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Donald  
M'Donald.

33412. Have you been paying rent the whole of that time to the landlord?—Yes, but the rent was only 6d. till the last repair was made.

33413. How long is it since the last repair was made?—Four years.

33414. How much did the repair cost?—I don't know. Only he asked me whether I would be willing to pay £1 for the house when I got it repaired, and I said I would.

33415. Were you better pleased to pay 6d. for the house as it was before, or 30s. as it is now?—Well, it was in danger of falling formerly, and you could not live in it anyhow.

33416. Have you a son who helps you?—Yes, one son and two little daughters.

33417. Is your son married?—No, he is quite a young man.

33418. Then it is your son who pays the rent?—Well, yes, it is he that earns the rent.

33419. Are you able to work a little yourself?—Yes, I work some yet. I never worked in this country.

33420. Could not your son help a little to put up a fence round the potato ground?—Yes, if we got ground along with the cow and the wintering of her. The old way was that the proprietor should set up the fence, and that we should pay interest.

[ADJOURNED.]

ARGYLL.

TYREE, ARGYLL, TUESDAY, AUGUST 7, 1883.

(See Appendix A, LXXXVI.)

TYREE.

*Present:—*

LORD NAPIER and ETRICK, 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.

DONALD M'DOUGALL, Crofter, Balphuil (52)—examined.

Donald  
M'Dougall.

33421. *The Chairman*.—Have you been elected a delegate?—Yes.

33422. Were there a good number of people present?—Yes, a great many.

33423. Have you a written statement to produce?—Yes, but we wish to say something before that. We wish to know whether it is true that an assurance is being given to crofters and cottars in giving their evidence before this Commission from proprietors and factors.

33424. Such an assurance has been given in many places by proprietors and factors, and I will now ask whether there is any one present who will give an assurance in regard to the island of Tyree?—*Mr M'Diarmid*. I am local factor to his Grace the Duke of Argyll.

33425. Do you feel enabled to give an assurance to the people here present that no one will suffer prejudice in consequence of what he says here on this occasion?—No, I cannot give any such assurance. I did not ask for it, and I was not told to give it.

33426. You don't think you are, knowing the disposition and character of the proprietor of the island, enabled to give such an assurance on your

own responsibility?—I would say the Duke of Argyle won't do anything against any man who will tell the truth.

33427. Are you able or not, from your knowledge of the character of the proprietor, to give a positive assurance that no prejudice will occur to any one on account of what is said here to-day?—I am not going to say that.

33428. (*To Witness*).—It is not in the power of the Commission to give you any assurance of the kind. The Commission cannot interfere between you and your proprietor, or between you and the law. Whatever you state, therefore, now will be at your own risk and on your own responsibility. But from what we know of the character of the Duke of Argyle, we cannot believe—we do not believe—that any prejudice could occur to you on account of what you say.—*Witness*. We live in that part of Scotland where most of that suffering is taking place, and oppression and slavery. We are poor people. We cannot give any of the statements that we came here prepared to make unless we receive the assurance that no crofter will be evicted from his croft, or cottar put out of his house, for telling what we have to tell; and that is the truth, and nothing but the truth.—*Mr M'Diarmid*. I have had this moment put into my hands a letter from the Duke's chamberlain. He says the crofters are at liberty to make any statement they have to make without any fear of after consequences.—*Witness*. What I have to say is, that we never had much fear of the good man the proprietor, because factors here were his eyes, his ears, and his mouth in his dealings with us. And, concerning the house of Argyle, we desire that whatever we say, anything that we complain of as having been unjustly done, will be put to the credit of the factors, and not to the house of Argyle. My reason for saying so is that we get letters from Kintyre—I don't know if cottars get such information, but we crofters do—if we have any complaint to make in respect of rent, or any injustice done to us, we must go and state our case in such and such a place in Kintyre. These letters are written in English, in the name of the Duke.

33429. Is the complaint this, that when you have anything to state you are obliged to state it in writing in English to a factor living at a different place?—No; we do not complain of that at all. We think that this is an indication on the part of the proprietor that he is willing to hear and redress our grievances. That is our understanding of it.

33430. Have you got a written statement on the part of your township which you wish to communicate to the Commission?—'Unto the Right Honourable the Royal Commission, the Petition of the Crofters of the Township of Balephuill, humbly sheweth, That our grievances are—1st, 'We have been deprived about thirty years ago, by John Campbell, Esq., 'the then factor of the island, of a part of Ben Hynish, which from the 'time of our forefathers belonged to the common pasture of the township 'of Balephuill, thereby reducing the stock on each croft by one horse, one 'cow, and one stirk less. 2nd, We do now pay, and had been paying, 'since we have been deprived of that said part of our common pasture 'rent as high as when we have been in possession of that part. 3rd, We 'do not possess any shore where to obtain sea-weed wherewith to manure 'our ground, since we have been deprived of that said part of our 'common pasture, if we be not allowed by the good-will of the occupier 'of that part of our common pasture we have been deprived of to have 'the sea-weed. 4th, We pay road rates, though we were ourselves keeping 'up till this year about three miles of road. We are under these disadvantages, while we humbly think we ought not to be under any of them, 'for the following reasons:—(1) We had our rent paid at and up till

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'the time we have been deprived of the said part of our common pasture ;  
'and, moreover, we have been deprived of it without summonses being  
'served upon us. (2) If we have been deprived of that said part of our  
'common pasture, we were entitled to have our rents reduced in propor-  
'tion, as our ground could not then raise better or more bountiful crops  
'than when we were in possession of said part of our common pasture.  
'(3) From the time of our forefathers the township of Balephuill possessed  
'a shore from which to obtain sea-weed to manure the ground, till we lost  
'possession of it by having been deprived of that said part of our common  
'pasture, as the shore belongs to that piece of land. (4) As we are  
'assessed for road money, we consider it very unjust that we should  
'have ourselves to keep up any road, as we have done for thirty years.  
'Therefore our demands are—1st, To get back that part of our common  
'pasture of which we have been deprived, or rent reduced in proportion  
'to extent of land taken from us, and £1176 for loss occasioned us by  
'having been deprived of said part of our common pasture for thirty  
'years. 2nd, That we shall be entitled to have a right to foresaid shore,  
'with road thereto for sea-weed to manure our ground. 3rd, That as we  
'are assessed for road money, and we were ourselves keeping up about  
'three miles of road till this year, we shall get £360 for the work we  
'have done on the road in that length of time—thirty years. These our  
'said grievances and demands we submit to your Lordships, and pray :  
'May it therefore please your Lordships to make an inquiry thereinto,  
'and redress our grievances accordingly.—DONALD M'DOUGALL, delegate.'

33431. You say that thirty years ago you were deprived of a portion of your common pasture, and had no reduction of rent ; did you receive any other advantage or benefit from the proprietor in connection with the deprivation of your land ?—Nothing.

33432. You complain that, in consequence of the common pasture being taken away, you have no proper access to the shore ?—That is so.

33433. But although you do not possess the shore, do you go to the shore practically to get sea-weed ?—Yes, we do ; but that is through the good will of the person who got the ground.

33434. Has the tenant of the ground ever prevented you, or put any difficulty in your way, in all those thirty years ?—There was a gate erected to prevent our passage, for fear of spoiling the grass. That gate was closed, and we were not allowed to pass. He did not keep the sea-ware from us, but he did not wish us to go trespassing through his ground, spoiling the grass.

33435. As matter of fact, do you habitually go for the ware ?—We have no other way but that of getting to the shore and getting sea-weed.

33436. And do you habitually go without any impediment at this moment ?—Yes, we do.

33437. Do you make any payment to the tenant on account of the sea-ware ?—We do not, because it belongs to ourselves, if we get it out.

33438. Is there a sufficient quantity on the shore for the use of your lands ?—Plenty.

33439. You complain that you pay road money, and yet that you are obliged to keep up a particular road of three miles ; who made this road of three miles long ?—I don't know who made it, but we measured it.

33440. Is it a made road, or is it merely a natural road across the ground ?—It is a made highway from quay to quay.

33441. Do the crofters expend any money upon it, or do you merely apply some labour ?—We pay our rates for the general public highways, and we keep up this road besides with our own labour, although it is entirely outside the boundaries of our farm.

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33442. But it leads to the shore. How much labour does it come to for each occupier in the year?—I believe it comes up to about twenty days a year for each crofter, with a horse and cart—nearly that, anyhow.

33443. Do you mean that each crofter has a cart and horse engaged in the labour?—Yes.

33444. For twenty days?—Yes. It may be ten days one year, and twenty or more than twenty another year.

33445. You say that thirty years ago a portion of your pasture was taken away; has any of your pasture or arable ground been taken away since that?—No.

33446. During the last thirty years has the rent of your crofts been increased?—Yes, it was twice raised.

33447. What stock do the crofters keep now on a full croft?—I keep two cows and two horses.

33448. Young cattle?—I have no young cattle at present.

33449. Any sheep?—No; no crofter in the island has sheep.

33450. What rent do you pay?—£15, 2s.

33451.—How many acres of arable land have you?—Sixteen acres.

33452. What is the area of the hill pasture for the whole township?—I cannot tell that.

33453. Is it very large?—It is not large now, since we were deprived of a part of it.

33454. Is the road to the shore, on which you expend so much work, only useful for your township, or is it of use to and used by other people?—Yes, it is useful to the country side.

33455. Who uses it?—It leads to the quay.

33456. Does anybody else work upon it, or only the people of your township?—No one else does, or has ever done, any work upon that road but us.

33457. What goes on at this quay? Is it for fishermen or the exportation of cattle?—It is for fishermen.

33458. Is that for the fishermen of your own township, or of other townships?—It was originally built for our township, but it is often used by people from all parts of the country, who run in there in bad weather. In connection with this quay, I have to mention that nine crofters and some cottars who had their lands near this quay were moving to another part of our hill pasture. The pretext that was used for taking the hill pasture from us was those nine cottars that were moving from the quay. The place was cleared, and now when we go upon a rough day there is no person to hold a rope.

33459. Have any cottars within the last thirty years been brought in and put upon you in your present township?—Yes, some even since that time; there was all that number, and there have been some since.

33460. Were these cottars the natural increase of your own population, or were they brought in from the outside?—They belonged to our own township. There were some that came from the outside as well. Some of those came from some ground cleared by the factor to make a farm for himself.

33461. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh*.—Who got the land when it was taken away—the whole of the hill pasture thirty years ago?—It was the tacksman of Hynish who got it from us, and now Mr M'Quarie has got it.

33462. Who is Mr M'Quarie?—One of the tacksmen of the place.

33463. Is he a large tacksmen?—Yes; he has two large tacks.

33464. What do you want to say in addition?—That this factor that cleared our place thirty years ago got the management of the property, but ordained a statute, like that of the Medes and Persians, that no one should have either a sheep or a pig, for fear that these sheep of ours

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would break in upon the large farms. He went round also among us, holding a paper in the one hand and a notice to quit in the other, and he told us that unless we signed this paper, the effect of which was that we would require to be obedient to anything and everything which either he or the Duke of Argyle would order us to do, we would have to quit the place. We signed the paper, otherwise we would have to quit. After we signed the paper, his mode of procedure was to raise our rents excessively, our idea being that he did not mean to raise our rents because he thought the place was worth the rents, but because he thought he would get us to follow our neighbours to foreign places and give up the crofts. That day we would have signed ourselves out into the sea, but that alternative was not put before us; and what we wish now to bring under your notice is, that while we live in a land of law and liberty—it gladdens our heart that our country is a country of law and liberty—still neither the law nor the liberty reached this estate. We were in a state of slavery and oppression. We have heard, but we are not quite certain whether it is the case, that it is the Duke's desire that those places which were cleared by the removal of our neighbours to foreign places and some to the sea should be distributed among us. If that had been the case, it would have been good for us—if such a policy had been pursued—but it was not. Instead of that policy being pursued, those vacant farms were consolidated into large farms. There are ten of them now upon the island, and upon eight of these there were crofters in old times—before Mr Campbell's day.

33465. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie*.—What is the size of the large farms you refer to?—I believe the smallest of them is about £100; the highest is about £400.

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JOHN M'FADYEN, Crofter, Caolis (42)—examined.

John  
M'Fadyen.

33466. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie*.—You have a written statement to submit?—I have. 'To the Royal Commissioners, Highlands and Islands. 'I represent the small crofters of Caolis, Ruaig, and Salum, who complain 'of—(1) The smallness of our holdings, the inferior quality of the soil, 'through continual cropping, there being no room for rotation of crop. '(2) High rent and the high-handedness of factors in using every means 'to exact more rent from us; for example, a late factor got all the 'crofters to sign a paper to him, that they would comply with anything 'he would see proper to do to them, or they would be evicted, and when 'he got them to do so, he raised two times their rent. The consequence 'is yet seen in our poverty. Under these circumstances, we petitioned 'his Grace the Duke of Argyle last December for a reduction of rent, 'but were refused; his Grace, however, gave some help in seed to those 'that could not sow their crofts, and offered leases to those that did 'not sign the petition, and were better off than their neighbours before. '(3) Paying rent for drains made thirty-six or thirty-seven years ago, 'which ought to have ceased in twenty years: these drains are now useless. '(4) Having to buy almost all the meal we require, as well as about £6 'worth of coals yearly, and all the wood we use for building or repairing 'our houses. (5) Having had formerly to work about twelve days a 'year on the estate without payment of any kind, and that at any time 'of the year the factor saw proper to send for us; if we refused, we would 'be fined. (6) The partiality of factors in favouring the larger tenants 'against the small crofters, when the larger tenants can get the factors 'to remove cottars from their own larger holdings, and put them on the

'small crofts against the crofters' will. (7) We are under all these disadvantages, while the half of the island is under large sheep tacks held by strangers, and the people of the island are not allowed so much of the land as to make a living off it. The large tacks are the cause of much of the pauperism in the island. The people having been evicted from their holdings and removed to the sea-shore, and their holdings converted unto sheep tacks, six of which are held by three individuals. (8) There is no harbour accommodation where goods and passengers can be landed or shipped by steamers of ordinary size in rough weather, in consequence of which goods and sometimes passengers are taken north until the steamers land them, if possible, when returning south. The postal communication is also so irregular that for a fortnight at a time neither letters nor papers are received in the island; nor is there a post running between the post-office at Scaranish and the east end. Our demands are more land, fair rent, fixity of tenure, and compensation for improvements.'—Signed by JOHN M'FADYEN, Caolis, delegate, and by nineteen others.

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33467. What is the extent in acres of your crofts at Caolis?—There might perhaps be about twelve acres of arable land in addition to the outrun; but in some cases the outrun has been apportioned along with the arable ground; the acreage in this case is larger, of course.

33468. But the extent of arable land is usually about twelve acres?—Short of twelve perhaps.

33469. Is that not sufficient for a rotation of crops?—I am afraid not; there is a good deal of the land within the arable area that is rocky and unsuited for cultivation, and that is counted of course in the acreage.

33470. What extent of arable land would you think sufficient to admit a rotation of cropping?—To make a crofter comfortable probably he would require about twenty-four acres.

33471. Besides the outrun?—Yes, besides the outrun.

33472. You don't think a rotation of crops could be carried out without an acreage of that extent?—The ground is so poor and gives forth such poor crops that I think we could scarcely maintain much stock upon all the arable land that we do plough just now.

33473. How long is it since you signed the paper which the late factor asked you to sign?—Thirty years ago, perhaps.

33474. That is given as an example of the high-handedness of factors; can you give a more modern instance?—There are many examples of high-handedness down to the present day, but some of them are specified in the other papers sent in to-day, and those who sent them in are more capable of speaking of them. But this high-handedness does continue.

33475. How much meal are the people generally obliged to buy in the course of the year, on an average?—Twenty-one bolls per family this year in the township of Caolis; but this year is exceptional.

33476. Do you grind any of your own corn?—Yes, we grind some barley some years—very little. }

33477. What amount on an average will you make from your own crops?—Some of us make none at all. They have more than enough to do after feeding the stock to sow down crop again; some of us have to buy seed.

33478. Do you use the whole produce of the croft in feeding your cattle?—The greater number give to the cattle the whole of the barley and oats. Of course, the potatoes always go to the family; but there are others who send something to the mill.

33479. Do you keep more than one horse usually?—Two.

33480. On twelve acres of arable land?—Yes.

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33481. What quantity of potatoes do you usually raise?—Perhaps fifty to sixty barrels in an average year, off an average croft; some more, some less.

33482. Do you sell potatoes?—They are always sold out of the island more or less; but there has scarcely been any sold out of our township the last four years.

33483. Do you sell some when you have sixty barrels?—Yes, we would.

33484. What quantity would you use yourselves?—Probably between thirty and forty barrels. That would depend of course upon the number of the family, but it is an average.

33485. How long is it since you ceased to give twelve days' work in the year to the estate?—It has not entirely ceased yet. In Mr Campbell's time it was twelve days, and it got less, and now there may be a few days now and again; it has not yet ceased. We do not complain of it now.

33486. For what purpose is that work given?—Any kind of work. We were once obliged to put up a fence between two large tacks—a stone wall six feet high. We had to do the whole work; quarry the stone, carry, and all. I built it.

33487. That has ceased to be a ground of complaint now?—Yes, unless it may begin again.

33488. Have any cottars been taken off the large farms and put upon the crofters' lands at Caolis?—Not out of the large tacks, but they were taken off some other crofts that were consolidated into one, and they were removed as matter of favour to the sitting tenant, and made to settle down upon the smaller crofters' holdings.

33489. In Caolis?—Yes.

33490. How many instances of that have there been at Caolis since you remember?—I and three neighbours had a piece of outrun attached to our arable ground, and four crofters who were removed from their holdings were settled down upon this outrun of ours. There were instances of sitting upon an individual croft.

33491. Who got this ground?—A man who was a bachelor, and who had no one to look after; but he was in favour with the factor. He is not living now.

33492. What was the extent of those four crofts, or what was the rent of them?—There was only one croft, although there were three families upon it. Two of them were in the rent-book, and one was a cottar. They were moving to make room for him, and sent off upon our land.

