

## Helmsdale, Sutherland, 6 October 1883 - Angus Sutherland

ANGUS SUTHERLAND, Teacher in the Glasgow Academy (30)—examined.

38215. The Chairman.

—What is your connection with this place?

—I am a crofter's son here. I have been brought up here, and I always visit the place annually, and spend two months of every year in it.

38216. Is your father living, and in the occupation of a croft?

—Yes.

38217. Have you been elected a delegate by the people of this place?

—I was elected a delegate by the people of this place in the month of March, at a meeting publicly convened.

38218. Do you represent other townships besides this, or this place alone?

—I was delegated to read a statement on behalf of the parishes of Loth and Kildonan.

38219. Will you be so good as to read that statement?

—'Our grievances had their origin in the years 1814-19. In the year 1815, when many natives of the parish were fighting for their country at Waterloo, their homes were being burned in Kildonan Strath by those who had the management of the Sutherland estate. During the period above referred to, the people of the parish of Kildonan, numbering 1574 souls, were ejected from their holdings, and their houses burned to the ground under circumstances of the greatest hardship and cruelty—the houses in many instances having been set on fire while the people were still in them. These burnings were carried on under the direction and supervision of Mr Patrick Sellar, who was at that time under-factor on the estate, and who was also accepted tenant of the land from which the people were evicted, and which their ancestors had held from time immemorial. But we think it unnecessary to enlarge upon this phase of the historical "Kildonan burnings." There is abundance of contemporary literature testifying to the barbarity of the proceedings attending these clearances, and there are still living amongst us witnesses of them, and our own poverty and present grievances are due entirely to them. The immediate result of the clearance of this parish was that the entire population of close on 2000, who had previously in their possession and pretty equally divided 133,000 acres of land, were compressed into a space of about 3000 acres of the most barren and sterile land in the parish; and the remaining 130,000 acres were divided among six sheep farmers, who thus held on an average upwards of 20,000 acres. This division of the land has remained very much the same ever since. The cultivated land in Kildonan Strath was allowed to go back to a state of nature, and the green which succeeded to the crofters' corn crops has formed the mainstay of the sheep farms ever since. The people of Kildonan, of course, got no compensation of any kind, though their houses which, were their own absolute property, having been built entirely by themselves, were destroyed, and their labour in the reclamation of the land confiscated. When they were expelled from their homes in Kildonan Strath, the only provision made for them was that the holdings of a few tenants at the seaside round about this neighbourhood were subdivided to such an extent that what was then held by three or four families is now held by 200 families. There was no subdivision of holdings by the people themselves. Such a thing was never allowed. That matter has been always attended to by the proprietor, and the consequence is that we have the smallest agricultural holdings in Scotland—from one to three acres—side by side with holdings of 44,000 acres. We feel that it is needless to enlarge upon the many evils which must of necessity have followed this sudden impoverishment of people who had hitherto been in comparative affluence. At one fell swoop progress was for ever made impossible, and everlasting poverty made certain. The struggle for existence became so fierce that the ordinary amenities of life became impossible. People were so huddled together that a man cannot now walk round his own house without trespassing on his neighbour's land. Poultry cannot be kept, for if they stray half-a-dozen yards they are into a neighbour's corn, and this in a parish which contains sixty-seven acres for every man, woman, and child, rural and urban, within its bounds. Our bounds have not been extended for the past sixty years, to allow for increase of the population, but, on the contrary, they have been continually contracted. If any official

or superannuated official of the estate has to be provided for, a slice is always taken off our miserable holdings, never off those of the holders of the thousands of acres. The people of the district of West Helmsdale had this done to them no fewer than three times. Part of the holdings of fifteen of their number was some years ago taken from them and added to the holding of the local ground officer. At the same time, part of the holdings of nine others was taken from them in the following manner:—The then ground officer went round among the crofters concerned, and told them that the proprietor wanted them to give up to him a part of their land in order that it might be planted with trees. On these conditions they consented. Immediately thereafter the land taken from them was given to the harbour master, another estate official, and who is son of a former ground officer. A tree has not been planted there to this day, though this happened ten years ago. We are well aware that the most persistent efforts have been made by those guilty of the crime of the Kildonan burnings to justify their actions. The state of the people before the clearance has been systematically misrepresented. They have been represented as suffering from periodically recurring famines; but we defy any one to show that the people of Kildonan suffered in this way at any time that there was not famine in other parts of Scotland. Mr Loch, the author of a great many of the oppressive rules under which we suffer,—published to the world as a fact that the people were frequently reduced to such straits by famine, that they were obliged to bleed their cattle and mix the blood with oatmeal in order to keep themselves alive. This statement by Mr Loch has been repeated over and over again, and has been made the text of many a homily on Highland destitution, and we have often heard attempted justifications of the clearance founded on it. Yet, for all that, the statement bears absurdity on the face of it. Oat-meal mixed with water—of which we presume there was no dearth—would be as nutritious and certainly more palatable than if it were mixed with blood; and if they wanted to use the cattle for food the best way would surely be to kill them and eat the beef. The statement, so far from militating against the people, has the very opposite effect. It proves two things—

(1) The utter want of any justification for the clearance, and

(2) it shows that the people had both oatmeal and cattle of their own, and now they have neither.

Also, before the clearance, the people had the right of fishing for salmon on the river and of shooting game on the hills, and the fact of there being always abundance of game and salmon is sufficient proof that the assertion referred to, if not entirely destitute of foundation in truth, is at least grossly exaggerated. It has also been asserted that their methods of agriculture were primitive. We don't deny that they were so when judged by modern standards; but the proper standard to judge by is the general state of agriculture at that time. We have no hesitation in saying that, judged by that standard, the agriculture practised in Kildonan at that time was as good and scientific as that practised at Dunrobin Mains. At any rate we think that any farming was better than allowing the land to go back to a state of nature, as was done. The fact is, that the sheep farmers who succeeded to the land of the crofters were enabled to make fortunes out of the confiscated labour of the evicted people. The value of Kildonan Strath as sheep farms depended entirely on the green which succeeded to the crofters' corn crops; and one of the reasons of the present deterioration of sheep farms is, that the grass is being overborne by moss through want of cultivation. As bearing on this point, we may be allowed to draw the attention of the Commission to the fact that the present proprietor has reclaimed 1312 acres at Kinbrace in this parish, at an expense, as has been stated in the newspapers, of upwards of £40,000. Now the amount of land reclaimed by the proprietor as stated above is certainly not one-fiftieth part of the land which had been reclaimed and put under crop by the crofters prior to the clearance. This can be conclusively proved from the amount of green with the plough ridges still distinguishable. We have thus then, according to the much-landed method of reclamation pursued by the Duke of Sutherland, the value of the labour expended by the Kildonan crofters on the land before the clearance, fixed at £200,000. All this was confiscated to the sheep farmers, and the rightful owners were turned out on the world penniless. We consider that it is not at all surprising that sheep farming paid in Kildonan under such conditions. On the other hand, our small holdings are exhausted through constant cropping and manuring for the last sixty years. They are so small—average size three acres—that we cannot afford to give the land any rest. From this exhaustion and the shallow nature of the soil, the corn crop is frequently so short that it cannot be cut, but has to be pulled up by the roots. All the produce we derive from our holdings is not sufficient to maintain us for half the year. The rest has to be bought, and for money to do so, as also for the money wherewith to pay our rents, we are dependent on the herring fishery, and on friends abroad and in the south. The herring fishing in this place

