe that conduct so unreasonable and violent can be thought of by you, more especially when I remember that I have often showed you my willingness to help you in your own proper industry – within the last year I and Lord Lorne together have/

2/

have/ advanced more than £500 to aid the fishermen of Tiree in getting better boats, and no small part of this advance has gone to your village, I had hoped to be encouraged to persevere in this kind of aid by seeing a more systematic and successful industry in the way of fishing. But no confidence can be placed in those who are led aside from the paths of industry to the paths of lawless violence. The only return I get for the aid I have given is a threat of violence far more gratuitous and unreasonable in its character than many of the outrages which have taken place elsewhere – Nobody is trying to deprive you of anything you have ever had – Nobody is trying to evict you – Nobody is even asking you to pay any rent for the ground occupied by your houses – You are therefore under no trial or temptation except such as is common to all men who may desire to seize what does not belong to them – It distresses me to have to say such things to men of Tiree with whom I have been connected so many years without any disagreement – But I hope you will see that it is impossible for me to yield to



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

threats of violence – Neither in my private nor in my public capacity would this be consistent with my duty

I earnestly hope you will not compel me to have recourse to the law. It is most repugnant to my feelings to do so, but I cannot submit to such threats of violence as those which at least verbally you have sent to me. Your friend and wellwisher, Argyll

### 8. Duke's reply (via Rev J G Campbell) to letter from N McNiell, Vault.

1/

Please copy the enclosed letter, and its enclosure - then seal it and post it to the Minister. Argyll.

2/

17 May 1884. The Duke of Argyll. Enclosure. letter for Rev'd J.G. Campbell Tیره.

3/

London, May 16 1884

My dear sir, You have done quite right to send to me the letter of N MacNiel of Vault – Indeed I am very glad you sent it, [and] he will be none the worse of having written it so far as I am concerned – It is an excellent specimen of the incoherent nonsense which the poor people put forward as their “grievances”!

In the first place they refer to transactions between 25 and 37 years ago in the second place they misrepresent those transactions in the most childish way. I must say I wonder you did not point out to the poor man the obvious nonsense of his grievances.

What business has he with the fortune left by Mr. Campbell? What business has he with the fortune of Mr McQuarie. Are these grievances even if the fables he tells were true?

I send you a reply which I must request you to read to the poor man.

Who is he? There is no

4/

N McNiell in the rent roll of Vault - But there is a Lachlan McNiell. Is he a cottar or son of the crofter L McNiell? Yours truly Argyll



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

Copy Letter to Rev'd J G Campbell 16 May 1884

### Reply

1. It is quite true that owing to the potatoe failure and the expenditure of all my rents on employing the people [and] emigrating them the late Duchess and I retired to Rosneath [and] lived for several years so quietly that we did not even keep one carriage. It is also true that a rich man offered to buy Tiree and I declined because I was fond of the island and the people [and] did not wish them to fall into the management of a stranger.

2. It is not true that the “big factor” was

5/

then living with “Carriages horses [and] saddles”. I used to visit him often, [and] he had nothing but a gig like what you have at the manse.

3. When the people were starving they were glad to get Indian meal [and] turnips – both of which are excellent food. McNiell does not seem to know that boiled turnips are a favorite food with many rich people.

4. The complaint that “Compulsory labor” was employed on Heylipol can only mean that the food ought to have been given Gratis without any labor. Highlanders ought to be more independent than to talk such nonsense.

5. The story about the “big factors” fortune is a ridiculous fable [and] even if it were true the crofters in Vaul have no business in it.

6. The same story of McQuarie must be a fable too – but if he has made a fortune he must have done so by his store [and] his farms [and] nobody has a right to complain unless he

6/

he did anything dishonest.

7. The complaint that whales flesh was used as a manure shows great ignorance. Crops don't taste of the manure used on the land, and whales flesh is at least as wholesome as cows' dung.

If the people of Tiree have no other grievance than such twaddle as all this they ought to be a very happy [and] contented people. They are infinitely better off than they were in 1847 [and]

21

Reference: ARG/06/T/04/02/1884

© His Grace, the Duke of Argyll

Transcribed by John McLean, Friends of the Argyll Papers, April 2018



## The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle

all the improvement is due to what I have done for them [and] I shall be very glad to do more to make them still more comfortable. Argyll