33493. Had this old bachelor any other land besides?—No.

33494. Had those two crofters and the cottar grown up upon that piece of land, or had they been crowded in upon it?—Yes, they belonged to the place.

33495. What rent do you pay?—£14, 8s.

33496. What have you—stock and acreage?—Ten or twelve acres of arable ground, two horses—one of them only about a year old, three cows, a quey, two stirks, two sheep. The place is rather fully stocked; the croft would scarcely feed them well.

33497. Have you beyond this arable acreage any outrun belonging to you individually?—There is a portion of outrun to some extent, but principally rocky, and five of us have the right to put stock upon it. One of us only puts a horse upon it.

33498. What extent will it be?—Probably thirty or forty acres, rock and all.

33499. Have you any pasture besides for the whole township?—No, nothing; that is all. The outrun of the other crofts is allotted to each croft separately.

33500. Do you consider your rent too high?—Yes.

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33501. Do all the rents bear the same proportion to the land that yours does, or about it?—Probably it is much about the same; some may be cheaper.

33502. You think yours is dearer than ordinary?—Well, perhaps it is.

33503. Do the large farmers pay lower rents than the crofters in proportion to their acreage?—Perhaps some of the large farmers may be dearer than the crofts, but take them all round, considering their extent, I should say the crofting communities are as highly rented.

33504. What would you consider a fair rent for your croft and right of pasturage?—I think, considering the stock it keeps, it is dear enough at half the present rent.

33505. How do you arrive at the value of the land?—I fix the rent in proportion to the amount of stock the croft can provide for. We practically take little out of the produce of the croft itself. It is the outcome of the stock that provides our rent and the value of the croft.

33506. That being so, what value of rent do you put upon the horse, the cow, and the sheep?—I look upon it this way: the horses are employed for cultivating the croft, and we take no profit out of them, so we do not count them in making up the rent. I would set apart, perhaps, 25s. or 30s. for each cow.

33507. But if a man keeps two horses on twelve acres of land, is he not consuming in an unprofitable way a large proportion of the produce of the croft?—I can scarcely admit that it is unprofitable. We cannot do with one horse; the ground is light and sandy, and some of it mossy; it must be ploughed quick, and sown when it is ploughed. One horse won't do, and unless we have a horse we cannot have the crops at all.

33508. Can two of you not arrange to keep two horses between you?—I tried it, and we could not get on with it; not but we agreed well enough, but we would be behind hand with the work.

33509. Then if instead of having twelve acres of land you had twenty-four, would you require four horses?—No; the two horses would cultivate more land equally well as the present croft.

33510. Why then will they not do it when it is divided between two men, if they would if one man had it?—There is a great difference. The neighbour may have other work to do with the horse when I would like it to plough. It may be he is carrying sea-ware when I would like to be at the plough.

33511. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Are you a native of the island?—Yes.

33512. Are you well acquainted with it?—Yes, I know it; but I live upon one end of it, and there is some portion of the other end I don't know so well.

33513. Is the population of the island falling off?—It is decreasing.

33514. Was there a much larger population in Tyree in old times than now?—Yes; there was once about 4000 people, and now it is short of 3000.

33515. Is it the case that half the island at least is in the hands of a few large tacksmen?—Probably there is about half the island.

33516. Can you name the large tacks?—There are some of these large farms that have crofters still within their bounds, but a considerable portion of the old boundary of the township has been added to the tack.

33517. Name those that have no crofters upon them?—Scaranish, Baliepheatrish, Cornaigmore, Hough, Grianal, Hynish, Cruaidhghoirtean, Crosspool, Reef. There are several others where the place was only



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partially cleared and a large tack formed of the portion that was cleared, and a few of the crofters still remain on the outskirts of the place.

33518. Upon the various tacks you have enumerated, how many people may be living now?—I don't know that there is more than a family on each farm.

33519. Is it the fact then that of these large tacks six of them are held by three people?—Yes.

33520. I want to know the position of those tenants—are they Tyree people?—Two of them are natives of Tyree.

33521. Where did the others come from?—The factor has two, Mr M'Quarrie has two, and Mr Barr has two.

33522. Are these people resident on their farms?—Yes, they are resident in one of the places.

33523. What is the name of the present factor's farms?—Hough, Hylipool or Cruaidhghoirtean.

33524. Were there a great number of people at various times working these nine possessions you have referred to?—Some of those places were cleared before my recollection, some since. I live upon one end of the island, and could not tell the population, but there are others coming after me who can.

33525. Can you speak generally whether the removal of these people benefited those of the small crofters who were left behind?—In some of the townships that was the case; they were the better of it; but in the great majority of them they were nothing the better of it; the cleared lands were added to or made into tacks.

33526. Are the crofters in your position worse off to-day than they used to be?—Yes, we are; and the reason is that we pay higher rents, and the crofts are not so good as they used to be in the days of our fathers.

33527. Did the system of creating large farms in this way benefit in any degree, directly or indirectly, the crofter class?—I think it was greatly to their loss, because some of those who were removed were added in and crowded upon the small crofters, and their places made less.

33528. May it be stated with truth that of the total population of Tyree nearly the whole of them are situated upon one half of the island?—That is the truth, according to my judgment.

33529. Are the lands that are under tack of a better class, both arable and pastoral, than the lands in possession of the crofters?—Well, perhaps it generally may be said to be better land, but anyhow it looks very much better, because a great portion of it is not under cultivation, and therefore the pasture is good, and the portion of it that is arable can be cultivated upon a better system, and yields better crops, than we in our small crofts are able to raise.

33530. Is there a good deal of land that was once under cultivation now in the big tacks, and not cultivated at all?—Yes, I can tell you some of those townships out of which the people were sent away.

33531. Mention them?—Out of Scaranish went ten crofters. Then there is another tack not named before, Baugh, where some crofters still remain; five crofters were sent out of it. Another place that was added on to the farm of Baillepheatrish, eight crofters were sent from it. It was called Kennoway. Out of Hylipool twenty-six crofters were removed and twenty-one cottars. There were nine crofters and three cottars cleared from Balephuill, and this portion added on to the farm of Hynish. Those four crofters were removed from a piece of land which was given to the British Sea-weed Company. There is another tack, Manal, where there is still crofts, but twenty-nine crofters were removed from a portion of it that is a large farm now.

33532. You said you bought a lot of meal last year; where did you buy it?—Chiefly from Glasgow.

33533. Did you use to produce much more meal than you do now?—In old times we used to send to the mill almost as much as would feed the family, in many cases where now we do not send a grain.

33534. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie*.—Was the land from which the four crofters were removed for the British Sea-weed Company the piece next to the quay at Balephuill spoken of by Donald M'Dougall?—No.

33535. Does the British Sea-weed Company give any great employment in Tyree?—Yes, there are a few that find direct employment from this, and there are others that manufacture kelp, and they are obliged to sell it to this Sea-weed Company; they are not allowed to sell it to anybody else.

33536. Is that for want of a market, or because the factor orders it?—No, it was neither the one nor the other, but because the Company rented the shore from the proprietor, and accordingly they have the right to purchase at a price fixed by themselves all the kelp manufactured on the island.

33537. What wages are those that they employ able to make?—There is a statement bearing upon that among the papers sent in.

33538. Can you make better wages by burning your own kelp?—So far as I know, they do not make better wages. You cannot manufacture kelp except for a few weeks; whereas those in the employment of the Company are employed all the year round.

33539. What was the date of the removals you have spoken of—was it in modern times?—The greater portion of them would have been sent away some thirty years ago; but upon a change of factorship in the place about twenty years ago, some more were removed. There might have been a few cases since that time, but not to speak of.

33540. Those removed about thirty years ago would be removed after the potato famine in 1848?—Yes.

33541. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh*.—Without anticipating any statement that may be made about the case of the Sea-weed Company, can you say whether the Sea-weed Company ever pay money to people employed by them?—Perhaps they have given away money once or twice, but they won't pay any money if they can help it.

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ANGUS MUNN, Crofter, Heanish (44)—examined.

33542. *Professor Mackinnon*.—You have a statement to submit to the Commission?—Unto the Honourable the Royal Commissioner, appointed 'to inquire into the Condition of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, 'the Statement of Angus Munn (44), crofter and fisherman, Heanish, Tyree; 'Humbly sheweth, That we have been forcibly deprived of our holdings of 'two crofts, during our father and mother's lifetime, to make room for 'another party who got into the factor's favour, and on going to his Grace 'the Duke of Argyle to Mull, he advised us to come home and that he himself would look after it. On the factor becoming aware of this he 'reported that we had no stock to stock the ground with, and on being 'challenged by the factor as to the stock, we had to call witnesses to let 'them see what number of stock we had; and on the factor's becoming 'aware of this, he, in a rage, asked us about the stock. Having replied 'in the affirmative, he said, "Did I not tell you that you were not to 'have a hoof on the grass after a certain day?" On being questioned as

ARGYLE.

TYREE.

John  
M'Fadyen.

Angus Munn.

ARGYLL.

TYREE.

Angus Munn.

'to what was to be done with them, "Drown them," said he. We had  
'then to confine them in our byres until some of our cattle died. Now,  
'on his Grace having found this out, and that we were able to stock the  
'ground, he further instructed the factor to reinstate us on the crofts; but  
'after all we never got but one of the crofts we had before, after being  
'two years from us, and much rent was imposed upon us on that croft  
'than what was before. Mr Geikie was the ruling factor for his Grace at  
'that time. The crofters grieve for high rents, as it was about doubled  
'within the last thirty years, exclusive of rates; and our land, by constant  
'rotation, does not yield the one half of the produce it used to do previous  
'to the rent being raised, and by that reason, we are buying our meal  
'regularly from the south, and also feeding stuff for our cattle. The  
'most useful part of our common pasture was taken from us and added to  
'the one in whose hands the greater part of the township is. Our  
'demands are—More land, fixity of tenure, fair rent, compensation for  
'improvements.—Delegate, ANGUS MUNN.—Signed HUGH M'KINNON,  
'senior, MALCOLM M'KINNON, HUGH M'KINNON, junior.—P.S. We also  
'complain of our harbour accommodation, and for larger fishing boats, such  
'as are required for that part of our industry.'

33543. How many crofters are there in Heanish?—Four just now, and the minister counts for one; that is five, who have got three crofts.

33544. What is the whole rent of the place?—I pay £7 and a few shillings; I cannot tell the total rent of the place.

33545. You say the rent was doubled within the last thirty years; what was your rent at that time?—We had only one croft at that time, and we paid 40s. to 50s. for it.

33546. And do you pay your present rent for the same land you had then?—Yes, for the same land we pay now £7, for which we paid formerly 40s. to 50s.

33547. But the two crofts that were taken from you were not restored to you?—Yes, we got the one that we have now.

33548. But not the other one?—Not the second.

33549. How long ago was that?—Nearly twenty years ago.

33550. What was done with the other croft which was not restored to you?—It was given to a neighbour and favourite of the factor's.

33551. Had he no land before?—Yes, he had.

33552. How much had he before?—He had three crofts.

33553. And you were not in arrears when that croft was taken from you?—Yes, we were a little in arrears.

33554. Did you or your father make any improvement upon these two crofts you had?—Yes, we made some drains, and we put some soil upon the rocky ground.

33555. Was the land worth more after you did that than it was when you came into possession of it first?—No.

33556. Was it not yielding better crops?—Yes, the portions that were drained were yielding better crops, but the other portions were getting worse.

33557. How?—Because it required to be ploughed every year, and we could not give it rest.

33558. Why did you need to plough it every year?—Because it was so small; we were not able to support ourselves unless we ploughed it every year.

33559. When was the part of the common pasture taken from you?—About sixteen years ago; it was in Mr Geikie's time.

33560. What reason did he give for doing so?—No reason at all, but his own good-will and pleasure.

33561. To whom was it given?—To the man who got our croft—the favourite. ARGYLL.
33562. What was the extent of it?—About three acres, rock and all. TYREE.
33563. What stock do you keep now?—One horse and two cows. This portion of outrun which I speak of was used as a passage to the general outrun of the place for the cattle, so that it is not merely the loss as pasture land, but the loss of it as a direct road. We have now to make a circuit of a mile to get to the outrun upon which our cattle graze. Angus Munn.
- There used also to be horses upon it some portions of the year.
33564. What feeding stuffs do you get for your cattle?—Pease-meal and bean-meal.
33565. Do you use that food all winter?—No.
33566. What generally does it cost you?—26s. or 27s. per bag; it is in bags we buy it.
33567. How many bags do you use in a season?—Two to four usually.
33568. How many bolls of meal have you had to buy since last autumn for yourself?—Nearly twenty.
33569. At how much the boll?—Fifteen to twenty shillings off and on—oatmeal 20s., flour about 15s.
33570. Do you fish?—Yes.
33571. Do you make your living by fishing?—No. I was obliged to take to the fishing when I lost the second croft. My father and mother were bedridden, and I had to support them.
33572. Were the two crofts sufficient to support them?—Yes, we were able to live by them, but it was just hard enough.

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ALEXANDER M'LEAN, Crofter, Balmeanoch (78)—examined.

33573. *The Chairman.*—You have a statement to submit to the Commission?—I have. 'I, Alexander M'Lean (74), elder and crofter at Balmeanoch, Tyee, humbly beg to bring before the Royal Commissioners 'the following facts and grievances, and crave their attention and consideration to the poor circumstances unto which I have been reduced 'through the ill-treatment I have received from time to time. About 'forty years ago I bought the first of my crofts for the sum of £95 sterling, 'the yearly rental of which was at that time £6 sterling. I afterwards got 'possession of other two crofts, but for one of them I had to pay £5, 'and for the other £8, before I was allowed to take possession of them, 'these sums being equal to the yearly rental of the crofts. I held possession of the three crofts for a good number of years, and, although they 'were but small, having been together, I was able to live comfortably, and 'was perfectly satisfied. But a few years ago the last two mentioned 'crofts were taken from me, without either compensating me for improvements made, or even giving me back my own money which I paid for 'them, and this for the direct purpose of extending the ground of a 'stranger, who is not content by reducing me into my present poor circumstances, but who now uses all means to deprive me of my remaining one. 'The rent of my present croft is now £12, 11s. 6d., as compared with '£6 thirty years ago, or upwards of £1 per acre of poor soil. I have 'now so little land, and what I have is so dear, that I would be utterly 'unable to fight against poverty, were it not for the support I get from my 'children in the Lowlands. My prayer is that I should get back my two 'crofts, and that the rent of the other one should be reduced to the old

Alexander  
M'Lean.

ARGYLL. 'standard; and were this prayer answered I would be perfectly content  
 TYREE. 'and fairly comfortable.

Alexander M'Lean. 33574. What do you mean by saying that forty years ago you bought the first of your crofts for the sum of £95 sterling?—I bought it, as I stated, from the outgoing tenant. He went away to America at that time, and he had the right to sell the croft and everything that was upon it. There were two horses and one cow of stock, and there were the crops and houses; and when I valued the amount I paid him £95, and when I valued the amount of seed and labour that he expended upon the croft for that year and the houses, I considered I was over £40 out of pocket beyond the value of everything that I received.

33575. Did the sum of £95 include the cattle, horses, and growing crop?—Yes, it included the stock, crops, and houses.

33576. How much were the houses valued at?—There was no valuation.

33577. How much did you count out of the whole £95 was for the houses and offices?—They were not much worth; they were in a very backward condition, and I had to repair them and put them in order again, and I believe they were not worth as much as I expended in putting them in repair.

33578. The rest of the £95 was for stock?—Yes.

33579. Why did you say you bought the croft for £95 sterling, when the money was for the purchase of stock on the croft?—I bought it in order to have a dwelling there, and that I should cultivate it myself afterwards.

33580. You got two other crofts; who did you get them from?—From the factor of the day.

33581. Who did they belong to before?—It was other two men that had the crofts that I had before. One of them removed voluntarily to take up the croft his father possessed before, and the other one left, I don't know why or how.

33582. But you got them from two crofters?—Yes, it was two crofters occupied that before.

33583. They were taken away from you and given to somebody else; who were they given to?—They were given to the British Sea-weed Company.

33584. What use does the company make of the land?—They cultivate it.

33585. Is it the company that cultivates it, or has the company given the two crofts to two tenants, or to one tenant?—They keep it in their own hands.

33586. When the two crofts were taken away from you, you say you got no compensation for improvements. What improvements had you made?—Well, I cultivated them; then they were drained; but they were drained at the factor's orders and his expense; but I paid interest all the time I was in possession of the crofts.

33587. Did you build any walls?—There were fences, and I kept them in repair.

33588. You say there is a stranger who is not content with reducing you to your present poor circumstances, but wishes to deprive you of your present croft. Who is this stranger?—The manager of this sea-weed company. He wanted to get the only one I have.

33589. How do you know that?—The factor told me.

33590. When the manager asked the factor for the croft, what did the factor say?—I cannot tell that; I did not ask that.

33591. Do you think you are in any danger of losing your last croft?

—I cannot say very well. Of course, I did not know that I was in danger of losing those that I lost. But what I particularly wish now is to get them back again.

33592. But the people from whom you got them might come and ask to get them back again?—Well, they have another place.

33593. So have you?—Oh, yes; but it is very small. I consider it far too small. If it was large enough, I would not ask these crofts back.

33594. Lots four, five, six, seven, and eight are in the possession of the stranger. Do you mean the company?—Yes.

33595. What use does the company make of those five lots?—They cultivate them.

33596. Are these five lots necessary for the trade of the company—for their business?—They must have considered that themselves anyhow before they asked them or got them.

33597. What do you think?—My opinion is that they might have done without them. Their allegation is that they required them in order to feed the horses necessary for their work; but they had two crofts before these, and they might have fed their horses upon these.

33598. Does the company do good to the people?—I believe in a sense they do some good, to some of the people at least. They employ some of the people; they keep a store, where they provide goods for the people.

33599. Do they give good wages?—The wages do not seem large, and the people complain of it.

33600. Do they ever give money, or do they always pay in goods?—With goods.

33601. What is the reason the company do not pay in money?—It is likely that they make profit off the goods, and that they prefer to give goods rather than money.