has been a failure for a number of years past. We have most of us a cow and a horse. Some have a cow, but no horse. A few have a horse, and a cow, and a calf; but on pain of instant eviction we are forbidden to have a single sheep. Very few of us would be able to keep a horse for purely agricultural purposes. Work can sometimes be obtained from the fish-curers during the fishing season in carting nets and herrings for the fishermen, and in loading and discharging the cargoes of the ships that carry away the herrings and bring the materials used in fish-curing. Those of us who keep horses for this purpose have to buy food for them. We would beg to give the Commission just one more example, and a very mild example it is, of the misrepresentation of the state of affairs in this parish. It is from that widely circulated and much read and quoted book called the Statistical Account of Scotland of 1847. It is not written by the parish minister, as the accounts of all other parishes are, but by the Duke of Sutherland's factor, the late Mr Gunn. This is what the writer says—

"Population—1801, 1440; 1811, 1574; 1821, 565; 1831, 257." He then proceeds to say

—"The decrease is accounted for by the change that occurred in the rural economy of the parish by the substitution of Cheviot sheep for Highland cattle between the years 1811 and 1821. The system of small holdings and subletting, previously common in the parish, was thereby altered, and no part of the parish being adapted for new settlements, the bulk of the population was settled on the coast-side parishes, and in particular they resorted to the village of Helmsdale, which is within two miles of the southern boundary of the parish forming part of the same district of country, and where the increase of the population far exceeds the decrease in the interior. Under the heading "Industry" the writer says

—"Almost the whole of the parish is occupied as sheep farms. The number of sheep grazed—all of the Cheviot breed—is estimated at 18,000 head, and they are divided among six tenants of separate farms." In the account of the adjacent parish of Loth, which was written, not by the parish minister, but by a legal gentleman in the employment of the estate, after quoting the population thus—1801, 1374; 1811, 1330; 1821, 2008; 1831, 2234, the writer proceeds

—"This increase is to be attributed to the successful establishment of the herring fishery at Helmsdale." To put all this into plain language, "a change in the rural economy of the parish" of Kildonan reduced the population from 1574 in 1811 to 257 in 1831; while "the establishment of the herring fishery at Helmsdale" increased the population of Loth from 1330 in 1811 to 2234 in 1831; the plain fact being that the people were burnt out of Kildonan, and compressed into the miserable patches of land in the most barren part of the parish of Loth, or forced to a worse fate in the wilds of North America. The writer of the account of Kildonan asserts that the increase of the population at the sea-shore exceeded the decrease in the interior; but this can easily be proved not to have been the case by adding the population of both parishes, as given by the writer himself. So far from exceeding it, the increase did not equal the decrease. In 1811 the population of both parishes combined was 2904, and in 1831, 2591, or a decrease of 223. We may suppose that the statement as to the people resorting to their pleasant seaside residences is equally accurate, though it took faggot and crowbar and military to induce them. Further, to meet the requirements of "the change in its rural economy," the old boundary of the parish had to be changed, because it would not look well to have a population of 2234 in a parish of only 17,371 acres, while the neighbouring parish of 134,550 acres had only a population of 257. We merely state these as instances, and not by any means the most aggravated, of the attempts that have been made to keep the truth regarding our treatment and condition from becoming known to the public. We also wish to bring before the Commission the great disadvantage at which we are placed in the matter of rent as compared with the much favoured sheep farmers. There are in the parish six sheep farms and part of two others. The rental of the whole, as per valuation roll, is £4180, and the acreage of these amounts to 130,000, which gives 7½d. per acre. Again, the farm of Kinbrace was recently advertised, and the acreage stated at 44,391, and the rental per valuation roll is £1070, which gives 5½d. per acre. A sheep farmer in the county, giving evidence before a Parliamentary Committee recently, stated that his rent was £1240 (which is the exact figure in the valuation roll), and that he had 7000 sheep. Now the rule is six acres of hill and dale for one stock sheep. That gives 42,000 acres, which gives his rent per acre as 7d. Here, then, we have three different tests which show practically the same result, namely, that the sheep farmers in this parish pay a rent of 7d. per acre. There are 200 crofters in the parish. Their rental per valuation roll amounts to £651. Their total acreage is a little over 3000, or say, to put it beyond any possibility of mistake, 4000. That gives a rental per acre of 3s. 3d.; that is to say, we, with our miserably small holdings of barren, rocky land, the greater part of which we have reclaimed ourselves, pay five times as much per

acre as the sheep farmers pay for the best land in the parish. Two years ago the sheep farmers got an abatement of 50 per cent, of their rents, but we never got anything of the kind—nothing except the rigorous application of the death premium and increase of rent on our own improvements. In winter we have to resort to whins or furze to keep our cattle alive. This is bruised or pounded with a flail, and then given to the cattle. When that fails, we must use sea-weed to feed them with. This is invariably done in the case of a severe winter. We cannot grow straw enough to thatch our houses or outhouses. We have our choice between allowing our houses to get roofless or taking rushes or bent from the holdings of the large farmer, at the risk of prosecution and punishment, as has been done on several occasions. We are also at a great disadvantage in regard to economy of labour, because of the smallness of our holdings. We are obliged to manure all our land each year, whereas, if our holdings were large enough, we could adopt the five-shift rotation, when it would be necessary to lay down manure only once in five years,

and the land could obtain rest besides. We desire further to direct the attention of the Commissioners to the following particulars of the distribution of the population of the parish :