33602. Do the people complain that the goods are bad or dear?—They complain that they are dear.

33603. But is the quality of the goods good?—I believe they may be about as good as are going; but when they pay in money they only pay half. For a ton of kelp they only give £2 in ready money, but they give £4 worth of goods.

33604. If a man refused to accept the goods in payment, would he get any employment from the company, or would the company turn him off?—I really cannot tell.

33605. This paper is all about your own case. What have you to say about the other crofters in Balmeanoch?—There is only one other tenant and myself and this company in the whole township. He has his two crofts still; he was not deprived of any of them; but I believe he complains of the high rent.

33606. Have you been deprived of any hill pasture?—No; the township has the old hill pasture.

ARGYLL.

TYREE.

Alexander  
M'Lean.

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DONALD MACDONALD, Crofter, Balamartin, assisted by HECTOR MACDONALD, Cottar and Fisherman, Balamartin (38)—examined.

33607. *Mr Fraser Mackintosh.*—You have a statement to submit to the Commission?—*Donald Macdonald.* I have.—‘Unto the Right Honourable the Royal Commission the Petition of the Crofters of the Township of Balamartin, humbly sheweth, That our grievances are—  
‘1st, High rent, and the manner in which it was raised being unfair, and

Donald  
Donald and  
Hector  
M'Donald.

ARGYLL.

TYREE.

Donald

M'Donald and

Hector

M'Donald.

' against the terms made, or rules under which the township of Balamartin  
 ' was formed. 2nd, We have our common pasture or outrun diminished  
 ' in extent at one end by cottars' houses, and at the other by its being  
 ' annexed to the township of Balephuill. 3rd, We have to pay to the  
 ' factor for sea-weed to manure our ground. We are under these said  
 ' grievances, which we humbly consider to be unfair and contrary to the  
 ' rules under which the township was formed, for the following reasons :  
 ' —(1) At the time the township of Balamartin was first divided up into  
 ' crofts—about eighty years back—the township then consisted of thirty-  
 ' eight crofts, with four acres in each, with a common pasture or outrun  
 ' besides, capable of holding one cow and one stirk to each croft, and the  
 ' horse we keep to till the ground on the four acres. The total rent of  
 ' the township then divided among the thirty-eight crofts amounted only  
 ' to £60, and we had fuel-peats without extra charge. But at the time  
 ' John Campbell, Esq., became factor of the island, he raised our rent  
 ' from £60 to £124 yearly; and, worse still, in our then straitened  
 ' circumstances—as the ground yielded us not crops of such quality as it  
 ' formerly yielded, though by causes uncontrollable by us—he doubled  
 ' our crofts, sending most of the crofters to one end of the outrun as  
 ' cottars, and introduced strangers from the township of Hellipool, as he  
 ' was to make a sheep-tack of that township. Therefore, upon the  
 ' remainder of the crofters, numbering thirteen, it has fallen to pay that  
 ' rent of £124, and the expenditure of £6 yearly to each crofter for coals,  
 ' as we could not get any more peats, making the total amount in rent  
 ' and coals payable by us £202 yearly. Moreover, year by year our crop  
 ' is reduced in quality, as the soil gets more inferior in quality each year.  
 ' And last year we suffered so much from floods and storms that we had  
 ' at last to apply to his Grace the Duke for assistance in the shape of seed  
 ' to plant our ground. We applied also to the Duke for reduction of  
 ' rent, but his Grace would not grant our demand in regard to rent.  
 ' (2) If the factor evicted the crofters, we consider it very unjust that  
 ' the outrun at one end should be allotted to them for houses, thereby  
 ' diminishing its extent without compensation; and we consider it very  
 ' unjust as well that at the other end it should be annexed to the town-  
 ' ship of Balephuill without compensation either. (3) Though the shore  
 ' of our township is not generally liable to sea-weeds, and therefore we go  
 ' to the nearest beach to obtain it, along a part of which beach the  
 ' factor's ground extends, we do not in the least damage the factor's  
 ' ground, as there is a road from the beach to our township without  
 ' touching the factor's ground at all. So we think it just that we should  
 ' not have to pay to the factor for the sea-weed; still the factor insists on  
 ' payment. And we do pay for it in the shape of work given him three  
 ' or four days with our carts in harvest time, and three other days in  
 ' winter time manuring his ground. On this grievance as well we applied  
 ' to his Grace the Duke; but he treated this petition as he did the one  
 ' petitioning for reduction of rent. Our demands therefore are—1st, Fair  
 ' rent; 2nd, compensation for what of the outrun we have had taken  
 ' from us and damaged; 3rd, that we shall have not to pay for sea-weed  
 ' to manure our ground. These our said grievances and demands we  
 ' submit to your Lordships, and pray: May it therefore please your  
 ' Lordships to make an inquiry thereinto, and redress our grievances  
 ' accordingly.—DONALD MACDONALD, delegate.—I wish also to read a  
 ' paper containing general cases of evictions of special importance:—  
 ' 1st, Neil M'Donald, crofter at Mannal, was about thirty-four years  
 ' ago, for no well-grounded reasons, evicted from his home and farm  
 ' by the factor, John Campbell, Esq. He had no other home to go to, and

'was forbidden by the factor to build a house in any part of the island.  
 'The factor also threatened with instant eviction any crofter or cottar  
 'who might out of pity afford him even one night's shelter from the cold.  
 'So his only place of shelter was a small boat turned upside down, with  
 'a hole in the centre for a chimney, and some straw laid round the  
 'openings to prevent the snow drift from perishing himself and little  
 'ones. One neighbour, who out of pity was moved to take and give his  
 'children shelter in his house, was instantly summoned before the factor,  
 'and severely reprimanded for being so humane. 2nd, Hector M'Donald,  
 'Balamartin (crofter), was some time afterwards evicted in the same  
 'manner. Forced to leave his house and home, having no house to go to,  
 'every individual crofter and cottar in Tyree were, on the threat of evic-  
 'tion, forbidden to give him even one night's shelter. His wife being  
 'nigh her confinement, he for her sought shelter in his sister's house; but  
 'the farmer on whose croft the sister's house stood (John Sinclair, Baria-  
 'pool) was instructed by the factor to turn the evicted family out. In  
 'the said John Sinclair's cart the wife and family were removed, and the  
 'woman, while being driven in the cart, by the way was delivered of a  
 'child, as no one would be allowed to shelter her during the time of her  
 'delivery. 3rd, Hugh M'Lean, crofter, Manual. This man, who was  
 'blind, was about nineteen years ago disgracefully evicted as the above.  
 'Having no house to go to, he was still in his own home. The factor  
 'then sent men to strip the roof off that home by means of instruments  
 'of iron. He then removed to the barn, in which lay a quantity of grain.  
 'The same men were then sent back with orders to strip the barn too;  
 'and the poor blind man, with his crippled wife, and no sons to help  
 'him, as of the sons he had two were drowned some time before, and his  
 'only other son was insane in the asylum, was cruelly turned out and left  
 'at the roadside. 4th, Alexander M'Donald, a blind man, was evicted  
 'while John Campbell, Esq., was factor of the island, by whose orders  
 'men were sent to have this man's house stripped while the poor man  
 'was in bed and unable to leave it. He was then removed by some  
 'friends to the barn, but the factor ordered the roof to be taken off the  
 'barn too; and thus the sightless man was rendered houseless. And the  
 'only reason for evicting this man was simply to give his holding to one  
 'of the factor's favourites. The man then became a burden to the parish,  
 'and from that time till now his maintenance cost the parish about £600.  
 '—I am Gilchrist M'Donald. Since I can remember, my father was a  
 'crofter in Balamartin. About nineteen years ago, although being only  
 'one year's rent in arrears, he, and a neighbour who was only 50s. in  
 'arrears, were evicted. The latter from his own croft. This was done  
 'in order to give both the crofts to the factor's servant man, which  
 'servant was not a native of the island. Some weeks before the time to  
 'leave the house I paid the rent, but on the appointed day (as we were  
 'still in the house, not having another to go to) some men—others  
 'refused to do it—by order of the factor were sent to the house, and  
 'these men by means of an iron bar broke open the door, turned us and  
 'all our things there and then out of the house. My father was about  
 'sixty years of age, and without the croft was unable to do anything for  
 'himself. My mother, who was about the same age, was imbecile, and in  
 'that state was carried by them out of bed and laid at the road side. As  
 'the factor would not grant me leave to build a small house to shelter  
 'them, I had to remove them to Glasgow, which city not agreeing  
 'with them, I was obliged to return with them to Tyree again, but the  
 'only house I could get was an old kiln belonging to the crofters of  
 'Balamartin. The little I got for the stock on the farm was all spent in

ARGYLL.

TYREE.

Donald

M'Donald and

Hector

M'Donald.



ARGYLL. 'maintaining us before getting leave from the factor to build a house  
 — and had it ready for dwelling in.—GILCHRIST M'DONALD, Balamartin.'  
 TYREE. '—I lost my holding in the same way as the above.—DONALD M'LEAN,  
 — Caolis, formerly tenant of Balamartin.'—*Hector Macdonald*. I have  
 M'Donald and a paper to read on behalf of the cottars and fisherman of Balamartin:  
 Hector M'Donald. —'In the township of Balamartin there are at present thirty-two  
 families, consisting in all 172 individuals. Our fathers and even  
 'some of ourselves had crofts which, without any reason being assigned,  
 'were taken from us, and that without any compensation having been  
 'given us for houses or for any improvements affected by us. It  
 'became necessary for us, therefore, to build other houses for ourselves  
 'and families at the seashore (that is), on the common belonging to the  
 'crofters of Balamartin, and for these houses some of us had to pay rent.  
 'Our ordinary employment is fishing, but for want of a safe harbour  
 'wherein to preserve our boats, we are compelled to use much smaller  
 'boats than is required for our fishing coast. Some of us have tried  
 'larger boats, but for the want of a safe place to keep them some of them  
 'were driven into pieces upon the rocks and others were sunk while  
 'riding at anchor. We wish it to be clearly understood that it is next  
 'to impossible for us to make a living for ourselves and families without  
 'such a harbour. For the want of such a harbour our lives are often in  
 'great danger, especially on the act of landing. As a rule, we can only  
 'continue to fish for about six months of the year. We find it impossible  
 'under these circumstance—that is, by fishing alone—to maintain our-  
 'selves and our families in any way like a comfortable position. What  
 'we want therefore is a few acres of land on which to graze a cow and  
 'plant a few potatoes, and also a safe harbour erected for our fishing  
 'boats at the south end of the island. We are all quite willing to pay a  
 'reasonable rent for the land, and of course we are also prepared to pay  
 'reasonable dues for a safe harbour.—HECTOR MACDONALD, Balamartin,  
 'delegate.'

33608. Are you quite sure that the rent of the place was raised by Campbell, at one swoop, from £60 to £124?—*Donald M'Donald*. No, not at one time; it was raised twice.

33609. By the same man?—Yes.

33610. Did he assign any reason for doing it?—No reason whatever.

33611. Was it at that time that Hillipool was made into a sheep farm?  
 —The rent was raised a little before that time.

33612. But at the time Hillipool was made into a sheep farm did you get any reduction?—Nothing.

33613. Were your peats upon the pasture from which you were deprived?—No.

33614. Then how were you obliged to buy coals instead of peats?—The peat bank was exhausted; there is no peat in the place to speak of.

33615. Last year you say you presented two petitions to the Duke of Argyle, one for seed and the other for reduction of rent; the one about the reduction of rent was not granted, what was done with the other?—We got the seed; but we were told we would get no reduction in the rent.

33616. Was it the understanding that you were to pay back the value of the seed?—We promised to pay it.

33617. And do you think it will be asked of you?—We cannot tell; it has not been asked yet.

33618. Do you pay the factor any money for the sea-ware?—He does not ask money, but he asks us for some work; and we do not pay this factor except what we paid to the previous tenants of the farm. The shore

and the sea-ware belong to the farm of Hillipool, and we have paid them for the sea-ware all along. ARGYLL.

33619. In the form of labour?—Yes. TYREE.

33620. What value in money would you put upon this labour?—It would be about 30s. Donald M'Donald and Hector M'Donald.

33621. Do you get anything from the factor while you are doing this work; do you get any money or any allowance in the way of food?—We get our food well.

33622. Do you consider that upon a great estate like Tyree it is worth the while or proper that tenants should pay for sea-ware at all?—Well, we don't think that we either injure his land or the roads, but merely gather the drift ware that comes upon the beach; we don't think any value ought to be exacted for it.

33623. Can you labour your crofts without this sea-ware?—No.

33624. Can you pay your rent if you do not labour and manure your crofts?—No; unless we work them and manure them we cannot pay our rents.

33625. Would it not appear then that the deprivation of sea-ware is rather a prohibition of labouring your farms at all?—We cannot say that.

33626. You state that you want a fair rent and compensation for the outrun which has been taken from you and damaged, and that you shall not have to pay for sea-weed to manure the ground; don't the people want to get back the land which is in Hillipool?—Certainly.

33627. Why did you not put that in the paper?—We never were in Hillipool.

33628. Would you like to get the common pasture back which was taken from you?—Yes; but a great portion of it is filled with cottars.

33629. Are the cottars that are here a great burden upon the crofters?—Certainly, they have deprived us of our grazing.

33630. Are you able to pay your rent out of your croft, or do you labour otherwise?—I must needs pay the rent out of the proceeds of the croft, for there is no means of earning wages in this land.

33631. You do not go fishing or abroad then?—No, not now.

33632. What is your rent?—£11, 7s. 6d. I have three crofts.

33633. Are the people whom you represent much like yourself, with the same grievances?—Yes, practically the same.

33634. What would you consider would be a proper rent for you to pay now under the circumstances you are in?—I would be very glad to get it at the rent my father paid, about £4, 10s.—the three crofts for which I now pay £11, 7s. 6d.

33635. *Sheriff Nicolson (to Hector Macdonald).*—How many cottars are there at Balamartin?—Thirty-two families.

33636. Are all of you people belonging to the place?—No.

33637. Were some of you removed from other places to Balamartin?—Yes.

33638. What places?—They were put out of Hillipool.

33639. How long since?—Some of them before I was born, or about that time; some others since.

33640. And there are some of you who had crofts which were taken from you?—Yes.

33641. To whom were they given?—The factor's servant got the one that my father had anyhow, and his neighbour's as well.

33642. Was your father in arrears?—Thirty shillings.

33643. What was the rent?—I cannot tell.

33644. You were removed from the houses as well as from the land?

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M'Donald and  
Hector  
M'Donald.

—Not at that time; our houses were old; but a neighbour was removing from his houses. They were new and good, and there was only one man going in, and he occupied these houses. Afterwards, when our own houses got bad, we had to build them again.

33645. How many people had to remove from their own houses to build new ones?—I cannot tell.

33646. What sort of houses have you?—Thatched houses covered over with felt; others with ordinary thatch.

33647. Are they not as good as ordinary crofters' houses in Tyree?—Quite as good.

33648. How many rooms have you in them?—Three.

33649. What does it cost you to build a house of that kind?—We cannot tell; it was ourselves quarried the stones and built them.

33650. And did none of those who were put out of their houses and built new ones get any compensation for the old ones, or assistance to build the new ones?—I did not get a penny whatever, and I did not hear of any other person that did.

33651. Did you not ask it of the factor?—No, we did not ask for any assistance, and the reason of it was this, we were asked to leave the stone and wood of the old house for the new comer, and we thought when we were asked that there was no use asking for any assistance at all. It is but right to say we did not leave it, however; we took it away with us.

33652. How much land has each of the thirty-two cottars?—The high road.

33653. No land at all?—Nothing whatever.

33654. Not even a bit of ground for potatoes?—Not the breadth of the soles of our feet.

33655. Your living is by fishing—what kind of fishing?—Cod and ling, lobsters, and all kinds of fish about the shore.

33656. Do you go far to fish?—Sometimes the length of fifteen miles off the shore.

33657. Who takes the fish from you?—Some send to Glasgow; some sell it at the shops.

33658. You get a regular market?—Yes.

33659. What do you get for the cod and ling?—We get £26, 10s. to £28, 10s. per ton for the ling, and £23 per ton for the cod.

33660. That is for dried salt fish?—Yes.

33661. Is that a good price?—Yes; we never had it so good, except last year.

33662. Do you fish for herring also?—No, we have no herring boats; we have no place to keep them.

33663. Are all your boats small?—Comparatively small; they are 16 to 26 feet keel.

33664. In other parts of the islands they have fine large boats, with which they go to Barra and the east coast?—Yes; but we have none here, because we cannot keep them.

33665. Could you afford to buy such boats if you had a good harbour for them?—Yes, some of us could.

33666. What kind of harbour would you propose?—A harbour of refuge.

33667. A pier and breakwater, or simply a pier?—We would require a breakwater as well as a pier.

33668. Could it be made of stones in the place?—There are plenty of stones in the place.

33669. Could it be made strong enough with hewn stones and cement?—I think it could be made of concrete strong enough.

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33670. Have you any idea what it would cost?—No.

33671. But you would be willing to pay something for the cost in the way of dues, would you?—Yes, we would.

33672. *The Chairman.*—I understood you to say you had received no assistance from the proprietor towards building your house?—Yes; no assistance was granted.

33673. Did any of the other people receive any assistance?—No.

33674. I understood you to say you had received no land from the proprietor?—No, nothing.

33675. Nor any of the other people?—No; not of those cottars I have named.

33676. Did you ever receive any work or wages from the proprietor?—Not in my day.

33677. Or did any of the other people receive work and wages from the proprietor?—I believe the factor employs a few of them.

33678. What description of work?—Drains and ditches.

33679. Have you ever received any assistance towards the purchase of boats, nets, or apparatus, or any assistance towards the industry of fishing, from the proprietor?—All that I can ever remember that he sent to Tyrce in connection with the fishing was one boat, with its complement of her-ring nets.

33680. Has the proprietor expended any money in making a pier or harbour of any description in this island since you can remember?—Not a penny ever since I remember.

33681. We see here present a great number of young, strong men: are any of the people away fishing at present, or are they all here?—Yes, there are many of them away; some at the east coast fishing, some on board steamers, and some in all quarters of the earth.

33682. Do many of them go to the Lowlands for agricultural labour or work for wages?—Yes, but the greater number of them go to sea.