—Area of parish, 134,550 acres; population, 1935, or 60 acres to each individual. There are in the parish 427 families, i.e., 315 acres to each family. There are in the ratable portion of the parish 277 families, and the land, if distributed equally among them, would give 413 acres for each family. We have seven-eighths of the population living on one-thirtieth of the land. We just mention one fact which sufficiently shows the nature of the land we hold. It extends from the sea-shore inland for about two and a half miles; and at that point, and forming its north-west boundary, is a mountain ridge nearly 2000 feet in height. There are only two other points in the whole parish attaining to the same altitude. They are far inland, about twenty-five miles, at the source of the river; that is to say, a stream of two and a half miles, flowing through our holdings, falls through the same height as the river does in its course of close on thirty miles. This sufficiently testifies to the steep and rocky nature of our land. After the clearance some grazing land at a place called Breachachadh was set apart for us to summer some beasts, at so much per head. After some years a place called Griamacharry was substituted on the same terms. This was felt to be a great boon. A calf born in summer could with a struggle be fed all winter, in spring sent to this pasture, and in autumn sold to help to pay rent and buy meal and other necessities. The horses also, not being much required during summer, were sent to the grazing, and taken back when required to take home the peats and to do other work. This arrangement relieved our common, and enabled us to keep two or three sheep a-piece thereon. But three years ago, without consultation or warning, we were deprived of this grazing. There was no provision made for us otherwise. Representations were at once made by us to the estate management, but to these there was no reply. Besides, we were peremptorily ordered to clear off the few sheep some of us had on the common, and the factor went round among the people—a thing unknown before—with a paper for them to sign. Not only did the paper contain a promise to put away their few sheep, but that they and their successors for ever were not to keep a single sheep on said common. Some of us, naturally enough, objected to this last condition, and in consequence refused to sign the paper. They did not refuse to put away their sheep—that was decreed—but they refused to sign the paper. They were immediately served with summonses of removing at the next term. This at once gave rise to an agitation and public exposure, which resulted in the summonses being withdrawn, and a kind of arrangement, which no one seems to understand, being made about a grazing club farm. The result of it all was the loss of the few sheep we had, and the sheep of the large farm which borders with us now feed on our common. We have already alluded to the monopoly of almost all the land in the parish by eight men. From the valuation roll it will be seen that they are as follow :—

'No. 190, £697; 191, £376; 193, £500; 194, £1070; 195, £550; 196, £282; 197, £45; 198, £660. But this is not all. Each of these eight large sheep farmers occupy large arable farms in adjacent parishes, and others sheep farms in other parishes of the county. No. 190 is No. 55 Loth (£308+ £697) = £1005, besides holding a farm in the county of Caithness. No. 191 is No. 125 Lairg (£300+ £376) = £676, besides being a landed proprietor in Ross-shire. No. 193 is No. 216 Rogart (£175), and Nos. 210-11 Dornoch (£500+ £175 + £100) = £775. No. 194 (now proprietor) was until recently held along with No. 63 Loth (£292+ £1070) = £1362. No. 196 is Nos. 57, 58, and 59 Loth and No. 227 Rogart (£282 + £714 + £25 + £442 + £90) = £1553. No. 197 is Nos. 20 and 21 Farr (£45+ £913+ £255) = £1213, besides being a large farmer in the county of Caithness. No. 198 is 'Nos. 66 and 67 Loth (£660+ £250+ £130) = £1040. No. 190 = £ 1005; No. 191 = £676; No. 193 = £ 775; No. 194 = £1362; No. 195

=£550; No. 196 = £1553; No. 197 =£1213; No. 198 = £1040; total, £8174. We have thus eight persons occupying land in the county to the value of £8174, and some of them owners and occupiers in other counties; while in our case 200 families pay only £651, and that at a rate five times as high as the large farmers. We also complain of how we are treated with regard to our roads. Though we are assessed for the maintenance of roads, those which we use are in a disgraceful condition. They are mere water-courses; they never see macadam. Once a year, and sometimes at longer intervals, the earth is lifted out of the shallow ditch which borders only one side, and is thrown on the road. The first shower washes it off, and the road is worse than ever. The only solid and well kept part of our roads is where the native rock crops up. All the money seems to be spent on the old parliamentary road, on which the trustees drive their carriages. This is well kept and regularly macadamised. The rate per mile expended on this road is more than double the rate allowed for the maintenance per mile of the crofters' roads, yet the crofters pay equal rates on a rent five times as highly valued. The road on Kildonan Strath is equally well kept. It is twenty-eight miles long, and has been made and is maintained to accommodate the scattered shepherds of the eight sheep farmers. For the accommodation of the 200 crofter families, the trustees maintain only six and a half miles of the wretched roads already referred to. In addition the crofters have made and maintain at their own expense sixteen miles of road. Generally, we beg to state that any sign of independence or public spirit on our part is visited with the gravest displeasure by the estate management, and subserviency is the only road to success. Strangers are invariably preferred over natives. Boycotting has always been a recognised feature in the management. Parents have frequently been obliged to banish their sons who had given offence to a factor or his underlings. Estate rules, which not one of us has ever seen, are continually held over our heads, and the death premium or doubling, and in some cases trebling, of rents upon our own improvements is a recognised institution. The system of estate management that burnt us out of Kildonan Strath has been consistent and continuous. You will doubtless hear statements of enormous sums of money spent on improving the estate; but let it be remembered that such expenditure has no relation whatever to the crofters, in this parish at least. We have made all our improvements ourselves, and our reward is increase of rent. We have reclaimed hundreds of acres of land which were worth nothing per acre—had they been worth the sheep farmers would have got them—and now we are paying from 15s. to £1 per acre per annum for having reclaimed them. Our main grievance is that we have too little land. The remedy, of course, is to give us sufficient. That sufficiency is quite at hand. What has been said of the parish of Kildonan applies with equal, if not with more, force to the parish of Loth. When a family dies out or emigrates their holding is always added to the large farm of Crakaig. Within the last twenty years upwards of thirty small holdings have been so added. In the district of Whitehill in this parish the people were long ago given a piece of hill grazing and 15s. added to their rent on account thereof; but afterwards this was taken from them, and the rent left as it was. The boundary between the crofters of Whitehill and the large farm of Crakaig originally was a water-course called Crakaig Burn, southward to the point at which it is crossed by the old parliamentary road. The crofters' land was to the east thereof, the farm of Crakaig to the west. The tacksman began to claim his boundary as a point about 500 yards further east, and into the crofters' land, and from that point straight out the hill, and erected a fence there which actually enclosed five of their houses. This took away the best part of the people's pasture, namely, the green spots along the course of the burn. The people all along protested and disputed the arrangement, but the estate management gave them no protection or redress, though repeatedly appealed to. This matter has been in dispute for thirty years. The people of this parish have scarcely any grazing at all. In this respect they are even worse off than the people of the parish of Kildonan.'