33683. In ships?—Steamers, and ships too.

33684. Do you think most of the people of the cottar class make their living by fishing and by other work in the island, or do they make it by going away to other places?—I can speak better, of course, of my own case, and I obtain the whole of my livelihood as a fisherman. I know very well that the people send home assistance to their parents here; but I believe the greater portion of their livelihood is taken from the sea round this coast here.

33685. Have you ever had the misfortune to lose any of your relatives at sea by drowning?—Yes.

33686. Are there any widows now in the island of men drowned at sea?—Yes, there may be perhaps one or two, but I was only a young lad at the time; it was considerably over twenty years ago—it was not out of my township, but out of the township of Balephuill. Since that time there was a boat with a crew of five lost at Skerryvore lighthouse, twelve or fifteen miles off the shore here.

33687. In cases of that sort, when people fall into poverty, are they kindly treated—does the factor assist them?—When this great disaster occurred I was only a boy, and I cannot very well remember; but a brother of my own was drowned off the shore two years ago, and my mother was a widow, and there was nothing done on that occasion.

33688. When the people fall into poverty and go on to the poor's roll, are they well and kindly treated by the parochial authorities?—I cannot very well tell; I know that the paupers complain, but that may very well happen without there being good ground for it. It is the nature of some

- ARGYLL. of them to complain. Besides, I am at the sea, and don't know very well what may happen.
- TYREE. 33689. In cases of sickness, is the parochial medical officer here?—Yes, certainly.
- Donald M'Donald and Hector M'Donald. 33690. Is the medical officer kind and attentive to the people?—Yes, very.

DONALD MACFARLANE, Cottar, Balamartin—examined.

- Donald Macfarlane. 33691. *Sheriff Nicolson*.—You have a paper to submit?—I have. 'Some thirty-two years ago I had a croft at Hillipool, before it was cleared for a sheep farm for the factor's nephew. The last year I had the croft, the factor tilled the third part of it for his own use, without even telling me that it was to be done. I paid the rent in full from Whitsunday till Martinmas, and the factor's crop growing in it. If I would say anything against the factor's doings I was in danger of losing all I had. I then lost the whole croft and got another holding in Balamartin, for which I was charged twice as much rent as the tenant that had it before me. Shortly after I gave it up, as it would not pay at such high rent. My house is still on the holding, but the present tenant is against its being there, and is determined to have it out of his way.—DONALD MACFARLANE, Balamartin.'—'We, the undersigned, beg to state that our grievances are very similar to the above, and that we have been wrongfully evicted for no other reason but to make room for the factor's nephew. Afterwards it fell into the factor's own hands, who had it until his death. JOHN CAMERON, Scaranish; DONALD M'MILLAN, Mannal. Other fifteen families were evicted from Hillipool at the same time, and for the same reason as the above.'

ALEXANDER BUCHANAN, Surgeon, Tyree (46)—examined.

- Alexander Buchanan. 33692. *Professor Mackinnon*.—How long have you been in the parish?—Twenty-three years.
33693. I suppose you have charge of the neighbouring parish of Coll?—I had for twenty years, but I gave it up two years ago.
33694. You know it almost as well as Tyree?—Yes.
33695. And I suppose you may state that your interest in the place is not that of medical officer entirely, but your relatives are connected with the district?—Yes.
33696. And have been for a long time back?—Yes.
33697. You have been continuously in Tyree for the last twenty-three years?—I have.
33698. And you know the condition of the people thoroughly well?—Pretty well.
33699. You have heard the evidence that they gave here to-day?—I have since you resumed after lunch.
33700. The outcome of it is that perhaps some time before you came to the place, and also since you came to the place, there has been a good deal of consolidation of small crofts into big farms, that there has been a raising of the rents, and that there is a large number of people in the island without land at all?—Not since I came. There have been only two farms cleared since I came—Scaranish and another.
33701. The tradition of clearances was quite fresh when you came?—Yes.

33702. So that the evidence led in that respect was quite true?—Quite true.

33703. Would you like to say whether you know that the rents have been increased?—They have not been much increased since I came, except in some isolated cases.

33704. But before you came there was an increase?—There was an increase before I came.

33705. And you are quite aware that there is a large number of people in the island without any land?—I am.

33706. What is the condition of this cottar class that are without any land at all, are they very poorly off?—A great number of them are poorly off, and some are as well off as the crofter class.

33707. I suppose those who have strong young families are well off?—Yes.

33708. And those who have no strong men are just not so well off?—They are badly off.

33709. What is the general condition of those of the crofter class whose rents are £12 to £15; are they in such circumstances that they are able to carry on from year to year, and perhaps stand a bad year?—The crofters who pay £15 are not so well off as those paying above that sum; but where they have families in the south they support them, and some of them are pretty well off. Of course, their crofts are not able to pay their rents as well as crofts say of £25 or £30.

33710. As rents go in the place, what kind of croft—what rent—do you think would be the minimum upon which a crofter could live fairly just now?—£20.

33711. And what would be about the size of that croft?—Say about thirty-two acres or so.

33712. And what would his stock be?—Two horses, eight to ten cows, and some sheep.

33713. They complain that they have no sheep, and that the outrun was taken from them; do you think that is a reasonable grievance?—No; because they would quarrel among themselves with sheep in their outruns. That has been the case as far as I can see.

33714. Do the cottar class live mainly by fishing?—A number do; but a number have families in the south, at sea, or working as agricultural labourers, and they send them home money from the south to support their parents. There is a good many of that class in the island.

33715. Are there many able to make a living by fishing off the shore?—Yes.

33716. And do you think, if they had good shelter for their boats, as the last witness spoke of, a greater number would be able to make their living?—Certainly, and they would have larger boats.

33717. That is very much required?—It is.

33718. I suppose as boatmen at home and sailors away there is not the beat of them?—They are really very good.

33719. They are strong men?—Yes.

33720. I suppose with respect to their physical condition you would say they are very strong men?—They compare favourably with any of the other islands as regards physical condition.

33721. And healthy?—Yes, averagely healthy.

33722. Do you draw any distinction between the crofter and cottar class in respect of their physical condition?—Yes, I do as to the children. The cottar class children appear to be in want of milk a good deal as compared with the crofter class.

33723. And I suppose that would tell in the future?—Of course.

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33724. There are a large number of them whose crofts are less than £20, and they would all wish to make them of reasonable size; is there sufficient land in the place to supply those people with land, and still not break down large farms?—There is not; but if they had a large out-run for cattle, they could cultivate their crofts.

33725. And is there such a large outrun in the place?—There is not a large outrun vacant, as far as I am aware.

33726. What would be your own opinion with respect to the amount of the estate under large tracts and the amount under a large population of crofters—whether there is really too much of it under the large tacks?—According to the population, there is at present.

33727. The farms are not so very large in this district as they are in others; what is about the rent of the biggest farm in the place?—About £400.

33728. What is the rent of the smallest of the large farms?—I suppose about £98 or £100.

33729. And are there crofts at £30, £40, and £50?—There are some crofts of £40 and £50.

33730. So that in that respect there is a fair gradation?—Yes.

33731. So that a large portion of the surface is under farms, under and over £100 rent?—Yes.

33732. Do you think that if the people would get increased crofts in the event of a farm being out of lease, or the like of that, there are many in the place who could take a croft?—There are a few, but a large number would not be able to take them,—that is, without outside assistance.

33733. You speak about the present population of the place; of course you know that the place is not peopled to such an extent as it was forty or fifty years ago?—No; there was then a population of something like 5000.

33734. Do you think it is still, considering its capacity, sufficiently peopled?—There is sufficient population for the land.

33735. Rather too much population than too little?—Rather, to make a living.

33736. Even supposing that the land was more evenly distributed among them than it is now, would that still be the case?—It would be still the same.

33737. Has there been much emigration from the island since you came to it?—Not much emigration to foreign parts.

33738. There was a great deal before you came?—A great deal.

33739. And you have yourself been abroad?—I have.

33740. Have you seen any of those people when you were abroad?—I saw one or two who had gone, but they had only newly gone.

33741. Have you heard often of the condition of those who emigrated long ago from relatives at home?—I have.

33742. What is their general condition?—Their condition is that they would not return, although they would get their land back again for nothing.

33743. You are quite convinced that those who went are better off than those who remained?—I am.

33744. Those who remained were not much improved in their condition by their neighbours going away?—No; in fact, there was no improvement.

33745. It was rather the other way they say?—Yes.

33746. Are you a member of the School Board?—I am.

33747. And have you been since the commencement?—I have been since the passing of the Act.

33748. How is the Education Act administered in this island?—**ARGYLL.**  
Fairly.

33749. Any complaints about children not going to school?—There is a difficulty in getting them to go at certain times of the year.

33750. Are there a sufficient number of schools in the island for all the children in the place?—There is.

33751. Good schools?—Yes, but there is one township complaining a little—at least there was a complaint—it was a Free Church school, and they wanted a board school, and there were some complaints, but the place was well enough supplied at the time, and we did not think it desirable to erect a board school in the meanwhile.

33752. We heard elsewhere that although children were perhaps taught more regularly now, and although a greater number got the elements of education, there were formerly better scholars; what have you to say to that in Tyree?—Tyree was well off as regards education before, because the Free Church sent students here regularly; and they sent good men. And we have been so far fortunate in getting some good teachers since the passing of the Act, and I do not see much change.

33753. Are you able still out of the island to send young men to college?—We are.

33754. And do they take a good place after they go?—Yes.

33755. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.*—Has there been much poverty or distress this last winter in the island?—No.

33756. Did the potato crop fail?—Yes.

33757. And notwithstanding that the people were able to find subsistence?—Yes, they were able. Their friends assisted them from the south, and their families did not come home this year as they used to do. Some of them come home that have been serving in the south as agricultural labourers, but last year they did not come, and so were able to send more home.

33758. Is it common, except when they are in good circumstances, to come home at the end of the year?—Yes, a number come in the winter time.

33759. And they remain away all winter when they are pushed?—Yes, a greater number remain now than when I came here first.

33760. Do you think those who get into the habit of remaining away all winter will absent themselves altogether when their parents die?—They will.

33761. And in that way there will be a natural decrease of the population?—There will.

33762. I observe in the report of *Sir John M'Neill* thirty years ago, it is stated by a number of people, including Independent and Established Church ministers I think, that 2000 would be a sufficient population for this island; is that your population?—It is at present 2700—I would say it would carry about 2400 or so. If there was a decrease of 300, it would be enough.

33763. Do you think all cottars should be removed, and that crofters should receive larger holdings?—Certainly not.

33764. Would you give the crofters larger holdings?—I would only increase the holdings of the crofters as one crofter died out—adding the one to the other.

33765. You would not break up the large farms?—I might where there was a very large farm.

33766. I think there are three tenants in the island who hold arable farms altogether, worth about £600 a piece?—Yes.

33767. Are these farms which you think might be judiciously reduced

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in size?—Some of them. Others could not very well be given to crofters, such as Hynish.

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33768. If the people are tolerably well to do—and they look so—have they much ground for complaint, do you think?—They have ground for complaint for want of a proper harbour and want of small harbours for fishing.

33769. That, you think, is really the principal practical grievance?—I think so.

33770. Are those small harbours to be easily made?—Not easily without a good deal of money, but they have never been tried.

33771. What do you call a good deal of outlay?—Say for a principal harbour it would cost £8000 or £9000 to make a pier.

33772. But you would require subsidiary small harbours?—Yes.

33773. And they would cost a good deal of money too?—They would.

33774. In fact, you contemplate an outlay of not less £10,000?—Not less than £16,000 or £17,000.

33775. Would that add very much to the prospects of the island?—Certainly it would to the fishing and cottar class; they would get larger boats, and prosecute the fishing to a larger extent and go further out.

33776. There would be no direct profit from these piers?—The principal harbour would pay good interest, I have no doubt, upon the produce that leaves the island.

33777. It would not pay 3 per cent. on an outlay of £7000 or £8000, would it?—It would pay 2 per cent.

33778. On £7000 or £8000?—I think so.

33779. *The Chairman.*—You mentioned that although there had not been many clearances or evictions, within your own recollection two farms had been cleared—did you mean two townships?—Two townships.

33780. How long is it since these were cleared?—Eighteen or nineteen years ago.

33781. Was that during the tenure of the present Duke?—Yes.

33782. Was there any particular reason for clearing those townships?—I suppose arrears of rent, that is the only reason I heard at the time.

33783. That there were long arrears of rent?—Yes.

33784. We have heard a great deal in the course of our inquiry, and very different opinions, upon the question whether the fishing industry can be best prosecuted by a separate class of people or by people associated with the crofting class. What is your opinion upon that question?—My opinion is that a fisherman could not prosecute his fishing successfully with a croft.

33785. Your opinion would be that if the fishing industry was established here upon a solid basis by the creation of convenient and safe harbours, then there might be a separation of the classes?—Yes, that is my opinion.

33786. But you don't think that there could be a separation of the classes until these improvements were carried out?—No.

33787. I do not wish to suggest that opinion to you—is that your own opinion?—It is my own opinion, but I believe that in a township where fishermen are, they would require a small out-run for a few grazing cows to give their families milk.

33788. You think every fisherman's family should have grazing for a cow?—Not every fisherman a cow, but that so many in a township should have cows, so that they would be able to get milk.

33789. You would have as many cows as families?—No, just a few, that there should be plenty of milk in the place for their children.

33790. What is your idea of a fair rent per acre for arable ground in this island?—Between 10s. and 12s. ARGYLL.

33791. Do heads of families, apart from fishing, ever go to labour outside, or is it only the junior members?—Only the junior members. TYREE.

33792. In your recollection, do you observe any decline in the physical condition of the people?—No decline. Alexander Buchanan.

33793. Is the quality of the food improving?—A few more of the luxuries have crept in among them. Their food has changed a good deal. Now they have tea and coffee twice a day, instead of porridge and milk.

33794. Is the use of baker's bread increasing?—Yes, it is.

33795. Is the bread baked in the island?—No.

33796. Where is it imported from?—Oban, Tobermory, Bunessan, Glasgow.

33797. Is the consumption of bread in that way increasing?—It is of late years.

33798. Is the consumption of wheaten flour for making wheaten scones increasing?—It is ; it was only lately imported here.

33799. Do you consider that the substitution of wheaten flour for oats and barley is beneficial to the people, or is it indifferent?—My faith is in oats and barley as yet, because you cannot make wheaten bread into the forms that you can make oats and barley.

33800. Is there any disease in this island connected with poor dietary and bad lodgings?—No ; no cases of the sort, so far as I have seen. I have only seen one case of scurvy within the last ten years.

33801. Any remains of cutaneous disorders?—Oh yes, a good many cutaneous disorders.

33802. Is that associated with a peculiarity in the food?—Not, so far as I know ; only cases of infection, or local cases.

33803. Have you had any fever?—Not for a long time. The last fever was typhoid, seven or eight years ago—a little of it.

33804. When it occurred did you find it possible to isolate the cases? Yes.

33805. How did you do it ; did you clear the house?—No, I said that no person must go near it.

33806. You did not place the individual cases in isolation?—No, we left them in their own houses, and when it was known that it was fever all the people kept away.

33807. But if it was typhoid it was not infectious?—Yes, it was infectious. I have found typhoid to be infectious.

33808. Have you had to treat typhus here at all?—No, not typhus.

33809. When the fever occurred did you find, on the part of the Parochial Board, every desire to afford people liberal assistance?—I did.

33810. Was any skilled nursing obtained for the people?—No.

33811. It was not necessary?—It was not necessary.

33812. You mentioned that the people in the last season had not returned as much as usual from the south ; do you mean to say that individuals in families remained away at service for the specific purpose of assisting their parents?—I do.

33813. In consequence of the greater distress?—Because they heard there was a failure of the potato crop here, they did not want to come home and burden their parents.

33814. You said it might still be useful that there should be a slight decrease in the population of the island ; if a decrease took place, and the ground vacated by the people was added to the larger farms, would it still be useful in that form—if when people emigrated the lands they

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occupied were added to the larger lands?—No; I would add them to the crofts.

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33815. It would only be useful in the case of land vacated being specifically distributed amongst the crofters?—That is what I mean. A crofter with forty or fifty acres is nearly as well off as a large farmer.

33816. Would you say, on a general review of the situation, that the management of the estate had been a liberal one, in reference, I mean, to a fair proportion of the rental having been spent in benevolent and useful work in the island?—I would rather not answer that question.

33817. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—In Sir John McNeill's report, which is now thirty years old, it was stated that the population, which was then 4000, might properly be reduced to 2000; but are you not aware that since that time the population has decreased very considerably?—I am.

33818. Is it also not the fact that a great deal of the land of the remaining population has been consolidated and added to large farms?—Not since I came here, twenty years ago.

33819. I am speaking of the date of Sir John McNeill's report?—Yes, it has been since that time, I think; but I can only speak from 1860.

33820. So that what Sir John McNeill pointed to, in the matter of population being reduced, was not at all consistent with adding farm to farm, was it?—I do not understand quite.

33821. Was not the idea that must have been prevailing in the mind of Sir John McNeill, or those whom he consulted, when suggesting that the population should be reduced, that the reduced population should have the full benefit of the island of Tyree?—That would be the sense of it, I think; that the island would support 2000.

33822. Would there be any use in reducing the population to 2000, or to the 2300 you suggest, unless the lands occupied by the population to be removed were to be given to the small people?—Certainly not.

33823. Can you instance any case within your own recollection, or have you heard, of any lands being added to the crofter class?—No, not that I am aware of.

33824. So then any pretence of saying that emigration is good for the country would be of no value unless it benefits those that remain behind?—No, certainly not.

33825. Supposing, for instance, that farm was to be added to large farm in the island of Tyree as people went away, you might reduce the population to twenty people?—You might.

33826. You state with regard to the food of the people that it has altered a good deal, and that, in place of the good old porridge and milk, tea and coffee have been introduced?—Yes.

33827. Whose fault is it that that food has changed?—It is no fault of the people, it is the good communication with the south—with the towns.

33828. In former times had not the most of the people land which was able to supply them with meal, and also cows to supply them with milk?—Yes.