This statement was adopted last night unanimously at a public meeting, and I have been authorised to lay it before you. I shall be glad to supply information as to any statement made therein.

38220. Will you kindly state by whom this statement was drawn up or written ?

—If you will allow me I will explain, as shortly as I can, the proceedings preliminary to your visit. When it became known that Her Majesty had appointed a Commission to inquire into the state of the crofters of the Highlands, there was a public meeting called of the people here in the month of March, and delegates were appointed by the people at that meeting. The delegates met on several occasions, and there was an understanding come to that the various delegates should gather information in their districts, and that these statements should be given in. That was done, and it was remitted to me to

put them into form, so as to present them in some logical way before the Commission, in order that any further labour might be lightened as much as possible in that way. I am not even responsible for the phraseology, as that has been changed and modified in some degree upon representations made by me at the beginning.

38221. Are you responsible for the facts stated?

—I am responsible. A great number of the facts are within my own cognisance; and, of course, I have obtained statistics from the proper official sources.

38222. Was the substance of this transmitted to you in Glasgow?

—Yes, a mass of notes. I was here in summer, and saw them at that time, and took them with me to Glasgow.

38223. And, when you received this information on the spot, did you examine it critically, and cross-question the people as to it?

—Yes; but most of the facts I had as good opportunities of knowing as the delegates themselves had. Being a native, and brought up here, all the facts referred to are within my own cognisance as well as theirs.

38224. It is not very essential to the purpose of our present inquiry to ascertain the exact features of hardships which accompanied the original evictions; but, at the same time, as in the course of this paper the word 'burnings' has been twice used, apparently with the intention of aggravating the intensity of the case, I would like, as a matter of curiosity, to know what authority you have for stating that houses were set fire to during the presence of the inmates of the houses on the occasions of these evictions?

—Well, generally, of course, there is some sort of literature on the question, which doubtless you have seen. There are also statements by old people who were sufferers at the time, and a general belief on the part of the people who came down to the sea-coast from Kildonan that this was done; and I may mention that the name by which the transactions are known among the people is - burnings,' but I have no objection that 'clearances' should be substituted, or any other word. I put in the word 'burnings' simply because I was familiar with it—because it is the word used among the people when they speak of it.

38225. **Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.**

—Will you put it in Gaelic?

—'Losgaidh'; and the year is called 'Bliadhna na losgaidh'—the year of the burnings.

38226. **The Chairman.**

—When the people were removed from their holdings in the upper parts of the parish and brought down to the seacoast, did not they bring (as is very generally the case) the timber of their houses with them?

—Yes, I believe so, in some cases. I have seen some timber that was brought down, but only in one case. There may have been more.

38227. I don't understand what was burnt if the timber was carried away?

—The roof. The houses were not all burnt, but there were cases of burning.

38228. I think it is a rash thing to use the expression without absolute certainty that there were cases in which the houses were burnt during the presence of the inmates. Then you are not able to give any particular case of that—to name any family or any particular case?

—I may state that there is a man here named John Poison, who told me recently that his mother-in-law's family were evicted, and the mother took two infant children outside while the house was being burned. There were some of the household effects burned in the house. One of these children was afterwards his wife.

38229. You have also alluded to the employment of the military in evictions in Kildonan; what was the

nature of that employment ?

—I understand, and have heard repeatedly, that the military were forwarded from Inverness at the time the evictions were taking place, and that they actually came as far as Golspie; but it was fully unnecessary to employ them any further, as the people went quietly away when they heard that the military were called in.

38230. In speaking of the reclamations which have recently been in progress, to the extent, I think, of 1300 acres, on the part of the proprietor, if I understood you rightly, you said that these reclamations did not represent one-fiftieth part of the cumulative reclamation of the old Sutherland holders?

—Yes, I made that statement.

38231. That would imply, then, in these parishes hereabout, 60,000 acres of land under cultivation?

—Yes; it is so.

38232. Have you got any ground for estimating the arable land in the old holdings at so high a figure as 60,000 acres ?

—It is about 50,000, I understand, from the amount of land which shows signs of ploughing yet. I did not calculate the amount of land which may have been cultivated, and is overgrown, by heather at this time, but only the land upon which ploughed ridges are still to be seen. I didn't go over it and measure it, but I know every inch of it, and I think it is within the truth that fifty times as great an area—close on 60,000 acres—was under cultivation.

38233. **Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.**

—In the strath of Kildonan ?

—Yes.

38234. **The Chairman.**

—How many acres do you estimate the parish of Kildonan to contain?

—150,450 acres.

38235. Do you think that of the 150,000 acres in the parish of Kildonan, 60,000 were in old times under cultivation?

—Yes.

38336. Under spade cultivation ?

—No; plough cultivation.

38237. What was the population—the highest population?

—Close on 2000.

38238. In the strath ?

—Yes.

38239. **Sir Kenneth Mackenzie**

—350 families ?

—Dividing by 5, I suppose so. The families were, generally, very large at that time.

38240. Then there would be fewer families. There would not be more than 350?

—No; the highest population was 1754.

38241. **The Chairman.**

—Well, if there were 350 families, and all of these families were in the position of tenants—small tenants, crofters, or persons haying holdings, excluding the landless families—allowing there were no landless families or families of poor cottars—that would give to each household 160 acres of arable ground besides the outrun. Now, have you ever made an estimate or calculation to test the probability

of your statement ?

—Yes, I did; I tested it in every way, and from what I have heard from some of the people I felt that I was fully justified in putting down the statement from the extent of land they said they had, and the amount of corn they had.

38242. Do you really believe, or is the impression generally entertained that each of these poor holdings on an average contained 160 acres of arable ground ?

—Perhaps it is a little over the average, but I am under the impression, and certainly they are, that they each held 100 acres of arable land.

38243. Is there any experience in any part of the Highlands, in the present or in the past, of holdings of those average dimensions ?