33829. And therefore they took their own produce?—Yes.

33830. But then, when their lands were diminished and their cows taken away, where could they get the meal or milk?—Supposing the lands were not there they gave the crop to the cows, and that got them tea and sugar and meal from the south.

33831. But don't you think the change is to be more attributed to the altered circumstances in which the people were placed by the deprivation of their lands than to any new-fangled idea of luxury?—No, I place it all to the communication with the south.

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33832. How is it then that people in a better position in life are very fond of taking porridge and milk?—Because times have changed. Gentlemen now have taken to porridge and milk, and the poorer classes have taken to tea and coffee.

33833. It is merely a whim of fashion you think?—I think so.

33834. You were asked a question just now about the state of the island generally, and whether large sums or any sums of money had been spent in benevolent and philanthropic objects; is there anything spent directly for the benefit of the poorer people?—Not much that I am aware of; there may be a few things.

33835. Who is the representative of the Duke of Argyle in the island?—Mr M'Diarmid.

33836. Does everything centre in one gentleman locally?—Yes.

33837. Is there any society of any kind in the island whereby the crofter and cottar class, by coming in contact with them, might have their social position improved, and their ideas and views elevated; is there any society in Tyree?—Not much.

33838. Are there any prizes offered for nice houses or gardens, or agricultural shows?—Yes, there are; the Duke gives in the summer for agricultural shows some £20 every year.

33839. That you can point to as one direct act?—Yes.

33840. Are you in favour of large properties with large populations, when the proprietor does not reside amongst his people?—No.

33841. How often has the Duke of Argyll been in Tyree?—Lately, I think, he has been here every August.

33842. Within the last four or five years, how long does he stay?—A day, or perhaps two days.

33843. Does he go about speaking to the people?—He does.

33844. Can you trace any benefit in the position of the people by his appearances here?—No, I see no change from his coming and going.

33845. What is the character of the people of Tyree generally; is it a place where crime is comparatively unknown?—Crime is unknown. The people are quiet and peaceable.

33846. Do you yourself find satisfaction in going out and in among them?—I do; I never get an uncivil word.

33847. About Coll; what population is there there now?—About 700 or 800.

33848. Are the people there in a comfortable condition?—As far as I know, they are; I hear no complaints.

33849. Are there any big farms upon it?—Yes, large farms, say about £500 rent. There is one farm of that extent, and others down from that to £45.

33850. Coll was the ancient heritage of a family named M'Lean?—Yes.

33851. It was then purchased by John Lorne Stewart, chamberlain for Argyle?—Yes.

33852. What did he do after he came to Coll?—Commenced to improve it.

33853. What did he do with a lot of the people?—Of course, these things were before I came here. I suppose some of them were removed, or removed themselves; I cannot say which.

33854. Did he not improve a great number of people off the face of Coll?—I am not aware of that.

33855. They were improved where?—They voluntarily left. By improvement I mean he built good houses and introduced dairy farming.

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33856. Was it for the benefit of the people that he put them out, or his own convenience and comfort?—Both, I think; to make a little money and to bring Ayrshire farming perhaps into use there.

33857. And did the remaining people of Coll benefit by the dairy farm?—Do you mean the original people?

33858. Yes?—No, not a great many, because they did not take kindly to it at first; they preferred Highland cows.

33859. Where did Mr Lorne Stewart come from?—Campbelton.

33860. Was he a Perthshire man originally?—I believe so.

33861. Is it his son who has the place now?—Yes, and I hear no complaints.

33862. Is the population of Coll now much less than forty years ago?—It is.

33863. Do you know whether any notice was given to the people of Coll that the Commission was to sit here to-day?—I believe there was, but I don't know.

33864. What communication is there between Coll and Tobermory?—The same as there is here, by sailing ship and steamers once a week.

33865. When we came in to-day we came into a pretty creek where there is some appearance of a quay. It looks rather old. Can you give me any idea when it was built?—I don't know.

33866. Is it beyond the memory of man?—I don't know.

33867. Has anything been laid out upon it?—Oh, yes; it has been repaired by cement being put into the holes.

33868. Who did that?—The factor, I suppose.

33869. He did not put a new stone, do you think, into it?—There might have been, but it would be on the top.

33870. Do you know that the people have been petitioning about this matter of the harbour over and over again to the Duke of Argyll without effect?—I am not aware that they petitioned very often, but the place has been surveyed two or three times.

33871. Did they petition the House of Commons complaining that they had no proper harbour?—I am not aware of that.

33872. *Professor Mackinnon*.—You stated that there was no increase in the area over which the crofters' ground extended within your time, but I suppose there have been several instances of a croft being made larger?—Yes, individual crofts made larger.

33873. Then, with respect to Coll, I suppose there is no crofter, as we understand the term, upon the portion of Coll that constitutes Mr Stewart's estate?—There may be one or two, but that is all, under £30.

33874. All the crofters are still upon the east end portion with which you yourself are connected?—Yes.

33875. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh*.—Who is proprietor of that part of the island?—My wife is.

33876. What is the property called?—Cornaig.

33877. *Professor Mackinnon*.—How many crofters will there be on Cornaig under £30?—Twelve or fourteen.

33878. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh*.—These are the old people?—These are people who were removed from Mr Stewart's ground.

33879. Did your family take them on?—My father-in-law did.

33880. What was his name?—Colin Campbell.

HUGH MACDIARMID, Sub-Factor to the Duke of Argyll, Tyree (38)  
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33881. *Mr Cameron.*—Where do you belong to?—Perthshire.

33882. How long have you been resident here as sub-factor?—Seven years.

33883. Who is the head factor?—Mr Wylie.

33884. You are the only factor here?—The Duke has no factor here, only a sub-factor.

33885. Do you represent the Duke here?—Yes.

33886. Who was your immediate predecessor?—Mr Geikie, who was chamberlain of Tyree.

33887. Then the dignity of the office was lowered at the time of your appointment, in succession to Mr Geikie?—Yes, it is more centred in Inveraray.

33888. Do you know the cause which determined the Duke to do that?—No.

33889. How long was Mr Geikie here as resident chamberlain?—Twelve years, I believe.

33890. Do you hold any land from the Duke?—Two farms.

33891. Did you take those farms when you first came to the island, or did you get them subsequently?—I took one of them six years ago, and another a year last Whitsunday.

33892. Who held the first farm which you took from the Duke?—A Mr Campbell.

33893. Did you take it as it was in his possession?—Exactly.

33894. And with regard to the second farm, who held that?—Messrs Sproat and Cameron, writers, Tobermory.

33895. Was that also held as you got it?—Exactly in the same way.

33896. Has anything been done in the way of consolidation of farms at the expense of smaller holders during your occupancy of the place you hold?—None whatever; an occasional crofter may have got two crofts instead of having one before.

33897. You say there were not many instances of that?—No.

33898. And where it occurred was it in consequence of a vacancy arising from natural causes in a croft, or from removal or eviction?—It was on account of natural causes in most of the cases, because the people emigrated.

33899. Has there been much emigration during the time you have been here?—Very little, perhaps fifty or sixty people.

33900. Do you know if the people who have emigrated have written to their friends at home since their departure?—Oh, yes.

33901. Have you happened to hear what reports they gave of their new position?—Most of them very favourable, and would not like to return.

33902. But has that encouraged other people to go abroad and join them?—No, very few have gone; I may say none at all.

33903. Do you find the tendency for people to go and seek their fortunes abroad more extensive than it was, or less so?—I cannot say; for the short time I have been here I cannot say I know any difference.

33904. In point of fact, the consolidation of farms which we have heard of this morning took place in your predecessor's time, and not in yours?—Yes, not my immediate predecessor.

33905. With regard to leases, have any of the smaller tenants got leases on this estate?—None.

33906. But larger tenants have?—Yes.

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33907. What is the limit below which leases are not granted?—About £100 is the lowest rent where there is any lease.

33908. Have you heard any general wish expressed by the smaller tenants to obtain leases?—No.

33909. Is there much improvable land in the island?—No, very little.

33910. Most of it has been already reclaimed?—Yes.

33911. Is any reclamation going on at present?—No.

33912. With regard to piers, I believe representations have been made to the Duke from the people that if piers could be erected it would be a great advantage to them, and we have also heard evidence to-day to the same effect; do you know if any estimate has ever been made by the Duke as to the cost of erecting a suitable pier?—Oh, yes, he has got two estimates made very recently—one last year and the other the year before.

33913. By engineers?—Yes, from eminent engineers.

33914. What was the outcome of these—what report did they submit to the Duke?—They would not guarantee that the pier would stand.

33915. Were they not left free to select the place where they thought it would be best?—Yes.

33916. And to submit designs of a suitable, substantial pier?—Yes, and these were submitted to the Duke.

33917. And do you say that the engineers submitted designs of a pier with the remark that it would not stand?—They were afraid it would not stand, it is so very stormy.

33918. And was there an estimate submitted at the same time of the cost?—Yes.

33919. Do you know what it came to?—No.

33920. You are not able to give any opinion upon that?—No.

33921. Have there been any raisings of rent of late years—since your occupancy of the place you now hold?—There might be an isolated case, but no general raising of rent.

33922. No general revaluation or raising of rent?—Not at all.

33923. Are the prices of stock to any extent higher than seven years ago?—Yes, the price of stock has been very high this year.

33924. But I mean not this year only, but has the price of stock been gradually rising?—No, I think not. This year and the end of last year was exceptional; three or four years ago it was exceptional.

33925. Is much stock exported by tenants?—Yes.

33926. What do they export besides live stock?—I cannot say there is much of anything except live stock.

33927. How many times in the week do steamers come?—Once a week. There are three steamers, and they call once a week; they all call on the same day.

33928. You have three steamers all through the year, once a week each way?—Yes.

33929. Have there been any remissions of rent in consequence of distress or other causes of late years?—No.

33930. Was there any remission of rent or reduction of rent last year in consequence of distress?—No.

33931. Was there any great distress last year?—Not very.

33932. From the failure of the crops?—No very great distress.

33933. As far as you have heard, was it equal to what it was in other parts of the West Highlands?—I don't think so.

33934. They were assisted by seed potatoes to a certain extent?—Yes, to a certain extent.

33935. Was the cost of these potatoes repaid, or is it expected it will be repaid?—It is not repaid yet.

33936. Is it expected to be repaid?—In some cases.

33937. Cases where the people are sufficiently well off to do so?

—Yes.

33938. We heard something in the course of the evidence about sea-ware. Can you tell us what the regulations of the estate are in regard to the people getting sea-ware?—The complaint was about that farm I got last Whitsunday. It seems the tenants of Balamartin always give a certain amount of labour for getting sea-ware off this farm, and the same thing was attached to it when I got it. I did not make any new rules to them.

33939. When you got the farm you found that these tenants were bound to give so many days' labour on the farm?—Yes.

33940. And in return for the labour they were allowed to take away sea-ware, was that it?—Yes.

33941. What is the position of affairs now?—It is still the same.

33942. That they give the labour and take away sea-ware in return?—Yes.

33943. Was that included in the rent which you give for the farm?—Not at all, it was always understood between the tenant of that farm and those smaller tenants.

33944. But I mean is it included in the bargain which you made at the time you entered into the farm?—That is a bargain with the proprietor.

33945. It was one of the advantages you got when you took the farm?—No, I did not discover it until after I took the farm.

33946. Then you discovered yourself to be in a better position than when you took the farm?—I suppose I did.

33947. How many days' labour are these people supposed to give?—Two or three days in the year, and they have to put up fifteen carts of sea-ware off the shore.

33948. For you?—Yes.

33949. How many days' labour would that take?—About two days.

33950. How far have they to carry the sea-ware?—In some instances about perhaps 500 or 600 yards, and in other places longer than that.

33951. Have they ever complained to you at all about that or objected to it?—We talked about it.

33952. Did it ever occur to you to suggest to the Duke that it would be very much to the comfort and contentment of the people if an alteration in the terms of the lease was made by which this could be done away with?—No. I may state that I find the arrangement very troublesome, and if they can do without the wrack I will do without their work. I have often sent my carts there and could not get a pound of wrack on the shore.

33953. They give their labour in exchange for the right of taking the sea-ware?—Yes.

33954. Can no arrangements be made by which a limited portion of the coast should be set apart for them to take sea-ware, reserving to your farm what would be required for its proper manuring?—That would be a very difficult arrangement to make, because the sea-ware all comes in a sort of common, and it would be difficult to arrange to give them a share of it—in fact, almost impossible.

33955. Can you tell us anything about the kelp manufacture?—The kelp manager is here himself, and perhaps might give you some evidence.

33956. Have you any observation to make upon the evidence which you have heard given—did you take any notes?—Yes, but I wish to go to Bunessan, where Mr Wylie will be; I have been taking notes for him.

33957. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie*.—I don't know what your position

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exactly is here ; is your advice accepted in the letting of farms?—No, I don't let farms at all.

33958. What are your duties as sub-factor?—Just doing any work through the estate and collecting the rents once a year.

33959. And you superintend any expenditure?—Yes.

33960. Do you not give any advice if a farm falls vacant?—I am quite admitted to do that if the Duke or chamberlain asks me.

33961. Mr Wylie takes his information from you?—To a certain extent.

33962. Do you know what the policy of the estate is when small crofts fall vacant ; is it the policy of the estate to join them together ; and when large farms fall vacant is it the policy to enlarge them or to restrict their size ? Is there any desire to alter the present character of the holding, or is the desire to retain the present character of the holding?—The character of the holding is retained very much.

33963. There is no wish to enlarge a croft?—In some cases they have been enlarged, and in some cases they have been reduced.

33964. What do you consider a suitable size of croft on which a man can make a living and pay his rent fairly?—It is a difficult question to answer ; I would rather not answer it.

33965. With regard to the character of the cultivation here ; you yourself are a considerable farmer ; is yours principally a grazing or an arable farm?—It is a grazing farm now, but it was arable, a good deal of it, at one time.

33966. You are not an arable farmer?—No.

33967. You are not competent to give an answer as to cultivation?—I am not an arable farmer here.

33968. Have you been so elsewhere?—Yes.

33969. Do you think the cultivation here is as good as it might be amongst the crofters?—I think they are very fair farmers here.

33970. I saw the lands here were sown with old grey oats and rye, and that the crops were thin and light ; do you think nothing better can be made of the soil than is produced?—You say you have seen old grey oats and rye ; I don't think anything else would grow here in the land you have seen that in, except barley.

33971. The soil is very inferior—or is it the climate?—The soil is very light ; there is something in the nature of it that won't grow large oats.

33972. But it is also very thin in the stalk?—That must arise from the soil, I think.

33973. Not from too thin sowing or want of manuring?—It might arise from all these ; it depends very much on the farmer.

33974. But generally you think the soil is well farmed?—Yes, I think the people here are good farmers on the whole.

33975. I am astonished to find that a twelve acre crofter keeps two horses ; to my mind that would be the ruin of any man who adopted it?—They all keep two horses here as a rule.

33976. Do you think that consistent with good farming?—They seem to make some money out of their horses. They keep them as a source of revenue.

33977. As breeding stock?—Yes.

33978. *Sheriff Nicolson.*—Do you think there has been no rise of rents for the last thirty years?—There has been no general rise that I am aware of. There may have been before my time ; I could not speak to that.

33979. Can you say what the present rental is?—About £5400.

33980. I find it stated in a return given in Sir John McNeill's report in 1851 that the rental was £2636?—I could not say as to that.

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33981. That looks as if it had been doubled in that time?—So it seems.  
 33982. Do you know whether the increase was on the bigger farms or the same all over?—I think the most of the increase was on the larger farms decidedly.

33983. What is the highest rent paid in the island for one farm?—Between £400 and £500.

33984. How many are there paying a rent above £100?—I believe from ten to a dozen or so.

33985. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh*.—Is it the rule all over the Duke's estate that nobody gets a lease paying rent under £100?—I am not aware whether that rule exists.

33986. You stated it did apply to Tyree?—They have never been asked for.

33987. It would appear from the questions which have been put to you that the rental has been doubled within the last thirty years; are you able to specify any improvements that have been done upon the estate during those thirty years?—No; I have been here such a short time I cannot speak to that.

33988. Was your predecessor styled chamberlain of Tyree?—Yes.

33989. Why did he get that appellation—is there anything in the titles to justify that?—I don't know; I only know the fact.

33990. Were you brought up as a factor?—No, as a farmer.

33991. Did you come here more as a farmer than as a representative of the estate?—Well, I am very fond of farming.

33992. But was it offered as an inducement to you to take the farm?—Not at all.

33993. But which occurred first; did you take the farm first or were you appointed to the office?—I was appointed to the office first. That was a year before I had a farm.

33994. You say you have changed the first farm you got from an arable farm to a grazing farm, can you tell me how many acres of that farm have run out?—I don't think I stated that; it was once cultivated, but not by me.

33995. How much upon that first farm?—Very little of that has been cultivated.

33996. Is the second one cultivated?—No.

33997. How many acres are there upon it?—Eight hundred acres altogether.

33998. How much cultivated?—I really never thought of that; I could not say.

33999. Have you not got an estate plan?—Yes, but I have never made up the acres of that. I have the Ordnance Survey maps, but I never made up the acres of arable land, because it is all under grazing now.

34000. Have you any such rule in Tyree, which I understand prevails in some other places, that when a husband dies leaving a widow without a son twenty-one years of age, the widow must remove?—No, not at all; there are a great many widows here who have crofts.

34001. Would you approve of such a rule?—No, I don't think so.

34002. Do you think there are too many people in Tyree yet?—I don't know; I would not like to answer that question.

34003. But with regard to their circumstances, within the last seven years, are they better off now than then, or more contented?—I cannot say that I see much difference.

34004. Can you explain why it is there is such a large audience here to-day?—I suppose it is greatly out of curiosity.

34005. You won't attribute it to a deeper ground?—They will have

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an interest in the Commission coming here ; it is very natural that they should come and see what is going on.

34006. Do you think they have any grievances ?—I would not like to answer that question. I have found them always very nice people.