—I don't know. Of course, I have not visited them, but I am told the largest holdings are in Coigach, Ross-shire, or thereabout; but your Lordship will have had an opportunity of seeing if they are of that size. As I understand it—I may be wrong—but I have always heard them referred to as what the crofters of Kildonan might have been if they had been left there. I don't know the size of the holdings at Coigach, but it is generally believed among the Highlanders that these are the Highland holdings of the olden time.

38244. It is supposed that, when the people cultivated on the runrig system, 100 acres of arable ground was apportioned off to each family?

—100 to each.

38245. And do you believe that possible yourself ?

—Well, of course, I have no means of judging, because what I have been accustomed to see was the small patches we have up here; but judging from the traditions or beliefs among the people, I am quite prepared to believe there was 100 acres to a family. That is the impression I have received from the knowledge I have of the circumstances, being a native, and hearing the people continually referring to it.

38246. Can the land cultivated in ancient times be generally discriminated by the eye from the land that has never been cultivated? Is not the old cultivated land generally known as green land or the green spots of land?

—Yes.

38247. In passing through the country now do you find in Kildonan that the green spots bear anything like a proportion of one-third of the whole ?

—Oh, yes; a very much higher proportion than that. It gives a very different impression to walk over it from going over it on the railway. All the green spots are not to be seen by any means from the railway or along the main course. All the tributaries of the river are much wider. The tributary valleys are much wider in every case, and the hills don't rise to the same altitude, and there is far more level and more green along the course of the tributaries than along the course of the main stream.

38248. In speaking of the custom of bleeding cattle and mixing the blood with oatmeal, which is so generally stated in regard to the Highlands in ancient times, do you mean to affirm that that practice never existed in the country ?

—I refer, of course, to the parish of Kildonan itself. I merely give the statement on its merits. I never heard it referred to as a fact that it was done, but I heard it often denied with great indignation that it ever happened.

38249. And one of the grounds you gave for denying it was this, that it proved that the people had oatmeal, and that they mixed it with water ?

—Yes, made porridge.

38250. Is it not possible that the people may have bled the cattle with a desire to obtain an element of



animal food in their diet?

—It is quite possible, and I have heard it said very lately that that was one of the delicacies of the Highlands at one time. I don't know whether it is within the experience of any other gentleman, but, apart from that, I think at present, at any rate, porridge is looked upon as the staple food of the people, and, I think, as long as they had porridge they would not grumble at the fare, and, consequently, would not resort to such a thing as to bleed cattle.

38251. As long as they had porridge and milk; but milk is an element of animal diet, and they might not have milk at the season when they bled the cattle?

—It is quite possible.

38252. Then you stated that the expatriated people, some of them, found their way to America, where they experienced a worse fate. What ground have you for believing that the emigrants generally experienced a worse fate?

—The fate of my great-grandfather's family. My great-grandfather's family, except himself, all went out in Lord Selkirk's expedition to the Red River. My grandfather was married before he went out, and I have seen in my grandfather's house and my father's house a pile of correspondence describing the vicissitudes they underwent. They were left exposed on the north coast, and they had to find their way from Hudson's Bay to the Red River settlement; and they were exposed to the rigours of a lengthened winter, and, to crown all, the Indians came in and killed some of them, and the rest fled over the winter's snow to Canada. Only seven or eight managed to survive and settle in Canada afterwards.

38253. Are there many evicted families from this part of the country who cast in their lot with Lord Selkirk's settlement?

—Yes, and that accounts for the difference between those who settled here and those who were in Kildouan before.

38254. Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.

—Had Lord Selkirk a settlement called Kildonan?

—Yes, and it is called Kildonan to this day. It is near Winnipeg. Fort Garry was the principal town in the old Red River settlement, and it has now become Winnipeg. You will see an account of it in the book called *The Great Lone Land*, by General Butler.

38255. The Chairman.

—In speaking of the comparative rental paid by the sheep farmer and by the small crofter in this vicinity, which amounts to a great disparity—7d. being the average rental for the sheep farmer and 3s. 3d. per acre for the small crofter—the 3s. 3d., I presume, includes the home or the house?

—Yes.

38256. So it is the rental of the home, plus some proportion of land?

—Yes; the homestead generally.

38257. Is it quite fair to compare a rental which includes a home, and in which the home is the principal element, with a rental which does not include a home or includes a home which is a very small element in the whole?

—No doubt it would increase the power of the rental—if I may so state it—but with the single exception of the proprietor supplying the wood and lime used in the construction of the houses, the house is otherwise provided for by the tenant himself.

38258. Now, taking the houses, we see in the immediate vicinity of this place a number of respectable houses with slated roofs and chimneys, and a proportion of these houses has been raised at the expense of the tenant, and a proportion by the landlord?

—The landlord supplies the lime and the timber. In the neighbourhood of my father's house a man built a house last year, and put a slated roof on it; and I was asking him about it two months ago, and he said it was exactly about a tenth part of the value of the house—the whole house costing in the

construction about £80—and the timber and lime supplied by the proprietor were valued at £8.

38259. When a tenant leaves a holding of that character here, in this vicinity, does he receive any compensation or any melioration ?

—It is unknown in practice.

38260. When a new tenant comes in does he pay the old tenant any compensation ?

—I have known cases—at least I have not known them, but they were told me—but it is not a rule; the fact of the matter being that no tenant is allowed to run into arrear. That may, perhaps, account for it. I understand that, in this parish, arrears of rent are unknown. So far as is within my knowledge, arrears are unknown.

38261. In comparing the rental of land held by the large farmer and held by the crofter in this vicinity, we may presume that in proportion to the whole held by the crofter he has a larger area of what is now arable ground?

—Yes, the proportion of course is much larger.

38262. Consequently it would be fairer to compare the rent of the arable held by the sheep farmer with the rent of the land held by the crofter, because we may suppose almost all the land held by the crofter is arable

—It would affect the calculation in this way—I admit it would make a difference; and perhaps the proper basis would be, if we could ascertain the acreage of arable held by the large farmers; but I limited my calculations to the parish of Kildonan, as it is the one I am acquainted with I think what your Lordship has suggested would affect the calculation unfavourably on the part of the crofter. It struck me at the time your Lordship said so, but the point had escaped me.

38263. You compare the whole area of the sheep farmer with the area held by the crofter, and you show that the rent paid by the crofter is much higher than the rent paid by the sheep farmer. But surely it would be fairer to compare the rent paid by the crofter with the rent paid by the farmer for his arable area, because all the area held by the crofter is arable?