34007. You can give them a good character ?—Yes, I can.

34008. There is no public house, I understand, upon the island ?—No.

34009. Is that not considered a grievance ?—I think it is a very good thing there is not.

34010. What do people say about it ?—I have never heard them complain.

34011. How long is it since it has been done away with ?—I could not say.

34012. Was it before your time ?—Oh, yes, some time before.

34013. What does a person do who is ill, and who may be recommended to have something of the nature of stimulant ?—I suppose they may get it from a neighbour.

34014. But where will the neighbour get it ?—Well, there are ways and means always—by having it in the house, they will get it from the steamers.

34015. There is no licence in the place ?—No.

34016. There was a licence—probably more than one—at one time ?—I suppose there was one at one time.

34017. Was the licence taken away on the *ipse dixit* of the Duke or at the wish of the people ?—I don't know. It was before my time, and I never inquired.

34018. Supposing this were done, not by request of the people but by the wish of the Duke himself, would it not indicate that a person taking that step was one exercising a close interest in the people ?—I believe it was for their good the Duke did it ; there is no doubt about that, because I believe he would get a large rent for a public house there.

34019. That is one instance of the interest he takes in the people ?—There is no doubt it was done for their good.

34020. Can you mention any other overt act showing his interest in the people of Tyree ?—I know he always takes an interest in them, and would like them to be well off.

34021. That is a generality ; can you point to anything more specific ? I cannot say.

34022. You heard what the previous witness stated, that the Duke came and went without its apparently doing any perceptible good ?—He comes and stays for a day or two, and he sends clothes and books to be distributed amongst the people.

34023. Books for prizes ?—Yes.

34024. And clothes for the poor ?—Yes.

34025. Are these distributed by you ?—By my wife.

34026. You state that the people last year were not at all so ill off ; how was it necessary to apply for seed ?—I suppose they must have been worse off last year than other years.

34027. Did they apply for public charity ?—Yes, I applied myself for some for the people here.

34028. Does that not denote there was a little more than usual distress ?—I admit there was that.

34029. But you consider that was exceptional rather ?—No doubt about it.

34030. Were you troubled here with the great storms that went over the

west coast?—Oh, yes; no doubt of it, and they did a good deal of damage.

34031. *Sheriff Nicolson*.—Is there no house on the island for the accommodation of strangers?—Oh, yes, there is a temperance hotel.

34032. *The Chairman*.—You mentioned you were a tenant of two farms?—Yes.

34033. Were those farms, or either of them, in the hands of a resident tenant before or an absentee tenant?—One of them was in the hands of a resident tenant and one of them in the hands of an absentee.

34034. So that, as far as resident tenure is concerned, they are just where they were?—Just where they were.

34035. In reference to the farms of above £100 of annual rental in the island, are there any of the farmers or tenants non-resident, or are they all resident?—They are all resident on the island.

34036. All the tenants of those farms?—Yes.

34037. In no case are two farms held by the same person excepting your own?—Oh, yes.

34038. Then there is one other case?—Two other cases besides myself.

34039. Then there are as it were two farms on which there is no tenant in that sense?—Three farms on which there is no separate tenant.

34040. But there is no farm held by an absentee tenant?—None.

34041. There was a statement made by, I think, the first delegate about a road from Dalphuill to the shore upon which the crofters were said to labour although the benefit of the road was not exclusively theirs, can you explain that?—The benefit of the road is entirely theirs more or less; the benefit is theirs except a small piece at the end of it.

34042. This is a township road existing for the particular benefit of these people?—Yes, it is meant for the township.

34043. A delegate made a statement which rather surprised me, that the occupiers in the township were required to work for an average of twenty days in the year, and in each case with a cart and horse, for the repair of the road?—They have always been keeping up that road themselves, but how long or what time they take to work upon it I don't know. I have never heard that statement before.

34044. Does it appear to you that twenty days' labour in the year is unlikely?—I know they spend a good deal of labour on it; there is a good deal of labouring in keeping that road.

34045. But it is indispensable to their welfare?—It is.

34046. The proprietor contributes nothing to keep that road in order?—Not until this year; but he has offered to do it this year.

34047. Why did the proprietor particularly offer to do it this year; was it to afford work in distress?—Not at all, but they represented to me it was a hardship, and I spoke to the chamberlain, and the Duke said he was willing to assist to keep it up.

34048. One of the delegates exhibited a plan from which it appeared that the kelp company, or sea-weed company, was in the possession of five crofts; what is the reason that those crofts are in the occupancy of the company?—The company farm some land to keep their horses in food.

34049. Would the company not find it possible to purchase their food?—I suppose they would find it cheaper to work their own land. They do a great deal of good to the island.

34050. We heard it stated that the company did not pay wages, or very little, in money, but pay their wages in goods; what is the reason of that?—I cannot say.

34051. Is it the fact?—The manager of the company is here, and he may say; I don't know much about their business at all.

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- ARGYLL. 34052. Have you ever heard it stated in public or in the island that the people did not receive money wages?—I heard that that was the case. In some instances I have heard where they have got money.
- TYREE. 34053. But have you heard it stated that the general system of traffic with the company is the truck system, or the payment of wages in goods?—That is spoken of by the people.
- Hugh Macdiarmid. 34054. Has that ever been a subject discussed between the proprietor or the chamberlain and yourself?—No, never.
34055. Do you know whether the chamberlain is aware of it?—I could not say whether he is or not.
34056. What is the nature of the commodities in which the company deals?—Just a regular store or shop.
34057. Do they purchase as well as sell?—No, I am not aware that they purchase anything.
34058. They merely sell goods?—Yes.
34059. We learn that the proprietor was in the habit of offering prizes for an agricultural show?—Yes, there is an agricultural show held here every year.
34060. What is the nature of the competition, for sheep and cattle?—Cattle and horses and butter.
34061. Cheese?—No, just an ordinary agricultural show.
34062. Poultry?—No.
34063. Has the proprietor taken a particular interest in the improvement of the breed of cattle?—Yes.
34064. Is there a bull kept here?—A large number of them.
34065. Afforded by the proprietor?—No, the people pay for the bulls themselves.
34066. But perhaps the movement in favour of good breeding may have originated with the proprietor; was there ever a proprietor's bull kept here?—Yes.
34067. What is the cross introduced into the country now?—Highland cattle.
34068. You adhere to the pure Highland cattle?—Yes, there are one or two dairy farms, but principally Highland cattle.
34069. You have no shorthorn crosses?—Yes, on some of the larger farms.
34070. Are the crofters taking to that at all?—No.
34071. What is the sheep used generally on the island?—Blackfaced sheep and Leicester rams.
34072. You said that during the scarcity of last year you had applied for public charity on behalf of the people; did you receive any?—Yes.
34073. In what form?—Meal and money.
34074. From what source was it?—Glasgow.
34075. Not from the Lord Mayor's fund?—We got a little from the Lord Mayor's fund about a week ago.
34076. Speaking of public works in the island and useful works, you stated that you were not able at that moment to mention any particular work which had been carried on since your arrival; but with reference to the roads which intersect the island, were they originally made by the proprietor or his predecessors?—I suppose they were made by the proprietor, and they are kept up by the road trustees.
34077. Which means the proprietor?—Yes.
34078. Were the roads originally the landlord's work?—I could not say.
34079. We have not seen very much of the island, but on landing I was rather struck by the want of fencing in the landscape; is there in

other parts of the island much substantial stone fencing?—There is a good deal of fencing in the island, but it is principally wire.

34080. Is there fencing actually between the different crofts or only the boundary of the whole township?—It is the boundary of the township as yet.

34081. Are the grazing lands of the crofters now almost all divided from the sheep farmer's lands by fences?—Yes, the whole of them, I think.

34082. Is there any substantial stone fencing about the larger farm houses?—There is not much stone fencing.

34083. Is there any facility for stone fencing?—Plenty rocks, if you blast them.

34084. But you don't find stones in the soil?—No.

34085. Do you think stone fencing superior to wire?—I think so.

34086. Much more?—Yes.

34087. The place is not advantageous for it?—No.

34088. We have been told there has been little peat left; can you form any conception or estimate of what the cost of fuel, either peat or coal, to the family of a Tyree crofter would be in the year?—I could not form an estimate, but I know it must be a considerable item in their expense; but I could not form an estimate.

34089. Do they import any peat, or is it all coal?—All coal.

34090. £6 was mentioned by one or two witnesses as the probable cost of fuel?—I think that is a high enough estimate for a small crofter.

34091. *Professor Mackinnon*.—Are you acquainted with a crofting community elsewhere?—Yes.

34092. Where?—Perthshire.

34093. Much the same class of people?—Yes, on Sir Donald Currie's estate.

34094. You were in Mull before you came to Tyree?—Yes, as ground officer.

34095. As compared with the estate in Mull, would you consider the crofters here better off?—I would say they are.

34096. With regard to those that asked or that got the seed last year, were they the smaller crofters or the bigger crofters?—Principally the smaller crofters.

34097. With respect to those for whom you asked outside aid, charity, were they chiefly of the crofter or cottar class?—Entirely of the cottar class.

34098. So that, even in a very bad year like last year, a good substantial crofter can weather the storm with comfort?—A good substantial crofter would.

34099. And there are a considerable number of them in this island?—I hope so.

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LACHLAN M'PHAIL, Farmer, Kilmoluag (50)—examined.

34100. *The Chairman*.—How long have you been tenant in your present farm?—Twenty years.

34101. During that period has it always been the same size?—Yes, an adjacent croft was added to it since that time.

34102. How large is it now?—I cannot very well tell you the exact extent of arable ground. There was a good deal of arable ground once, but the sand drifted and I gave up cultivating it, and I have it mostly under pasture now.

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Hugh  
Macdiarmid.Lachlan  
M'Phail

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Lachlan  
M'Phail.

34103. Have you got hill pasture?—All the grazing is enclosed—the whole land is enclosed, grazing and all. There was a strip that used to be common pasture to the remaining crofters in the township, but it was a cause of difference between us, and it was valued and added to the rest and fenced in.

34104. Was your father or any member of your family a tenant there before?—No, myself and my brother had it at the beginning.

34105. Was the croft which was added to the farm of great use to the farm?—No, it was not of much use to the farm or to me, and I did not ask it. But the marches suited to put them together.

34106. What became of the previous tenant of the croft?—The tenant of it is still upon the croft. He had to give it up, for he had no stock and fell back. He gave it up of his own accord.

34107. Have you got a lease?—No.

34108. What is your rent?—£49, 3s. 6d.

34109. Has the rent been the same during the whole period of your occupancy?—Yes, the same.

34110. Do you find farming more profitable at present prices than when you began?—No, not so far as the arable cultivation is concerned, because we are subject to the drifting of sand on the place; but the grazing stock is more profitable now.

34111. A tenant was asked by Sir Kenneth Mackenzie what he thought the proper rent for a cow was, and he answered from 25s. to 30s. I want to know whether the cottars or the poor ever ask the farmers here for the grazing of a cow for the summer or during the whole year?—It is quite a common practice.

34112. How much do the cottars, where they graze a cow on a farm, pay for the grazing?—The practice is to give the grazing for the six months of summer and autumn. It is not the practice to charge for winter grazing. And the price depends exactly on the condition of the outrun for the time being, whether the tenants keep a greater or less amount of stock upon it. Sometimes it is down to 7s., as this year, and sometimes it is as high as 16s. There is not, so far as I am aware, a single crofter in Tyree who would give pasture for a cow within what we call the ring fence, within the arable portion; he might allow it to graze upon the outrun, but not to pasture within the croft.

34113. Then the price upon the outrun would run up to 17s. for six months?—Seven shillings to 16s. for as much as a cow would pick up. It has sometimes been down to 5s.

34114. How does a cottar sustain his cow during the other six months of the year?—On the goodwill of his neighbours.

34115. Does he pay for the goodwill?—I am not aware. The cow is allowed to feed as it may; as much as it can gather outside without any charge, but any hand feeding is paid for.

34116. Do you know how much a cottar would usually pay for winter fodder?—It is very difficult to say what the outlay of a cottar is; a cow would require, to be well fed, £4; but no cottar lays out that amount.

34117. Do you think he would lay out £3 for winter food?—I really cannot tell; there is many a one I know who feeds a cow has not £3 to spare; how he does it I don't know.

34118. Would it be any advantage to you to have a lease; or are you quite satisfied as you are?—No, I am not dissatisfied. I have no fear that I will be dispossessed as long as I pay my rent.

34119. Were your houses and offices built by the proprietor or by yourself, or by both together?—The houses were built before I went there;

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but I believe they were built by the tenant, and that the proprietor had nothing to do with them.

34120. Did you pay the previous tenant anything for them?—Nothing.

34121. Then if you went away you would not expect to get any compensation?—I really cannot say what may happen in the future, but that has been the practice of the place.

34122. There are no regulations on the estate for compensation for buildings?—I am not aware that there has been for small holdings like ours.

34123. *Professor Mackinnon.*—Had your father a holding?—Yes.

34124. What was his rent?—£5. He lived in a different township.

34125. Do you remember any of your neighbours in this island at the time of the potato disease that had a large croft?—No, I don't remember any that had a very large holding; an ordinary croft.

34126. You remember perfectly well the time that has been spoken of to-day when the people were removed and went away to America?—Yes.

34127. Was it entirely of their own free will that those people went away?—So far as I know, many of them went away of their own free will.

34128. Did the whole of them go of their own free will?—I am not aware.

34129. Are you aware that many of those who emigrated were in arrear of rent when they went away?—I believe some of them were in arrear. I know others went away and sold the croft. The phrase 'selling the croft' means of course selling the crops and the stock and the houses; but there is also something of the nature of goodwill that perhaps is rather difficult to explain—a sense of possession that grew. One would give more for the crops because he was to enter into possession of the land.

34130. You heard the things that were said to have been done under the management of the former factor?—Yes, I heard, and I saw the men.

34131. Are you aware that there was great dissatisfaction with the management among the people?—Yes, I know that there was great dissatisfaction, but whether the cause of that might be justified of course would be another matter. The people spoke of great dissatisfaction. I had no land at the time; I was young and without care, and did not take much heed of the matter.

34132. Were you aware of many people that were able to come well out of the distress following the potato disease in Tyree?—Yes.

34133. And are there some of those in the place yet?—Yes.

34134. And have they bigger holdings now than they had then?—There are plenty of their descendants still in the place.

34135. There have been a good number of large farms made since that time?—They were made about that time.

34136. And do you think the people would have been better off if they had got the lands of the crofters who went away instead of these lands being turned into big farms?—I know that some of them would be very glad to have them anyhow, and would be able to take them. Others would not have been able to take them.

34137. Those who pay rent from £30 upwards like yourself, are they not in a better position than those who have the small crofts?—They are in a much better position.

34138. In a bad year like last year those people did not require assistance?—Well, they are all present here, those who asked assistance last year. Each man can answer for himself in that respect, but I neither required nor asked for assistance.

34139. Between those who have land and those who have not, are



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those who have no land much poorer than those who have?—Some of those who have no land are quite as well off as some of those who have. Some of them in the cottar class, with a trade or the like of that, are better off than the poorer of the crofter class.

34140. But take them class for class?—Any person can understand which class is best off; of course it is the crofter class.

34141. And the bigger the croft the better he is off?—The small crofter invariably says so.

34142. But does the big crofter say the opposite?—Well, he would get the opportunity of having his choice pretty often if he did say it. It could be turned to a small croft any day if he pleased.

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DONALD CAMPBELL, Crofter, Kilmaluag (36,) assisted by DONALD MACLEAN, Cottar, Kilmaluag (65)—examined.

Donald  
Campbell  
and Donald  
Maclean.

34143. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh*.—Have you papers to submit to the Commission?—Yes.—‘*Ballvuilin and Kilmoluag*. Our complaints, which we consider grievous, are, that a part of the “common,” for all which we still pay, was taken from the township some fifty years ago; thirty-five years ago another part was taken off our common, and we still pay for that part also. When John Campbell, Esq., was factor on the estate, our rents were raised at three different times, so that they were nearly doubled. Previous to the raising of our rents, we had to come bound to him by compulsorily signing a paper that we would be obedient and submissive to any orders from him in all time coming. We signed this paper at the threat of instant eviction. The third rise in the rents was made for drainage. We have to pay for the sea-ware we use as manure, either in money or take twenty carts to the land of the farmer on whose shore the sea-ware is got. This is equal to five or six days’ work. We have also to complain that when our growing grass is in need of the greatest care, the manager of the Sea-weed Company sends his horses and carts through our grounds, and states that he has authority to do so. The above complaints apply to both townships.—*Kilmoluag*. The whole township of Kilmoluag had to sign a paper to the then factor, Mr Geikie, to give to a neighbouring farmer out of their common as much land as he chose to take from us, which, if they (the crofters) did not consent to do, he threatened he would send every mother’s son of them out of the island.—DONALD CAMPBELL, delegate.’—‘To the Honourable the Royal Commissioners appointed to inquire into the State of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. We, the cottars of Ballvuilin and Kilmoluag, want to let you know the poor condition we are in through a great many causes (too numerous to mention), some of which we will try to state here. We have got houses built on the crofters’ common, and the landlord wants us to pay rent for the sites, although the crofters are paying for it already. We cannot prosecute the fishing with safety for the want of harbours for the safety of our boats. We had a sort of a quay at Kilmoluag, but the big tide that was two or three years ago tore it down, and it has never been mended yet. We are making kelp, and are paid at the rate of £4 per ton of 2520 lbs. with goods, which are charged for more than in any shop or store in the island. There are sixty cottars between Ballvuilin and Kilmoluag, and we are troubling the crofters very much getting ground to plant potatoes in, as their holdings are so small (a thing that is out of the question to get from the tacksmen); also getting horses and carts for a great many things we need them for.

'Some of us had crofts, but they were taken from us without any known reason but to please the factor that was here at the time. What we most want is a bit of land to plant potatoes in and grazing for a cow or two, and harbours for our fishing boats.—DONALD MACLEAN, delegate.'

34144. (*To Campbell*).—Who got the common land that was taken from Ballvuilin?—A neighbour of ours.

34145. Has he got it yet?—Yes.

34146. What is his name?—A man named John Cameron has it just now, and another piece of it is occupied by Donald Kennedy.

34147. Had your father a croft?—Yes, my father is still in a croft.

34148. Do you know the rent your father was paying when he was a young man?—£6.

34149. What is he paying now?—£12.

34150. Was there anything done for him by the proprietor in the way of helping him to build his house or fences or drainage?—I am not aware of any.

34151. Who is the farmer upon whose shore the sea-ware is got?—Mr M'Diarmid.

34152. About the grass, the manager of the Sea-weed Company sends his horses and carts there; is there any way for this manager to send them except this pasture?—The complaint is that they spread their sea-ware upon the grass in order to dry it—upon our pasture ground.

34153. What rent does the manure company pay to you for taking your land in this way?—Nothing.

34154. How long is it since they began to do this?—Ever since they came, some fifteen years ago.

34155. The paper states that the manager says he has authority to do so, but did you never make a complaint to the factor or ground officer?—I am not aware that we did.

34156. It would appear to be wise for you to do so?—It would appear so.

34157. About Kilmoluag, you state you had to sign a paper to the chief factor, Mr Geikie, whatever he chose out of the farm; did the neighbouring farm get anything out of your farm?—Yes.

34158. How much?—We got a bad bit in exchange for it.

34159. What was done at that time prejudiced the town?—Yes, it is a loss to the township to the present day.

34160. Who is the person that has this place?—Lachlan M'Phail.

34161. What would you consider a fair rent to pay for your place?—I don't think it is worth more than £6.

34162. What your father was paying first?—Yes; it is worth less to-day than when my father got it; the sand has drifted upon it.

34163. Are you a fisherman?—I sometimes fish about three months, and work on land the rest of the time.

34164. Is it necessary for you to engage at fishing here to keep your family alive?—Yes, and we must buy our potatoes from elsewhere as well, and earn our wages elsewhere also. That is the way we now live.

34165. How many people are now living in Ballvuilin?—Seventeen have land; thirty or thirty-two are without land.

34166. At Kilmoluag how many have you?—Nineteen.

34167. And how many cottars?—About thirty.

34168. Are the cottars a great burden upon you?—Yes.

34169. Do you pay poor rates?—Yes.

34170. Are these cottars in whole or in part people who have been sent into these two towns from other places?—Yes; there were some of them sent consequent upon the clearing of Hylipool; some also were sent from

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Campbell  
and Donald  
Maclean.

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Donald  
Campbell  
and Donald  
Maclean.

another town which was partially cleared, Baugh, but the great majority of them belong to the place.

34171. (*To Maclean*).—You state that there are sixty cottars between Ballvuilin and Kilmoluag; where could you point out any land that could be given to you?—Wherever they would wish to send us.

34172. You are willing to go to any place in Tyree that is convenient?—Yes, anywhere where we might assist ourselves in any way.

34173. Would some of you be able to take small places yourselves and build your own houses without, or would you all need to get some assistance to move?—There are some of them that would be able, they would be willing to make a home in these new places. There are some of them that are exhausted building houses—shifting about here and there, and building houses wherever they go.

34174. Are there enough of them in the position of being able to build houses for themselves and stock the new lands—are they in sufficient numbers that would much relieve Ballvuilin and Kilmoluag if they went? Yes, certainly there are.

34175. Would not the crofters of Ballvuilin be very likely willing to help you to move?—I don't know that they would assist us very much.

34176. But would not it be a great relief to get rid of you—would not it be worth their while?—Yes, if they had the good intention.

34177. Considering the overcrowded position you are in, do the crofters and cottars live very agreeably together?—Sometimes; there are exceptions.

34178. Had you ever land?—Yes, I had it, and I lost it when Mr Geikie entered on the management of the property; before he raised the rents. I have a special complaint amongst these papers.

34179. Had your father a croft before you?—Yes, they always had—my fathers.

34180. Was your father able to bring up his family respectably?—Yes.

34181. You are working at kelp?—I do not personally do very much. but there are plenty of people working at it in the place.

34182. Do they ever get money for what they do?—No, they do not get money, and those of them who have been asking money for the last year or so only get £2 per ton in money; they would get at the rate of £4 if they took goods.

34183. But although the goods were stated to be worth £4, perhaps the goods were not worth more than £2 in another shop?—Perhaps not even £2.

34184. I suppose the people do not like to be treated in that way?—No, they do not; they are badly treated in many a way. They very often have to get up about midnight and go away down and pick up tangle out of the surf when the sea is washing over them, and take it up out of the reach of the tide on their backs over rough ground, and all they get is 4d. per cubic yard of root of tangle.

34185. What is sold in the shop—nothing except provisions?—Yes, clothes also.

34186. Anything else?—Tea, tobacco, meal; and all sorts of luxuries.

34187. Are there other places where people can purchase goods in Tyree?—Yes.

34188. And I suppose you and the other people would like to get money for what you earn and spend it where you chose?—Certainly it would be better for them.

34188\*. You would not object to go to Glasgow and make your purchases if you liked?—Anywhere.

NEIL M'NEIL, Crofter, Vaul (50)—examined.

34189. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie*.—Have you any paper?—I have :—‘To the Royal Commissioners for the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The township of Vaul consists of twelve crofters and fourteen cottars. I represent the township. Our grievances are—(1) That a former factor made us sign a document that we would be obedient to his laws; the result was that he nearly doubled our rents within the last thirty-eight years, partly for drainage and twice for reasons unknown to us. (2) That, owing to the inferiority of the soil through incessant tillage, we have to buy all our meal from Glasgow. Our sons and daughters gather our rent through the world. (3) Scarcity of fuel and wool, for we have no sheep. (4) That the cottars are a great burden to us. By order of the Crofters of Vaul. NEIL M'NEIL.’—I have been requested to hand in the following papers also :—For John M'Kinnon, Kirkapool; Hugh M'Dougall, Vaul; and Lauchlan M'Kinnon, Vaul. ‘To the Royal Commissioners for the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. *Statement of John M'Kinnon*.—I was formerly a crofter in Kirkapool. My grievances are—(1) That the land was taken from me while my rent was paid. I was gathering the rent the best way I could, at all sorts of fishing; and as soon as my father and mother died the land was taken from me, and no recompense. I may state that my father and grandfather were crofters on the same land before me; (2) that I have a large family, some of them young, others unable to do anything for, themselves; (3) that I mostly live by fishing. I have no boat nor nets of my own.—JOHN M'KINNON, Kirkapool.’—‘*The Statement of Hugh M'Dougall, Cottar and Fisherman, Vaul, Tyree*—Sheweth, That our house was damaged by the November tide of 1881, and I sought liberty from the factor to build another house at my own expenses, above high-water mark, and that was not granted us. I having no other occupation but the fishing. What I desire is that we shall be allowed to build another house, where our lives shall not be in peril. Trusting that your Lordships will give our case due consideration, and as in duty bound, I shall ever pray. HUGH M'DOUGALL.’—‘To the Honourable the Crofters' Commissioners at present sitting in the Island of Tyree. *Statement by Lauchlan M'Kinnon*, residing there. Gentlemen, I desire to state that over twenty years ago I purchased, for the sum of £40, a croft at that time belonging to one Archibald M'Phail. M'Phail was then in arrears of rent to the extent of about £12. This sum was deducted by the factor from the principal, and the balance handed to M'Phail, who subsequently went to America. The late Mr John Campbell was then chamberlain to his Grace the Duke of Argyll, and Mr Lachlan M'Quarie, ground officer here. After occupying my croft for over twelve years it was taken from me, and no reason given for doing so. When I asked the chamberlain if he had anything against me, he said that he had not, but that there were other reasons. I was then paying for my croft a yearly rent of £5, 10s., and was not in arrears. My family was then young. My stock consisted of one horse and two cows. These I was obliged to sell. With the proceeds, and some money which I borrowed from a friend, I purchased an east coast fishing boat, which I have since had enlarged; and from the time I was deprived of my croft until now the boat has been the principal means of support of myself and family. I have a wife, six sons, and three daughters. At the time my croft was taken from me, I was allowed to retain one acre of it, or thereabout; the remainder being given to another crofter. During Mr Campbell's time I

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' was not charged any rent for the acre retained, but during the factorship of his successor, Mr Geikie, I was obliged to sign a paper agreeing to pay rent, if required, at any future time. I was never charged rent by Mr Geikie, but I am now paying the sum of 30s. for the said acre yearly. When my croft was taken from me I was promised another croft in return, but which, notwithstanding my frequent applications to the then and subsequent factors, I am still without. On the ground I now occupy I can only plant a few barrels of potatoes, and am obliged to plant more potatoes in other crofters' ground, paying rent therefor. My present stock consists of two cows and one horse, the grazing and wintering of these respectively costing me over £20 a year. I have never received compensation of any kind for the loss of my croft, although at the time it was taken from me I was willing to emigrate with my family, had money compensation been given me. As I consider that I have been most unjustly deprived of my land, and there being no apparent intention on the part of his Grace the Duke of Argyll to reinstate me therein, or in another croft, I beg humbly to present this statement for the consideration of your honours.'

34190. Did you ever see again this document you signed saying you would be obedient to the factor?—No, but I have heard people who have seen it and who signed it.

34191. You have not seen it?—No, not I.

34192. Was it ever produced again?—Not to my knowledge, but the people who signed it told me they did so.

34193. Did they get a copy of it?—It seems not.

34194. What is your rent at the present time?—£21, 10s. 6d., I think.

34195. Was your father in the croft before you?—We were in Balphuil first.

34196. How long have you been in possession of the present croft?—Thirty years.

34197. Was it your brother or your father that came there first?—My father.

34198. What was the rent?—About £18.

34199. How much money was put on for drainage?—None upon us.

34200. Therefore, the rise from £18 to £21, 10s. is a rise that was put on for reasons unknown to you?—I may state the reasons perhaps. The rents were raised twice forbye the drainage money, and it was sent by the factor amongst the tenants to divide amongst themselves, and they valued the crofts amongst themselves, and if you did not take so much of this rent which is given in lately you will give me your croft, and the crofters had to remove back and forward amongst themselves.

34201. Did they value the whole township?—Yes, among themselves, and we had to give up one of the crofts we had for one of these light sandy ones, and latterly we were removed down there altogether.

34202. You present a paper from Lachlan M'Kinnon, in which he says he bought his croft and paid £40 on entering it; was that a common custom?—Yes, it was in old times that such as Lachlan M'Kinnon bought the rental; that is when he bought the stock it was understood that he bought the use of the rental along with it.

34203. When he paid £40 he got some stock for it?—He would have some stock, but it was understood he would have the benefit of the croft by buying the rental.

34204. The goodwill?—Yes, his Grace allowed them to sell the rental. John Maclean bought his place, that was what he did. It was understood he had it while he paid his rent.

34205. And did everybody have the right of selling it in old times?— ARGYLL  
It seems they had before factor Campbell's days.

34206. He stopped that?—Yes, my father bought his first croft the same way in Balphuil.

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34207. How long is it since this practice was stopped?—Thirty-eight years ago, I think, since factor Campbell came.

34208. You mention the scarcity of fuel, what on an average will you spend on coals?—About six tons to each family on an average. Some can do with less and some more.

34209. Where do you get it?—From Ardrossan.

34210. What do you pay for it?—The price varies, sometimes 14s., 16s., and 17s. 6d., and it has been as high as 30s. per ton.

34211. Will it come to £4 on an average?—They were allowing £6 on an average for each family; some require more than six tons.

34212. Have none of the crofters any sheep?—I am not aware of any.

34213. They do not make any cloth at home?—Oh, yes.

34214. Do they buy the wool?—Yes.

34215. And spin it at home?—Yes.

34216. Are there many weavers in Tyree?—A good many.

34217. *The Chairman.*—You say your sons and daughters gather your rent through the world?—Yes.

34218. Do your sons and daughters frequently send home money from their wages?—Generally they do.

34219. Would it be possible to pay the rent throughout the country unless the younger members of a family sent money from their wages?—As far as I know, I don't think it would; in most cases it would not.

34220. Do you know anybody here present who actually signed that document in which they promised to obey the factor's wishes?—Yes, Donald Macdonald.

34221. (*To Donald Macdonald*). Did you sign the document promising to obey whatever the factor desired?—Yes.

34222. How did you know what the contents of the paper were—was the paper read over to you aloud?—All we know is this—the paper was not read to us at all, but the ground officer had a lot of notices to quit in one hand and this paper in another, and we were told that the contents of the paper were that we would require to obey anything that the Duke of Argyll or his factor would ask us to do.

34223. Was it written or printed?—It was written.

34224. Was M'Quarie the ground officer?—Yes.

34225. Is he alive yet?—Yes.

34226. Is he here?—He was here; he may be here yet.

34227. Was that in the time of the present Duke or his predecessor?—In the time of the present Duke.

34228. Do you know of anybody who can read and who saw the paper himself and read it?—I am not aware of any who read the paper before he put his hand to it.

34229. Was your knowledge of the contents of the paper solely derived from the statements of the ground officer?—The factor was not present upon the occasion; our only information regarding the paper was what the ground officer told us at the time.

34230. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—Was each tenant obliged to sign a separate paper, or did several of them sign one paper?—I believe it was the same paper that every crofter in Tyree signed.

34231. Did you put your cross to it?—I believe I signed my name; I can sign my name.

34232. What year did this occur in?—It would be about thirty-five

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years ago; some two or three years after Mr Campbell got the management of the estates.—*John Campbell, Bailenoe.* Probably it was in the year 1847. Mr Campbell got the management of the estate in 1846, and it was the year after.

34233. *The Chairman.*—Did you sign it?—I did not sign it myself, but everybody in the township where I lived signed it.

34234. (*To Donald Macdonald.*)—How did you know that the papers in the man's other hand were summonses to quit?—He told us.

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JOHN CAMPBELL, Crofter, Bailenoe (77)—examined.

John  
Campbell.

34235. *The Chairman.*—Have you a paper?—Yes.—‘The principal ‘grievances or hardships of which we have to complain are the following:—  
‘At the time when Mr M'Nicol had the neighbouring farm, three crofts  
‘and their share of the common were taken from us by Mr Campbell the  
‘factor, and added to Mr M'Nicol's farm. Mr M'Nicol also desired the  
‘stock of the three crofts to be grazed in our township, and since we  
‘refused £10 more rent was laid on us forbye the loss of the crofts. The  
‘stock of the schoolmaster's croft, which previous to Mr M'Nicol's time  
‘was to be grazed on his farm, was forced on our township without any  
‘payment. At another time a croft was cut off our common for a man  
‘who in the course of some years went to America. The factor, Mr  
‘Campbell, then gave it back as at first, but laid on us the rent charged  
‘on the tenant who left. He (factor) sometime after gave the croft to a  
‘blacksmith, a favourite of his own, and charged a new rent, but did not  
‘lower our charge. A short time ago another croft and its share of the  
‘common were taken from us, and added to the same tack. At the time  
‘of the neighbouring tack being cleared two of the crofters got share in  
‘our township, and also the very best. All such doings greatly spoiled our  
‘township, and led to one of our best roads being closed. Our township  
‘was drained, and the interest of the money spent in so doing was laid  
‘on us as extra rent. This was promised to be taken off in the course of  
‘twenty-one years; but we are now thirty-five years paying it, and still  
‘no signs of lowering such rent. Crofters who lost their holdings in other  
‘townships built houses on our common grazing ground, and these being  
‘so scattered greatly ruins our grass. What we want now is a lowering  
‘of rent; for at the rent charged at present we are unable to take a living  
‘out of our crofts, if our sons and daughters did not send us help from  
‘other quarters. We also want the crofts mentioned above restored,  
‘which would greatly make up for our loss, for four of us have only one  
‘croft each at present.—DONALD CAMPBELL.’

34236. How long has Bailenoe been a township?—It was under crofters of old.

34237. What is the name of Mr M'Nicol's farm?—Hyilpool.

34238. Was that an old tack?—No; it was under crofters of old times, there were twenty-one there.

34239. You say, ‘A short time ago another croft and its share of the  
‘common were taken from us and added to M'Nicols' tack,’ how long ago  
was that?—Four years ago.

34240. How did the croft which was taken away and added to the  
farm become vacant?—The man that occupied it got a croft in another  
township.

34241. And would the crofters at Bailenoe have been glad enough if

that had been divided among them?—Certainly they would have much preferred it.

34242. How long is it since the drainage was executed?—There was some made thirty-five years ago; then for the last twenty-eight years a few have been made now and again.

34243. By whom was the drainage done, by the crofters themselves or outside people?—Partly by the crofters and partly by outside labourers.

34244. Were they stone drains or tile drains?—Partly the one and partly the other.

34245. Was the work well done?—Yes, very well done.

34246. Did they do a great deal of good to the soil?—Yes, as long as they were open.

34247. Is the land still the better for it, or has the land become as it was of old?—Those that were first done are of no good now; the ground has gone back very much. Those that were more recently done are doing good.

34248. How long did they continue to do good?—Twenty years.

34249. Did any of the crofters open the drains again and relay the tiles?—Some of them.

34250. And did that do good again?—Yes, they were better.

34251. Why did not they all do it?—They cannot do it; there are no stones, all the stones have been used up. They cannot blast the big rocks.

ARGYLL.

TYREE.

John  
Campbell.

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RONALD MACDONALD, Cottar, Heanish (46)—examined.

34252. *Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.*—You have a paper?—Yes.—‘To the Honourable the Royal Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Condition of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. *The Statement of Ronald M’Donald* (46), cottar and cattle dealer, Heanish, for Heanish and Baugh cottars—Humbly sheweth, That many of the cottars of Heanish and Baugh were deprived of their holdings, either directly or indirectly, to make room for tacks, as in the case of one party who was deprived of his holding at Baugh, then partly cleared to make an addition to the tack of Reef, and same party again was evicted from his croft at Heanish to make room for a blind man and his family from Hylipool, then a crofter town-ship, but which was at this time converted into a tack. This party never received a penny for his outlay in house erection, but had to build another house at his own expense down at the sea-shore; and ejectments were served upon us during our occupancy of the crofts for being one day behind in ploughing our turnip ground, and fines imposed for fictitious faults, and had to be paid on rent day, for such as if any of our horses should break in accidentally from one part of our common to another part, both which was our own by right. The sum paid for each collectively amounts to £17. The late John Campbell, Esq., was factor for his Grace the Duke of Argyll. Cases could be cited where the crofters were evicted to make room for factor’s servants and favourites. The result is that many are reduced to poverty; their only employment in winter is gathering tangles for the British Sea-weed Company, and making kelp in spring for the same company whenever they get the chance of doing so, those of them who do not go to the fishing. What we desire is a few acres arable land and as much grazing as will be a sufficient keep for a cow or two.’—‘Also Scaranish cottars’ statement by Duncan M’Kinnon, crofter formerly, but now labourer, age fifty-five. My father and grandfather

Ronald  
Macdonald.