—Oh, no.

38264. At any rate the large majority of it ?

—A larger proportion than belongs to the sheep farms.

38265. How was the land held by the crofters made arable ?

—By their own labour mostly.

38266. How was the land held by the sheep farmers, and which is now arable, made arable ?

—To a great extent by the crofters also, who were evicted long before in 1815. My parents on the mother's side were called out of Kintradwell, which is now a large arable farm.

38267. With regard to the land held by the crofters in this vicinity, the most of which is arable, is it by nature better than the land held by the sheep farmers ?

—Oh, dear, no !—not nearly so good. It is the very worst land in the parish.

38268. In speaking of the difficulty of obtaining manure for the holdings here, you mentioned that they were manured with sea-weed in some cases ?

—It is a fact, though I did not mention it.

38269. Is any price paid by the people for the sea-weed ?

—No.

38270. They have the free right to the sea-weed?

—Yes.

38271. All along the shore ?

—All along the shore.

38272. You mentioned that a certain portion of the common pasture had been, of recent years, taken away, and that an absolute prohibition existed of feeding sheep on what remains? Where is the common pasture now?

—On the holdings of the crofters; the arable land is generally along the sea shore, and back to the watershed that I have referred to is their arable land.

38273. But a good deal of the crofting land is up the valley here ?

—No, it is along the coast more, above the ridge.

38274. I see some crofters' lands just now, up the valley from the bridge ?

—Yes, up to the left.

38275. Then they have common pasture ?

—The sheep hill you see there, and some parts lying beyond.

38276. Then both those who are in the valley and those along the coast have got common pasture—a small amount of common pasture, attached to their arable holdings ?

—That is so.

38277. And there they are prohibited from keeping sheep?

—Yes.

38278. What was the reason of that ?

—The reason assigned was that they did not take proper means of keeping them back from going into the corn of some people who had no sheep. Of course that is so. Not very frequent instances of that happened; and the reason assigned was that they were continually complaining about that. That was given as the reason why they were ordered to put them away; but it existed at the same time, and was coincident with the time when they were deprived of the grazings up the strath.

38279. Then the reason they were prohibited from keeping sheep was that those sheep molested the arable land of their own class of people ?

—The ostensible reason. The people believed it was not the real reason

38280. What was the real reason, do you suppose ?

—The reason the people generally suppose is that the holding in Gramacary was taken from them; and it was pointed out that they had this hill pasture attached to their agricultural holdings, and they would be asked to keep their cattle there; and of course they could not keep both cattle and sheep there, and the sheep were ordered to be put away. I have no means of knowing the intention of the estate management on the subject, but that is the general impression of the people so far as I am able to ascertain it.

38281. You spoke of a larger common grazing taken away from the Sutherland people fifteen years ago ?

—That is another matter. It is connected with some of the holdings that came down to the sea-shore, and parts of the holdings of some people—nine, I think, in one case —were turned away on the pretence of its being used as a plantation; and it was given to another gentleman along there, who has it now, and it has never been planted.

38282. It is used as a sheep farm ?

—No, it is used as grazing.

38283. You said the evils of which the people complained were intended to be rectified by the concession of a common grazing or club farm of some kind, which you say no one can understand ?  
—That is my impression.

38284. Have you taken any trouble to ascertain the nature of it ?  
—I have, and I was told at first that all the arrangements were made. Of course the arrangements were come to very quickly, as far as I can understand, and there were steps taken, of a kind; but I say that, so far as I am aware, the people were not sufficiently taken into the confidence of the management to make it successful I have inquired regarding that at some members of committee who have been appointed, and I could not find out whether the farm at Suiseill was taken or not. Some told me it was taken, and some that it was not. I am under the impression that the lease is not signed yet.

38285. When did you come here ?  
—I came here on this occasion only yesterday, but I was here during August and September last

38286. Do you know whether any stock has actually been purchased by the people?  
—It has been purchased; that is within my knowledge.

38287. And has been placed there?  
—Yes.

38288. Then can the people give a greater proof that they consider it a serious and useful project than that they should actually purchase stock and put it on the ground ?  
—Well, no doubt it is. I am not going to say—I have no means of saying—that the initiative was taken by people who really had no interest in the matter. I am not going to attribute motives to those people, but my belief is that the people were not sufficiently taken into their confidence, and I look upon it as if there were displeasure shown towards people who took means of publicly agitating in this matter to get the former grievances redressed. There were some people here who took some leading part, or took some part, in a small agitation we had in order to make the grievance connected with the deprivation of the common pasture known. Now, I am under the impression that there was an attempt made—or at least the fact was so—to shut out and discountenance those people in every way, and those people were not taken into confidence because they had taken a part in the former agitation.

38289. You mean that the people who took part in the agitation are excluded from the benefits of the club farm ?  
—Well, not explicitly; but really it is so. At least the people are under the impression that there might be more frankness in the business.

38290. You spoke of a paper which the people had been asked to sign declaring they would refrain from keeping sheep upon the common pasture, and binding not only themselves but their successors for all time. Have you got a copy of such a paper ?  
—No, but I am sure some of the delegates are prepared to speak to that.

38291. Have you seen it?  
—No; I was not here at the time.

38292. With reference to what you call the death premium, that is, I suppose, a rise of rental on the death of the tenant?  
—Yes.

38293. Is that rise of rental exacted in every case? Is it progressive, or is it exacted only in the case of certain holdings held, perhaps, for a length of time at small rents?  
—I don't know the principle, but, so far as is within my knowledge, they are always raised. There is a difference in the proportion in which they are raised.

38294. Supposing a holding has been held for a length of time, and the son succeeds the father, it is raised on that occasion?

—Invariably.

38295. But suppose the son immediately died, and was succeeded by a brother, would it be raised a second time immediately, or is the rise only for once?

—I rather think it is when the death succeeds quickly.

38296. You mean there is a progressive rental?

—Yes, but of course the people here are long-lived as a rule. In all deaths that have occurred within my knowledge the rent has been in some cases trebled and in some cases doubled.

38297. Is that premium exacted in all cases where you succeed immediately a near relative like a father, or is it only exacted in the case of a new tenant coming in, or a new family?

—The family arrangement does not enter into it, as far as I can judge [See Appendix A, LXV]

38298. According to this statement of yours, up to the present time, or nearly up to the present time, the policy of the estate management has been a course of consolidation with reference to small holdings?

—Quite so.

38299. And a crowding of the population into closer bounds?

—Yes.

38300. Is there no symptom, up to the present time, of a reaction or a change in that respect? Is there any tendency towards a different system?

—Well, I have heard a great deal about that, but really the people have not the means of judging except through these changes, or intended changes, affecting themselves; and I cannot say, from what I am able to see, that there is any change in the deportment of the management towards the crofter population up to the present time.

38301. You said that the immense expenditure which has taken place, and which can be proved to have taken place, on this estate, has not been intended for the benefit of the crofter population, and I think you go so far as to say that it has not actually benefited them. Do you think that would bear the test of inquiry? Do you think the employment given on the estate has been of no advantage whatever to the people?

—So far as I remember, I don't think I went the length of saying that; but, if I said so, I did not mean to say that, because no doubt they would benefit indirectly to the extent that employment was provided for the time. Undoubtedly I admit that.

38302. For instance, you say that the houses have been constructed mainly at the expense of the people. But has not the abundance of work, and the distribution of large sums in wages, enabled the people to reconstruct or improve their houses?

—Undoubtedly, but I wanted to show that the employment afforded, in the first place, by the construction of the railway, and, in the second place, by the reclamations up the strath, continued only for perhaps five years altogether, putting it very liberally; so that, though they might be a little more prosperous during those five years, they could not save so much money out of what was spent on the estate as would do them any good permanently.

38303. **Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.**

—Do you not think that the construction of the railway is a permanent good?

—Decidedly a permanent benefit to the people—I am far from denying that—but not to the extent to which the rents are raised.

38306. You think the rents have been raised in consequence of the railway coming there?

—Undoubtedly it would be one of the reasons.

38305. Have the rents been raised irrespective of the so-called death premium?

—No. There is no change made in the rental I don't know the rules of the estate, but it is the invariable practice that there is no increase of rent during a man's lifetime.

38306. I think you mentioned that one of the causes assigned for removing the people from the hill lands was their inferior mode of cultivation?

—Mr Loch states that in his book.

38307. And you rather surprised me by mentioning that they don't adopt, at the present day, the rotation of cropping on the lands down here?

—Not the five-shift. I think it is a three-shift they have.

38308. Don't you think the smaller the holding the more necessary it is to adopt a good system of cultivation?

—Yes, if it came to spade husbandry; but when ploughing has to be done subdivision of an acre in extent would be an inconvenience, I think.

38309. Do you think it would be any encouragement to the proprietor to give them larger holdings if he found the holdings they had were cultivated in the best possible way?

—Undoubtedly, but I think the people require encouragement much greater than the proprietor does.

38310. But the proprietor having this power in his hands, is it not desirable that the people should offer him this inducement to give them larger lands by showing they are capable of using them to the best advantage?

—I maintain that the agriculture here is of a most superior kind. I say that by the most scientific farming in Scotland they could not excel the crops these people take out of the soil, considering the nature and circumstances of the case.

38311. But they don't adopt a rotation of cropping?

—They cannot adopt the five-shift system. It would subdivide the land to such an extent that it would not be worth the trouble of shifting it, all the patches would be so small.

38312. It seems to me that the smaller the holding itself is, the more necessary it is to adopt the most improved system of cultivation?

—Undoubtedly, but the land can get no rest; and you can see the inconvenience of subdivision with plough cultivation.

38313. **Mr Cameron.**

—In reference to that comparison of the rental paid by the large farmers and the small ones, as I understand, you take the arable land of the large farmers, and the hill ground, and also the arable land of the crofters and the hill ground. You lump them all together, and take them the one with the other?

—No, I simply took the area of Kildonan, in which the sheep farmers have their pasture land, and in which the crofters have both. The parish was the basis of my calculation.

38314. The whole parish?

—Yes.

38315. But you say that 3s. 3d. is the rent paid by the crofters per acre for all their holdings—hill and arable?

—Yes.

38316. And 7d. is that paid by the large farmers for all they hold—hill and arable?

—I may state that, with the exception of one farm, there is no arable farm belonging to a large farmer

in the parish.

38317. But the arable land held by the sheep farmer is part of his farm?

—Yes; I took the whole.

38318. But I want to ask whether the arable land held by the crofters is not larger in proportion to the whole than the arable land held by the sheep farmers?

—Yes, out of all proportion.

38319. Therefore it is hardly fair to lump them together to make the calculation?

—I have admitted that already to his Lordship.

38320. **Mr Fraser-Mackintosh.**

—You stated that upon three different occasions land was taken from the people in this Neighbourhood, and I think you also stated that, upon one occasion, it was for the alleged purpose of planting. Would it not be a very great advantage to this immediate locality if there were some planting?

—Undoubtedly, and the people looked upon it in that light, and were therefore more willing to give the land.

38321. But they were not willing to have it taken from them and given to an estate official?

—They would not have given it up had they known that was the reason it was wanted for.

38322. You also stated that crofters' sheep have been prevented going upon the hill lands here, but, notwithstanding that, I believe sheep are to be found?

—I saw them myself.

38323. So the people have been prevented from having the full use of their own commonty while other people's sheep have the benefit of the commonty?

—That is so.

38324. For which they are supposed to pay rent?

—That is so.

38325. About this story you have mentioned as to the blood being mixed with oatmeal, have you ever heard anything of that kind being attempted or done in modern times?

—No.

38326. Not even as an experiment?

—No.

38327. What advantage do you think in your own mind it could possibly be?

—None, so far as I am able to see; only to the extent that his Lordship put, of perhaps having an element of animal food in it; but I don't think the people thought of that at all.

38328. Of course it was the blood of cows?

—Yes; the cows were said to have been bled.

38329. Is the blood of cows now used for food?

—Undoubtedly, and it was upon that ground that I was talking of a gentleman who told me that it was a delicacy in some parts of the Highlands. Of course, what is commonly known as blood puddings are of the same nature.

38330. Do you yourself believe, after careful consideration of the matter, that it was a common thing, if it existed at all?

—I am under the impression that it never existed, after all the consideration I have been able to give it.

38331. Is it not a fact that it was south country people who circulated the story first ?

—Yes, and Sutherland people always indignantly deny it.

38332. With regard to the burnings you have referred to, what was the name of the person who married the infant that was taken out of the house after she grew up?

—John Poison, residing in West Helmsdale.

38333. Have you heard him tell the story frequently?

—Once. I was told by other people that it was his people who were referred to, so I inquired of him.

38334. Are there at this moment living in Sutherland or Caithness any survivors of those who were turned out at the time of these burnings?