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Macdonald.

‘occupied the croft or holding from time immemorial and paid the rent, yet evicted to make room for sheep. My father was seventy-five years of age when we were evicted. The croft was about eight acres, giving plenty of work and returns to keep us comfortably.’—‘Also Archibald M’Kinnon, shoemaker, crofter’s son, age forty-three, deprived of the place for which his father paid £50 for the goodwill of it in Scaranish, and never received a penny for our loss there. There was a large family of us thrown out.’—‘Also the whole of Scaranish crofters, numbering twenty-two families, were badly used; twelve families went to America, and a number of them died on the passage through want of proper food and allowance. The rest were allowed to remain and got their lots increased, but subsequently all of them were evicted and reduced to poverty. We humbly pray that our crofts shall be restored to us again, for which we are willing to pay fair rent with fixity of tenure.—DUNCAN M’KINNON, Scaranish; ARCHIBALD M’KINNON, Scaranish.’

34253. What rent are you paying now?—I just paid one rent last year for the garden I got along with the house.

34254. Had you any land at any time yourself?—My mother had; I never had.

34255. What rent was your mother paying?—About £6.

34256. Was your mother long a widow?—Yes, she was married twice; and it was the land that her husband had that was taken from her.

34257. Were your father and mother in comfortable circumstances to bring up a family?—Yes, they were in good circumstances. My father died when I was only an infant, but my stepfather was in good circumstances.

34258. Until they lost the croft?—Yes.

34259. Where would you like to get land—yourself and the other people of Heanish?—Wherever we would get it.

34260. Would some of you be able, if you got land, to build houses for yourselves, and to put some stock on it?—Some of us would be.

34261. Would you?—I would myself and others would also.

34262. Would you be able to take as much land as would enable you to live without doing anything else but attending to the produce and stock?—The croft would always stand good, and I might still be going backwards and forwards as I now am.

34263. Are there some of the other crofters in Heanish and Baugh who could take land?—Some of them are—three or four at least; others of them are very poor.

34264. Do you know the case of Duncan M’Kinnon, who is referred to in the paper?—I don’t know very particularly about the case; I know the man; he is here.

34265. Will the whole of the people mentioned here in Heanish, Baugh, and Scaranish, ever be in anything but a precarious position unless they get more land or steady employment?—It is difficult for me to say generally with regard to that, but I don’t see how they can live at all as they are.

34266. Are the people referred to in this paper, for whom you have been speaking, generally very poor—poorer than they have been in your recollection?—Some of them are poorer than they were, others are much about the same condition.

34267. And you represent to us that the general demand of the people is to get more land; and some of them to get potato ground and enough to keep a cow?—That is their demand.

34268. *The Chairman.*—How do you make your own living?—I am a cattle dealer.

34269. Is the droving trade going on as well as before?—Yes, sometimes better, sometimes worse.

34270. But is it interfered with or altered by the railways and other causes of that sort?—It goes on as before.

34271. Do you pay rent for your house?—I paid one rent for both the house and the garden.

34272. Is the house a new one?—The house is about six or seven years old.

34273. Why did you only pay one rent for the house if you have had it for six years?—It was not asked.

34274. Then you had your house for nothing for five years?—Yes; perhaps more than five, but five anyhow.

34275. Who built the house?—I built it.

34276. How much did it cost you?—It did not cost much. If you get suitable stone here it can be built cheap; there is not much outlay excepting the wood.

34277. If you had to leave it would you get any compensation for it?—It has not been usual in the place to give compensation.

34278. Did you ask the factor's leave to build it?—Well, it was an old house that was re-made, and I leased the land—just went to one of those old houses and made it suitable for habitation.

34279. Did you pay anything to the former occupier?—No, it is one of our own houses; we did not leave the houses although we lost the land.

ARGYLL.

TYREE.

Ronald  
Macdonald.

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DONALD SINCLAIR, Cottar, Balphuil (40), assisted by ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, Cottar, Balphuil (49)—examined.

34280. *The Chairman.*—Would you please to make your statement?—

'The principal grievances or hardships of which we have to complain are the following:—The most of us, and our fathers before us, had crofts, and without any reason being assigned they were taken from us. Our crofts were then added to the neighbouring sheep farm. We then had to build new houses at the shore, without any compensation for the houses left. The only means of living then left us was fishing, and owing to the want of a safe harbour we are unable to prosecute the fishing to any great extent. On that account we have only small boats which we must haul up every night so as to be out of danger. Again, our houses are nearly a mile distant from where our boats land, and that being the case we have many a time to go even at midnight to look after them. On coming from the fishing with these there is none at shore to render any assistance, as our homes are so far from the sort of quay we have. This again gives us great inconvenience when we go for meal, salt, or coals, with our boats to where the steamer lands, that is a distance of six or seven miles, and on coming back we have to pay dearly for a horse and cart to take such goods to our homes. The inconvenience would be great had it only been that; we have to carry the fish home on our backs. It may be mentioned that the Fisheries Board built a quay previous to our crofts being added to the neighbouring sheep farm. It is at that quay, although in a very ruined condition, that our boats are still landing. There are no signs of said quay being repaired, although the proprietor promised to keep it in repair after the board built it. What we now want is a safe harbour, and our houses built near it, so that we could prosecute the fishing in a right style. We also want as much land as

Donald  
Sinclair and  
Archibald  
Campbell.

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Donald  
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Archibald  
Campbell.

' will enable us to keep a cow and plant some potatoes, for which we are willing to pay a reasonable rent.

34281. You say that the meal in the company's store is 8s. per bag higher—how much is the oatmeal at the company's store per boll?—It is over £2 per two bolls.

34282. How much would that be per boll?—£1 per boll.

34283. Is that higher than the current price in the country?—Yes.

34284. We have generally heard that the price of oatmeal is either over £1 or 21s. per boll?—We do not get that kind of meal here.

34285. What is the chemical work of which you speak?—It is in connection with their work south—the manufacture of iodine.

34286. Are you employed at so much a day or per week in this work?—We do not know.

34287. Does the company never show you the account in which the value of your work is written down?—The only way to know your wages is to go and ask for more provision, which usually consists of Indian meal, tea, and sugar, and the only account that is rendered is that you are told there is nothing to your credit.

34288. Does the company buy things as well as sell?—They take eggs in return for provisions.

34289. Do they take eggs from the families of the people whom they employ?—Yes, from any one.

34290. Do they pay for the things they buy ready money, or do they enter that into the account?—Goods in return for the eggs—goods only.

34291. You never got money from the company for your work or for the eggs or other commodities?—Well, we got occasionally 1s. or 2s. to put half soles upon our shoes, or the like of that; but we must tell what we want the shillings for before we get them.

34292. Have you ever complained of this system to the factor?—No, but we complained to a member of the company who was here recently, either to give us more wages or to give us the meal at the current rate of the country.

34293. What did he say?—His reason was that it would be so much money into his pocket if there were none of them working at all, implying thereby it was out of charity that he employed us at all.

34294. When did this company come into the country?—About twenty years ago.

34295. Do they hold their storehouse and premises as tenants from the proprietor, or from some farmer or tacksman?—We understand that they hold direct from the proprietor, and pay him rent for the shores as well as for the land.

34296. You speak of working in gathering tangle or sea-weed; is this a new kind of work in the country; was it introduced in connection with the company?—Yes; but the kelp was manufactured before that time, and when the kelp was being made in the country the proprietor bought it. We got £5 a ton for it.

34297. But did you gather tangle in the same way at night?—They did not use the tangle for the manufacture of kelp at that time.

34298. Do you frequently gather the tangle in the middle of the night?—Yes, I was at it myself; of course, we must attend as the tide suits.

34299. Do the women and children work at night?—Yes.

34300. Do you really say that women and children occasionally at least go out at midnight to gather the tangle upon the shore?—Yes; my sister was a widow with three children, and she was out with me gathering those tangles at night. The night was so dark that if I did not see it I could feel it among the sea-ware.

34301. Was that in the winter?—Yes, it is in the winter that we take it.

34302. How much is it possible to make by the day or week at this work—you named 4d. per yard?—I believe if there was a very strong young man and a very strong young man along with him they could both possibly make 2s. 6d. each in a day; but very often we can get none for weeks; sometimes not for a month—sometimes only an armful.

34303. Did your sister's children work at this work at night with her?—Yes, her children were along with her; and that is customary all over the place, as the tide suits.

34304. Does the company sell coals?—Yes, it is always dearer than the current price of the country.

34305. (*To Archibald Campbell*).—What is your case?—In addition to what is stated in the paper, we think that if the quay in our place was put in order and kept up we might have larger boats, and might prosecute the fishing with greater success. We live a mile from the quay. We were removed at the time the nine crofters were cleared away, as was spoken about in the former part of the day. My father had one of those crofts. When my father lost the croft he was sent to a smithy that was in the place. He gave that croft to another man to crop it for the year. We had to begin to quarry stones and build the house for ourselves. We would not get a stone or a stick that belonged to the place when we left.

34306. Have you anything more to say on the part of the other people?—Yes, we think that if, in addition to the quay being put in order, we were removed down close to it, and got some bit of land with cow's grass, we could be able to make our living as fishermen.

34307. (*To Donald Sinclair*).—What do you pay for oatmeal at the company's store?—About £1 the boll, more or less; sometimes 19s., and sometimes a little over £1.

34308. How much would it cost if you bought it at a shop in the island?—Eighteen shillings sometimes; sometimes higher.

34309. Then the two prices are very nearly the same?—No.

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JAMES SLEVEN, Resident Manager to the North British Chemical Company—examined.

34310. *The Chairman*.—You have been here part of the day, and have James Sleven. heard several of the witnesses refer to the system of trade carried on by your firm?—Yes; some of these are erroneous.

34311. Have the kindness to explain the system of trade which you carry on with the people?—Mr Stanford, the principal partner of the company, first introduced this into the island. He found a great difficulty in conveying money as cash to pay the workmen and kelp burners or makers here. Once or twice he sent a clerk from Glasgow with the cash box, and the clerk and the cash box were taken north and south, and could not get landed. Then there is no bank in the place; and when I came to the island it was the request of the people that the company should open a store for their benefit. The company did so, and are supplying goods as good as can be got in any part of the island, and as reasonable.

34312. Does the company give the people the option freely of receiving their wages either in money or in goods?—They do; but if they get it in cash they reduce the price of the kelp. The kelp at present is almost a drug in the market, and Mr Stanford has given up the purchase of it in

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several places. This place he has kept on the same as at first, and is paying the same amount for it.

34313. But do I understand that any labourer in your employment may come to you freely and ask you either for money or for goods just as he likes?—Those people who work the kelp are not labourers. They commence to work—they know our system—and they can work or not at all as they please. We do not employ them; they just commence to put up the seaweed.

34314. I want you to speak of other classes of labourers?—One of the delegates who was here last said it was only seldom any money could be got. That man I paid more than £6 to last summer, for work he did for the company.

34315. I do not understand what description of labourer?—He is a joiner, the one who was here last.

34316. I want to know what description of labourers you employ; you say that the people who work the kelp are not labourers?—No.

34317. Who is employed by the company—what other class?—Just a few men, carters, and three or four who work in the factory when it is working.

34318. With regard to the chemical works?—That is the chemical work where we prepare the tangle in the rough state for the other work of the company, which is at Clydebank.

34319. The few labourers employed by the company, may they receive their wages freely in money or goods as they like?—They get money occasionally, and other times goods.

34320. But if one of your labourers came to you and said, 'I want to have the whole of my wages in money, and always to have it in money,' would you always give it him?—I would, if I had it on hand.

34321. But would you try for his benefit to keep it on hand?—Well, I cannot do but just as I am done with. I have sometimes cash on hand, and other times I have not. When I have it on hand, and they ask it I give it to them.

34322. Are all the labourers you employ in debt to the company, or are some of them not in debt?—The greater part of them are in debt to the company. We just give them goods as they require them, and we do not speak of whether it is due or not.

34323. Suppose one of your labourers said, 'I insist upon having the whole of my wages in money always,' would you promise him to do it or not?—I would say, 'If you keep within your wages, we will pay you altogether in money.'

34324. That is to say, 'if you are not in our debt'?—Yes.

34325. Now explain on what system the people gather the tangle, and sell it to you?—It was stated here it was 4d. a cubic yard; it is 6d. per cubic yard. Two feet high and 3 feet long is 4d.; the cubic yard, 3 feet long and 3 feet high is 6d. It is but 2 feet high that we take it, as tangle keeps better in that state.

34326. Do the people gather it and bring it to you wet?—No, it is placed on the shore, and is measured there by a man employed by the company to measure it, and they all get lines for this tangle, and come to the store and get paid for it.

34327. And you take it to your store?—Yes, to our work.

34328. Suppose a man who has got this heap of tangle said, 'I want to sell it for ready money and not goods,' would you give him ready money?—No, I would not.

34329. And if you did, you would give him less than if you gave him goods?—It is possible.

34330. Is it true that the people are in the habit of gathering the tangle at night in winter?—It is very seldom; that is a rare case. ARGYLL.

34331. Had you ever any knowledge of the case in which the women and children went out in the middle of the night to gather this stuff?—They might go early in the morning, which we might say was night—dark—so as to catch the tide. TYREE.  
James Slevven.

34332. Did you ever hear of children going out at night?—I never heard of an instance until to-day.

34333. Is this system of truck or barter which you carry on—have you heard it complained of by the people, or is it agreeable to them?—It has been agreeable until lately.

34334. Is this system of barter or truck approved of by the Duke's chamberlain?—I cannot answer that question.

34335. Do you know whether he is aware of it?—Our resident factor is aware of it.

34336. Did the resident factor ever discuss the question with you?—We have often talked of it.

34337. Did the resident factor seem to approve or disapprove of it?—He appeared to approve of it. With regard to the land, as was stated by the delegate—he stated that I, as an individual, went to the factor, and asked his present croft. Now, that I totally deny, and the present factor can be asked the question, if it is true. I never sought his croft, and never asked it for myself, or any one.

34338. You are able to assure him at the present moment that you do not wish to possess his croft?—I can if he is listening; I do not wish it.

34339. But the other crofts which the company possess, how were they occupied before they got into possession of the company?—They were occupied by crofters.

34340. What became of the crofters, were they turned out?—No, one of them got a better place.

34341. And what did the other get?—He had two crofts, and he has one yet; the other was given to the company.

34342. Does the company make any profit on the purchase and sale of these articles, or do they do it really for the good of the people?—They do it more for the good of the people than for profit; their profit is very small indeed.

34343. Do you think the profit you make is smaller than the ordinary profits of a shopkeeper or trader?—No, I don't think they are smaller, but just something similar.

34344. *Sir Kenneth Mackenzie*.—Is it drift tangle cast up by the sea that they gather?—Yes.

34345. They do not cut it?—No.

34346. Why do you get it mostly at low spring tides?—When the tide is out it is got, and when the tide is in it cannot be got. It is partly covered by the sea.

34347. Does the tide not bring it up?—It drives it up.

34348. *Professor Mackinnon*.—There was a statement made, that the weight of a ton of kelp was 22½ cwt.?—That is correct, that is allowed for sand and stones, and I can assure you it is no profit. In some cases I have seen 28 lbs. of stone coming out of a piece of kelp, placed there undoubtedly by some individual.

34349. But is it not rather an unusual mode of procedure to call 22½ cwt. a ton?—No, it is always so in the kelp trade.

34350. Don't you think it would be as well to pay less for 20 cwt. and call it a ton?—It would be just the same.

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34351. The people also stated that when they did get money for the kelp they got at the rate of £2 per ton?—That was offered them.

34352. But when they got goods they would get at the rate of £4 per ton?—Yes, that they would get the option. I have offered that.

34353. Does that mean that you charge 100 per cent. profit upon the goods?—No, it does not.

34354. What does it mean?—That we wish to pay goods, and it is more convenient.

34355. To the extent of 100 per cent.?—That is not the case. You are well aware that kelp is at a low rate at present.

34356. I do not mean to dispute that £2 may be a good price; but what is the meaning of £2 per ton in cash or £4 per ton in goods?—That was never mentioned except to one or two individuals who were there pushing to get cash by other parties from the outside, and just to stop the claim we said so.

34357. You actually give them for kelp £4 worth of goods?—Yes.

34358. But if you were to be put to it, and they insisted upon getting money, you would give them half?—Yes.

34359. So that the evidence upon that matter is quite correct?—It is so far.

34360. There was a man who said here as a matter of complaint that you were using his pasture ground for drying the sea-ware?—That is true.

34361. And that you had the authority of the factor for that?—We have the authority of his Grace. The company's lease gives them that authority to put up sea-ware on the shore to dry it and burn it.

34362. On the crofters' pasture land?—Yes.

34363. So that his Grace derives rent from the crofter and a second rent from you?—In some cases it is more beneficial than injurious to the pasture, the sea-weed being put up upon it.

34364. The crofters seem to take a different view?—Some of them do.

34365. At what hour is high tide at the height of the spring?—Six in the morning.

34366. And low water at twelve at night?—Yes.

34367. Then is it not at twelve at night that they can get the tangle best?—Yes, if they go.

34368. It is in winter they get it?—Autumn, winter, and spring, up to the month of April.

34369. You said they went for it in the morning?—Yes.

34370. As matter of fact, is there ever a low tide upon a winter's morning?—It does not require to be low tide; you will get it at half tide or one hour's ebb.

34371. And they go for it at half ebb in the morning and low tide in the middle of the day?—Some of them go early in the morning and remain until late at night, and do not return to their homes.

34372. Perhaps the night tide puts it up best?—It comes up day and night.

[ADJOURNED.]