—Several. Mr Ross, who was sitting beside me, is one of them. He is not a delegate. His health was delicate at the time the meeting was held, so he was unable to be put on the list.

38335. Is he an individual whose house was burnt?

—I think so. He recollects all the circumstances of the case at any rate, and there are several others.

38336. Have you in your own mind the slightest doubt that the burnings occurred?

—Not the least. In fact, they might as well deny their own existence, it is so firmly believed. It is as well established as the existence of William Wallace, at any rate.

38337. We know the existence of the first Napoleon has been doubted by a very famous man?

—Yes, and on far better evidence than the Kildonan burnings.

38338. Can there be any possible reason why the large population that are here congregated about Helmsdale should not get such additional land as would put them in absolute comfort and enable them to be a credit to the proprietor and a credit to the county of Sutherland?

—I see no reason, and it has always surprised me that it has not been done. When I read the glowing accounts in the newspapers about the reclamations by the Duke of Sutherland—and I give him all honour for them—I am often sorry that he does not take the people more into his confidence, and allow them to profit by it.

38339. Would the people welcome any symptoms on the part of the Duke of Sutherland to alter the present system in the direction you yourself have been pointing out?

—I wish I could express the joy with which the coming of age of the present Duke was received, because the people were led to believe great things were to happen. Looking back upon my own experience, I am sorry to say they have been sadly disappointed.

38340. In all the places we have come to, we have generally found it to be the feeling of the people in the various districts and parishes that they are very much attached to their homes. Is it the case in the two parishes you have referred to?

—Undoubtedly it is the feeling in every case, and it is no doubt intensified by their want of knowledge of the world.

38341. With regard to the parish of Loth, you stated that thirty different places were added to the farm of Crakaig. What became of the people who were removed?

—Numbers of the families died out through poor circumstances. People don't marry, because they see no way of providing for a family—the places, of course, being always added to the farm. Others emigrated.

38342. So within your own recollection that has taken place?

—Yes, to the extent of seven or eight of them.



38343. Are there any crofters at all on that spot now ?

—No, none on the west side of the Loch Beg Burn, and there were plenty at one time within my memory. There is one cottar.

38344. At what age did you leave the country for the first time?

—I was about twenty years of age before I left.

38345. You have taken a great interest in all matters connected with your own county, and have you taken an interest also in all Highland matters for some years past?

—Well, I have taken a subordinate position.

38346. Have you done that as a matter of conscience?

—Pure conscience.

38347. You found yourself impelled, as it were, to take some part in the amelioration of the condition of your countrymen?

—Yes, out of pure conscience. I have profited nothing by it. I have incurred nothing but opprobrium, and lost my time and means to some small extent.

38348. **Sheriff Nicolson.**

—Did many of the people emigrate from this place to America, besides those who went with Lord Selkirk's expedition?

—Well, there has been the ordinary stream of emigration going on as circumstances arose. For instance, if one emigrated he sent home money to take out others. That has been the principal way, but there has not been a general exodus since that time.

38349. But, in general, have they been rather unsuccessful than otherwise?

—I think the most of them have been successful, but not to the great extent sometimes represented. Of course, we see those who do well and who come back, but those who don't do well don't come back; and the hardships that occurred in my father's family of course applied to the whole of the people.

38350. Do you know whether it is the case that the richest man in America is the son of a Kildonan crofter?

—Is that Mr Mackay? I heard that, but I think there is no ground for it. I am told he belongs to the north of Ireland. His forefathers may have belonged to the county. I understand the prime minister of Canada belongs to Rogart

38351. Has there been any emigration in recent years from either of these parishes?

—Yes; a good deal—I mean the people sending for their relatives.

38352. And with satisfactory results?

—Well, that depends altogether upon whether the settlement of Manitoba will turn out successful or not. There was a run two years ago, and I suppose it remains to be seen whether that is to be a successful settlement or not. The resources of the colony are not properly developed.

38353. The principal industry of the people in both parishes is fishing?

—The herring fishery.

38354. Without that, I suppose, they could not live here?

—It is impossible, I understand.

38355. Is there not sufficient work provided for the people to keep them in labour?

—There is none whatever except at the occasional times I referred to, namely, the making of the

railway and the reclamations.

38356. Then are the able-bodied population here all fishermen?

—No, they are not fishermen to the extent they were within my recollection.

38357. What is the cause of that?

—I suppose it is this, that they require to confine their attention for part of the year to the cultivation of their crofts, and that renders them unfitted for the other work. In fact, they never took kindly to the sea, and it is impossible they could —people whose forefathers had been engaged in agricultural pursuits so long. I don't know whether it is to be accounted for by heredity, or otherwise, but it is a fact that they are not in the habit of becoming fishermen and sailors entirely,—not even to the extent within my recollection.

38358. I suppose the class of boats and apparatus they have now is similar to what is employed on the east coast generally?

—Yes.

38359. Very few fish with the old small boats?

—Very few; they are getting fewer every year.

38360. There is no other fishing here except the herring fishing?

—There is to a small extent, but not to any important extent.

38361. No important cod or ling fishing?

—No.

38362. Do you know whether there is any such fishing to be had on these coasts if it were prosecuted?

—I am not so well fitted to speak on that point as some of the gentlemen who are to come after me.

38363. I suppose you are well acquainted with the educational condition of the parish?

—Yes; I served my apprenticeship in the parish school here.

38364. Is the administration of the Education Act satisfactory?

—Generally it is satisfactory to the people. I would find objection to it in some points, but it is not my duty to say anything about that. I think, however, the people are, upon the whole, satisfied with the administration of the School Board.

38365. And do they take advantage of it?

—I must say that, so far as I am able to learn, the board neglects its duty in not making the compulsory clause effectual; I think it is the wish of the people who are better inclined, and who would like to see the children properly educated, that it should be enforced. The objection I had was that, when they were erecting the school, I thought they did not put up a sufficient building.

38366. Not sufficiently large?

—Not sufficiently large, and not so good a building as they should have put up.

38367. Is there only one school here?

—Yes, they have only one school to attend. There are side schools up the Strath, but they have only one principal school in the parish. These side schools are not taught by certificated teachers.

38368. Then, the compulsory clause of the Act has not been put in force?

—No, it has not. There is a compulsory officer, and I understand he does his duty, but I understand the board neglects its duty in not prosecuting.

38369. Has there ever been a prosecution?  
—I understand not.